Paul R. Hepler, II. BRITISH REACTION TO GENERAL BOULANGER: 1886-1891. (Under the direction of Loren K. Campion) Department of History, May 1969.

The purpose of this study is to show that British public reaction to France's General Georges Ernest Jean Marie Boulanger between 1886 and 1891 attained sufficient proportions as to merit treatment and further study. During this period, the Boulanger crisis in France elicited widespread response in Great Britain in the form of newspaper reports, journal articles, diplomatic correspondence, and personal accounts. By analyzing these reactions, this study attempts to discover the extent and significance of the effect of the Boulangist phenomenon on British foreign policy and public tranquility.

The Boulangist affair with its accompanying threat of a Franco-German war jeopardized two basic tenets of British foreign policy--maintaining the status quo in Europe and insuring Belgian neutrality. After becoming French minister of war in 1886, Boulanger stirred national pride to the point that the revanche concept was activated in the minds of many Frenchmen, and Germany naturally responded sensitively to this threat to her security. The resulting war-scare during the spring of 1887 caused Britain considerable concern, for, needless to say, the thought of a possible continental war in which she could become involved was alarming. Although a change in the French cabinet in May 1887 led to the General's removal from his position of minister of war and to his departure from Paris, many British observers still viewed him as a dangerous menace. In others who believed that Boulanger himself was

finished politically, his brief popularity intensified distrust of French mass-type democracy and volatile national sentiment, of which he was a product.

During 1888, Boulanger's dismissal from the French army and entrance into politics again affected British policy. The bellicosity developing from the movement that centered around him found reflection in French foreign policy and so threatened European stability. One result was friction between Anglo-French colonial interests sufficient to push the two countries to the verge of war and force British foreign policy into the wake of that of the Central Powers. In addition to these developments, the British saw in Boulanger the incarnation of the French desire for empire, and consequently fear developed that Britain would be the object of this imperialistic thrust. Anxiety, therefore, intensified during the spring of 1888 until Britishers were at least affecting to envision a possible invasion of Britain under Boulanger. This "invasion scare" became one of the contributory causes of the introduction and passage of the Naval Defense Act of 1889--itself, however relatively remote, a contributory cause of the First World War.

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PREFACE

In the following study I have attempted to analyze British reaction to the phenomenon of General Boulanger of France between the years 1886 and 1891 as can be viewed from The (London) Times, various journals of the period, correspondence of Her Majesty's foreign office, and personal evaluations by prominent Victorians. I have deliberately refrained from using some material, when, although it concerned the Boulanger Crisis, it did not relate specifically to my topic or was merely factual reportage and not expressive of any reaction.

Besides The Times, indispensible to any study of British involvement in international affairs, I also canvassed the following important journals of the period, reflecting all segments of the British political spectrum: The Contemporary Review, The Atlantic Monthly, The Forum, The Century Magazine, Littell's Living Age, Review of Reviews, The Chautauquan, The Saturday Review, The Illustrated London News, The Edinburgh Review, Punch, The Quarterly Review, Macmillan's Magazine, The Nineteenth Century, The Economist, Blackwood's Magazine, The Spectator, The New Statesman and Nation, The Fortnightly Review, Murray's Magazine, The Universal Review, The Westminster Review, The New Review, The Electic Magazine, and Public Opinion.

Of the above, those journals not appearing cited in the text or bibliography are so missing because they do not contain material usable for my topic.

INTRODUCTION

On January 7, 1886, General Georges Ernest Jean Marie Boulanger, perhaps one of the most colorful personalities of modern France, became minister of war. From this point until his suicide on September 30, 1891, Boulanger recurrently excited the concern of the French Third Republic, if not all of western Europe. Born in Rennes, Brittany, on April 29, 1837, Boulanger entered the military school of St. Cyr in 1854 and graduated in 1856, at the age of nineteen. Thereafter he achieved a distinguished military career resulting in his elevation to the war minister's position.[1]

Over the next four years Boulanger's actions evoked far-reaching reactions throughout most European capitals. Several essays and monographs concerning German response to the Boulanger phenomenon, especially in connection with the Franco-German war-scare during the spring of 1887, are available. An excellent article by Andreas Dorpalen treats Russian attitudes toward the General.[2] Recent British and American scholarship, however, has provided little treatment of Boulanger and his movement; in fact, this matter often merits only a footnote in diplomatic histories. The few articles dealing with this subject, moreover, are confined to thumbnail character sketches or superficial observations.[3] Articles

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[1] For the standard treatment of Boulanger and his movement, see Adrien Dansette, Ie Boulangisme (Paris: Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1946). Of further interest is Alexandre Zevaes, Au Temps du Boulangisme, cinquieme ed. (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1930).

[2] Andreas Dorpalen, "Tsar Alexander III and the Boulanger Crisis in France," The Journal of Modern History, XXIII (June, 1951), 122-136.

[3] See, for example, D. W. Brogan, "A Dictator Who Failed: Boulanger

in French historical journals evaluate Boulanger personally or his effect on internal politics.[4]

The dearth of studies of Britain's response to Boulanger ostensibly suggests that John Bull paid little attention to the General. Such, however, was not the case. Between 1886 and 1890, Boulanger's actions resulted in a war-scare, sufficient to threaten two main tenets of British foreign policy--maintenance of the status quo in Europe and insurance of Belgian neutrality. Furthermore, as the diplomat-author Sir Thomas Barclay pointed out, the bellicosity developing out of Boulangism brought Britain and France into contention over colonial aims.[5] As a result of the intensified colonial rivalry Lord Salisbury attempted a limited entente with the Central Powers, a move that characterized British foreign policy during 1888. That same year British fear of a French invasion under Boulanger prompted a naval bill designed to bolster Her Majesty's defenses.

All this surely suggests that British reaction to Boulanger remains a subject well worth studying. My examination of the topic, by assessing the opinions of The Times, journals, diplomatic corps, and important individuals not necessarily in a journalistic or diplomatic position,

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1837-1937," The Spectator, no. 158 (April 23, 1937), 754-755; Raymond Mortimer, "Boulanger: A Hitler Who Failed," The New Statesman and Nation, XXIV (August 1, 1942), 78.

[4] André Siegfried, "Une Crise Ministérielle En 1887," Hommes Et Mondes, XI (April, 1950), 477-500; Jacques Piou, "Le Boulangisme," La Revue De Paris, II (March 15, 1932), 301-320; Duchesse d'Uzès, "Comment J'ai Connu Le Général Boulanger," Revue Des Deux Mondes, no. 49 (February 15, 1939), 820-830 are some examples.

[5] Sir Thomas Barclay, Thirty Years: Anglo-French Reminiscences (1876-1906) (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), pp. 91-92.

shows that the British became very touchy over Boulangism, to the point that they saw war with France looming before them. In fact, British-French hostility resulting from the jingoism of Boulangism was such that considerably less than a Fashoda incident would probably have been needed to have London envisioning war. In light of this state of affairs, the French foreign minister Théophile Delcassé's later policy of rapprochement with Britain seems all the more called for. As the historian Beckles Willson commented, "What would have happened to Anglo-French relations if he [Boulanger] had achieved supreme power can only be imagined."[6] Willson's analysis was paralleled by the words of George Peabody Gooch, the eminent historian, when he wrote to me that ". . . I do vividly remember the extreme interest which we in England took in Boulanger's career, and most of us, I think, had no desire whatever to see him Master of France as we were rather afraid of what he might do in foreign policy."[7]

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[6] Beckles Willson, The Paris Embassy: A Narrative of Franco-British Diplomatic Relations: 1814-1920 (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1927), p. 296.

[7] See below, Dr. G. P. Gooch, Buckinghamshire, England, letter, 14 Mar. 1967, to the author, p. 124.

CHAPTER I

THE BRITISH VIEW BOULANGER'S RISING STAR

The appointment of General Boulanger to the position of French war minister in January of 1886 aroused little concern among the British during the first half of that year. It was not until some months later that suspicion started to develop in Britain over his aims and British observers began to regard him as a threat to the security of both the French Third Republic and the peace of Europe. During the early months of the following year concern over the General intensified as his actions seemed to be leading in the direction of a Franco-German war. Although the guarded British consensus was that Boulanger would not actually lead France into war or overthrow the Republic, he, nevertheless, caused large-scale problems for the British foreign office in early 1887.

The reaction of the influential London Times to General Boulanger as a public figure preceded diplomatic response to him by several months. Although the British foreign office seemed unaware of the General until mid-May of 1886, The Times took notice of him--if only infrequently--during the opening months of the same year. Its cognizance of Boulanger on the eve of and at the time of his becoming France's minister of war was characterized first by incredulity and then condescension. In early January 1886, The Times, reporting the demise of the ministry of French premier Henri Brisson, discounted the rumored inclusion of Boulanger in the proposed cabinet of Charles de Freycinet.[1] The Times contended that,

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[1] Charles Louis de Saulses de Freycinet, known as "the white mouse," formed the tenth ministry under the leadership of President Grévy which replaced the Brisson cabinet. For Freycinet's opinions and reflections

in the light of Boulanger's behavior in Tunis, his appointment would be a slap at Italy and Paul Cambon.[2] When Boulanger's appointment became a reality nevertheless, The Times merely reported this fact.[3] A veiled reference to the General mentioned that several second-rate men had been chosen for the Freycinet cabinet,[4] and a more openly derogatory article stated that the new minister of war had somewhat played politics in bidding for his new position.[5]

From mid-January until early February, The Times made no further comment on Boulanger. Yet during this period he instigated numerous military reforms aimed at improving sanitary conditions, insuring quicker mobilization, increasing the troops' spirit of loyalty and pride, and in general making of the French army a more effective fighting force. In connection with the reforms, Boulanger on several occasions denounced conservative elements in the army for harboring reactionary sentiments.

These attacks did finally prompt an article and an editorial in The Times. On the whole, both now were favorable to Boulanger and upheld his

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on the Boulanger episode see his work, Souvenirs: 1878-1893 (Paris: C. Delagrave, 1913).

2 The Times (London), 5 Jan. 1886. (Hereinafter referred to as The Times.) While serving in charge of the French occupation of Tunis, Boulanger had on several occasions disagreed with the resident general there, Paul Cambon. See Henri Cambon, Paul Cambon: Ambassadeur de France 1843-1924 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1937), pp. 69-83; Paul Cambon, Correspondance: 1870-1924 (Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1940), I, 241-274. Both treatments are favorable to Cambon; for the other side of the story, see F. Turner, General Boulanger (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1889), pp. 71-84.

3 The Times, 6 Jan. 1886; 8 Jan. 1886.

4 Ibid., 9 Jan. 1886.

5 Ibid., 12 Jan. 1886.

action.[6] On February 11, The Times' French correspondent, Henri de Blowitz,[7] pointed out that Freycinet and Boulanger disagreed over the latter's army program and hinted that if Boulanger did not come to heel Freycinet would dismiss him.[8] His predictions proved wrong, for Boulanger continued his programs unopposed. The Times, therefore, made no major mention of him again until June 15. With no journals as yet carrying any comment on the General, with his being neglected by Mr. Punch, and with his receiving only infrequent mention in The Times, it seems safe to conclude that the British public at this time felt little interest in and no concern over his rise to prominence.

After mid-May, however, a chain of developments in Paris had the effect of bringing Boulanger closer to the center of British attention. The reception that the Count of Paris, pretender to the French throne, gave in honor of his daughter's marriage to the Crown Prince of Portugal turned into a great royalist demonstration. This event resulted in proposed parliamentary legislation for the expulsion from France of the royal princes (i. e., all heads of families that had once ruled France and their immediate heirs). From the time the legislation was proposed

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[6] Ibid., 2 Feb. 1886.

[7] Henri Georges Stephane Adolphe de Blowitz was born on December 28, 1832, and died January 18, 1903. He joined The Times in July, 1871, and while with it, he wrote more than 4,000 columns. In his position of French correspondent to The Times, he was recognized as one of the foremost of European journalists. He was personally acquainted with key European figures, and this acquaintance often gave him the knowledge of predicting European developments before they happened. (In any mention in this paper of the correspondent of The Times, the author will be referring to Blowitz.)

[8] The Times, 11 Feb. 1886.

until an Expulsion Law was actually passed on June 22, The Times carried numerous articles denouncing it.[9] Boulanger's name now appeared with more frequency, for he was reputed to be a proponent of the proposed legislation.

Until mid-June readers of The Times received only piecemeal information about Boulanger. Finally, on the 15th, they were formally introduced to him; in a highly favorable article entitled "General Boulanger," The Times' correspondent reported that he was certainly a man who would play an important role in any future developments of the Third Republic. The article applauded Boulanger's military career and gave a biographical résumé. It commented that Boulanger showed "an energetic and resolute will, and an ardent desire to accomplish something during his tenure of office which has been held by a rapid succession of Ministers."[10]

Another news medium, the journal, now began to notice Boulanger. Gabriel Monod,[11] probably the most objective observer of French affairs who contributed to a British journal,[12] mentioned Boulanger's army reforms

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[9] The Count of Paris left France for Britain after the passage of the Expulsion Law. See his telegram to Queen Victoria on June 25, 1886, in George Earle Buckle (ed.), The Letters of Queen Victoria, Ser. III (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930-1931), I, 151. An Austrian newspaper, Wiener Tageblatt, reported that Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales invited him to come.

[10] The Times, 15 June 1886.

[11] Gabriel Monod, although a regular contributor to The Contemporary Review, was not on the staff, nor was he in any way commissioned to write articles. See below, Dr. G. P. Gooch, Buckinghamshire, England, letter, 14 Mar. 1967, to the author, p.124. Furthermore, Monod's articles did not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Contemporary Review on French matters. See below, Arnold de Montmorency, Chairman, Contemporary Review Co. Ltd., London, letter, 28 Feb. 1967, to the author, p. 123.

[12] "General Boulanger," The Spectator, no. 59 (November 6, 1886), 1476.

and their desired aim of increasing military efficiency in his regular column in The Contemporary Review.[13]

Heretofore there had been no reason for any British alarmist reactions to Boulanger. His flurry of speeches and decrees, however, aimed at increasing his popularity, attracted more negatively critical notice. In The Times of July 1, the correspondent in speaking of this new activity reversed his position of mid-June; instead of eulogizing he denounced by reporting that

> General Boulanger has no fixed plan, that he likes to be conspicuous, that he is lacking in self-control, and that knowing how short-lived Ministries are, he is bent on exhausting all the sweets of office before a retirement which his own exuberant activity is likely to hasten.[14]

The remainder of July proved to be eventful for both the development of the Boulangist movement in France and The Times' reaction to its growth. On July 14, as ever, the French national holiday was celebrated. At the Longchamps review, Boulanger in full uniform and mounted on his handsome black horse, Tunis,[15] completely eclipsed any rival for popularity that he might have had. So hearty was the masses' endorsement of him, and so bountiful were the cries of "Vive Boulanger!," that this response plus the consecration of the occasion by the music-hall singer Paulus with a song, "En revenant de la revue,"[16] left no doubt that Boulanger had now

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13 Gabriel Monod, "Contemporary Life and Thought in France," The Contemporary Review, XLIX (June, 1886), 884.

14 The Times, 1 July 1886.

15 Tunis, like his master, quickly became a favorite of the people. Ironically, however, experts said that Tunis was actually a poor specimen of his breed.

16 Ernest Alfred Vizetelly comments in his book, Republican France:

stepped forward as the new champion of France and that he was followed by a large group of proselytes. Blowitz remarked that Boulanger was the hero of the hour and hinted that he might have his political sights set on something big.[17] A Times editorial, however, discounted this supposition and concluded that Boulanger's success resulted from merely his own energetic character and an aroused public interest.[18] These conflicting views in The Times suggest that there was no community of viewpoint on Boulanger's future. Lack of agreement was demonstrated further when Blowitz reversed his earlier position. Blowitz now asserted that the source of Boulanger's popularity was his pageantry, such as Tunis. Therefore, Blowitz concluded, Boulanger's star rested upon a mere vapor of emotionalism likely to disappear as quickly as it had appeared.[19]

In August, a situation arose which gave The Times yet another occasion to denounce Boulanger. Utilizing clause four of the Expulsion Law of June 22, 1886, which stated that "The members of the princely families who may be authorised to reside temporarily on the territory of the Republic, shall be excluded from all public functions,"[20] Boulanger removed the Duke d'Aumale, the uncle of the Count of Paris, from the army list.

1870-1912 (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1913), pp. 319-320, that "En revenant de la revue" while still popular in France was also utilized in Britain for commemorating Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Two lines of the song read

Then shout hooray
For Jubilation Day . . . .

17 The Times, 15 July 1886.

18 Ibid., 16 July 1886.

19 Ibid., 19 July 1886.

20 Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 296.

This action, accompanied by Boulanger's uttering some derogatory comments about the Duke, led the latter to publish several letters in early August which Boulanger had presumably written to him while he was the commander of the VIIth Army Corps. In these letters, Boulanger had gratefully and admiringly thanked the Duke for getting him promoted to the rank of general. The explanation for Boulanger's removing the Duke is simple; in predictable fashion the French minister of war in a republican government was attacking a monarchist even though he had previously kowtowed to him for an army promotion. Faced with the Duke's damaging charge, Boulanger immediately denied the authenticity of the letters. Failing in this attempt at self-exoneration, the General fell back on an age-old alibi; he next claimed that he remembered nothing about the letters. When his position became even more embarrassing, Boulanger chose to lapse into silence.

The Times, which had been highly critical of the Expulsion Law, seized upon this directly-connected incident as an opportunity to direct a barrage of sarcasm at Boulanger. The Times first ran merely a facsimile of the Duke d'Aumale's letter with an objective discussion of the facts concerning the controversy.[21] An editorial the next day, however, criticized Boulanger's apparently unscrupulous actions and asserted failure of memory.[22] A fortnight later, in a highly satirical article, the correspondent first dwelt upon Boulanger's gadfly antics and his inexhaustible supply of stratagems calculated to keep himself in the limelight.

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21 The Times, 2 Aug. 1886.

22 Ibid., 3 Aug. 1886.

He continued this tone by making a new reference to the Duke d'Aumale-Boulanger correspondence. Commenting on a recent pamphlet about Boulanger, the correspondent then gibed that it would not be surprising if the General himself had authorized the publication.[23]

Two significant articles appeared near the end of August, seemingly noteworthy in their confirmation that Blowitz and The Times editorials did not always agree over the political future of Boulanger. In The Times, Blowitz thus asserted that France was becoming increasingly weary of the present composition of the government but would continue to bear it up to a point, at which she would throw herself "into the arms of some charlatan who think [sic] that playing the part of a buffoon gives him a claim to be consecrated as a dictator."[24] (Blowitz's mention of a charlatan is, of course, a reference to Boulanger.) The second article, a Times editorial, expressed the contrary view, for it did not give the General even a hope: "There is no dangerous rival in the field. General Boulanger's letters [i. e., to the Duke d'Aumale] have extinguished the chance of that military demagogue . . . ."[25] In this difference of opinion between Blowitz and The Times over the prospects of Boulanger, certainly the newspaper erred the most, for, although the embarrassing episode of the Duke d'Aumale's letters had certainly not brightened Boulanger's chances with the Republicans, it had simultaneously not deterred any of Boulanger's following nor any of the large numbers of

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23 Ibid., 17 Aug. 1886.

24 Ibid., 24 Aug. 1886.

25 Ibid., 26 Aug. 1886.

adherents who were daily joining what promised to be the Boulanger bandwagon. As the historian Denis Brogan has remarked, "After all, Bonaparte himself had had no blind devotion to veracity."[26]

Until now, The Times had expressed varying views about the General; however, by the beginning of September 1886, it began to drop some of its sarcastic tone and lean toward a more serious and critical interpretation of Boulanger and his actions. A plausible explanation for this turnabout seems to be that The Times' predictions about the Boulanger bubble's being doomed to burst had failed to materialize--if anything, Boulanger's popularity had grown to even greater proportions. Another reason for the increased seriousness may well have been that Bismarck was becoming increasingly suspicious of the energetic French minister of war.

On September 17, while inspecting military maneuvers in the Bordeaux district, Boulanger congratulated his commanders on abandoning defensive in favor of offensive tactics. Although he was referring only to "sham fights," the correspondent of the French newspaper Soleil interpreted the General's statement as being bellicose, and for several days the question of whether it was intended to be a warlike proclamation or merely a reference to strategy became the central topic of the Paris press. The Times[27] covered the controversy in articles appearing in several issues, but presented only the facts of the matter.

October passed without any new Times reaction to Boulanger, but in

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[26] D. W. Brogan, France Under the Republic: The Development of Modern France, 1870-1939 (New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1940), p. 186.

[27] The Times, 18 Sept. 1886; 20 Sept. 1886; 21 Sept. 1886.

November there was increased journalistic response to him. Until November, no British journal save The Contemporary Review, with Gabriel Monod's article, had taken any notice of the General, and it had made only brief mention of his army reforms and had contained no direct comments on either his popularity or political prospects. In the opening days of November, however, Monod commented quite seriously on Boulanger in The Contemporary Review. He first quashed the ill-founded idea that The Times had expressed in its editorial of August 26, that the Duke d'Aumale's letters had destroyed Boulanger's popularity, averring that they had not impaired it. In fact, Monod speculated that the General had gained immense popularity with both the people and the army, for the people were glad to have again a hero and the army was glad to be again in the limelight. To Monod, Boulanger seemed no more comic. He pointed out Boulanger's supposed ability and stated that the man's military ambitions threatened the security and life of the French Republic. Attributing to the General the potential for establishing a military dictatorship and provoking a European war, Monod asserted that for France to retain her liberties she must deprecate foreign conflicts and eschew all thoughts of military glory.[28]

Another journal, The Spectator, applauded Monod's impartial treatment. It upheld his thesis that Boulanger's popularity had increased, and, furthermore, accepted Monod's reasons why it had increased. Of main importance, however, seems not the fact that The Spectator upheld Monod's contentions, but comment made in the journal about public opinion in

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[28] Gabriel Monod, "Contemporary Life and Thought in France," The Contemporary Review, L (November, 1886), 736-737.

