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on the League of the Three Emperors 1881

J.Y. Simpson

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PETER ALEXANDROVITCH SABUROV

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J. Y. SIMPSON



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AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107626478

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First published 1929

First paperback edition 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-62647-8 Paperback

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PREFACE

THE League of the Three Emperors (1881) was a nineteenth-century political event of capital importance in the international life of Europe which has not yet received in itself that measure of investigation which it merits. Even to-day, apart from certain passages in Prof. A. F. Pribram's classical work on *Die politischen Geheimverträge Österreich-Ungarns* (1920), well-known in the English translation entitled *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary*, certain passages in Volume III of the revealing German Foreign Office publication entitled *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871–1914*, Edward von Wertheimer's *Graf Julius Andrassy: sein Leben und seine Zeit* (3 vols. 1910–13), and an admirable brochure, *L'Alliance des Trois Empereurs*, by Prof. K. Kratchounof of Sofia (1924), there is strangely little in the way of serious studies devoted mainly to the great issues involved.¹ The principal reason is that first-hand material bearing on the negotiations that led up to the League has hitherto been scarce.

In May, 1917, M. Saburov gave me a signed copy of his work in French entitled *Ma Mission à Berlin 1879–1884*, which had been printed for private circulation (*na pravakh rukopisi*) in St Petersburg a few months before the outbreak of the War. He expressed his desire to have it made available some time to the

¹ Reference may also be made to Prof. J. V. Fuller's work entitled *Bismarck's Diplomacy at its Zenith*.

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Western world, as he believed that it had value as a record of events. Two articles containing excerpts from these Memoirs were contributed by me to *The Nineteenth Century* in the months of December, 1917, and January, 1918, under the title "Russo-German Relations and the Saburov Memoirs" References to these selections in such works as *Die grosse Politik*, vol. III, pp. 113 n. and 133 n., and Sir C. Grant-Robertson's *Bismarck*, seemed to indicate that M. Saburov's too modest estimate of his own work deserved further consideration.

Accordingly, the main part of this volume constitutes a complete translation of *Ma Mission à Berlin*.¹ The Memoirs are preceded by an editorial Introduction in two sections, the first of which is of a more biographical nature, while the second represents a translation of an article entitled "Russie, France, Allemagne (1870-1880)" contributed by M. Saburov to *La Revue de Paris* (15 March, 1912). This article is included here as forming a peculiarly suitable introduction to the Memoirs themselves. The latter are followed by an editorial Postscript, the earlier portion of which is devoted to the light shed on the negotiations as furnished in the relevant communications to and from Prince Bismarck set forth in Volume III of *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914*. The second part is devoted to some general conclusions. The notes throughout, unless when expressly indicated to the contrary, are editorial.

¹ Extracts and short résumés from the original work have appeared in the Russian publication, *Krasny Archiv*, I, 64 ff. (1922).

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For much assistance in connection with these and the introductory biographical section, I am indebted to M. Peter Petrovitch Saburov, to Baron Alexander Felixovitch Meyendorff, who has kindly read the work in proof and supplied several important details in addition to those acknowledged in the text, and to M. Alexander Onou, late Russian Consul-General in London, whose personal relationship to Baron Jomini has made him an invaluable commentator on contemporary personalities and events. I wish further to acknowledge the courtesy of M. M. E. Sablin in granting permission for the examination of certain documents in the archives of the Russian Embassy in London, as also to thank Principal Sir C. Grant-Robertson, and Sir J. W. Headlam-Morley, K.B.E., friend and former colleague, for help ungrudgingly given. To the Editors of *Die grosse Politik* I wish to make acknowledgment of their generous permission to make use of such portions of the third volume of their monumental work as bears upon the present undertaking. Lastly, I would express my thanks to Miss Mona Fisher and Miss E. McNeil for their careful revision of the translations from the French and German respectively.

J. Y. SIMPSON

25 CHESTER STREET
EDINBURGH*July* 1929

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ABBREVIATIONS

D.G.P. *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette*
1871–1914.

P.S.T. A. F. Pribram's *The Secret Treaties of*
Austria-Hungary.