Britain. It was stated that Britishers had probably underestimated Boulanger.[29] Furthermore, the article continued, they were mistaken about the consequences of the Duke d'Aumale intrigue, for "it was very generally believed in England that his [i. e., Boulanger's] career must necessarily be at an end."[30]

This article contains a printed evaluation of British reaction to Boulanger and seems significant in two related respects. First, as The Spectator pointed out, France and Britain were not in agreement that lying should necessarily result in the disgrace of the liar. Perhaps more noteworthy, however, is that The Spectator's report about the British generally believing Boulanger's career to be at an end shows how their opinion was then following the line taken by The Times. The Spectator's own opinion, on the other hand, was certainly not shaped by that of The Times because besides endorsing Monod's article it concluded by commenting that "General Boulanger is evidently not a man whom a Government like that of France will think it can safely throw aside."[31]

During the month, an incident occurred which, although seemingly unrelated to British reaction, gives deeper insight into The Times correspondent's opinion of the danger Boulanger posed to European peace. On November 10, Prince Chlodwig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst[32] in his

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[29] "General Boulanger," The Spectator, no. 59 (November 6, 1886), 1476.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 1477.

[32] Prince Hohenlohe served as German ambassador to France from 1874 to 1885. He then served in Strasbourg from 1885 to 1894 as governor of Alsace-Lorraine.

memoirs recorded what was in effect one informed German opinion on the serious situation that was developing in France. He noted that whereas Boulanger had previously needed a crutch to lean on he had now won over the masses and various elements were leaning on him. Prince Hohenlohe continued by remarking that Boulanger's popularity had reached such heights that it would be almost impossible for anyone to form a ministry without him. He further advanced the opinion that if Boulanger remained in office he would convince Frenchmen that he could regain Alsace-Lorraine and would lead France into war in 1888.[33] The Prince then made a revealing reference to Blowitz, who it develops shared his ideas on Boulanger:

> Blowitz and Villaume[34] share this opinion. Their utterances agreed. Blowitz added that if Germany considered war unavoidable she had only to let Boulanger have his way, and war would come in 1888. If, on the other hand, Germany did not want war, she must overthrow Boulanger.[35]

That Blowitz's idea of Germany's implementing the overthrow of Boulanger made a strong impression on Hohenlohe is revealed in another comment in the memoirs of the last named:

> I cannot venture upon a decision as to whether it is possible, by exposition of the consequences which will follow Boulanger's course of action, to enlighten public opinion in France as to the danger threatening the country and thus induce it to put pressure on the Chamber and bring about his fall. The commotion which such discussions would produce on the Stock Exchange, which is very sensitive

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[33] Friedrich Curtius (ed.), Memoirs of Prince Chlodwig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1906), II, 367.

[34] General Karl von Villaume served as the German Emperor's military plenipotentiary to St. Petersburg from 1887 to 1893.

[35] Curtius, Memoirs of Prince Chlodwig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst, II, 367.

> to the action of French politicians, might perhaps produce a favourable effect.[36]

Blowitz's plan seems quite important in view of the fact that this course of action became the ultimate German approach in later months. It is certainly not inconceivable that Hohenlohe relayed Blowitz's plan to the German government. Here, quite possibly, is an instance of the far-reaching effects of British reaction to Boulanger.

Hohenlohe's account of Blowitz's opinion received substantiation by an article which appeared in The Times of November 15. In it Blowitz alleged that Boulanger's pacifistic speech made before the Gymnastic Societies on November 14 did not ring true. He continued by asserting that European consensus had the General wanting to go to war in the near future but being deterred by the fact that France did not want to take up arms. According to Blowitz, the real question was whether Boulanger would lead France to victory or oblivion in the event of war.[37]

On December 3, the Freycinet ministry fell. The problem of Boulanger remained, however, since the General retained his position as minister of war in the new ministry formed by René Goblet. If the British public had been reluctant to accept the idea that the Duke d'Aumale's letters had not killed the political chances of Boulanger, they were certainly not reluctant to accept the idea now that his activities were leading directly into a Franco-German war. During December and the following months, several British newspapers teemed with articles about the present state of Europe and of the supposedly inevitable

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[36] Ibid., 368.

[37] The Times, 15 Nov. 1886.

conflict.[38] No more than The Times did the British public any longer see Boulanger as a comedian. With a war-scare developing, Britain now faced a situation of military unpreparedness. An example of the articles that appeared in the country's press is an anonymous piece carried by The Contemporary Review. The author after denouncing the inefficiency of the British army wrote, "If, then, England desires to speak with some authority in the great crisis which is approaching with no certain steps, her forces, such as they are, must be conspicuous by their fitness in every particular."[39]

As 1887 opened, an obtrusive question in international affairs was still whether the troublesome French war minister would lead France into another conflict with Germany during the year. On January 1, Blowitz's column in The Times maintained that one of France's biggest mistakes in 1886 was her arousing of German suspicions. Boulanger had actually hurt the army, for by letting politics slip in he had destroyed its solidarity. Nevertheless, Blowitz forecast peace for 1887,[40] a prediction in keeping with the conversation with Hohenlohe in which he had forseen war for 1888 if Boulanger remained in power.

It is entirely possible that, during January, Blowitz on his own accord tried to instigate the overthrow of Boulanger. In The Times, Blowitz defended himself against a charge made by Henri Rochefort, a follower of Boulanger, accusing him, Blowitz, of going on behalf of

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[38] For examples of such reports other than those in The Times, see below, pp. 18, 19, 31.

[39] "The Army," The Contemporary Review, L (December, 1886), 775.

[40] The Times, 1 Jan. 1887.

Jules Ferry[41] to see Edouard Lockroy, minister of commerce in the Goblet ministry and supporter of Boulanger, to offer Lockroy a future political prize if he would abandon Boulanger. In The Times article, Blowitz maintained that in his visit to Lockroy their conversation concerned only the 1889 Exhibition and contained no mention of Boulanger.[42] Rochefort, an avid supporter of Boulanger and editor of the newspaper L'Intransigeant, contended, however, that Blowitz did go to Lockroy and said in substance that

> The opportunists and the Right have decided to shelve General Boulanger. You will consequently do wrong if you continue to identify yourself with a man who is henceforth lost. Abandon him to his unfortunate fate, and I think I am in a position to assure you that you will come out all right.[43]

According to Rochefort, Blowitz was planning to make a similar call on Granet, minister of posts and supporter of Boulanger, until his, Rochefort's, revelations ended the idea of such a visit.[44]

Between January and June of 1887, several articles appeared in The Fortnightly Review under the general heading of "The Present Position of European Politics." These pieces dealing with the political situation in individual European countries were republished during the same year in a book also bearing the title just quoted. They were written by the

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[41] Jules Ferry was a retired French politician who had headed or served in several French ministries. Although still being quite influential, he had lost much favor over his colonial policy.

[42] The Times, 25 Jan. 1887.

[43] Henri Rochefort, The Adventures of My Life, trans. Henri Rochefort and Ernest W. Smith, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Edward Arnold, 1897), II, 304.

[44] Ibid. Judging from Blowitz's career, Rochefort's charge may very well have been true because Blowitz was not opposed to making news.

eminent British foreign observer, Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke,[45] credited with being an unofficial spokesman for the British foreign office.[46] That Dilke's opinions were respected in influential circles stands out from an editorial which appeared in The Times on January 1, at the advent of the article series. After rehashing the contents of Dilke's first article concerning Germany, The Times applauded the effort and expressed agreement with the majority of the conclusions.[47] Dilke's article about France in essence held that an imminent war with Germany was highly unlikely because both powers had reached the point where they were too strong for each other.[48] Furthermore, Dilke reasoned, France as a whole did not want war, for she did not have any allies in Europe because of the irrational policy of her foreign office. He felt that the only Frenchman who posed a threat to the European peace was Boulanger and that he was not really an instigator. As for the German military buildup, Dilke contended that it was a reaction not to the bellicose mood of France, but to the discovery of the weakness of the Austrian army and the complacency within the German forces. As for Britain's position, Dilke attempted to summarize it by noting that, although war

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[45] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke served in the British foreign office in 1880, was a world traveler, and knew all the influential French politicians. He was thereby able to become a leading authority on foreign affairs.

[46] "A Plea for Peace," The Edinburgh Review, CLXVI (October, 1887), 561.

[47] The Times, 1 Jan. 1887.

[48] Dilke's article about France appeared in The Fortnightly Review, XLI (February 1, 1887), 161-195. I have, however, drawn the article from the complete book, Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, The Present Position of European Politics (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1887).

was not as imminent for Britain as for continental Europe, she would fare much better in a long rather than a short conflict.[49]

Dilke also offered an assessment of Boulanger's popularity. He felt that none of the various incidents had hurt his popular standing, but that without a war the General's acclaim could rise no higher. In fact, without something like a war, Dilke prophesied, Boulanger would be forgotten in a few years.[50] At the present time, however, Dilke saw him as the uncontested man of the hour:

> I shall be disbelieved when I state simply that his personal popularity in France is greater than that enjoyed by any man since Napoleon was at the height of his power, with the possible exception of Lafayette at the moment of the Revolution of 1830. . . .So popular is he with the private soldiers and, generally speaking, with the majority of the electors, that it may be said that, in comparison with him, no one else in France, with the doubtful exception of old M. Lesseps, is popular at all.[51]

In spite of Boulanger's popularity, Dilke believed that barring the outbreak of war the General was innocuous as a threat to the Republic. He could not be elected president because in the houses of parliament, which decided this matter, he had insufficient support. His control over the army was jeopardized by the frequent ministerial changes. If he attempted to gain political control by suppressing civil disturbances, he would destroy much of his popularity. If war were to erupt, on the other hand, France would turn to her best general and would allow him to establish a virtual dictatorship.[52]

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[49] Dilke, The Present Position of European Politics, pp. 32, 40, 57, 74-75, 84-85, 58, 60, 36, 14.

[50] Ibid., pp. 58, 66, 69.

[51] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[52] Ibid., pp. 66-67, 38, 68, 65.

Possibly Dilke's conclusions were calculated to ease the apprehensions of at least some Britishers who felt that a Franco-German war was imminent and that Boulanger was on the verge of a coup d'etat, but other news articles certainly were not. These disagreed completely with Dilke's opinions about the improbability of Boulanger's precipitating a war. The Daily News continually represented "General Boulanger as constituting the sole peril to the peace of Europe."[53]

Blowitz, however, in his articles for The Times upheld the contentions of Dilke. In reaction to an article entitled "Under the Edge of the Knife," which appeared in the Berlin Post, and which characterized Boulanger as the master of the situation in France, Blowitz challenged such reasoning by pointing out that France wanted peace and that Boulanger would probably have been overthrown already had not Bismarck and the German press so clearly alluded to him and thereby stirred the national pride of the French so that they would not allow his overthrow.[54] Here Blowitz seems to be rejecting the very policy that he had recommended to Hohenlohe the previous November. In fact, he became completely explicit about his new position: "The obligation of France towards General Boulanger is the result of the German attacks on him."[55] That Blowitz's ideas on the peaceful intentions of France did not seem to be accepted completely by his own newspaper is borne out by an editorial which appeared in The Times on February 18. The editorial warned that

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[53] Rochefort, The Adventures of My Life, II, 305, quoting from The Daily News.

[54] The Times, 2 Feb. 1887.

[55] Ibid., 4 Feb. 1887.

war might break out any day, as both France and Germany were "armed to the teeth."[56] Although a war-scare was evident, opinion obviously was not in agreement over whether or not the scare was justified.

Frederic Harrison, another observer of foreign developments, commented on the situation in a February letter to the Pall Mall Gazette. In this letter, entitled "Peace or War?," Harrison showed himself in basic agreement with Dilke that France did not want war: "My distinct impression, gathered from press, conversation, and all that goes on around, is this--that people in France are no more desiring war, expecting war, thinking of war, than are people in England."[57] As to Boulanger's popularity, Harrison did not credit it with having reached the proportions that Dilke attributed to it: "And to suppose that this lucky and adroit soldier is at present the master of Chamber, Cabinet, Senate, President, Army, Press, and thirty-seven millions of Frenchmen seems to me mere midsummer madness."[58] Here Harrison's thinking appears closely akin to Blowitz's. As to the possibility of a Franco-German war, Harrison hesitated to speculate, but did believe that if one occurred it would have to be forced on France. It is noteworthy that Harrison, reflecting on this letter when he republished it in 1915, commented that

> It was the time of the Boulanger excitement, when Bismarck was trying to convince his own country and ours that France was preparing for a revanche under a new Napoleon. Nothing more ridiculously untrue was put forward even by the German reptile Press even in this year of war with us.[59]

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[56] Ibid., 18 Feb. 1887.

[57] Frederic Harrison, The German Peril (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1915), p. 60.

[58] Ibid., p. 67.

[59] Ibid., p. 58.

During the month of March, journalistic speculation about Boulanger continued. In The Contemporary Review, Gabriel Monod upheld the observations of Dilke and Harrison. On the question of the likelihood of a Franco-German war, Monod pointed out that it was improbable because France did not want war and Germany would not attack. He then attacked some British journals which, as he wrote, had been "manufacturing all sorts of imaginary news as to the warlike intentions and military preparations of the two countries."[60] Although Monod felt that war was improbable, he did not feel that it was impossible, and he again denounced foreign journals for worsening the situation by their own European brand of yellow journalism. He then belittled the alarmist notions of newspapers like The Daily News by stating that such talk was pure hypothesis, and that if it contained a grain of truth the French government would immediately dismiss Boulanger.[61]

Another influential journal, The Nineteenth Century, now took notice of the General in an article by the Frenchman Joseph Reinach. He expressed astonishment at the ignorance of British opinion on the Boulanger question and went on to attack the notion that Boulanger enjoyed tremendous popular esteem. Reinach's attack obviously was aimed at Dilke's portrayal of Boulanger's popularity. Reinach contended that, true, Boulanger enjoyed popular standing, but that the popularity was of

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60 Gabriel Monod, "Contemporary Life and Thought in France," The Contemporary Review, LI (March, 1887), 434.

61 Ibid., 434-435.

an inferior quality. It was, in fact, really notoriety, not popularity at all. That Boulanger would ever play a political part in the French Republic seemed out of the question to Reinach; he felt that only the criticism copiously provided by Bismarck had kept Boulanger in office so long. It seems worth noting that in this article Reinach went further to say that sensationalism (i. e., the circus horse) first brought Boulanger into the limelight, an opinion which coincided with the view of Blowitz in The Times of July 19, 1886.[62]

If, as seems evident from the preceding article, Reinach did not expect war, The Times of March 18 also took that standpoint. Blowitz, writing for the newspaper, mentioned that Boulanger had a compulsive desire to advertise himself continually and asserted further that "The problem is, whether he simply aims at temporary notoriety, or whether he has a plan marked out before him and an intended goal."[63] The next day Blowitz went so far as to pooh-pooh the idea that Boulanger did have any master plan, writing that there was no need for concern, as Boulanger was in no way a Cromwell. He continued by speculating that once Boulanger fell from power he would lose the support of the army, and finally advanced the thought that when the existing ministry fell Boulanger would be shelved.[64]

April proved to be a turbulent month in the development of an already confused situation. An article in The Nineteenth Century,

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[62] Joseph Reinach, "The True Position of French Politics," The Nineteenth Century, XXI (March, 1887), 340-350.

[63] The Times, 18 Mar. 1887.

[64] Ibid., 19 Mar. 1887.

written by Edward Dicey, offered a revolutionary approach to the situation. Appearing in such an established and respectable journal, Dicey's views quite probably caused some concern among the British public. Dicey first asserted that the real danger to the peace of Europe was France, because France unlike any other country would make war merely for the purpose of restoring her lost prestige.[65] As he stated, "A country, too, in which a Boulanger is a possibility, and in which every general may look to a dictatorship as the reward of a successful campaign, cannot but constitute a source of permanent danger to the interests of peace."[66] Taking a different approach, Dicey contended that, since a successful war of revenge was out of the question, "France can only recover her prestige at the cost of some other power; and the power which presents most opportunities of attack, and is least likely to have on her side the sympathies of Europe, is undoubtedly England."[67]

In late April, the Schnaebelé incident brought Franco-German tensions to a crisis. On April 20, Schnaebelé, a French frontier agent, was arrested by German authorities after crossing the border. Schnaebelé had been invited by German officials to step onto German soil to discuss certain regulations concerning the frontier, and thus his arrest seemed tantamount to a direct German provocation. For several days France and Germany lingered on the brink of war, but, on April 30, Schnaebelé was released and tranquility restored. During the crisis, The Times

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65 Edward Dicey, "England and Europe," The Nineteenth Century, XXI (April, 1887), 551-553.

66 Ibid., 553.

67 Ibid., 557.

refrained from any editorial comment.

In the light of Boulanger's past conduct, the British public probably found it hard to understand why he was allowed to continue as minister of war. His dismissal or retention, however, both seemingly presented definite problems. An editorial in The Times during May informed its readers of this predicament. After pointing out that no French politician was brave enough to form a ministry without Boulanger but that no one actually wanted him in his cabinet, The Times editorial summed up the situation: "'To put it plainly,' said our Paris Correspondent yesterday, 'many persons of all parties fear that his retention in a new Cabinet may be regarded abroad as a provocation and at home as a dictatorship.'"[68] On May 17, the Goblet ministry fell, ostensibly over the budget, and as The Times reported the next day the question of Boulanger now had to be answered. In his article, Blowitz pointed out that a proposed Freycinet cabinet without Boulanger would mean peace--one with Boulanger would mean war. A Clemenceau cabinet with Boulanger would mean war, but war deliberately entered into, not irresponsible war, as would result from the Freycinet ministry with Boulanger.[69] The matter was settled on May 30, when Maurice Rouvier formed a ministry without Boulanger. In effect and conceivably literally, Blowitz's advice to Hohenlohe the previous November had been put into practice and had achieved the desired result.[70]

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[68] The Times, 17 May 1887.

[69] Ibid., 18 May 1887.

[70] See above, pp. 12-13.

Opinion differed as to the meaning of Boulanger's departure from political office. To some commentators it appeared that he was finished. In The Times, Blowitz favored such an assumption. He also maintained that Boulanger had been the tool of others and, with an unwonted display of graciousness, added that the General was leaving his position with great dignity and modesty. Besides France's having been saved from war and dictatorship, the development meant that he could now assume the position of a trustworthy and loyal soldier.[71] An editorial in The Times did not, however, paint nearly such a rosy picture: it contended that a man such as Boulanger would not likely fade into insignificance.[72] Perhaps Punch, the British magazine of humor and satire, summed up this point of view best. Under a cartoon of Boulanger (see next page) standing on the names of the new Rouvier ministry appeared the words, "'A time will come!'"[73]

Because of continued Boulangist rallies and other demonstrations, it seemed best to French authorities that Boulanger should be removed from Paris before the national holiday of July 14, in order that a repeat of the 1886 performance would not occur. In keeping with this plan, General Ferron, Boulanger's successor as minister of war, assigned Boulanger to command of the remote Thirteenth Army Corps at Clermont-Ferrand, with orders that he should have departed Paris by July 8. Blowitz's article in The Times concerning this development pointed out

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71 The Times, 1 June 1887.

72 Ibid.

73 "Not In The Cast Of The Piece," Punch, no. 92 (June 11, 1887), 287.

NOT IN THE CAST OF THE PIECE.

B-l-ng-r. "AHA! THEY HAVE NOT GIVEN ME A PART! NO MATTER! A TIME WILL COME!"

Punch, June 11, 1887.

that Boulanger and his friends would have liked him to stay over until the 14th, so that they could stage another demonstration in his favor, but "General Ferron, however, has saved him from making himself ridiculous."[74] On July 8, the General left Paris from the Lyons railway station (to the accompaniment of passionate cheers and demonstrations) for what the Republicans hoped would be a St. Helena for him and his movement.

The preceding commentary has discussed British reaction (as expressed in The Times and various journals) to the Boulanger episode, from the General's becoming minister of war in January 1886, until his removal to Clermont-Ferrand in early July 1887. Although disagreement over Boulanger's aims and prospects existed among the media during this period, enough consensus prevailed to mark several phases of evolution in their assessment of the General. Even though The Times noticed Boulanger first, they did not fully realize his ambition and potential until mid-June. Afterwards they generally reacted to him with sarcasm, especially in relation to the Duke d'Aumale's letters; however, both The Times and its correspondent often showed inconsistencies in their treatment of the General and disagreements over his future prospects. The later months of the year, however, exemplified an increased response to Boulanger, a more cautious evaluation of him, a fuller realization of his supposedly dangerous ambitions, and a fear that his actions might provoke a Franco-German war. Concern over these important issues resulted in greater harmony of opinion during the early months of 1887, although

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[74] The Times, 2 July 1887.

as before, there were some dissenting voices. The Times, Blowitz, Dilke, Harrison, Reinach, Monod, and others, however, all seemed in basic agreement that a Franco-German war provoked by Boulanger was not imminent, that the French preferred peace to war, and that Boulanger did not constitute a threat to the security of the Republic. Disagreement within this majority arose over secondary issues like the extent of Boulanger's popularity. By late March, Blowitz had forseen that Boulanger would probably be overthrown with the fall of the incumbent ministry. The materialization of this prediction and the subsequent dismissal of the minister occasioned the press and journals to pass through their last phase of reaction to the Boulanger phenomenon during this period. Blowitz believed Boulanger's dismissal would finish him, while others, his own paper included, disagreed.

Another important index to British reaction to Boulanger is the response of the British foreign office. In many cases, the evolution of diplomatic assessment paralleled that of The Times and journals; however, diplomatic judgments generally preceded those of the press and, furthermore, reflected greater insight with less disagreement.

The British foreign office, like The Times and journals, took little notice of the new minister of war until after May 15, 1886. It was in connection with British reaction to the projected parliamentary measure for the expulsion from France of the royal princes[75] that Boulanger first came to be mentioned in the correspondence of the Paris embassy. A letter of May 25 from Lord Lyons[76] (the Queen's ambassador

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[75] See above, pp. 3-4.

[76] Lord Lyons was recognized as one of the most able of the British

to France) to Lord Rosebery[77] (the British foreign secretary) echoed The Times' contention of late May and June that the expulsion of the princes seemed unjustifiable. Lyons had, however, perceived something The Times had missed; he noted that by now Boulanger, through his army reforms and his publicity in the French news, had gained popularity not only with the army, but also with the civilian masses:

> Much anxiety is felt respecting Boulanger's goings on with respect to the army. He seems to think of nothing but currying favour with the lowest ranks in the service, and with the mob outside. It is believed by many people that he would not act vigorously, as Minister of War, against any disturbances, but would try to turn them to account and set up for himself as dictator or what not.[78]

During June, Lyons was silent on the subject of Boulanger, but as previously mentioned, The Times favorably introduced the General to the British public through the agency of Henri de Blowitz. A comparison of his article with the Lyons letter to Rosebery shows that the British ambassador to France and The Times' correspondent had divergent opinions about the direction in which Boulanger was moving. Lyons believed Boulanger to be an opportunist motivated by self-interest while Blowitz thought him sincere in his efforts to effect constructive measures.

An even more negative note was sounded in a letter written by Lyons to Rosebery on July 2. Lyons first alluded to Boulanger's attempts to gain popularity, but then noted that "From the way people talk, one would

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ambassadors. He served as ambassador to Paris from July, 1867, until he resigned November, 1887.

77 Archibald John Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, served as foreign secretary in the third Gladstone administration, which came to power in early 1886 and lasted until August of that year.

78 Thomas W. L. (Lord) Newton, Lord Lyons: A Record of British Diplomacy (London: Edward Arnold, 1913), II, 365.

think that the questions were whether Boulanger is aiming at being a Cromwell or a Monk, and if a Monk, which dynasty he will take up."[79] Lyons' language then became flippant as he mentioned the possibility of a Franco-German war and concluded with the thought that "Then the Republic here has lasted sixteen years, and that is about the time it takes to make the French tired of a form of Government."[80] Lyons' reference to a Franco-German war was undoubtedly connected with Boulanger; for, since becoming minister of war, the General had been in contact with Paul Déroulède and his League of Patriots, an organization which occupied itself with bellicose proclamations generally concerned with the regaining of Alsace-Lorraine. This association plus a revival of French militarism spurred along by Boulanger had not gone unnoticed by Bismarck, who became more alarmed by it in later months.

Whereas Boulanger's rise to the status of popular hero at the French national holiday of July 14 brought immediate comment from The Times, the foreign office received no correspondence from its Paris embassy on this occasion of Boulanger's increase in popularity. Perhaps the only clue to the reaction of the Paris embassy is one given by Lord Newton in his biography of Lyons. Newton, who served with Lyons' staff from 1881 to 1886, seemingly agreed with a Times article of July 19 by Blowitz that asserted that Boulanger's increased popularity was attributable to his pageantry. Like Blowitz, Newton contended that for the General "The circus horse had done the trick."[81]

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[79] Ibid., 367.

[80] Ibid., 368.

[81] Ibid., 370.

An incident in September drew the attention of the British foreign office to Boulanger. On September 17, in a reference made only to "sham fights,"[82] Boulanger heartily encouraged his commanders on maneuvers in the Bordeaux district to continue to pursue offensive tactics rather than defensive tactics. A controversy quickly developed among the Paris newspapers over whether or not this remark was intended to be bellicose. The incident, however, received even more attention in Berlin, as Bismarck had for several months been fearing the spirit of revanche that was developing around Boulanger. In an interview on September 23 with Randolph Churchill, then a member of the House of Commons, Count Hatzfeldt, the German ambassador to Britain, upheld this view by declaring that "Our eyes are riveted on France."[83] He seemed interested, furthermore, in the possibility of British assistance in case of a Franco-German conflagration.[84] Lord Salisbury,[85] the new prime minister, also was aware of Bismarck's apprehensions, and in a letter to Queen Victoria in late September mentioned the possibility that the German chancellor might be trying to preoccupy the other Great Powers with a crisis in the Near East while Germany would be left alone to deal with the new French threat.[86]

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82 See above, p. 9.

83 Winston Spencer Churchill, Lord Randolph Churchill (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1906), II, 158.

84 Ibid., 159.

85 Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquis of Salisbury, became prime minister in August 1886 with the fall of the third Gladstone administration.

86 Lady Gwendolen Cecil, Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932), IV, 9.

In Britain, fear of a Franco-German war now began to develop, nourished by such newspaper and journal articles as have been described above; the Paris embassy, however, seemed less apprehensive than the press even when Bismarck placed before the Reichstag a bill allowing for a sizeable increase in the German army.[87] That the Paris embassy was not yet ready to accept the gravity of the new developments seems indicated in a letter of December 21 from Lyons to Lord Iddesleigh,[88] although the ambassador does not seem to have completely discounted their significance either:

> I do not see any outward signs here of the strained relations between France and Germany and the imminent war between the two countries which the Standard announces. But it is true that among the French themselves some suspicion and distrust of Boulanger's aims are becoming more apparent.[89]

As the year 1887 opened, the question looming most in foreign affairs was whether the apparently bellicose French minister of war would lead his country into a Franco-German war. Thanks to reports coming from Germany, the foreign office did not reflect the cool attitude expressed by The Times. On January 12, the Reichstag rejected Bismarck's army bill. He promptly dissolved the assembly and proclaimed his determination to secure the passage of the measure because there was a threat to Germany and that threat was Boulanger.[90] The German press, which had

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87 Ibid., 13.

88 Lord Iddesleigh had replaced Rosebery as foreign secretary with the fall of the third Gladstone administration in August, 1886.

89 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 382. The Standard was a British newspaper. It was often referred to as the unofficial mouthpiece of the British foreign office.

90 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 14. A. J. P. Taylor points out that

reacted midly to Boulanger over the preceding months, now at the beckoning of Bismarck released a flurry of journalistic comment concerning the putatively bellicose intentions of the French war minister. It appeared that Hohenlohe's superiors were heeding the advice Hlowitz had given him about Germany's engineering the overthrow of Boulanger.

As Lord Salisbury assumed the position of foreign secretary on January 12,[91] he found himself confronted with news from nearly all well-informed quarters of an imminent war between France and Germany. Fluctuations in the stock markets gave further credibility to this belief that Europe faced a "war-cloud on the Rhine."[92] Paradoxically, Salisbury himself saw more than enough evidence seeming to show that the typical Frenchman still opposed such a war. So strongly did he believe in the peaceful intentions of the French, in fact, that at times he suspected Bismarck of deliberately manufacturing a "scare" in order to create an atmosphere conducive to an unprovoked attack on France should conditions in Europe prove favorable for such an enterprise. Yet on some occasions he feared that the vacillating nature of French popular

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Bismarck's reasons for introducing the army bill were political in that he knew his opposition would reject it. Bismarck could then dissolve the Reichstag and call for general elections in the hope that the electors would turn out his opponents and elect new representatives who would politically support him. See A. J. P. Taylor, Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 221-225. William Langer, however, although acknowledging Bismarck's domestic problem, feels that he was genuinely concerned over the dangers Boulanger posed and thus his army bill was primarily militarily motivated with the purpose of insuring peace. See William L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments 1871-1890, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), pp. 378-383.

[91] Lord Salisbury assumed the position of foreign secretary on January 12 because of the death of Lord Iddesleigh. He also continued to serve as prime minister.

[92] Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 71.

sentiment would strengthen Bismarck's power to convince the Reichstag of the necessity of increasing the German army.[93]

While Bismarck continued his sabre-rattling, Salisbury continued to find evidence that the French nation did not desire war, but he also continued to be alarmed at the possibility of Germany's provoking war with France. On January 18, Lyons for one thing wrote him that France did not want war. According to Lyons, the biggest concern of France was that Germany would attack her--an alarm which he did not share.[94] That the situation began to tighten even more was demonstrated in a conversation between Hohenlohe and Bismarck that was reported by the former:

> Bismarck thinks it likely that war will break out at no distant date. He says that Boulanger may make a coup d'etat at any moment, and then cause a rupture, while the concentration of troops on the frontier and the mobilization oblige us to take similar measures. At the Foreign Office I learned that a despatch had been sent to Paris calling attention to the results which this action on the frontier would produce. Things are becoming more serious.[95]

The effect of this new development quickly made itself felt in London, as stands out from a private letter from Lyons which Salisbury transmitted to Queen Victoria on January 24:

> Private.--There is great alarm here. A person entirely in Prince Bismarck's confidence writes that the Prince declares he must go to war forthwith if France continues her warlike preparations. Fears are felt that Germany will declare war, if Boulanger remains in

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93 Ibid., 13.

94 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 383-384.

95 Curtius, Memoirs of Prince Chlodwig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst, II, 371.

> office; and that, if the French Government try to dismiss him, he may attempt a coup d'etat.[96]

Victoria replied to Salisbury on the same day, requesting that he should extract from Germany and France a declaration that they were not going to make war on each other.[97] That afternoon, Salisbury received a visit from the German ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt. Hatzfeldt told Salisbury that war was quickly looming although Germany had no desire to engage in one, and he pressed the foreign secretary for a mutual understanding whereby Britain would discourage France from aggression against Germany while the latter discouraged France from acting against Britain. Hatzfeldt further commented about the supposed gross ignorance of the impending tragedy on the part of British public opinion.[98] Evidently the foreign secretary's conversation alerted him to the possibility of a European war, for later in the day he wrote Victoria that, since Britain did not have the power to restrain either France or Germany, "The prospect is very gloomy abroad. . . ."[99]

Yet Salisbury was still somewhat skeptical that a Franco-German war would come about; in a letter of January 26 to Sir Augustus Paget, the British ambassador at Vienna, he commented upon what to him was the almost unbelievable paradox of Germany's increased armament while there was little basis for such warlike speculations. On the same day, in a letter to Sir William White, the British ambassador at Constantinople,

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96 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 261-262.

97 Ibid., 262.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid., 263.

Salisbury reiterated his qualms and added that Bismarck's pose might be "one big electioneering shave."[100]

Near the end of January, Victoria revealed her concern about the situation. She forwarded to Salisbury a letter from the German Crown Prince Frederick, her son-in-law, in which he reiterated Bismarck's anticipation of war and predicted that another ministerial crisis in France was pending, a crisis which could only result in Boulanger's being chosen minister-president. "The Chancellor hoped," the Prince wrote, "that England and Italy would come to such an understanding as would enable them to make a joint naval demonstration on the coast of France."[101] On the strength of this letter, Victoria asked Salisbury on January 26 if he could not get a statement from both the French and German governments of the reason or reasons both governments had for going to war. This request was tantamount to asking that Salisbury suggest the respective governments agree to a cooling-off period. Salisbury for some reason did not comply with Victoria's wishes, conceivably not thinking her suspicions to be warranted. He was not, however, allowed to forget his instructions, as the Queen again called them to his attention on January 31. This time he complied with the wishes of his sovereign.[102]

The concern of Victoria and Salisbury over the possibility of a Franco-German war seems quite understandable. Such a war would have

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100 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 16.

101 Ibid., 17-18.

102 Ibid., 18-19.

proven particularly embarrassing for Britain at this time because it would have meant the defeat of two aims of British foreign policy--maintaining the balance of power between the several great continental states and preventing Belgium from passing permanently into the hands of the strongest continental power.[103]

Salisbury, nevertheless, appeared no more convinced of the actual inevitability of a Franco-German conflagration in February than he had been in January. New developments, however, put his coolness in the whole matter to hard tests. On January 30, he had reported to Victoria Germany's exceedingly clear intentions that, as long as French developments threatened her, Britain could expect no help from the Reich in warding off any Russian advances against Constantinople or the Straights.[104] Certainly this development was not beneficial to British foreign policy. At the same time, British and French colonial policies were coming into conflict, and in reference to this friction Salisbury wrote Lyons in early February that the French policy of making enemies in light of the present circumstances was completely unexplainable. That the prime minister was growing extremely impatient with the problems developing out of the Franco-German war scare found further reflection in the closing sentence of the letter: "It is very difficult to prevent oneself from wishing for another Franco-German war to put a stop to this incessant vexation."[105]

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103 Alfred Francis Pribram, England And The International Policy Of The European Great Powers: 1871-1914 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1931), pp. 1-3.

104 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 265.

105 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 306.

Bismarck's attacks against the ostensibly warlike attitude of Boulanger continued. It seems reasonable to suppose that whenever possible Germany slanted some of her propaganda against Boulanger toward important Britishers in order to convince them that Boulanger, not Germany, was responsible for the whole scare. An example of such an approach appears in the form of a letter written by Herbert Bismarck, the chancellor's eldest son, to Lord Rosebery on February 9. After discussing the peaceful intentions of the men who supposedly really ruled France, Herbert Bismarck continued:

> "So there is no danger from that side but only from Boulanger's. Nobody can foresee if this dangerous snub will soon be entrusted with the presidency of the cabinet or even of the republic--and when he holds that post he will be eternally ridiculous if he does not go to war at once; he is mad with ambition and vanity, and since there is no doubt that they arm a good deal in France we must be on the lookout.[106]

Salisbury may have felt a momentary relief upon receipt of a letter from Lyons on February 18. The latter stated that the French now believed war would be averted. He went on to say that he did not know this assumption to be based on any concrete information, but the feeling was that the Goblet ministry would soon fall, and thus a new government would be able to shelve Boulanger.[107] But any relief the Lyons letter may have occasioned was short-lived; the persisting threat of a Franco-German war continued to cause Britain problems in her foreign policy. In an answering letter to Lyons, Salisbury wrote that before certain decisions

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106 Walter Bussmann (ed.), Staatssekretär Graf Herbert von Bismarck: aus seiner politischen Privatkorrespondenz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), p. 425.

107 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 387.

were made he wanted "to know what is going to happen in Europe."[108] Thus Lyons again sought to reassure him: "The general feeling here seems to be that war has been escaped . . . ."[109] The British foreign office was alert to the possibility of the war minister's being discarded by means of a fall of the incumbent Goblet ministry, and, on March 8, Lyons again wrote to Salisbury that the chances of the Goblet ministry's remaining in power seemed very poor.[110] On the subject of Boulanger, he wrote that

> It is apprehended that unless the prestige of Boulanger is put on high again by strong language from Germany, there will be no difficulty in obtaining, as a matter of course, his fall, with the rest of the Cabinet of which he is a part. M. Grévy is believed to be very anxious to be rid of him.[111]

Yet Salisbury was now suddenly as reluctant to accept this new optimism after the several months of warlike talk as he had been in the beginning to accept the possibility of war. When Lyons wrote to Salisbury asking about his [Lyons'] retirement, which he hoped would become effective at the end of April, the prime minister replied on March 26 that he wished Lyons would stay on until December because a change in ambassadors might add an "element of danger" to the precarious European situation. Lyons duly agreed to remain as ambassador.[112]

April also brought events which caused concern at the foreign office.

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108 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 40.

109 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 389.

110 Ibid., 392.

111 Ibid., 393.

112 Ibid., 394-397.

On the 4th, Salisbury wrote to Victoria that, from conversations that he had had with Hatzfeldt and from other various indications, he believed Bismarck did want a war with France, but since Bismarck had been informed that Russia would not stand by and allow a repeat of the 1870 performance,[113] he had tried to preoccupy Russia by urging her to move in the direction of the Balkans, hoping that Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Italy would thwart this move.[114] Salisbury repeated his opinion in a letter to Sir William White the next day:

> The present aspect of European affairs is rather puzzling. The best explanation I can offer is that Bismarck has tried to induce Russia to sit still, or take a bribe, while France is being crushed, and that Russia has declined. Next, he has tried to get Russia involved in the Balkan Peninsula, and here too he has failed. And now he is thinking what he shall try next. But I believe he is still true to the main principle of his policy--employing his neighbours to pull out each other's teeth.[115]

Fifteen days later the Schnaebelé incident brought matters to a crisis.[116] Schnaebelé's arrest seemed to uphold Salisbury's contention that the Iron Chancellor wanted war with France, for the arrest of Schnaebelé with Bismarck's acquiescence could only appear to be a direct provocation. Thus the war-scare that had gripped Europe throughout the spring of 1887 reached a climax. On April 26, Lyons wrote to Salisbury that the French were terribly upset about the arrest but were not inclined

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113 Czar Alexander III had informed General von Schweinitz, the German ambassador to St. Petersburg, on February 6 that Russia would not again remain neutral in case of a Franco-German war. See Jules Hansen, Ambassade A Paris Du Baron De Mohrenheim: 1884-1898, deuxième édition (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, n. d.), pp. 30-31.

114 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 294.

115 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 26.

116 See above, p. 22.

to make a war over it, and that the German government also seemed to be of the same inclination. He did assert, however, that if the French press were to demand a war the government would be powerless to stop it.[117] The release of Schnaebelé on April 30, restored some degree of tranquility---certainly the war-scare began quickly to disappear.

By now it had become evident to many Frenchmen that Boulanger constituted a threat to the peace and stability of the Republic.[118] Their problem was, however, how best to handle the threat. The plan of many influential French political leaders seemed apparent enough: the chamber would overthrow the Goblet ministry, and in so doing get rid of Boulanger. The chamber however found itself up a blind alley, as Lyons pointed out to Salisbury in a letter on May 13:

> The plan would be to form a Ministry with Freycinet as Prime Minister, but not as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and without Boulanger. But then they are afraid to try and upset Boulanger, while they feel that to form a new Government and put Boulanger in it would be, or might be, taken in Germany as a plain indication that they are warlike at heart. It is an emergency in which the Chief of the State should exert himself; but Grévy's caution has become something very much like lethargy. In the mean time they are letting Boulanger grow up into a personage whose position may be a danger to the Republic at home, even if it does not embroil the country in a foreign war.[119]

On May 20, Lyons wrote to Salisbury that it seemed that Freycinet had agreed to form a cabinet, but still there was the question of whether or not Boulanger should be included. Lyons closed this letter by remarking that excluding Boulanger would both minimize the immediate

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117 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 400-401.

118 Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 301.

119 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 402.

danger of armed conflict and reduce German irritation. Lyons reported again on May 24 that Floquet, the president of the chamber, was probably going to form a ministry in which Boulanger would be included. Lyons further stated, however, that Floquet would be unacceptable to Russia.[120] The situation was finally settled on May 30: a new ministry was formed under Maurice Rouvier without Boulanger as minister of war, General Ferron replacing him. The formation of the Rouvier ministry enjoys a special significance in at least one respect. According to some historians, it seems that General Galliffet, an elderly man and a close friend of the Prince of Wales, was able to make clear to the latter the weaknesses of Boulangism. The Prince, whose interest in French affairs is famous, then succeeded in persuading the expelled Count of Paris to move the Right to support the formation of the Rouvier ministry, which was encountering much opposition from the followers of Boulanger.[121]

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120 Ibid., 403-404. At this time France and Russia were moving towards an alliance with each other. Floquet therefore appeared to be unacceptable to Russia because in 1867 he had supposedly insulted Alexander II, who was visiting Paris, by yelling "Long live Poland!"

121 André Maurois, The Edwardian Era, trans. Hamish Miles (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1933), p. 77. See Sir Sidney Lee, King Edward VII, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925-1927). Further support can be found in a letter from Taine, the French historian, to his wife, in which he wrote:

> Here is an echo from the Figaro, whether true or false it is important. "If a Floquet-Boulanger cabinet had been formed it would have meant certain war with Germany within the next month. The Prince of Wales sought out the Comte de Paris on purpose to warn him of the danger, and the Count then persuaded the Right to support Rouvier's administration."

See Hippolyte Taine, Life And Letters of H. Taine, trans. E. Sparvel-Bayly (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1902-1908), III, 271.

Here would seem to be another example of the far-reaching repercussions of British reaction to the Boulanger phenomenon.

CHAPTER II

THE APOGEE OF GENERAL BOULANGER

The next year and a half witnessed numerous developments in the Boulanger phenomenon, and these turns occasioned several oscillations in The Times and in journalistic assessment of the General. For the foreign office, on the other hand, Boulanger and his movement, whether momentarily plummeting or soaring, added to the already strained relations between France and Britain and thus continued to present large-scale problems throughout this period. Although Boulanger appeared to be in decline during the last half of 1887, he revived during 1888, making the transition to popular politician. By January of 1889, therefore, the consensus of nearly all interested parties was to be that the General would achieve mastery of France.

The demonstration at the Lyons railway station when Boulanger left Paris certainly justified the idea of General Ferron and the Republicans that the General should be removed from Paris before the national holiday.[1] With several thousand people protesting the departure of their hero and displaying wild emotionalism, this ovation reached such proportions that for the first time Boulanger possibly could have attempted a coup d'etat with some promise of success.

British reaction to the event formed in two divergent views. On one hand, some observers felt that the commotion represented the dying wail of Boulangism and that now, with the General secluded at the isolated post of Clermont-Ferrand, the movement would quickly sink into oblivion.

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[1] See above, 24-26.

Other observers, to the contrary, diagnosed the exhibition as a concrete indication that Boulanger and his movement would be much harder to kill than the Republicans had previously thought. During the month of July, both opinions appeared in print. Blowitz, in his columns for The Times, tended to take the first viewpoint. He attributed the commotion to the fact that during the summer months the Parisians often left their homes in the evenings to enjoy the cool night air, and that, therefore, it was relatively easy to gather enough people to stage a demonstration.[2] At about the same time, Blowitz again discussed the display. In this account he explained that an announcement placed in a Paris newspaper telling the departure time of Boulanger and the station from which he would leave had led to the congregation of people who staged the farewell protest.[3] This contention probably seemed a little more believable to the readers of The Times because it certainly appeared farfetched to postulate that several thousand people had gathered and demonstrated just because a hot summer night had driven them out into the streets. A Times editorial the next day, however, accepted the second interpretation. After calling the public display of emotion at the Lyons railway station threatening, this editorial stated that

> Were it possible, we might take refuge in the hope, which even M. Clémenceau expressed, that General Boulanger will now subside into a quite commander of an army corps. Had he that intention, he would hardly have lent himself so readily and so effectively to the demonstration of last week.[4]

On July 13, Blowitz, persisting in his initial appraisal of the incident,

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[2] The Times, 9 July 1887.

[3] Ibid., 11 July 1887.

[4] Ibid., 12 July 1887.

editorialized that, after the demonstration and Boulanger's subsequent denouncement by the chambers for lending himself to it, he had no chance to become a minister again. Blowitz remarked that "Henceforth he can only be a soldier or a rebel."[5] Advocates of the latter point of view, however, continued to believe that Boulanger's removal had in no way quenched the bellicose attitude of some of his followers. A Times editorial of July 14 re-echoed the idea earlier expressed by Edward Dicey in the April issue of The Nineteenth Century, namely that many people in France believed that Britain, unlike Germany, could not repulse an attack and therefore France might try to reclaim her lost prestige in Europe by a successful attack on Britain rather than on Germany.[6]

The French national holiday of July 14 passed quietly enough, and, although there were cries of "Vive Boulanger!," there was no demonstration sizeable enough to deserve designation as a Boulangist rally. This apparently dwindling enthusiasm for the absent General prompted Blowitz to reiterate his belief that Boulangism was dying; he stated that "In fact, it may be said their cause is lost."[7] Blowitz's subsequent articles on Boulanger are characterized by a high degree of sarcasm. Discussing the Bastille Day celebration in The Times, he maintained that Boulanger was quickly being forgotten. He further pointed out that Boulanger could hardly be a Napoleon as he had not made use of the Lyons demonstration to try to effect a coup d'etat. He then disposed of Boulanger as

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5 Ibid., 13 July 1887.

6 Ibid., 14 July 1887.

7 Ibid., 15 July 1887.

a threat by commenting that "In the meantime we must await another 14th of July, but till then when a man calls out 'Vive Boulanger!' he will be sent to a mad house, where he will be asked for the last news from the moon."[8] Blowitz continued his attack on Boulanger by writing near the end of the month that "This man with his daily doings is positively becoming an insufferable bore. Unfortunately he is a dangerous bore."[9] An inconsistency is here apparent in Blowitz's thinking, for he admitted to the potential threat of Boulanger when he called him a "dangerous bore." The journalist, however, resumed his barrage of sarcasm the next day; after mentioning that the General upon quitting his position as minister had sent a farewell address to a general in Tonkin, Blowitz remarked that it was unprecedented for a retiring minister to issue a farewell address, but "General Boulanger, however, like Napoleon, is a great man, and is not tied down to the behaviour of ordinary mortals."[10]

Disagreeing with Blowitz, but agreeing with The Times editorials, journalistic reaction throughout the month accepted the second interpretation of the status of Boulangism. The Saturday Review denounced Blowitz's position of calling the Lyons demonstration insignificant. In a cautionary mood, The Saturday Review called this display an "ugly symptom." In probably the most realistic appraisement of the month, the journal further commented that Boulanger had not suffered any loss of popularity, that he might possibly be the man to upset the already

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[8] Ibid., 16 July 1887.

[9] Ibid., 28 July 1887.

[10] Ibid., 29 July 1887.

tottering republican government, and that if he did come to power it would certainly add to the danger of a European war.[11] At about this time, an anonymous article appearing in Murray's Magazine stated that Boulanger's whole popularity rested upon his ability to keep himself constantly in front of the people and the press (an opinion which had become quite universal by now). His concluding remarks summarize his views:

> Only one point remains clear--that it is impossible to hear the last of Boulanger; that by speeches, or newspaper reports, or duels, or sensational effects, he will always manage to engross public attention; that he aims high, and will never stop until he has reached--WHAT? As the French proverb says: "Qui vivra, verra."[12]

In late July, Boulanger in predictable fashion seized an opportunity to place himself in the spotlight; his action, consequently, gave The Times additional reason to criticize him. Near the end of the month, Jules Ferry, who was coming out of retirement, made a speech at Épinal in which he said that France should not allow herself to be led by a "café-concert St. Arnaud."[13] Boulanger, insulted by this reference to himself, promptly challenged Ferry to a duel. Blowitz in commenting on the proposed encounter in The Times editorialized that, in challenging Ferry, Boulanger had "eclipsed all his previous follies . . . ."[14] As

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[11] "General Boulanger," The Saturday Review, LXIV (July 16, 1887), 70-71.

[12] "The Hero of the Hour in Paris," Murray's Magazine, II (July-December, 1887), 384.

[13] It should be remembered that Leroy de St. Arnaud carried out the coup d'etat for Louis Napoleon in 1851.

[14] The Times, 30 July 1887.

preparations for the proposed affair carried over into August, a Times editorial expressed disdain at Boulanger's latest strategem. After mentioning that the duel had given Boulanger another opportunity to increase his notoriety, the editorial gibed that it would be unfortunate if Jules Ferry were killed, but as for Boulanger, "to be killed in one [i. e., a duel] would certainly cut short his own career; but we doubt whether the event would interfere very materially with the prosperity of the country."[15] Blowitz continued in this vein of sarcasm the next day,[16] as did a Times editorial on August 3.[17] The encounter was called off, however, when the seconds could not come to an agreement over the terms, and the matter slowly subsided. The Times and its correspondent had previously disagreed over the threat Boulanger posed, but they now concurred in their assessment of his behavior. The only further notice of any importance taken of the incident was a cartoon which appeared in Punch[18] (see next page). For the rest of the month, except for small news items about Boulanger, The Times was quiet.

It should be mentioned here that from early 1886 to mid-1889 hardly a day passed that the General did not, in some way, figure in The Times. A tremendous amount of the articles involved are merely news items and reflect no opinion editorially or otherwise.[19] The sheer number of these

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15 Ibid., 1 Aug. 1887.

16 Ibid., 2 Aug. 1887.

17 Ibid., 3 Aug. 1887.

18 "Un Duel De Café-Concert," Punch, no. 93 (August 13, 1887), 63.

19 Such items are not treated in this study because they reflect no opinion.

UN DUEL DE CAFÉ-CONCERT.

MM. Boxe et Coxe.

M. le Général Boxe. "SAVEZ-VOUS VOUS BATTRE?" *M. Coxe (homme d'état).* "NON

M. le Général Boxe. "EH BIEN, ALORS! ALLONS-Y-DONC!"

(*Translation.*—"Can you fight!" "No!" "Then come on!")

articles gives support to the thesis that Boulanger was certainly accorded a special significance by British journalism.

Although The Times mentioned Boulanger only sporadically during September, two journal articles appeared which demonstrate the lack of unanimity in British journalistic assessment of the existing relationship between Boulanger and his supporters. In The Contemporary Review, Gabriel Monod, with his usual objective approach, discussed the reasons for the fall of the Goblet ministry and the subsequent overthrow of Boulanger. He expounded the virtues of the General, laying particular stress on his abilities and zest, but he faulted Boulanger by observing that, although he had done nothing to justify the charge that he wanted to be a dictator, his love of popularity had allowed him to fall into the hands of some evil friends who had used him as a tool to accomplish their own selfish ends.[20] Another article offered a different evaluation of Boulanger, a complimentary one. In it the author immediately pointed out to his readers that the General's greatest asset was his ambitious drive. "Ambition is his hope, his life, his mistress, his present, and his future; his very being is bound up in his insatiable craving for some intangible 'beyond.' It is shown in his every action, every word, every movement. It is insatiable!"[21] In evaluating the connection between Boulanger and his followers, this writer believed that the Frenchman was not the tool of any political parties, but that

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[20] Gabriel Monod, "Contemporary Life and Thought in France," The Contemporary Review, LII (September, 1887), 428-434.

[21] W. H. Gleadell, "General Boulanger," The Fortnightly Review, XLII (September, 1887), 364.

he had made them his tool and was using them to gain acclaim. He conceded that the General's whole popularity rested on advertisement,[22] but he maintained that Boulanger realized France was not yet ready for war and was, therefore, not a war hawk.[23] The author, who had met Boulanger several times, evidently thought that he had an excellent chance of coming to power. In conclusion, he defended Boulanger's motives and plans:

> It is absurd to join in the reproaches and strictures which too many are heaping upon the whilom Minister. He is now, and has been, only doing his duty. He is young and energetic; therefore he is called intriguing and adventurous. It is wrong to brand his qualities as defects. He may be ambitious (and in that he is no worse than his accusers), but his ambition is bound up in his country's success. If his country falls he falls with it. His instincts may be democratic, they may be aristocratic, perhaps even autocratic; before all, however, he is a soldier, and above all a Frenchman.[24]

As mentioned earlier, The Times and the journals during the month of July, 1887, tended to divide into two camps on the question of Boulanger. On the one hand, there flourished the idea expressed among others by Blowitz that Boulanger and his movement had no future, and on the other hand, there circulated the idea upheld by Times editorials and various journals that Boulanger and his movement very much remained a dangerous threat. The reaction of Her Majesty's Paris embassy evidenced both optimism and caution. Lord Lyons in a letter to Lord Salisbury on July 12 summed up his opinion of Boulanger's departure by

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[22] For the best treatment of the advertisement Boulanger received in the French press, see Jacques Néré, Le Boulangisme et la Presse (Paris: Armand Colin, 1964).

[23] Gleadell, "General Boulanger," The Fortnightly Review, 366-367.

[24] Ibid., 371.

reporting that the riot had both a bright and a gloomy side:

> The riot at the Lyons railway station seems to have done Boulangism harm even among the ultra-Radicals, and to have been the main cause of Boulanger's having been thrown over by Radical speakers in the Chamber yesterday. But it is a very dangerous thing to give the Paris mob its head.[25]

Several days later Lyons again wrote that the French national holiday had passed without any demonstrations in favor of Boulanger. He then, however, expressed a less optimistic note; he, echoing The Times' editorial of July 14, recognized that Boulanger's departure had in no way diminished the bellicose attitude of all of the Boulangists:

> On the other hand, Boulangism, which is now the French term for Jingoism, spreads, especially amongst the reckless Radicals and enemies of the present Ministry. And even among the better classes, warlike language and, to some degree, a warlike spirit grows up with a new generation, which has had no practical acquaintance with war.[26]

This French jingoism added to the already strained relations between France and Britain, born out of their antithetical colonial policies. A Times editorial of July had pointed out that French warmongers, realizing the power of Germany, might turn their attentions toward Britain, and now Lyons' letter acknowledged the existence of a French war-like spirit. That Salisbury was also concerned by the bellicosity generated by the Boulangist movement seems indicated. In a letter to Lyons on July 20, he enumerated several points of contention between Britain and France, and then, no doubt reacting to the Boulangist jingoism as well as to the other problems, closed by asking "Can you wonder that there is, to my eyes, a silver lining even to the great black cloud of a Franco-German

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25 Newton, Lord Lyons, II, 408.

26 Ibid., 410-411.

War?"[27] Several days later Sir William White, the British ambassador at Constantinople, also received a letter from Salisbury in which he again voiced his apprehensions over the hostile attitude that was developing in France toward Britain.[28]

In mid-October a chain of events in France resulted in a scandal which eventually implicated even President Grévy and at the same time led to a seeming further loss of prestige for Boulanger. The scandal began when General Caffarel, Boulanger's appointee as the under-chief of staff in the war office, was accused of being involved in the illegal sale of decorations. While being interrogated on the subject, Boulanger accused the war minister, General Ferron, of trying to discredit him with the Caffarel affair. For such an obvious insult, Ferron had Boulanger put under thirty days arrêt de rigueur--a close arrest under

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[27] Ibid., 409. The following incident demonstrates the strained relations between France and Britain at this time. Lyons left his post during July, and, therefore, for several months Britain had no ambassador in Paris. Lord Lytton, Lyons' replacement, left for France in December before he had accomplished the diplomatic formality of kissing the Queen's hands in a special audience. Victoria, disturbed at this omission, reported her displeasure to Salisbury and demanded that Lytton return shortly to kiss hands. Salisbury replied that it was necessary for Lytton to be in France on New Year's Day for the reception of the new president, Sadi Carnot. He then showed his concern over Anglo-French friction as he continued, "In the present strained state of feeling in Europe, a slight cause might produce an enormous amount of mischief." See Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 365-366.

[28] Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 50. By this time other countries were also noticing that the followers of the General were not politically dead. The correspondence of the Italian foreign office in early September demonstrated this fact. Paolo Boselli, deputy in Italy's lower chamber, informed his premier and foreign minister, Francesco Crispi, that he had assurances the adherents of révanche constituted only a small minority in France, that Boulanger appeared to have no chance of ever returning to power, and that France was not preparing to make an attack on Italy. See Thomas Palamenghi-Crispi (ed.), The Memoirs of Francesco Crispi, trans. Mary Prichard-Agnetti (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912-1914), II, 246-247, 252.

which a soldier must give up his sword, remain in his house, and see only his wife. Both a Times editorial and a Blowitz article speculated on the effects this disciplinary action would have on Boulanger's future prospects. The editorial asserted that this censure would hasten the demise of Boulanger as a threat to both European peace and the French Republic:

> Nothing is more likely than the approaching total eclipse of this luminary, whose appearance on the political horizon was so sudden and so hard to account for. He did nothing but look handsome, ride a spirited horse, talk significantly about the "resurrection of France," and coquet with the Radicals in the Press and in the Chamber.[29]

Blowitz upheld the French minister of war's reprimand of Boulanger on the grounds that the General had demonstrated his determination to regain power by constantly drawing attention to himself. The correspondent further stated that he did not know if it were possible or not for Boulanger to recapture his former power, but that the General in any case was "an element of trouble, over which the Government should obtain the mastery if it would avoid agitation and avert catastrophes."[30]

November and December passed without any noticeable alteration in The Times and journalistic reaction to Boulanger; in the meantime, the Caffarel scandal had implicated more people, among them Daniel Wilson, the son-in-law of President Grévy. The disgrace resulting from this affair ultimately led to the resignation of the Rouvier ministry on November 19, and of President Grévy on December 2, 1887. Both chambers then met and chose as the new president Sadi Carnot, who subsequently instructed Pierre Emmanuel Tirard to form a ministry.

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[29] The Times, 14 Oct. 1887.

[30] Ibid., 15 Oct. 1887.

The British response to Boulanger during the first half of 1888 contrasted markedly with reaction throughout the latter half of 1887. With the latter year's spring war-scare ended, with Boulanger safely, though still loudly, stationed at Clermont-Ferrand, and with The Times and journals in general continually alluding to the forthcoming finish of this supposed military buffoon, it can be said with a degree of assurance that the British public, by the end of 1887, no longer derived any discernible uneasiness from the daily notices about Boulanger. At this time, the British public could not have foreseen the dismissal of the popular hero from the army and his subsequent rise to the peak of political notoriety. Furthermore, they were unaware of the number of Boulanger's adherents who remained warlike in their intentions toward foreign powers.

During the first two months of 1888 the preponderance of British opinion indeed continued to expect (as it had towards the end of 1887) the demise of the Boulangist movement; the foreign office, however, found no cause to adopt such a viewpoint. Apparently unmindful of the continuing growth of Boulangist jingoism and the transformation of the General into a political hero, The Times made no significant mention of Boulanger until the last of February, when Blowitz commented on the fact that the General's name had appeared on the ballot for deputy in several French by-elections on February 26. Even then, the correspondent dismissed Boulanger's candidacy as a matter of little concern on the grounds that military personnel in France were forbidden by law to hold political office.[31] A Times editorial of the same day attributed

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[31] Ibid., 28 Feb. 1888.

Boulanger's apparently illegal bid for office as merely another means of keeping his name constantly before the public.[32]

This lack of insight on the part of The Times did not prevail in the foreign office because the hostile nature of the Boulangist movement presented serious problems for it. Salisbury felt reconciliation with France to be impossible, for Anglo-French colonial rivalries were merely adding more fuel to the growing French jingoistic flame. In light of this situation, he decided to attempt a limited rapprochement with the Central Powers, a decision that was to guide British foreign policy throughout the year.[33] An opportunity to realize this goal arose as early as January 22, when Hatzfeldt inquired about Britain's position in the event of a Russo-German war. Salisbury, however, brushed aside this feeler and replied that he could not make such arrangements under a parliamentary situation.[34] In mid-February, Salisbury, aware that Frenchmen's adulation of Boulanger and the war-like pronouncements associated with his name had not abated, feared some colonial incident might spark armed hostilities. He displayed his anxieties in a letter to Sir Evelyn Baring [later Lord Cromer], the British agent and consul-general in Egypt:

> We are at this moment on the sharp ridge that separates the slopes toward war and peace. It is a matter of great uncertainty down

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 85.

[34] Ibid., 87. A parliamentary government, such as Britain's, would be reluctant to enter into any formal agreement restricting their future policies. No ministry could commit itself in advance for cooperation in a war as that ministry might be overthrown at any time. In essence, one government cannot bind another.

> which we shall slide, but a very slight push either way will decide the issue, and the slide will be a tremendous one if we go towards war. It is a matter, therefore, of no common importance to avoid any unnecessary cause of conflict. If you were to have a row in Egypt, the excited opinion of the French might turn that way. They already, I am told, look upon a war with England as the cheapest of the three alternatives open to them [i. e., Germany, Italy, and England]. They are so unreasonable, and have so much incurable hatred of England, that I should dread any very glaring exhibition of our sovereignty in Egypt at this moment. . . .
>
> It is not from any doubt about supporting you that I urge you to keep the peace for the present, but because I do not wish our administration in Egypt to be the cause to which the long European war is to be ascribed by the future historian.[35]

In March, a series of developments led to the compulsory retirement of Boulanger, his entrance into politics, and consequently to a marked split in The Times and journalistic reaction to the General and his future prospects. This division continued for several of the following months. Since French policy strictly forbade military personnel from holding political office, the new minister of war, General Logerot, in early March, asked Boulanger if he had in any way solicited his recent candidacy. He received only an equivocal reply from the General. This ambiguous response, the emergence of the Cocarde, a paper with Boulangist leanings,[36] and the fact that Boulanger had come to Paris against orders on February 24, March 2, and March 10[37] (only this last incident was mentioned in the minister of war's report), prompted General Logerot to ask President Carnot for permission to place Boulanger's name on the army's inactive list. Carnot approved.

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[35] Ibid., 95.

[36] The Times, 13 Mar. 1888.

[37] On March 2 and March 10, Boulanger came to Paris disguised by dark spectacles and affecting a limp.

Blowitz, on March 16, interpreted the whole incident as betokening the death of Boulangism, for he believed that the disgrace of being placed on the army's inactive list would seriously impair Boulanger's popularity. After pointing out that there had never been any similarity between Boulanger and Bonaparte, he congratulated the government:

> It may be regretted that a man who has figured so prominently should have incurred such a punishment, but the Government must be congratulated on the energy displayed, under the force of imperative necessity, after an indulgence which moderate men were beginning to consider weakness, and almost connivance.[38]

A Times editorial of the same day agreed with Blowitz's opinion except for the fact that it did not completely rule out any possibility of the General's recovery. It pointed out that Boulanger's fall would certainly restore a degree of tranquility to the continent, but in an important statement on his esteem abroad the editorial reported that Boulanger's "popularity is merely that of the hero of the café concert."[39] The Saturday Review did not agree with the opinion of either Blowitz or The Times; it remarked that "Altogether, it looks more unwise than ever for the superior person to sniff at General Boulanger."[40]

In the meantime, Boulanger, upon being placed on the inactive list, had not even remained at Clermont-Ferrand long enough to hand over his command to his successor, General Warnet. Both his hastily departing Clermont-Ferrand and his apparently allowing himself to be proposed as a candidate in the by-elections[41] constituted a serious breach of discipline.

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[38] The Times, 16 Mar. 1888.

[39] Ibid.

[40] "Boulangisme," The Saturday Review, LXV (March 17, 1888), 311.

[41] Boulanger denied the charge that he had allowed his name to be

This misconduct led General Logerot[42] to convoke a Court of Inquiry, which later decided that Boulanger should be removed from the army list. Because of governmental leniency, however, the final decision was to retire Boulanger compulsorily on March 27, 1888. On both March 21 and 23, Blowitz predicted that the court-martial would end in the oblivion of Boulanger.[43] A Times editorial was more reluctant, conjecturing that possibly Boulanger had courted punishment in order "to pursue political adventures"; however, if this supposed motive were actually true,[44] The Times felt he had miscalculated the extent of his popularity. The Saturday Review concurred with the editorial's belief that Boulanger had political ambitions by postulating that he had possibly never intended a military coup d'etat, but probably intended instead a political coup d'etat based on a plebiscite. Disagreeing with both Blowitz's and The Times' assessment of Boulanger's popularity, however, the article averred that he could possibly effect a political overthrow:

> There is certainly nothing intrinsically improbable in the opinion held by some observers that, if General Boulanger plays his part as a politician with judgment and spirit, and a proper contempt for the mob of little men in the Chamber, he may sweep them all out of his way.[45]

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entered in the by-elections; the war office, however, believed that he had done so.

42 See above.

43 The Times, 21 Mar. 1888; 23 Mar. 1888.

44 Ibid., 21 Mar. 1888. The idea that Boulanger might court military punishment in order to enter politics was not a new idea. The Russian newspaper Novoe Vremia had predicted as far back as October, 1887, that it would be bad to remove Boulanger from the army because he could then enter politics. See The Times, 21 Oct. 1887.

45 "General Boulanger," The Saturday Review, LXV (March 24, 1888), 343.

Punch also did not allow the new developments surrounding Boulanger to go unnoticed. A cartoon, "Among The Latest Parisian Spectacles," (see next page) alluded to the action that had led to the General's being placed on the inactive list--his coming to Paris disguised and against orders. At the bottom of the page on which the cartoon appeared was the following gibe: "General Boulanger's Props.--For Tragedy--a prancing black horse. For Comedy--a music hall song. For Farce--a pair of blue spectacles."[46]

By the end of March, Blowitz's position on Boulanger's prospects of mustering sufficient support to gain political power changed little if any. He pointed out that Boulanger's forced retirement, which now rendered him eligible to be elected to the chamber, would be of small importance because no one wanted to follow a dictator. Thus Blowitz felt that Boulanger could assume only the position of a pretender and any success from this new enterprise would unavoidably be a long time in materializing.[47] A Times editorial which appeared on March 31 evidenced the continued reluctance of the newspaper itself to predict Boulanger's oblivion:

> That he is not a great man we willingly concede. But he has no great men to cope with, there is no strongly organized political system to baffle his attempts, and it is a serious question for France and for Europe whether, in all the circumstances, he is not great enough to produce very considerable and undesirable effects.[48]

The Tirard ministry, which fell on March 30, was replaced by one

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[46] "Among The Latest Parisian Spectacles," Punch, no. 94 (March 24, 1888), 142.

[47] The Times, 28 Mar. 1888; 30 Mar. 1888; 31 Mar. 1888.

[48] Ibid., 31 Mar. 1888.

AMONG THE LATEST PARISIAN SPECTACLES.

RENTRÉE DE M. LE GÉNÉRAL BOUM DE BLEULANGER,

Author of "En Revenant de la Revue," who will give his new Song, adapted from the English, entitled,

"Oh, what a surprise,
Two Lovely Blue Eyes!"

Punch, March 24, 1888.

under Charles Floquet on April 2. Under this new but weakened ministry, Boulangism now blossomed forth. It became apparent that the compulsory retirement of the General from the army had been a tremendous mistake on the part of the French government; since he was no longer in the army, he could enter politics with impunity. The Committee of Protest, a political machine that had gathered around him, quickly decided he should stand as a candidate in every by-election, win, and then resign the position each time. This action would thus constitute a virtual plebiscite in favor of him and his political plan,[49] which called for a dissolution of the legislature, a revision of the constitution, and the convocation of a constituent assembly

At the beginning of April, British reaction continued to be divided as to what the future prospects of Boulanger might be. By the end of the month, however, after his triumph in several by-elections, it was generally accepted that he stood a chance of obtaining power. In The Edinburgh Review, its editor, Henry Reeve, referred to Boulanger as a "pinchbeck Napoleon" who stood small chance of endangering peace.

> M. Boulanger, we are told, is the fetish of the hour, and he will probably be returned to the Chamber in his civil capacity, but unless we greatly underrate his abilities, he has no influence with the army or in the state sufficient to endanger the peace of Europe.[50]

In The Times, Blowitz reported to his readers that Boulanger now had only two possible ways of obtaining power, by a plebiscite or by violence, and that he would use neither. The chambers would not allow the

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[49] Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 323.

[50] "The Peace of Europe," The Edinburgh Review, CLXVII (April, 1888), 563-564.

first, and Boulanger would not accept the second because he realized that violence was a two-edged sword.[51] An editorial took a more cautious view of Boulanger, however, in referring to him as "a serious personage."[52] This evaluation seemed justified, for, on April 8, Boulanger won a by-election in the Dordogne district. Blowitz reflected on this victory: "General Boulanger is being hoisted by the Adullamites of French politics--- and by the Bonapartists among the number--to an altitude to which his native talents, so far as they have been hitherto displayed, would never have carried him."[53] Within the next few days, Blowitz's position shifted to such an extent that he no longer spoke of Boulanger's inability to succeed, but now attacked the weak French government for allowing Boulangism to reach such proportions.[54] A further change in his position occurred on April 14. After calling Boulangism madness, a remark consistent with his customary view, he conceded, however, that "The Boulangist microbe has now reached such a state of development that some prompt and decisive measure must be taken, either for or against it. The present situation cannot continue much longer."[55] The Saturday Review continued to predict success for Boulanger: "In whatever form it comes to him, he may be now considered safe to obtain power."[56]

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51 The Times, 2 Apr. 1888.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 10 Apr. 1888.

54 Ibid., 12 Apr. 1888.

55 Ibid., 14 Apr. 1888.

56 "The Progress of General Boulanger," The Saturday Review, LXV (April 14, 1888), 436.

On April 15, Boulanger was elected in the highly industrialized district of Nord. This second political success elicited more prudent responses to the General than had heretofore been expressed. A Times editorial gave the first serious analysis of the election. After commenting on Boulanger's victory, the editorial speculated about Boulanger's actions when and if he attained supreme power:

> Whether General Boulanger, if he were to rise to supreme power, would become a disturber of the peace of Europe is doubtful. It would, however, be a waste of time to seek for any indications of his future action in his present speeches. What is certain is that his attainment of his ends would increase the disquietude of the Continent.[57]

Blowitz's changed opinion on Boulanger is again evident in his article of April 18, but it was still overlaid with his persistent reluctance to grant Boulanger any preponderant chance of success. "Stormy times are doubtless in store for us, but it would be rash for the Boulangists to count on a success which will be long and keenly disputed."[58] In a similar vein, a Times editorial of the same day pointed out that the successes of Boulanger were certainly a problem, but not one which should occasion panic. What was needed, it continued, was for the French to scrutinize the flimsy and clandestine basis of the movement. "Patience, wisdom, and vigour ought to prick the bubble before he attains a position of real menace. We do not say that they will prick it."[59] This pessimistic tone soon appeared again in an editorial which pointed out that the situation in French politics was causing a menacing cloud

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[57] The Times, 17 Apr. 1888.

[58] Ibid., 18 Apr. 1888.

[59] Ibid.

which foreboded a storm for all Europe; France had reached the point where no folly or extravagance was impossible.[60] The Saturday Review now came to the verge of proclaiming Boulanger's accession to power:

> Hannibal, to use a phrase whereof the value has been proved by much use, is at the gates. He is even inside them. It remains to be seen what he will do with the city; whether he will sack it at once, or spend some little time first in going out and coming in again, just to show that he can and to rub it well into the citizens.[61]

The article continued by reporting that in Britain comment abounded on the General:

> . . . he seems to us decidedly superior in point of dignity, picturesqueness, and everything but price to a café chair or a stump. . . . He may be the false Caesar, most probably he is; and we, for our part, see no reason to believe that he is the son of Venus.[62]

Blowitz, on his part, pointed out that if Boulanger were going to take over time was of the essence to him, because his character was not one which could bear "cool examination."[63]

Up to now, except for Boulanger's election in several districts, the British public had had no reason to be particularly concerned over him. To be sure, the reading public probably could not have looked at a newspaper without encountering his name, but their familiarity with Boulanger most likely did not go beyond curiosity. Toward the end of April, however, Britishers probably viewed the General with more serious

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60 Ibid., 20 Apr. 1888.

61 "About Boulangism," The Saturday Review, LXV (April 21, 1888), 463.

62 Ibid.

63 The Times, 23 Apr. 1888.

concern. An editorial in The Times now suddenly observed that "A tolerably distinct warning has been given by the Boulangist organ [i. e., the Cocarde] of the anything but friendly manner in which Boulangism would comport itself towards this country were it once victorious at home."[64] The full implications of this development would become apparent in later months.

Around the first of May, an article entitled "General Boulanger" appeared in The Universal Review. The publication had commissioned Emily Crawford, a correspondent for the well-known British journal, Truth, to write this article. The author, who was acquainted with Boulanger, had asked the General, then minister of war, to supply the material. According to Miss Crawford, instead of granting her a personal interview, he called in a military colleague who was to discuss objectively the Boulanger career and character with her. The result of this interview was an article highly favorable to Boulanger. It defended every one of his controversial acts up to the time of his being sent to Clermont-Ferrand. On the General's future prospects, the author offered a new assessment. She believed that the Republicans would eventually arrive at a political deal with him.[65] The Crawford account drew sufficient attention for The Spectator to comment on it, alluding to the eulogistic tone of the article and remarking that the interview with Boulanger's military colleague could hardly have been an objective one because this subordinate would have looked to Boulanger, as minister of

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[64] Ibid., 26 Apr. 1888.

[65] Emily Crawford, "General Boulanger," The Universal Review, I (May, 1888), 83-99.

war, for advancement. The Spectator did agree with Miss Crawford that pomp was the basis for the French people's idealization of Boulanger and thus chose to call him a "brummagem Henri Quatre."[66] In concluding, The Spectator gave a brief hint of its opinion on the Frenchman's future. "Whether General Boulanger can win his Ivry,[67] may be doubtful--certainly it is not rendered more probable by this sketch--but he has the white plume, and if there is any charging to be done, he will be found in front."[68]

As far back as early 1887, frequent journal articles maintaining that the continuing developments on the continent demanded that Britain be prepared for war at a moment's notice had appeared.[69] Military leaders generally wrote these pieces. The problem, as these authors saw it, was that the navy, Britain's main defense, was no longer first class. They felt that it was complacent, outdated, and inadequate. The precarious condition of Her Majesty's fleet, frictions between France and Britain over colonial interests, and the revival of Boulangism with its bellicose accompaniment, appeared to be adequate enough reason for

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66 "A Lady's Portrait of General Boulanger," The Spectator, no. 61 (May 19, 1888), 683-684.

67 The Battle of Ivry (1590), a crucial battle in the War of the Three Henrys, brought Henry of Navarre to power.

68 "A Lady's Portrait of General Boulanger," The Spectator, no. 61 (May 19, 1888), 683-684.

69 For a representative sampling of these articles, see R. Spencer Robinson, "The Navy and Its Rulers," The Contemporary Review, LI (February, 1887), 252-273; "An Apology for Armies," The Contemporary Review, LI (May, 1887), 624-638; Edward Hamley, "The Defenselessness of London," The Nineteenth Century, XXIII (May, 1888), 633-640; Charles Beresford, "The Admiralty Confusion and Its Cure," The Nineteenth Century, XXIII (May, 1888), 760-765.

apprehension on the part of the British public. In a speech at a City Banquet in early May, Lord Wolseley, the adjutant general, gave further impetus to alarmist feelings when he vividly conjured up the possibility of a sudden French attack upon a defenseless London.[70] Faced with the awesome prospect of such an invasion, with continued journalistic articles proclaiming the deficiencies of the British navy and the defenselessness of London, and with newspapers like The Times reiterating that the success of Boulanger meant war, the British public grew nervous.

Throughout May, both Blowitz and The Times did little to ease the disquiet by constantly editorializing on the menace embodied by a Boulanger accession to power. One Times editorial noted that "General Boulanger may be sincere in disclaiming all desire to make war, but Boulangism, as the negation of constitutional government and the registered failure of principle, inevitably means war."[71] Blowitz, in discussing Boulanger's appeal to both war hawks and doves, reported that "He appears to be a barometric General, and just as the cardboard monk puts on or off his cowl, according as it is wet or fine, he lowers or extends his sword according to the political weather.[72] Punch took the opportunity to comment on Boulanger's future prospects in a cartoon entitled "Boulanger's Menu-Festo"[73] (see next page). Blowitz, in

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[70] Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 83.

[71] The Times, 4 May 1888.

[72] Ibid., 5 May 1888.

[73] "Boulanger's Menu-Festo," Punch, no. 94 (May 5, 1888), 216.

BOULANGER'S MENU-FESTO.

No one can expect a General to be particular. Yet if such General be a Frenchman aspiring to conquer the hearts of his compatriots, he must first of all master the arts of a *Chef* and *cordon bleu*. From this point of view he is, at present, to be judged by the *menu* of his banquet given last Friday, at the Café Riche. To begin with, he is as well come to his *Hors d'œuvre à la Française* as to the usual *quatre mendiants*,—and there'll be plenty of these about

GULLIVER BOULANGER. C'EST LA PAIX!

should he attain to the Dictatorship. Was "Caviare to the General" included in the *hors d'œuvre?*

We pass his *Consommé à la Valenciennes*, his *Velouté d'écrevisses*—he's not "on velvet" yet—and we glance suspiciously at his "*Quartier de behague à la Générale.*" Is there any bony part in this quarter? The "*Cailles à l'étouffade à la Clermont*" is a most decidedly Royalist dish; "*Canetons du Nord*" are suggestive of "*canards*"; the "*glace nationale*" is ominously opposite to *enthousiasme national.* As to the wines, the *Mouton Rothschild* (1870) means money and the sinews of war, and though *Old Clos Vougeot* may appropriately follow as a specimen of another, but a much lower and almost extinct class of Hebraic vintage, yet what does that hero deserve of his own, or of any other country, who finishes up with "*Pommery et Gréno, frappé.*" Is it possible? "*Frappé*"! To "*frapper*" Pommery, or, indeed, any champagne worth drinking, is to kill it,—yes, we say deliberately, to kill it. And if this be Boulangism, then the cry of all veteran Champagners will be, "*à bas* BOULANGER!" "*Vive Pommery et Gréno!*" So we will leave his champagne *frappé*, and "*revenons*" *pas à la revue, mais* "*à nos moutons*"—*Rothschild.*

Punch, May 5, 1888.

another article, made explicit his belief that the Frenchman represented a menace: ". . . foreigners will certainly agree that General Boulanger's accession to power would be the signal of a disaster menacing the very existence of France, as well as the peace of Europe."[74] A Times editorial upheld this view by contending that, once Boulanger attained power, war would be the only way in which he could maintain control.[75]

During the month, The Times further demonstrated British concern about Boulanger's activities and political prospects by commissioning a distinguished foreign-affairs observer, Frederic Harrison, to go to France to study the question of Boulangism.[76] Harrison's subsequent letters to The Times appeared in a May article entitled "The Situation in France."[77] He later aptly summarized the article in his Autobiographic Memoirs:

> I saw that the movement was a very complicated and obscure conspiracy, for it was a combination of all the enemies of the moderate Republic--monarchists, imperialists, radicals, adventurers, and anarchists--subsidised by Orleans money and gambling speculators. The brav' général himself was neither soldier, nor politician, nor orator, nor even schemer, but an adept advertising "bluff." My report went on to describe Boulangisme as being neither a party nor a policy--without an ideal, or a tradition, or a flag, or an intelligible aim. Boulangism was simply a coalition of the enemies of the Republic, monarchic, imperialist, democratic, and revolutionary, worked by a syndicate, like the Panama canal, financed by rich pretenders who hoped to win something in the scramble. They gathered around a melodramatic soldier who rode about Paris as if it were a circus, and who had won popularity with the soldiers by official doles as Minister of War. He had become the "boss" of the

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[74] The Times, 7 May 1888.

[75] Ibid., 14 May 1888.

[76] Frederic Harrison, Autobiographic Memoirs (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1911), II, 60.

[77] The Times, 23 May 1888.

> military party, which later on ran the Dreyfus trick, by mere smartness in réclame. He was master of the arts by which an ambitious man poses as a patriot, and keeps himself ever before the public eye--but he was neither speaker, nor thinker, nor writer, nor leader. His manifestos were made for him by a fluent barrister and a smart journalist. He never committed himself to any policy, nor any platform. He was all things to all men, and studiously ambiguous.
>
> The question I tried to answer was this--Can a League of such irreconcilable elements hold together, grow, and triumph? I wrote home that, unless he acted soon, and boldly struck for a coup de main, it would break up and disappear. He had no following in the Chamber or in the Senate; all the regular parties, and all the established journals repudiated him; and the heads of the Ministry and the army were dead against him. To attempt a coup d'état, as Louis Napoleon did in December 1851, "the general does not seem to have the requisite devil."[78]

A Times editorial on the same day commented that Harrison's article reflected British political views of Boulanger and his movement.[79]

Anxiety persisted, however, in spite of Harrison's report. Blowitz related that he was now receiving numerous inquisitive letters regarding the General. One of them marveled at the size of Boulanger's following:

> "Explain to us how it happens that General Boulanger seems to have numerous partisans among a people who have good sense, who are prone to ridicule, and fond of change, and who yet cling to a man, who, seen from without, in no respect justifies the popularity he enjoys."[80]

Blowitz himself felt moved to observe that Boulanger was the only pretender allowed to live on French soil.[81]

Against the background of divergent opinion about Boulanger during March and April, and in the absence of any widespread public alarm until

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78 Harrison, Autobiographic Memoirs, II, 61-62.

79 The Times, 23 May 1888.

80 Ibid., 24 May 1888.

81 Ibid.

late April, British diplomats maintained essentially a wait-and-see attitude toward the General throughout these months. Even after Boulanger's relegation to the French army's inactive list and subsequent compulsory retirement,[82] the Paris embassy showed none of the uncertainty of opinion about the effect of these measures on the General's political career that appeared in The Times and journals. Lord Lytton, the new British ambassador to France, wrote to Lady Salisbury in late March that, although Boulanger looked flattened for the moment, it seemed doubtful whether the condition would be permanent:

> The man himself seems to be an egregious goose, and a mere tool in the hands of very second-rate political speculators, whom his former Republican friends are beginning to suspect of having been all along Bonapartist agents. Three weeks ago there was a real flutter of alarm about him at the Élysée. Now it is taken for granted that he is coulé. I expect to see him turn up again, however. Even a dead dog in a pond does that, and French democracy is a pond in which many nasty things are sure to turn up whenever it is stirred. For the present, however, the Boulanger agitation seems to be collapsing from want of funds.[83]

Meanwhile, Boulanger's followers had announced his candidacy for the district of Nord in an election slated for April 15. In mentioning this upcoming election in a letter to Salisbury on March 30, Lytton again betrayed his expectation that Boulanger would continue to remain a problem.

> The Orleanists have issued instructions to their supporters to vote for Boulanger in the Nord on the 15th. The General himself, like a circus rider, is simultaneously mounting more steeds than one. The towns are being told by his supporters that he is the only man capable of reconquering Alsace and Lorraine, whilst the

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[82] See above, pp. 57-59.

[83] Lady Betty Balfour (ed.), Personal & Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton (London, etc.: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1906), II, 341-342.

> rural populations, who are pacific, are being assured that the Germans so fear him that, by placing him in power, they will effectually prevent France from being attacked, and thus avert the danger of war.[84]

By early April, the Paris embassy believed itself to be witnessing the popular military man effortlessly making the transition to popular politician. A letter from Lytton to Lady Salisbury left no doubt on this:

> Meanwhile Boulanger is waxing fat and kicking very vigorously. His popularity and influence grow apace; and the Parliamentary Republic is so worn out and so unpopular, that I think he has a very good chance of upsetting it: in which case he will probably upset both France and himself into the bargain.[85]

Boulanger's victory on April 15, and his ensuing apparent push for political power, naturally reaffirmed to Salisbury the war-like nature of the movement which had concerned him during the previous winter. Even Queen Victoria now evidenced anxieties in connection with the relative strengths of the French and British Mediterranean fleets.[86] She again demonstrated her apprehensions in a late-April interview with Bismarck in Berlin. "I said [she later recounted], France did not wish for war, in which he [Bismarck] agreed, but her government was so weak and powerless she might be forced into anything."[87]

In May, British fear of a French invasion attained sufficient dimensions as to contribute eventually to passage of the Naval Defense Act of 1889.[88] Alarmist articles appearing in prominent British journals

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84 Ibid., 344.

85 Ibid., 345.

86 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 399-400.

87 Ibid., 404-405.

88 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 94-95, 183. For an excellent account

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fanned anxiety over the invasion threat. Rapid increases in French armaments accompanying and following the war-scare of 1887 had also caused concern, but probably a greater source of tension had been the sinister color added to this military build-up by the proclamations of the followers of Boulanger. Thus journalistic comment continued to view the General with apprehension. At the beginning of June, The Westminster Review saw fit to carry an article by a French politician, Yves Guyot, in which he attempted to discuss objectively the arguments of the anti-Boulangists and the Boulangists. This endeavor at impartiality immediately collapsed as Guyot revealed himself to be an ardent anti-Boulangist. Attributing the successes of the General to the French traditional need to incarnate the nation's whole essence in some living entity, he stated that the revival of Boulangism was nothing more than the rebirth of the spirit of Bonapartism. Guyot urged, however, that Boulanger was not a Bonaparte and, unlike Bonaparte, would not succeed. Boulanger's popularity, he continued, arose from a combination of his own flamboyancy and French boredom--boredom with the complacent and bungling republican administration. Guyot proposed that the French government act with vigor and quickly obliterate all aspects of

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of the controversy surrounding the Naval Defense Act of 1889, see Lord George Hamilton, Parliamentary Reminiscences and Reflections, 1868-1906, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1916-1922). The Russian ambassador to Britain, Baron Egor Egorovich Staal, did not agree that there was any widespread British panic from the fear of immediate French invasion. He did admit, however, that the need for security and increasing the defenses of the country became the interest of the first order. See his letters of May 6 and May 20 to Nicolas de Giers, the Russian foreign minister, in Baron A. Meyendorff, Correspondance Diplomatique de M. Staal (1884-1900) (Paris: Librairie des Sciences Politiques et Sociales, 1929), I, 417-418, 423.

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See above, p. 67.

Boulangism.[90] At the first of the month, Gabriel Monod offered his harshest treatment of Boulanger so far. He discounted the probable success of the Boulangist movement on the grounds that it received its impetus from mercurial popular acclaim, but added like Guyot that the public discontent with the current republican government could certainly help elevate Boulanger to power if it continued:

> To sum up: the Boulangist movement consists of three things--a politico-financial intrigue conducted by rogues, madmen and self-seekers, too few and too insignificant to be formidable; a popular infatuation, which would die out of itself if it had nothing to feed it; and finally, a growth of dissatisfaction with the present régime, which is very formidable indeed, which rests upon very real grounds, and which will assuredly end in the ruin of the Republic if Republicans themselves do not find some way of appeasing it.[91]

After June 4th, when Boulanger's motion for the revision of the constitution was promptly defeated by the chamber, The Times began to relax; its articles for the rest of the month[92] tended to interpret this defeat as a decisive setback for Boulanger. In reporting the failure of Boulanger's motion, Blowitz again displayed the strange sympathy for the man that he had shown before on several occasions when it seemed that the General and his movement were heading for oblivion:

> It must be wished, for the sake of General Boulanger, of France, and of peace, that he will abandon the pitiful rôle that he has adopted, will resume his sword, and will efface by the display of military virtues the recollection of the political farce just played by him amid the united hisses of all men of common sense.[93]

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90 Yves Guyot, "France and Boulangism," The Westminster Review, CXXIX (June, 1888), 748-764.

91 Gabriel Monod, "Contemporary Life and Thought in France," The Contemporary Review, LIII (June, 1888), 912.

92 The Times, 5 June 1888; 11 June 1888; 21 June 1888.

93 Ibid., 5 June 1888.

An editorial also agreed that the checkmate in the chamber was a distinct rout for Boulanger and his movement, contending that he had had no real program and that even his supporters no longer fully believed in him.[94] The Saturday Review, however, took an opposing view to that of both Blowitz and The Times. Rejecting the contention that both The Times and people on both sides of the channel had accepted--namely that Boulanger was politically finished--it pointed out that Boulanger's popularity did not rest upon his oratorical ability and that, therefore, his failure had not necessarily impaired his standing.[95]

Although The Times and The Saturday Review disagreed over whether or not Boulanger's abortive attempt before the chamber meant his political defeat, the fear of a French invasion still prevailed in Britain. A Times editorial demonstrated concern over this question. For some time, the possibility of building a tunnel under the English channel to connect the South-Eastern Railway with France had been explored. As the editorial pointed out, considerations of British national defense posed one of the biggest obstacles to such a project. What if the French at some time decided to use the tunnel for an invasion of Britain? One answer to this question was to equip the tunnel with explosives so that, if a French invasion seemed imminent, a push-button could ignite the explosives and destroy the tunnel.[96] The idea of the button became the butt of much satire. For example, Lord Randolph Churchill poked fun at the thought of

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[94] Ibid.

[95] "The Twentieth Fall of General Boulanger," The Saturday Review, LXV (June 9, 1888), 681.

[96] The Times, 27 June 1888.

the British cabinet sitting around such a button, trying to decide whether or not to push it.[97] George Robert Sims, who wrote for The Referee under the pseudonym Dagonet, also touched upon another facet of the problem in a satirical poem entitled "The Button." The last stanza of the poem reads thus:

> The tricolour floats from St. Paul's to-day,
> For, led by the General Boulanger,
> The French have come, and they mean to stay,
> Now they've passed the dangerous button.
> When out of order it proved to be,
> The whole French army came through with glee
> That wonderful tunnel beneath the sea--
> And so much for Sir Watkin's button![98]

Just as Boulanger's June defeat over the proposal to revise the French constitution had not completely erased anxiety in journalistic circles over a French invasion so did his setback evidently fail to allay government fears of such a development. As early as the beginning of May, Wolseley's speech[99] envisioning a French attack on London had given additional support to alarmist ideas. Other noted military authorities like Lord Charles Beresford had provided credence for Wolseley's ideas, and, before the month was over, Victoria's concern over the relative strengths of the French and British fleets seemed merited. The invasion scare continued well into the summer; accordingly, during May the foreign office concerned itself mainly with the questions of national defense and security. Letters circulated between Salisbury, Victoria, and her secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby, relative to strengthing

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97 Ibid., 28 June 1888.

98 George R. Sims, Dagonet Ditties, 2nd ed. (London: Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly, 1891), p. 108.

99 See above, p. 68.

the Mediterranean fleet, assessing the condition and availability of weaponry, and increasing the manpower of the army.[100] The seriousness with which Britain viewed Boulanger at this time stands out in the words of Salisbury's daughter and biographer. On Boulanger and the invasion scare she wrote that

> . . . crowds attended him wherever he appeared, and the sentiments uttered left it doubtful as to which of France's three neighbours would be the first against whom her pre-eminence was to be vindicated.
>
> In England, nervousness expressed itself that spring and summer in a widespread panic as to the possibilities of French invasion--a panic which became a contributory cause of the introduction of the Naval Defence Act in the following year.[101]

Throughout June, Whitehall continued to pursue questions concerning the army, navy, and national security. In a "very confidential" letter to Salisbury on June 8, the Queen reiterated grave worry over the armed forces, condemned certain people in high position for their complacency and incompetence, and agreed with the consensus that the army and navy were not first class.[102] Salisbury replied on the 12th that Wolseley

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100 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 409-411. The German foreign office also noticed this new burst of French chauvinism. Friedrich von Holstein, a leading official in the German foreign office, recorded the following in his diary under the heading "Highly confidential."

> One of the Ministers told me that he and his colleagues had the impression that the Chancellor would now welcome a war with France. They had all left the session in a very grave mood.
>
> I too regard this as a serious sign, but it takes two sides to make a war. Unless Boulangism causes the French to lose their heads entirely they will not start a war this year, and we shall not start one, according to H.H.

See Norman Rich and M. H. Fisher (eds.), The Holstein Papers (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955-1963), II, 376.

101 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 94. Italics are mine.

102 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 413-414.

was saying things in public that should only be revealed in private counsel. He added that it seemed necessary to increase the number of marines and concluded by remarking that "The allegations of Lord Wolseley that London is open to attack are being carefully examined; and efforts will be made to supply any existing deficiencies of organization."[103]

A Naval Committee, formed to investigate the military deficiencies, reported near the end of autumn. It advised endorsement of the double standard (i. e., increasing the strength of the fleet to equal that of the combined navies of France and Russia, which after Britain had the two largest ones in the world). Such a boost would give Britain more than adequate seapower, since France seemed her most likely enemy and Russia appeared to be moving toward a French alliance.[104] The action of the Naval Committee culminated in the introduction and passage of the Naval Defense Act by parliament in March of the next year.

During the month of July, two incidents occurred which in the opinion of British journalists had undoubtedly to sound the death knell of Boulanger's movement. On July 12, the General appeared before the chamber and asked for its dissolution. This request occasioned a quarrel between the deputy and the premier, Floquet, which resulted in Boulanger's resigning his seat and fighting a duel with Floquet on July 13. In the duel, fought with rapiers, the civilian seriously wounded the General. It thus seemed that, if this latest fiasco did not result in the political death of Boulanger, physical causes would. A Times editorial surmised that the ridiculous incident would at any rate finish

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103 Ibid., 414-415.

104 Hamilton, Parliamentary Reminiscences and Reflections, II, 105-106.

Boulanger politically once and for all. It continued that

> Throughout Europe the general verdict will be in brief "served him right," and there will further be a tolerably universal feeling that the danger of disturbance has been appreciably lessened by the swordmanship of the French Premier. There are cases in which one's natural sympathy for the vanquished is overborne by other considerations, and of such cases the present one is typical.[105]

Punch also satirized the incident in a cartoon, "Bombastes Furioso À La Française"[106] (see next page).

While Boulanger was recovering, a second incident occurred to strengthen the observers' view that he was through: he lost the by-elections held in the Ardèche and Dordogne districts. Blowitz, in reporting Boulanger's defeat in those contests, pointed out that "The good sense and dignity, the good repute and peace of France yesterday won a conspicuous victory . . . ."[107] He then asserted that suspicion was developing over the source of the General's financial backing.[108] Blowitz had raised this point on several previous occasions. A Times editorial on the same day went so far as to predict that if Boulanger did not win the upcoming election in the district of Nord, he would be as politically dead as his movement already was.[109] Even The Saturday Review, which had until now refrained from joining others in forecasting the political defeat of the General, predicted on July 28 that this

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105 The Times, 14 July 1888.

106 "Bombastes Furioso À La Française," Punch, no. 95 (July 28, 1888), 37.

107 The Times, 24 July 1888.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

BOMBASTES FURIOSO À LA FRANÇAISE.

(Adapted from the Old English Burlesque.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King Artaxominous (insulted and floored by General Bombastes) .	The Royalist Party.
Distaffina (a Faithless Flirt)	Mdme. LA FRANCE.
Fusbos (a Prime Minister, who is victorious over General Bombastes in a duel)	M. FLOQUET.
and	
General Bombastes	GÉNÉRAL BOULANGER.

*** The situation represented is the finish of the combat between *Prime Minister Fusbos* and *General Bombastes*, and it may be interesting to add that, in the original version, the *finale* ran thus:—

Distaffina (distracted).	Briny tears I 'll shed.
Artaxominous (rising unexpectedly).	I for joy shall cry, too!
Fusbos (considerably astonished).	Zounds! the King 's alive!
General Bombastes (suddenly sitting up).	Yes! and so am I, too.

But in the French version this order will not be exactly followed, as *General Bombastes* will sing the second line. *Fusbos*, much astonished, will exclaim, "*Tiens! il vit encore!*" and the King will sing the last line. So far, the rehearsals have been eminently satisfactory.

Punch, July 28, 1888.

latest political defeat might possibly be the end for Boulanger and his movement.[110]

The two setbacks Boulanger suffered during July no doubt lessened British concern over the possibility of a French invasion. In fact, from news reports the British reading public might have reasonably concluded that Boulanger was all but finished. As August began, nothing happened to dispel such a belief. A Times editorial even proclaimed that Boulanger had sunk so low that he was at the point of becoming a common lawbreaker who would be quickly arrested.[111]

Contrary to the prevalent assumption, however, that the July setbacks had signaled the end of Boulanger as a political threat, he again surprised British observers by triumphing on August 19 as a candidate in by-elections in the districts of Nord, Somme, and Charente Inférieure. During the rest of the month, therefore, a general but not unanimous reassessment of Boulanger characterized journalistic and press opinion of him. A Times editorial reported that

> The effect of his victories on foreign opinion has been considerable. Every one agrees that by being brought thus vividly before the minds of his countrymen he must for some time be a danger to peace; and as a consequence neither in Berlin nor in Vienna is the news at all welcome.[112]

The Saturday Review maintained that Boulangism had revived and that large numbers of people who were previously skeptical of it were now swarming

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110 "General Boulanger Really Defeated," The Saturday Review, LXVI (July 28, 1888), 103.

111 The Times, 16 Aug. 1888.

112 Ibid., 21 Aug. 1888.

to the movement.[113] Mr. Punch aptly described Boulanger's resurgence in a cartoon entitled "Up Again!"[114] (see next page). After his victories, Boulanger, in what was obviously another publicity stunt, disappeared for several weeks. Throughout his disappearance the newspapers gave constant and generally erroneous reports of his whereabouts. Actually he was in Tangiers most of the time with his mistress, Marguerite de Bonnemains.[115]

During the last half of 1888, both the foreign office and the Paris embassy viewed the Boulangist movement as temporarily dormant but potentially very explosive. Reflecting on Boulanger's "disgrace" following his duel with Floquet, Lytton in July wrote to his close friend, the well-known jurist and author James Stephen, that

> I think you will have been amused by the reports of the Boulanger duel, which came off just after my return to Paris. I don't think it yet possible to guess what will be the practical effect of it on the political prospects of the Brav' Général. The next election will show. But one would suppose that to be worsted in sword-fence by a Pékin, and stuck in the throat like a pig by a fat civilian, would not redound to the credit of a military hero, and that the vox populi would say to him, "You silly man, you don't even understand your own silly trade." French sentiment, however, is incalculable . . . . The Parisian populace seems to care nothing about this or any other political event.[116]

Lytton's reluctance to predict in July the political fortunes of Boulanger seemed justified in August. Although The Times and journals were proclaiming the death of Boulanger to a believing public, the popular

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113 "The French Elections," The Saturday Review, LXVI (August 25, 1888), 229.

114 "Up Again!," Punch, no. 95 (September 1, 1888), 98.

115 Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 329.

116 Willson, The Paris Embassy, p. 293.

UP AGAIN!

Madame La République loquitur:—

Mon Dieu! He's up again, though with much splutter.
It seemed that his submergence was so utter!
But to the surface struggles he once more.
Pouf-f-f! No, I cannot say that he looks dignified:
But by his frog-like sprawl one thing is signified,—
That "*P'tit bonhomme*—BOULANGER—*vit encore!*"

There seemed an end to his thrasonic clowning.
But it appears that he is proof 'gainst drowning,
Like—well, to specify were too invidious.
Pinked by the "Usher," plunged into the flood
Of Ridicule that's like a bath of mud,
Here he is once again, alive though hideous!

Que faire? I feel that I should relish greatly
To "bonnet" him as I did PLON-PLON lately.
'Twould simplify my task if he would sink;
But one can't drown a cork that just bobs under
And then pops up. What will France say, I wonder?
And what, I wonder more, will BISMARCK think?

What is he? What's his aim? Which is his Party?
Is he a sort of Brummagem BUONAPARTE?
A squeezable and clayey mask of CÆSAR?
Who pulls the wires of this pert popinjay?
Am I indeed to be upset one day
By this preposterous, spray-spluttering sneezer?

I feel he is *my* foe. A foe *pour rire?*
Or one *fou furieux* more whom I've to fear?
Our geese betray the Capitol, not save.
My fools are my undoing. Despot some
Were better than a CLEON cracked and vain.
So you, my master, "popping up again,"
Spluttering, but with his head above the wave?

Frenchman recovered from his wounds and, as noted above, emerged triumphant in several by-elections on August 19. A Times editorial had reported that these new victories would probably not be welcomed in some European capitals, and a letter from Salisbury to Victoria on August 25 suggests that they were most unwelcome in London:

> France is, and must always remain, England's greatest danger. But that danger is dormant, so long as the present strained relations exists between France and her two Eastern neighbours. If ever France should be on friendly terms with them, the Army and Navy estimates would rise very rapidly.[117]

For the British reading public, however, the question by the beginning of October was no longer "Is Boulangism dead?" but "How soon will Boulanger achieve power and what effect will his gaining control have on Britain?" Blowitz commented that he daily received letters from concerned readers inquiring what Boulangism would lead to:

> . . . it [i. e., Boulangism] is the object of universal attention, and not a day passes without my receiving letters asking what it will lead to. To reply is rather embarrassing, for nearly all my correspondents seem to fancy that General Boulanger's accession is at hand. I cannot share that opinion, which seems, however, widely spread.[118]

The noted British traveler Wilfrid Scawen Blunt interviewed Boulanger in Paris on November 15, and found him a peaceful, honest, able man whose political destiny seemed about to be realized.[119] Five days later,

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117 Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 437.

118 The Times, 6 Oct. 1888. An article in Macmillan's Magazine, appearing in early November, went so far as to envision the possibility of a man like Boulanger and a movement like Boulangism coming to the fore in Britain and overthrowing the system of parliamentary government. See Cyril Ransome, "Boulangism In England: A Speculation," Macmillan's Magazine, LIX (November, 1888), 31-35. See also the follow-up article, Cyril Ransome, "Boulangism In England: Our Defences," Macmillan's Magazine, LIX (March, 1889), 350-354.

119 Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of

the substance of Blunt's interview appeared in The Times in the form of a letter to the editor. Blunt predicted that, because of the decline of parliamentary life and the decay of the ministry at Paris, Boulanger would succeed. In commenting upon the effect of a possible Boulangist coup d'etat, however, he stated that there was no reason for serious concern because the General would not help to precipitate a European war: "A revolution in France is a less serious affair than it sounds with us."[120]

A Times editorial disagreed with Blunt on all issues except his contention that much of Boulanger's popularity derived from French governmental impotency. Chiefly the editorial criticized Blunt's estimate of the General's personality and the effect his success would have on European peace.

> The world at large has not yet had assurance of the great qualities that Mr. Blunt ascribes so freely to the popular favourite. Still less is it prepared to accept his comfortable belief that lovers of France and partisans of peace have little cause for alarm in the success of Boulangism. On the contrary, we believe it will be found, when the day of Boulangism arrives, that it involves very serious perils for France and for the peace of Europe.[121]

While the month of December brought no new developments in the French political situation, comment about the certainty of Boulanger's pending success continued to build in Britain. The Nineteenth Century, for example, published an article by Frederick Greenwood, a prominent

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Events, 1888-1914 (London: Martin Secker, 1932), pp. 3-5. In the interest of objectivity, it should be mentioned that Blunt had told Boulanger that he would try to influence British public opinion in his favor. Furthermore, Blunt was a very impressionable man who commonly accepted the word of the men he interviewed at face value.

120 The Times, 20 Nov. 1888.

121 Ibid.

observer of foreign affairs, in which the journalist pointed out that, although Boulanger had been for a long time a figure of ridicule to British politicians, "The ascendency of General Boulanger in France is hardly doubtful any longer . . . ."[122] Even Gabriel Monod, in rehashing the developments of the summer and fall, believed that the French government's lethargy and incompetency in dealing with the explosive Boulanger situation was facilitating the General's rise.[123] In mid-December, a noteworthy letter to the editor appeared in The Times. Written anonymously by "AN OBSERVER," it pointed out that France was ripe for revolution, and that the most likely man to gather the fruits of such an eventuality would be Boulanger, and continued the observation that

> In England we are slow to anticipate the future, even when its shadow is cast upon the wall. We have for the most part abused with frankness, but scarcely with wisdom, the sun while he was below the horizon; we shall probably worship with fulsome adulation the same orb when he rises into the sky. It is a comedy which was enacted during the time of the late Emperor Louis Napoleon, and I wish that I could think that it would not be repeated with General Boulanger or some other successful aspirant to power.[124]

Now that the consensus of The Times and journals was that Boulanger would succeed, Blowitz thereupon began to decry the effectiveness the supposed buffoon would have when he actually gained control. He now maintained that if Boulanger arrived he would be powerless because his only strength was his popularity.[125] Later on, in an almost belligerent

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122 Frederick Greenwood, "The Recent Change in European Affairs," The Nineteenth Century, XXIV (December, 1888), 807.

123 Gabriel Monod, "Contemporary Life and Thought in France," The Contemporary Review, LIV (December, 1888), 906.

124 The Times, 17 Dec. 1888.

125 Ibid., 4 Dec. 1888.

tone, Blowitz pointed out that Boulanger's whole success derived from having zealously refrained from attacking the Republic, and now he dared the General to perpetuate his popularity while desisting from continual pretended support of the Republic.[126]

Throughout the remainder of the year, as The Times and various journals continued to speculate on the political future of Boulanger, diplomats clung to their persuasion that the Boulangist phenomena foreboded trouble. Lytton voiced his feelings in a letter to Lady Salisbury in December:

> The political situation is really a very odd one. There is nothing visible on the surface, but the feeling of coming change is in the air. Every one takes it for granted that things can't last much longer as they are, and all the prominent politicians here seem to be horribly frightened that something dreadful is going to happen to them.[127]

With the advent of the new year, comment on Boulanger by Charles Beresford, Captain of the Royal Navy and an expert on British naval affairs, appeared in print. Beresford agreed that the Frenchman's triumph was no longer merely a possibility, but a probability. Joining the ranks of other observers who had previously warned that Boulanger's accession might menace Britain, Beresford reasoned that the General would have to go to war to retain power, and, that since Germany's strength was a deterrent to such action, he would logically turn against Britain.[128]

During January, conditions arose which allowed the Boulangist

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126 Ibid., 19 Dec. 1888.

127 Balfour, Personal & Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton, II, 376.

128 Charles Beresford, "The British Fleet and the State of Europe," The Nineteenth Century, XXV (January, 1889), 5-7.

movement to reach its apogee. Near the end of the old year, the death of a Parisian deputy named Hude, who represented the department of Seine, created a vacancy in the chamber; the government thereupon chose January 27 as the date for the required by-election. Boulanger's followers recognized an opportunity to demonstrate his popularity in the untested capital and quickly entered his name as a candidate. The Republicans chose an ex-liquor dealer to represent their party in this very important test of strength. A victory for the Boulangists in this election promised to be practically tantamount to inviting the General to march on the Élysée.

Boulanger's bid for the public office now prompted speculation by Blowitz and The Times on the likelihood of a Boulangist triumph and on its consequences. Blowitz suggested that a Boulanger victory on January 27 would hasten the looming clash between President Carnot and the General, and the journalist's bleak tone indicated that even he was beginning to accept the inevitability of a Boulangist dictatorship.[129] Two editorials that pointed out the grave consequences of a Republican defeat gave further support to Blowitz's idea that success for the General would quickly induce an encounter with Carnot.[130] By the second week of January, both Blowitz's columns and The Times' editorials contained tacit acceptance of Boulanger's winning the contest.[131] In mid-January, Blowitz forecasted that France's destiny hung upon the

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129 The Times, 1 Jan. 1889.

130 Ibid., 2 Jan. 1889; 4 Jan. 1889.

131 Ibid., 7 Jan. 1889.

election and that if Boulanger won her lot would be war.[132] Two days before the election Blowitz reported that "On Sunday will take place the election which is to decide whether General Boulanger shall become deputy for Paris, and on the issue of that election it seems tolerably certain that the fate of France more or less directly depends."[133]

In the meantime, the Boulangist committee had spent funds lavishly to decorate virtually every square meter of real estate from the Louvre to the Tuileries Gardens with posters and placards concerning their hero. The Republicans had countered in a like manner, and for the first time France witnessed large-scale electioneering with songs, banners, posters, and related propaganda. On the night of January 27, a holiday air of excitement prevailed in Paris as the election results were returned, and with the General's winning by a majority of approximately 82,000 votes. That night Boulanger and his committee held a victory dinner at the Café Durand, and, as an immense crowd gathered in the streets, the night became alive with the reechoed cries of "Vive Boulanger!" and "A l'Élysée!" Boulanger now reached the peak of his power and popularity. With his name upon the lips of thousands of followers, with the police and national guard generally sympathetic to his cause, with the government in a state of shock and impotency, and with the Republican leaders already contemplating their exile to New Caledonia, there seems to be little reason to doubt that at this moment Boulanger and his followers could have successfully enacted a coup d'etat.[134] At the hour of his greatest ascendancy,

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[132] Ibid., 14 Jan. 1889; 23 Jan. 1889.

[133] Ibid., 25 Jan. 1889.

[134] Brogan, France Under The Republic, p. 207.

however, Boulanger failed to make any move to establish himself as the master of France, and the force which at eleven o'clock was on the threshold of changing the history of modern France was at midnight already in decline.[135]

As the new year began, the foreign office felt marked concern over the outcome of the impending French elections and their consequences for Britain. Anxiety also received encouragement from Berlin. On January 11, 1889, Bismarck instructed Hatzfeldt to approach Salisbury at the first opportunity and ask for an immediate and publicly announced defensive

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[135] The reason or reasons for Boulanger's not attempting a coup d'etat on the night of January 27 have always been a question of historical uncertainty. The two most commonly accepted interpretations of Boulanger's inaction are that he lacked the courage for such an undertaking or that he preferred to achieve power through legal means. The first of these explanations is completely unbelievable in the light of Boulanger's heroic military record prior to his becoming minister of war. The second interpretation is unlikely because the Boulangist committee had so far not demonstrated any scruples in regard to legality. It seems more reasonable, however, to believe that Henri Rochefort and others had from the beginning exercised a controlling influence over Boulanger and that Rochefort actually made the decision that the Boulangists would not attempt the coup d'etat. Rochefort relates an example of this control over the General in his autobiography, The Adventures of My Life, II, 342. Furthermore, he states that he opposed a take-over by force on the 27th although other members of the Boulangist committee favored forceful action. See The Adventures of My Life, II, 329-330. Frank Harris, the noted British journalist and editor of The Fortnightly Review, who attended the victory celebration that night, gives additional evidence to support the last theory. He reports that when he encouraged Boulanger to make the attempt, the General finally replied "'I'm willing and ready. See Rochefort and Dillon: if they agree, we'll start.'" Harris then found Rochefort and informed him that the General approved attempting a march on the Élysée, to which he replied "'We're not ready. We've made no preparations!'" When Harris returned to Boulanger, the General immediately asked, "'What does Rochefort say?'" Harris informed him of Rochefort's reply and then tried to convince Boulanger that Rochefort was wrong. The General then merely repeated Rochefort's reply, and, according to Harris, his last words on the subject were "'I can't act against Rochefort.'" For the complete account of this discussion and Harris' part in it, see Frank Harris, My Life and Loves, ed. John F. Gallagher (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963), pp. 479-482.

alliance directed solely against France. The terms of the pact should specify that if France attacked either Britain or Germany both countries would retaliate.[136] Salisbury was to decide the duration of the agreement. No doubt the summer invasion scare, the trend in British foreign policy over the past year toward a limited entente with the Central Powers, and now the menacing Boulanger developments prompted Bismarck to think Salisbury would welcome such an offer. Undoubtedly Salisbury eagerly desired a union of this nature; however, he realized that the summer invasion scare had abated, that his previous policy of cooperation with the Central Powers was unpopular in Britain, and that there would be tremendous parliamentary obstacles to such an aggressive design. These conditions, therefore, dictated his reluctant refusal.[137]

As the date of the French elections approached, the feeling in Berlin if not in London was one of resignation to the inevitable. Prince Hohenlohe wrote that the Emperor, "Speaking of France . . . opined that Boulanger would certainly succeed. He already saw the time when Boulanger as Emperor Ernest should pay a state visit to Berlin."[138] Lytton's and Salisbury's silence until after the election amounts to tacit agreement with such predictions of Boulangist victory. On January 27, as Paris resounded with the cry of "Vive Boulanger!," and the General emerged

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136 Henry W. Cooke and Edith P. Stickney, Readings in European International Relations Since 1879 (New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931), pp. 25-26, quoting from Die Grosse Politik, IV, 400ff.

137 Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 115-119. Bismarck offered a similar proposal in March, but Salisbury's answer remained the same. See Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 119-124.

138 Curtius, Memoirs of Prince Chlodwig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst, II, 410.

from the election victorious, it is likely that Salisbury, who must have been rueing his inability to accept the German alliance-proposal, found Boulanger's victory intensifying his feelings in the matter.

CHAPTER III

THE FALL OF BOULANGER

The election of Boulanger to political office on the night of January 27, 1889, brought quick responses from British observers of French affairs. For the most part, these analysts viewed Boulanger's victory as a probable omen of his impending ultimate success. Boulanger, however, failed to take advantage of the favorable election returns. This inaction resulted in the swift deterioration of the movement over the following months. Ironically, not until Boulanger's political defeat in September of the same year did the preponderance of British opinion see that the apparently menacing movement had actually been in decline since the night of the General's January victory.

After Boulanger's success, Blowitz believed the situation to be grave but refrained from construing the election as a mandate for him: "Foreigners, however, must not, as I have already said, exaggerate the consequence of the movement. It should be remembered that Parisian electors have always shown a desire of giving a lesson to the Government of the day."[1] The correspondent did feel, however, that the government would have to grapple quickly with the Boulangist movement because of its increasing size. As he pointed out, many people who had previously waivered in their party affiliation were now becoming openly avowed Boulangists.[2] The line taken by The Times was much more pessimistic

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[1] The Times, 28 Jan. 1889.

[2] Ibid., 31 Jan. 1889. Blowitz's contention about the size of the Boulangist movement received support from The Saturday Review, which pointed out that thousands of Frenchmen were now joining the Boulangist

about Boulanger's victory than Blowitz's. An editorial disagreed with Blowitz on the consequences of the election, averring that foreign observers correctly interpreted the results as an indication of forthcoming tremendous changes.[3] The Times also felt that the election returns could possibly deal a fatal blow to both the incumbent Floquet ministry and the whole republican structure. On the subject of Boulanger's future possibilities, it commented that "What the people who believe in General Boulanger can hope from his advent to power we are unable to understand, but they mean evidently that he is to have his chance, and after the election of yesterday it may be taken for granted that in one way or other he will have it."[4]

The Paris embassy, like The Times, reacted apprehensively. Lytton wrote to Salisbury the day after the election that

> Boulanger, with his majority of over 80,000, has now nearly obtained all the weird sisters promised him. Thane he is and shall be king hereafter. Floquet's confident calculations have been tremendously refuted. . . .At a Cabinet Council last night at the Elysée, when the result of the election was known, Floquet it is said, tendered his resignation. Carnot refused to receive it; and the Government stays in till it is turned out by the Chamber. . . . The character of the next Ministry depends upon Carnot. But Carnot himself depends upon circumstances, the turn of which I cannot attempt to forecast.[5]

A letter remarking upon the situation in France from General Galliffet[6]

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aggregation. See "General Boulanger In Port," The Saturday Review, LXVII (February 2, 1889), 114.

[3] The Times, 29 Jan. 1889.

[4] Ibid., 28 Jan. 1889.

[5] Balfour, Personal & Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton, II, 378.

[6] See above, p. 41.

to the Prince of Wales no doubt disheartened this avid supporter of the Gallic Republic about the future of French government. The letter, dated "Year I of the Boulangerie," informed the Prince that

> The hero of the day is no more handsome than a month ago, no more useful, and no more glorious. Nevertheless he has found 240,000 enthusiasts. These can certainly be analyzed into the following elements: 160,000 Commune socialists, freed convicts, pimps, etc.; 80,000 domestic servants, cabmen, waiters, street scavengers, who have been promised that Boulanger will raise their wages, plus a certain number of penniless students and gentlemen of fashion.[7]

Galliffet further doubted that the government would initiate the necessary action to suppress the movement, although he believed such measures could possibly curtail the impetus of the Boulangist aggregation. Like Blowitz, he felt that much of the Boulangist vote indicated a desire on the part of the electors to chastise the government. In conclusion, he stated that "There is nothing here to restore a position for us in Europe. . . .Germany will be the gainer more than any other country whatsoever."[8]

Another important student of French affairs, Lord Randolph Churchill, voiced a dissenting view of the General's success. In retrospect, his assessment was the most accurate, for he alone seemed to realize the failure of the Boulangists in taking good advantage of their triumph. He wrote to Lady Churchill on February 5 that "Boulanger does not seem to me to have made as much out of his victory as he ought. If he does not do something soon, the effect of it will be forgotten."[9]

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[7] Maurois, The Edwardian Era, p. 76.

[8] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[9] Jennie Jerome (Lady Randolph) Churchill, The Reminiscences of Lady

The British public's reaction to Boulanger's election can, of course, be inferred to a great extent from The Times and journal articles; additional insight on the populace's response at this time, however, is provided by two commentaries directly upon the general tenor of their feelings. In an article written before the election, but published after it, Frederick Greenwood contended that the British still had not gotten over the invasion scare of the previous spring:

> Some of the most authoritative persons in our own country fear that the General's attention will be turned to England. What special reasons there may be for this apprehension I do not know. But it exists where nearly all that can be known is known, and that it is a plausible fear is manifest.[10]

Boulanger's latest success most certainly intensified these lingering fears. Another seemingly objective viewpoint on public reaction came from Baron Staal, the Czar's ambassador to Britain. He wrote to his foreign minister, Nikolai Giers, on January 29 that the British had received the French election results with "manifest displeasure" and that nothing could be any less attractive to Britain than a France under a Boulangist dictatorship.[11]

In February the French government initiated measures to eliminate Boulanger as a political threat,[12] but even after these developments

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Randolph Churchill, ed. Mrs. George Cornwallis-West (New York: The Century Co., 1908), p. 263.

10 Frederick Greenwood, "The Distractions of German Statesmanship," The Nineteenth Century, XXIV (February, 1889), 265.

11 Meyendorff, Correspondance Diplomatique de M. Staal, II, 16.

12 On February 14 the Floquet ministry fell over the question of revision of the constitution and was duly replaced on the 21st by a ministry under Pierre Emmanuel Tirard. The most detrimental appointment in this new cabinet for the Boulangists was Ernest Constans, named minister of interior, for he quickly exerted all his talents to getting

The Times and journals began to accept the possible decline of the Boulangist movement only slowly and tentatively. Blowitz particularly took a dim view of these governmental stratagems designed to deflate the Boulangist balloon.. He pointed out in early February that France would not rid herself of Boulanger by forbidding multiple candidacies: "Just as fever patients often ask leave to change beds, the fever, however, remaining, so France will not get rid of Boulangism by changing the election system."[13] The Times initially agreed with Blowitz's line of thought, believing that legislative postponements and other such devices would not destroy Boulangism.[14]

During March, however, a shifting of opinion did begin to appear. The first sign of this change came when The Times admitted that such governmental actions as the attack on the League of Patriots and the recall of the Duke d'Aumale would probably adversely affect the Boulangist cause. Commenting with some hesitancy on Boulanger's furture, an editorial stated that

> His career up to the present time has been so extraordinary, he has survived so many misfortunes that would have been fatal to any other man, that to forecast his future, even for a month ahead, is the extreme of rashness; but it is hard to suppose that the conviction

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rid of the troublesome firebrand. The government began to prosecute the League of Patriots, the most militant arm of the Boulangist octopus. Furthermore, it allowed the Duke d'Aumale to return to France in hopes that his presence would bring about a split between the Boulangists and the monarchists who had joined the General's bandwagon, introduced legislation to forbid multiple candidacies, and finally made preparations to arrest the General himself. The Republicans further hoped that the opening of the Paris Exhibition (i. e., the hundred years anniversary celebration of the beginning of the French Revolution) with the newly completed Eiffel tower would distract the French masses from politics.

13 The Times, 6 Feb. 1889.

14 Ibid., 19 Feb. 1889.

> of the men at the head of the League of Patriots would not do him very considerable harm.[15]

Several days later Blowitz acknowledged that the setback incurred by Boulangism since January 27 and the eclipse of politics by the Exhibition might yet together save the Republic.[16] Perhaps the strongest verdict on Boulanger's having missed his chance appeared in The Contemporary Review, where P. G. Hamerton pointed out that the General could no longer take over and establish a military dictatorship.[17] Hamerton based his contention on the belief that now, as a deputy, Boulanger no longer had the power of a commanding position that he had once enjoyed as minister of war. Thus Hamerton speculated that ". . . I am inclined to believe that Boulanger has missed his opportunity."[18] Although a shift in the assessment of the General's chances of ultimate success clearly had begun, this gravitation was not unanimous. The Saturday Review, for example, felt that a Boulangist take-over was still likely.[19] And certainly neither Blowitz nor The Times had made unqualified predictions about Boulanger's decline.

At the Paris embassy, Lytton also seemed in the dark concerning the peculiar lethargy of the Boulangist movement. He was, however, the first observer to discover that rumors of the government's preparations for the

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15 Ibid., 12 Mar. 1889.

16 Ibid., 25 Mar. 1889.

17 Hamerton's piece was a follow-up of a Gabriel Monod article. See Gabriel Monod, "The Political Situation in France: 1789-1889, Part I," The Contemporary Review, LV (April, 1889), 477-494.

18 P. G. Hamerton, "The Immediate Future, Part II," The Contemporary Review, LV (April, 1889), 506.

19 "France," The Saturday Review, LXVII (March 23, 1889), 337.

arrest of Boulanger were true.[20] He wrote on March 31 to Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's secretary, about the government's nervousness over its decision to arrest Boulanger.[21] A letter of the same day to Salisbury gave a similar account and concluded with the statement that

> The general anticipation is that the Government, being now too far committed to withdraw from the position it has assumed, and its supporters being bent on getting rid of the General per fas aut nefas, his arrest on some charge or other will probably be effected in the course of next week, unless in the meantime he flies the country--a step recommended to him by some of the ministerial organs.[22]

On April 1, the man who had been a focal point of European concern for three years, left Paris quietly.[23] Boulanger traveled to Brussels and moved into the Hôtel Mengelle, from which location he would direct his party's activities for the next three weeks. The French government now publicly inaugurated proceedings against Boulanger, with the General to be tried in absentia on charges of conspiracy and embezzlement. Lytton appeared to be better informed on his flight than any other observer, for on April 3 he reported the full details of Boulanger's departure to Salisbury. The ambassador felt that had Boulanger not fled he would have been tried, found guilty, and transported to New Caledonia.

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[20] A little known fact is that Boulanger, aware of these rumors of his impending arrest and constantly being followed by detectives, had fled France for Brussels on March 14. Count Dillon, however, followed and inspired the General to return immediately. Neither the French government nor the public, therefore, knew of this flight. See Vizetelly, Republican France, pp. 334-335.

[21] Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 487.

[22] Balfour, Personal & Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton, II, 382-383.

[23] The commonly accepted idea that the government intended to frighten Boulanger and never really wanted to arrest him is incorrect. See Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 335.

But, as these events had not occurred, Lytton gave no opinion on what effect Boulanger's flight would have on the movement and his chances for power.[24]

Even after the General's flight, The Times and journals still failed to evidence full awareness of the declining nature of his movement. Although Blowitz and The Times initially judged Boulanger's departure as a serious and possibly disastrous mistake,[25] they rapidly reversed their positions to the point of allowing that neither the General's absence nor his impending trial would significantly damage his chances.[26] The Saturday Review agreed with this consensus. At first the journal found that Boulanger's flight was a serious mistake which might possibly destroy his popularity;[27] however, a later article in stressing the folly of the government's case against Boulanger commented that

> It is already apparent that he has not done himself any serious harm by absconding. Followers who were in a hurry to leave him are beginning to find that out, and are coming back. The General will apparently be able to wait in safety till it suits him to come back and stand that trial in person which the French law secures to the criminal who has been condemned in contumacy. Unless the law is changed for him, he will be able to do it when he likes; and of course he will do it just at the general election.[28]

Even Punch followed suit when it depicted the General as a flying fish who could both "go and return"[29] (see next page).

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[24] Willson, The Paris Embassy, pp. 294-295.

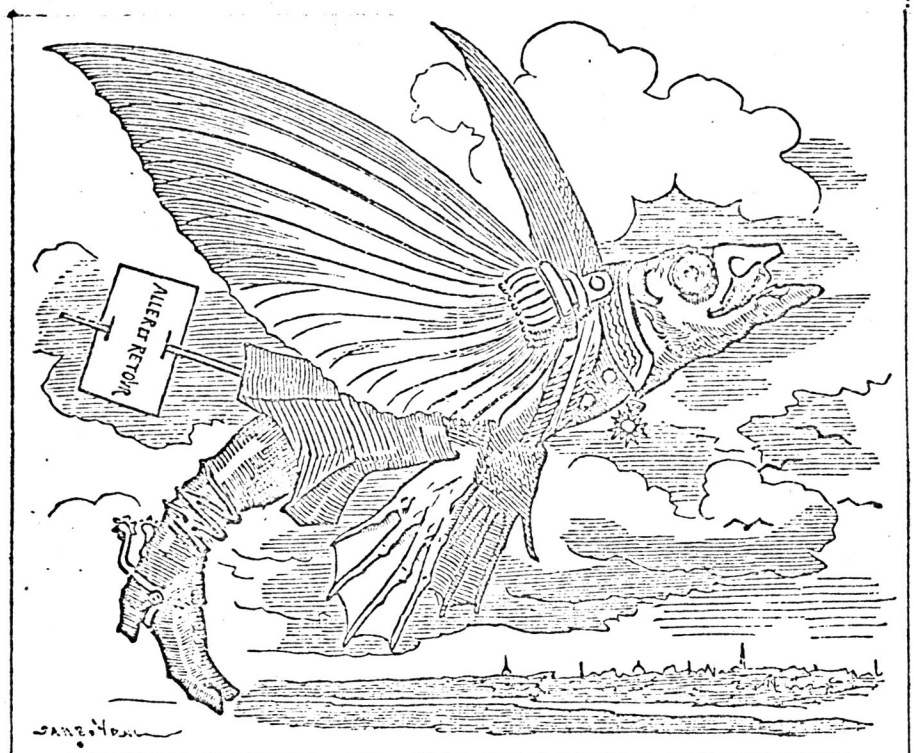
[25] The Times, 3 Apr. 1889; 4 Apr. 1889; 5 Apr. 1889.

[26] Ibid., 5 Apr. 1889; 8 Apr. 1889; 9 Apr. 1889; 15 Apr. 1889.

[27] "The Flight of the General," The Saturday Review, LXVII (April 6, 1889), 402.

[28] "The State Trial in France," The Saturday Review, LXVII (April 13, 1889), 433-434.

[29] "Poisson D'Avril; Or, The Boulanger Flying-Fish," Punch, no. 96



POISSON D'AVRIL; OR, THE BOULANGER FLYING-FISH.

Punch, April 13, 1889.

Because of continued Boulangist demonstrations and manifestos, which no doubt caused the Belgian government considerable embarrassment in handling its relations with France, the Belgian premier, Auguste Beernaert, informed the Boulangist forces that it would be to their interest to move their operations elsewhere. As sojourns in Britain by French fugitives had historical precedent, London became the logical refuge for the General. Thus the man who had caused Britain so much concern now went there. On this new turn, Blowitz commented that "The English nation is strong enough to put up with such guests; General Boulanger's satellites, however, will be swallowed up in London, and he himself will find the English temper quite contrary to the aims and methods of Boulangism."[30] A Times editorial agreed that politically Boulanger was unwelcome, but that, on the other hand, socially he would no doubt be successful in London. It then voiced its own curiosity and surely that of many Britishers by reporting that

> We shall all like to see the man about whom all France and nearly all Europe are just at present talking. Whether his visit is destined to be a short stage in a triumphant progress, or a long step in the downward path towards obscurity and oblivion, it will afford for the time a pleasing excitement, and will enable Englishmen the better to understand a man who, for reasons they have never yet been able to fathom, seems to have bewitched one half of France, and to have made himself feared by the other.[31]

At 3:15 p.m., on April 24, Boulanger arrived at Charing Cross railway station in London accompanied by many of his prominent followers. He did not pause to address the two thousand curiosity seekers who had

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(April 13, 1889), 173.

30 The Times, 23 Apr. 1889.

31 Ibid.

gathered to meet him, but went straight to the Bristol Hotel.[32] The General stayed there until early May, at which time he changed his residence to 51 Portland Place, where he would reside for nearly six months. From there, he directed his political machine in its preparations for the general elections in France, which were to be held September 22.

Boulanger received a mixed reception in London. Rochefort reported that he enjoyed immediate popularity,[33] but this appraisement did not hold true for all circles. Certainly the General's presence did not please the British foreign office, for his status as a French pretender living in London could have led to diplomatic difficulties with France. Salisbury immediately discovered one such problem in connection with British diplomatic representation at the opening of the Paris Exhibition. Attendance would imply sympathy with the revolutionary overthrow of the monarchy; however, as Germany and Russia were sending representatives, Salisbury recommended that Britain do likewise. In discussing this problem in a letter to Queen Victoria on April 22, he added that Boulanger's visit would only further complicate matters if Britain did not attend: "Our non-attendance would, therefore, be set down wholly to some quarrel with France; and, just at the time of General Boulanger's coming here, it might be awkward."[34] Baron Staal, the Russian ambassador, noted the difficulties that Boulanger's visit posed for Salisbury when he

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[32] Ibid., 25 Apr. 1889; "General Boulanger in London," The Saturday Review, LXVII (April 27, 1889), 490-491; "General Boulanger in London," The Illustrated London News, XCIV (May 4, 1889), 570.

[33] Rochefort, The Adventures of My Life, II, 354.

[34] Buckle, Victoria's Letters, Ser. III, vol. I, 495.

wrote to the Czarist foreign minister on April 24 that "I do not think that Lord Salisbury is very satisfied with this inopportune visit."[35]

In other circles, Boulanger attained immediate social success. Influential society leaders and even the Irish radical party wined-and-dined the General,[36] gave garden parties in his honor, and some even addressed him as the future French chief of state. Furthermore, Boulanger himself also entertained many notables at Portland Place. British interest in Boulanger and sympathy with his "patriotic task" reached such proportions, according to F. Turner,[37] that he felt compelled to write a biography of the General. This highly eulogistic work, published in 1889, obviously attempted to enlist British sympathy for the General and his cause. Besides referring to Boulanger as an "Anglo-Frenchman," Turner wrote that

> We have no doubt there are thousands of Englishmen, lovers of fair play, and admirers of a people bravely fighting for the liberties they themselves have long possessed, who will wish success to the plucky General and the millions of honest and patriotic citizens of all parties who are striving for the establishment of a strong, stable, and truly democratic Government, which shall adequately respond to the aspirations of the majority of the nation.[38]

Some British socialites, however, after meeting the General at parties and dinners, began to take a critical attitude toward him. The

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35 Meyendorff, Correspondance Diplomatique de M. de Staal, II, 28.

36 Ibid., 29; The Times, 27 Apr. 1889; 30 Apr. 1889; 11 May 1889.

37 Turner was Count Dillon's secretary.

38 Turner, General Boulanger, pp. 10-11. Another attempt to gain British support for Boulanger resulted in a journal article by Alfred Naquet, a ranking follower of the General. Naquet hoped to convince British liberals that Boulanger's goal was to protect the Republic, rather than destroy it, by replacing France's constitution with one

thoughtful journalist Ernest Alfred Vizetelly points out that, after British society found out what Boulanger really was, it "dropped him as suddenly as it had taken him up."[39] Vizetelly describes one of the visits he paid to Boulanger in this way:

> A house had been rented for him in Portland Place, and together with a host of English newspaper reporters, all the Boulangist tag, rag, and bobtail flocked to his receptions there. A visit we paid one Sunday filled us with much amusement. After filing past the General in the drawing-room, where all the men desired to shake hands with him, while the women, including some strange Leicester Square characters, were eager to exchange a kiss, we were prompted by a sound of revelry on high to explore the other parts of the house; and we then found most of the bedrooms occupied by individuals who, after paying their respects to the General, had felt desirous of drinking his health as often and as copiously as possible. It so happened that the enterprising agent of some French wineshippers had forwarded a large supply of champagne, claret, burgundy, and cognac; and the Boulangist stalwarts having procured a number of bottles of wine or spirits had retired with them to the seclusion of the bedrooms, where they sprawled on the beds and the floors, smoking and toasting the hero who was so gallantly kissing the ladies downstairs.[40]

Frank Harris also shared Vizetelly's opinion of the General's lack of social savoir faire. He reported that "In the summer he came over to London, a damp squib. . . .I dined with him a little later once or twice in Portland Place, but it was depressing and the champagne was appalling, sweet as sugar."[41]

Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill also dined with Boulanger on several occasions.[42] During these visits, Lady Churchill found the

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resembling that of the United States or Switzerland. See Alfred Naquet, "General Boulanger: I.--His Case," The New Review, I (June, 1889), 1-15.

39 Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 337.

40 Ibid.

41 Harris, My Life and Loves, p. 482.

42 Prior to leaving France, Boulanger had met Randolph and Lady

General to be unsure of himself, commonplace, and at best, an insipid conversationalist.[43] One of these dinners had particular importance, as the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, attended.[44] Lady Churchill recounted that dinner party in the following manner:

> As the General had no political mission in England, the Prince of Wales honored us with his company on one of these occasions. Among those who came, besides General Boulanger and Count Dillon who accompanied him, were the Duchess of Manchester (now the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire), Lady Norreys, Lord Hardwicke, Lord Hartington, Sir George Lewis, and Mr. and Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild, who got into great trouble with their French relatives for having been there. So confident of success were Boulanger and those about him at that time, that Count Dillon, who sat next to Mrs. de Rothschild, invited her in the General's name to stay at the Tuileries--"where we shall be in a few months," quoth he.
>
> There was in England a very strong opinion against Boulanger, and we were much taken to task for receiving and entertaining him; but Randolph was rather fond of exotic specimens of mankind, and liked to study them without regard to public opinion. Although undoubtedly a brave man morally, Boulanger was not sufficiently courageous to risk everything for a cause in which he undoubtedly was, as he perhaps suspected, a cat's paw.[45]

In the meantime, France occupied herself with the goings-on surrounding the Exhibition, and the government continued to be involved with the prosecution of Boulanger, Dillon, and Rochefort and with the impending

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Churchill several times, both in 1888 and 1889. In fact, on one occasion, Boulanger had autographed a picture of himself for Lady Churchill, dated March 3, 1889. Randolph Churchill's curiosity over the Frenchman continued when Boulanger arrived in London. For the autographed picture, see Churchill, Reminiscences, p. 267.

43 Churchill, Reminiscences, p. 258. Lady Churchill's attitude toward the General can in part be explained by her fond affection for the Duke d'Aumale.

44 Possibly Boulanger had already met the Prince in Paris. According to Roland Belfort, Boulanger, the Prince, and Randolph Churchill had spent an amusing evening at the famous Chat Noir. See Roland Belfort, "General Boulanger's Love Tragedy," The Nineteenth Century, CV (March, 1929), 415.

45 Churchill, Reminiscences, pp. 258-261. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt was also "taken to task" by the British Liberal Party for his sympathies for the General's cause. See Blunt, My Diaries, pp. 20-21.

passage of the law forbidding multiple candidacies. Of course, there also remained the ever present question of the upcoming general elections. These events, plus the General's activities in London, gave The Times and journals abundant opportunity during the summer months to speculate on his future chances.

With the September general elections approaching, both The Times and journals[46] at first hesitated to venture a prediction about the Boulangist's chances of success. Blowitz, in early June, showed his reluctance by reporting that "It is idle for any power on the Continent to reckon confidently on the policy of France nine months hence, since the result of the autumn elections may overturn the shrewdest calculations."[47] One premise for Blowitz's reasoning was that he felt Boulanger would return to France before the elections, risking imprisonment in order to win a plebiscite.[48]

With the passage of the law forbidding multiple candidacies in mid-July, however, Blowitz began to change his mind. He believed this law crushed any hopes Boulanger may have had for returning to France, for he felt the General would certainly not risk imprisonment to stand in one constituency.[49] The département elections, held in late July, strengthened the correspondent's skepticism of Boulanger's chances. Boulanger's

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[46] W. T. Stead, "Madame France and Her Brav' Général," The Contemporary Review, LV (June, 1889), 910-928; Camille Pelletan, "General Boulanger: II--His Impeachment," The New Review, I (June, 1889), 16-29; Anon., "Will General Boulanger Succeed?," The Universal Review, IV (1889), 157-182.

[47] The Times, 7 June 1889.

[48] Ibid., 13 July 1889.

[49] Ibid., 15 July 1889.

scant success (he had won in only twelve out of a possible eighty départements) led Blowitz to postulate that "It would be rash to predict the annihilation of Boulangism at the Parliamentary elections, but still more rash to predict its triumph after yesterday, and considering what may happen in the interim."[50] The Times[51] agreed, but qualified its position several days later by adding that "The General has risen from a fall so often that he may suprise the world yet again."[52]

During July the proceedings of the state against Boulanger continued. Both The Times and journals overtly criticized his indictment, which they believed to be based in many cases on superficial evidence. They further held that only the charge of malversation of public funds[53] could possibly

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50 Ibid., 30 July 1889.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., 2 Aug. 1889.

53 George R. Sims made use of this embezzlement charge to direct a satirical poem at the General. It read:

It costs some cash to catch the Gauls,
And placard all the Paris walls,
But his big balance never falls.
Who finds the money?

He travels like a little king,
And "cuts a dash" and "does the thing,"
And spares no cost to have his fling.
Who finds the money?

He's no estate, he's lost his pay,
Yet thousands go from day to day,
In working France for Boulanger.
Who finds the money?

In London he has settled down;
He means to have his fling in town--
A little king without a crown.
Who finds the money?

damage Boulanger's chances.[54] Nevertheless, on August 14 the High Court found the General guilty in absentia of conspiracy and embezzlement and sentenced him to deportation and imprisonment in a fortress.

Obviously the court's verdict rendered Boulanger's chances of victory almost nil, for it made him ineligible to stand in even one constituency without returning to France and asking for a retrial. Still there remained in The Times an unquenchable--an unreasonable--fear that by some stratagem or stroke of fate the General would manage to prevail anyway. There were, of course, some guarded prophecies of his failure, but the nearly obsessive belief that he might succeed predominated. A Times editorial stated on August 15 that it was "a little difficult to see how" he would manage such a maneuver,[55] but two weeks later the paper's editorialist and its correspondent both suggested that Boulanger would return before the election, stand trial, and hope for a revolution to free him.[56] The General made no such move, but Blowitz and The Times still kept the possibility of his success before the reading public. A

When kings and princes meet at tea,
When statesmen other statesmen see,
They jerk their thumbs at General B---
And whisper on the strict q.t.,
Who finds the money?

See Sims, Dagonet Ditties, p. 80.

54 The Times, 18 July 1889; "Boulangism," The Saturday Review, LXVIII (July 27, 1889), 96. Blowitz himself was called by the High Court to testify against Boulanger, but he informed them that he had no evidence against the General. He explained this summons to his readers by reporting that evidently a correspondent of a foreign newspaper had falsely written the court in his name that he (Blowitz) had testimony. See The Times, 5 June 1889.

55 The Times, 15 Aug. 1889.

56 Ibid., 30 Aug. 1889; 3 Sept. 1889.

Times editorial commented that "we cannot regard the results of next Sunday's voting as an absolutely foregone conclusion,"[57] and Blowitz stated that only a rash man would hazard a prediction of the outcome of the contest, for "Never have elections been more mysterious."[58]

The journals voiced even more explicit and apprehensive view of the General's prospects. The Saturday Review, feeling that the weakness of the evidence in the trial against him made the verdict of little consequence,[59] maintained that "It will not be the most suprising thing in General Boulanger's career if he does not come to the top after all in this ferment of little men and mean quarrels."[60] Lady Charles Dilke, although not seeing much chance for the overthrow of the Republic, did not discount the factor of Boulanger's popularity playing a part in the elections. She stated that "it seems to me very unlikely that the populace will cut General Boulanger adrift as lightly as the more educated section of French society may choose to do."[61] A most extreme article appeared indirectly in connection with the election. It showed that some Britishers, especially military leaders, still feared that a France under Boulanger would attack Britain. The author of the piece, Colonel F. Maurice, pointed out that Britain must be prepared to defend herself, for a Boulanger victory seemed probable to most watchers of France. On this subject he stated that

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57 Ibid., 16 Sept. 1889.

58 Ibid., 21 Sept. 1889.

59 "The Sentence on the General," The Saturday Review, LXVIII (August 17, 1889), 176.

60 Ibid., 177.

61 Lady Charles Dilke, "The Coming Elections in France," The Fortnightly Review, XLVI (July-December, 1889), 338.

> Let me put a case which will illustrate the importance of the matter from the point of view of those who are most nervously anxious lest any increase of our power should tempt us into ambitious courses. On Sunday, September 22, before these pages see the light, a question will have been decided which is of great importance to the peace of the world. Either the present rulers of France will then be retained in power, or General Boulanger will be the leader of a victorious assault upon them. Now I do not say that General Boulanger will succeed to power. I do not say that if he does succeed to power he will declare war upon England, but at this moment most of those who study France think that his success is possible, if not probable. . . .He may desire peace, but he must desire to satisfy the wounded vanity of France, to gratify the feeling which has placed him in power. No one supposes that he is very scrupulous as to the means he employs to gain his ends. Now is it morally right that the course of action which England shall take in regard to any question of her own policy as a nation shall be subject to the dictation of a man like General Boulanger?[62]

Unlike The Times and the journals, the Paris embassy harbored no illusions of Boulanger's effecting a comeback. Evidently aware of the moribund condition of the movement, Lytton was not plagued with any "ifs" regarding its future; in a letter to Lady Dorothy Nevill on August 25, he stated unconditionally that "Boulanger is generally thought to be smashed, and your friend Galliffet is proportionally elated, for he was thirsting for the blood of the Brav' Général."[63]

On September 22, France held her general elections, and, although Boulanger won in his chosen district,[64] the Montmartre division of Seine, the Boulangist condidates whom he had endorsed for other districts

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[62] F. Maurice, "Two Years of Naval Manoeuvres," The Contemporary Review, LVI (October, 1889), 518-519. Waddington, the French ambassador to Britain, also attested that many important British observers expected that Boulanger would succeed. See The Times, 23 Aug. 1890.

[63] Balfour, Personal & Literary Letters of Robert First Earl of Lytton, II, 389.

[64] Since Boulanger was ineligible, the seat naturally went to his opponent.

throughout France did not fare so well. Thus, the attempted Boulangist plebiscite, naturally weakened by the General's absence, failed miserably. The only center of noticeable Boulangist success was Paris, where after the second ballots eighteen Boulangist candidates were eventually elected. Merely the abundance of second ballots, however, demonstrated that the General remained, to a degree, popular. Boulanger, no doubt dismayed by the election, would have probably departed for America except that his followers persuaded him to remain for the second ballots. Since the second ballots also resulted in a defeat for the movement and since Boulanger's position in London had become quite uncomfortable, he decided to leave two days later, on October 8, for the isle of Jersey in the English channel.

All of the reluctance to predict the end of Boulangism that had been evident in The Times during the past year now disappeared. Both Blowitz and The Times' editorialists wrote obituaries confirming the death of Boulangism.[65] The results of the second ballots merely gave them a chance to reiterate their positions. Blowitz stated that "As for Boulangism, born from caprice and killed by a shrug of the shoulders, it disappears, leaving behind it men who would otherwise never have been heard of, and who owe to it all that they are or may be."[66] A Times editorial, which depicted the General as "a defeated and discredited adventurer," made the comment that

> We have only to consider what might have been, and compare it with what is, in order to measure the extent of this satisfaction. France has escaped from a grave peril--the peril of a great imposture,

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[65] The Times, 23 Sept. 1889; 24 Sept. 1889; 25 Sept. 1889.

[66] Ibid., 8 Oct. 1889.

> which, if successful, might have ended in confusion and might have ended in catastrophe.[67]

The sense of relief expressed in this passage indicates the seriousness with which the newspaper had regarded Boulanger.

Although the Paris embassy made no comment on the occasion of Boulanger's defeat, one British notable did. Randolph Churchill reflected the opinion of The Times as he wrote to Lady Churchill in September that "It is evidently all up with Boulanger. I suppose we shall have him now en permanence in London. People won't run after him quite so much."[68]

For the most part, journalistic reaction to the defeat of Boulanger agreed with that of The Times. Gabriel Monod, who had followed the General's career since 1886 in his articles for The Contemporary Review, felt that the General would never be able to recover from the defeat.[69] The Saturday Review also agreed that Boulanger had "failed";[70] however, in a later article, written several days after the second ballots, the journal obviously modified its position as it stated that

> The wildest paeans are being sung over the defeat, death, and destruction of Boulangism. The correspondent of the Times is sure, for the nth time, that the General is mort et enterré; there is, he thinks, no Boulangist party any longer. The facts are that the Boulangist have doubled their numbers and more in the Chamber (borrowing the increase chiefly from their kind friends the Royalists), that General Boulanger has carried nearly half Paris as far as seats go, and apparently has mustered more than half

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67 Ibid.

68 Churchill, Reminiscences, p. 263.

69 Gabriel Monod, "The French Elections," The Contemporary Review, LVI (November, 1889), 641.

70 "The French Elections," The Saturday Review, LXVIII (September 28, 1889), 341.

> the total votes. This is an odd sort of vanquishment, a very curious kind of annihilation.[71]

Surely this statement, although it is outside the general drift of opinion, indicates the extent to which Boulangism had awed some British observers.

Actually, for the rest of the year, and until Boulanger's death in September of 1891, the movement steadily decreased in power. The Paris Municipal elections, held in April, 1890, resulted in the victory of only three of eighty Boulangist candidates. No doubt this failure influenced the General's decision to dissolve his committee on May 21.[72] Finally, the publication of Le Coulisses du Boulangisme (i. e., "The Inside Story of Boulangism"), a series of articles written by Terrail-Mermeix and carried in Le Figaro,[73] exposed the previously hidden intrigues of the party and left the dead movement without even its honor.[74]

Both Blowitz and The Spectator belittled the revelations, stating that observers had suspected such from the beginning.[75] The Spectator further held that Boulanger's own character, and not these publications, had caused his fall. It postulated that

> General Boulanger is no doubt politically dead, not because he appears in the revelations as a loose-liver, or because he advertised himself like a quack-doctor--for France cares little about morality, and expects her heroes to be histrionic--but because he has been shown

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71 "The French Second Ballots," The Saturday Review, LXVIII (October 12, 1889), 395.

72 Vizetelly, Republican France, p. 340.

73 Terrail-Mermeix was a Boulangist deputy. These articles were later published in book form.

74 Brogan, France Under The Republic, p. 213.

75 The Times, 8 Sept. 1890; "The Boulangist Revelations," The Spectator, no. 65 (September 6, 1890), 300.

> to be a man whom no party could either thoroughly trust, or use with any certainty that at the supreme moment of the adventure he would not shrink back from its risks.[76]

The last event in the saga of Boulanger to elicit any major British reaction was his death. While still in Jersey, Marguerite de Bonnemains, the General's beloved mistress, contracted tuberculosis, and, because of the island's unsuitable climate, the pair moved to Brussels. As Madame de Bonnemains' health further deteriorated, the General himself aged quickly. He became a grief-stricken mere skeleton of his former self after she died in July 1891. With both his movement and his mistress dead, the General soon took his own life. On September 30, the man who had so far provided the greatest challenge to the Third Republic committed suicide in a Belgian cemetery on the grave of his mistress.

For the most part, British reaction to Boulanger's suicide was not sympathetic. A rare example of truly compassionate reaction, however, appears in a comment by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, the British traveler who had tried on several occasions to influence public opinion to accept Boulanger. On October 1, he recorded that "Poor Boulanger has blown his brains out over the grave of Madame Bonnemains. Politically he was already defunct, and this is a graceful and dramatic exit."[77] In contrast, The Times condemned Boulanger's final act. Blowitz quickly took advantage of his death to criticize him one last time. In reporting Boulanger's suicide, Blowitz attempted to sum up his career by writing that

> Nothing could have concealed his mediocrity except the illusion which his triumph might have cast like a halo about it. All of

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[76] "The Political Effect of the Boulangist Revelations," The Spectator, no. 65 (September 27, 1890), 400.

[77] Blunt, My Diaries, p. 57.

> his prestige vanished on the very day when it was seen that intrigue played a greater rôle in his career than heroism and his death, which may strike the popular imagination, is not likely to hide his faults or to excuse his ambition. . . .To-day Boulangism is a word which connotes all that menaces the dignity and the grandeur of a nation. . . .History has nothing more to ask of him, and France will try promptly to bury in oblivion a man who recalls to it only errors, insults, and intrigues. . . .and that with this corpse will be buried the latest personification of that execrable race known as "the Saviours of Society."[78]

A Times editorial further appraised the whole Boulangist episode by pronouncing that "Had he been other than he was, he might have been the master of France. Being what he was, he could not even endure to make himself the master of his own fate."[79]

Journalistic reaction to Boulanger's death was equally as severe as that of The Times. In its evaluation of Boulanger's career, The Spectator pointed out that he was an actor who tried to play Henri Quatre, an actor who realized all along that he was only playing a rôle. The Spectator concluded of Boulanger that "He could never have been a great man under any circumstances, for he lacked backbone in his character; but he had perceptions, he could administer, and if he had but believed completely in himself, he might have governed France, and perhaps affected the history of the world."[80] The Paris correspondent of Murray's Magazine took a similar position; he wrote that Boulanger's realization of his inadequacy prompted him to commit suicide.[81] Perhaps the most caustic journalistic

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78 The Times, 1 Oct. 1891. See also The Times, 2 Oct. 1891; 3 Oct. 1891; 5 Oct. 1891.

79 Ibid., 3 Oct. 1891. See also The Times, 1 Oct. 1891.

80 "The End of General Boulanger," The Spectator, no. 67 (October 3, 1891), 438.

81 "Tout Cela Pour Bibi!," Murray's Magazine, X (1891), 827.

treatment of the General's death appeared in Punch, where a satirical poem served as his obituary. It read:

> So high he floated, that he seemed to climb;
> The bladder blown by chance was burst by time.
> Falsely-earned fame fools bolstered at the urns;
> The mob which reared the god the idol burns.
> To cling one moment nigh to power's crest,
> Then, earthward flung, sink to oblivion's rest
> Self-sought, 'midst careless acquiescence, seems
> Strange fate, e'en for a thing of schemes and dreams;
> But Caesar's simulacrum, seen by day,
> Scarce envious Casca's self would stoop to slay,
> And mounting mediocrity, once o'erthrown,
> Need fear--or hope--no dagger save its own.[82]

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[82] "Boulanger," Punch, no. 101 (October 10, 1891), 179.

CONCLUSION

The preceding pages show that the course of British reaction to General Boulanger between 1886 and 1891 refuses neatly to follow one systematic trend. In fact, glancing back, one can see that it was often as mercurial as the man himself. From an examination of the maze of press, journalistic, foreign office, and personal evaluations of him, however, several salient features do emerge.

The Times and many journals changed their assessments of the General with every twist or turn in his fortunes; they were quick to predict the oblivion of Boulangism during its trials, and they were equally willing to grant its accession during its bright hours. Blowitz was the greatest spokesman for this point of view.[1] The very quantity of this sort of reaction indicates British concern over the General; a figure of little political significance does not evoke such copious evaluation.

Another group of writers, however, consistently voiced fear of the Boulanger phenomenon. Throughout the period, The Saturday Review reiterated that Boulanger was a threat to both the peace of Europe and to the political stability of France. The Daily News agreed. Furthermore, evidence has been produced which shows that some journalists, and especially military leaders, felt Boulanger was even more of a danger in that if he achieved power he would be a threat to the national security of

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[1] In connection with the oscillations that occurred in The Times and journals on the subject of Boulanger, The Saturday Review commented on Blowitz's treatment of the General that it resulted in "one of the most wonderful columns of rubbish that even the Paris Correspondent of the Times ever turned out." See "The Death of General Boulanger," The Saturday Review, LXXII (October 3, 1891), 373.

Britain. These individuals were united in their fear that France was still compelled by the desire to establish an empire and that, as Germany was too strong to attack, a France under Boulanger would naturally turn toward Britain in order to give substance to this dream.

In other British circles, observers felt Boulanger's career to be completely understandable in terms of fickle French sentiment; this explanation of his success, however, did not lessen the concern harbored about the General. Such British onlookers believed that Boulanger was the natural outgrowth of French mass-type democracy. As Lady Churchill pointed out, "The extraordinary rise and popularity of the man seems incredible, unless one takes into consideration not only the French character, which made such delirious enthusiasm possible, but also the state of France at that time."[2] William Thomas Stead, the famous journalist, further clarified this position by stating that

> This readiness to descend into the streets proves that, in a hundred years, France has not changed her nature, and is still an incalculable element in European politics. These two episodes [i. e., the conduct of Boulanger and his following] are quite sufficent to explain why Englishmen never feel the least confidence in the maintenance of a good understanding with the French, and what is of more importance, with Paris.[3]

Both of these comments reflect the British fear of French political capriciousness, and Boulanger, as a personification of that element, evoked anxiety not only over his personal aims but also over what he symbolized.

The reactions of the Paris embassy and Her Majesty's foreign office

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[2] Churchill, Reminiscences, p. 261.

[3] W. T. Stead, "Character Sketch: General Boulanger," Review of Reviews, II (September, 1890), 330.

to the Boulangist movement were throughout the period one of genuine concern. Reacting more quickly and more perceptibly than either The Times or the journals, Lord Lyons saw Boulanger as both a political and military threat by mid-1886. With suspicion of Boulanger's aims developing during the latter part of that year and Europe's envisioning an imminent Franco-German war in the opening months of 1887, diplomatic concern increased. Although Lord Salisbury was reluctant to accept the idea of a "war-cloud on the Rhine," the fear of military conflict nevertheless presented problems for the British foreign office in regard to maintenance of both the status quo in Europe and Belgian neutrality. Furthermore, the jingoistic outgrowth of Boulangism made itself felt in French foreign policy thereby increasing Anglo-Franco colonial problems to the point that Salisbury almost desired a war between France and Germany to end the "incessant vexation." Boulanger's dismissal from the post of minister of war offered little reprieve for the foreign office before the bellicose nature of his movement was again causing problems in Anglo-Franco colonial relations. By mid-February of 1888, this problem had reached such proportions that Salisbury believed the two countries lingering on "the sharp ridge that separates the slopes toward war and peace."[4] Salisbury, therefore, urged caution upon the British consul-general in Egypt, so that some colonial incident would not provoke armed hostilities. Added to these headaches, there developed in Britain during May of 1888 the fear that, as Britain would make an easier prey than Germany, France under Boulanger might invade. This "invasion scare"

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[4] Cecil, Life of Salisbury, IV, 95.

attained sufficient dimensions so as to contribute significantly to the eventual passage of the Naval Defense Act of 1889. According to William Langer, "with this famous act it may be said that the modern race for naval armaments began."[5] Langer then continues with "While Europe was lining the frontiers with enormous masses of men, and pouring funds into military expenditures, England now set the pace for extravagant naval construction."[6] Thus it might not be too rash to conclude that the British repercussions of the Boulanger crisis contributed a mite towards the European Powers' drift into the First World War.

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5 Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 478.

6 Ibid., pp. 478-479.

APPENDIX A

FOUNDED 1866

CONTEMPORARY REVIEW

(With which is incorporated THE FORTNIGHTLY)

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FROM:-
36 BROADWAY,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.I.
Tel: WHItehall 9101

Mr. Paul R. Hepler,
818 College View Apartments,
Greenville,
North Carolina 27834.

28th February 1967.

Dear Mr. Hepler,

Your letter of the 16th January has been passed to me.

I wish I could help you. Unfortunately, all our records were destroyed during the last war during the London blitz. We also lost all our backnumbers.

As you probably know, the Contemporary Review has always been Liberal in outlook, but its contributors express their own opinions, which are not necessarily those of the Review. W.T. Stead contributed to the Review for many years and was a close friend of Dr. G.P. Gooch, the historian, who was Editor from 1911 to 1960. Although Stead's article in 1889 was many years before Dr. Gooch took over, Dr. Gooch might know some of the background, and I suggest you write to him. At 93 he is still intellectually very active. His address is:

Dr. G.P. Gooch OL. CH. Litt. D.
Upway Corner,
Chalfont St. Peter,
Bucks.
England.

I am sorry that I cannot be more helpful,

Yours sincerely,

Arnold de Montmorency

Arnold de Montmorency

Chairman,

Contemporary Review Co. Ltd.

APPENDIX B

Upway Corner
Chalfont St Peter,
Bucks
14 march 67

Dear Mr Lepler,

thanks for your letter.

I am pleased to see interested you are in your chosen subject. I am glad you found the C.R. of that period useful. Did you find out was any other foreigner was on the staff? Now you should consult the other great Monthlies for your period: the Fortnightly, the Nineteenth Century. I forget whether the National Review existed at that time. I was only a boy being born in 1873 and therefore too young to have personal contacts, but I do vividly remember the extreme interest which we in England took in ~~her~~ career and most of us, I think, had Boulanger's no desire whatever to see him Master of France as we were rather afraid of what he might do in foreign policy. I expect you can get these great English Reviews at the Library of Congress in Washington of which my old friend Dr Sarkissian, is Librarian. If you go there you could tell him that I am interested in your work.

Good luck in your endeavours

Yours

(or G. P. Gooch)

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