

THE EASTERN QUESTION

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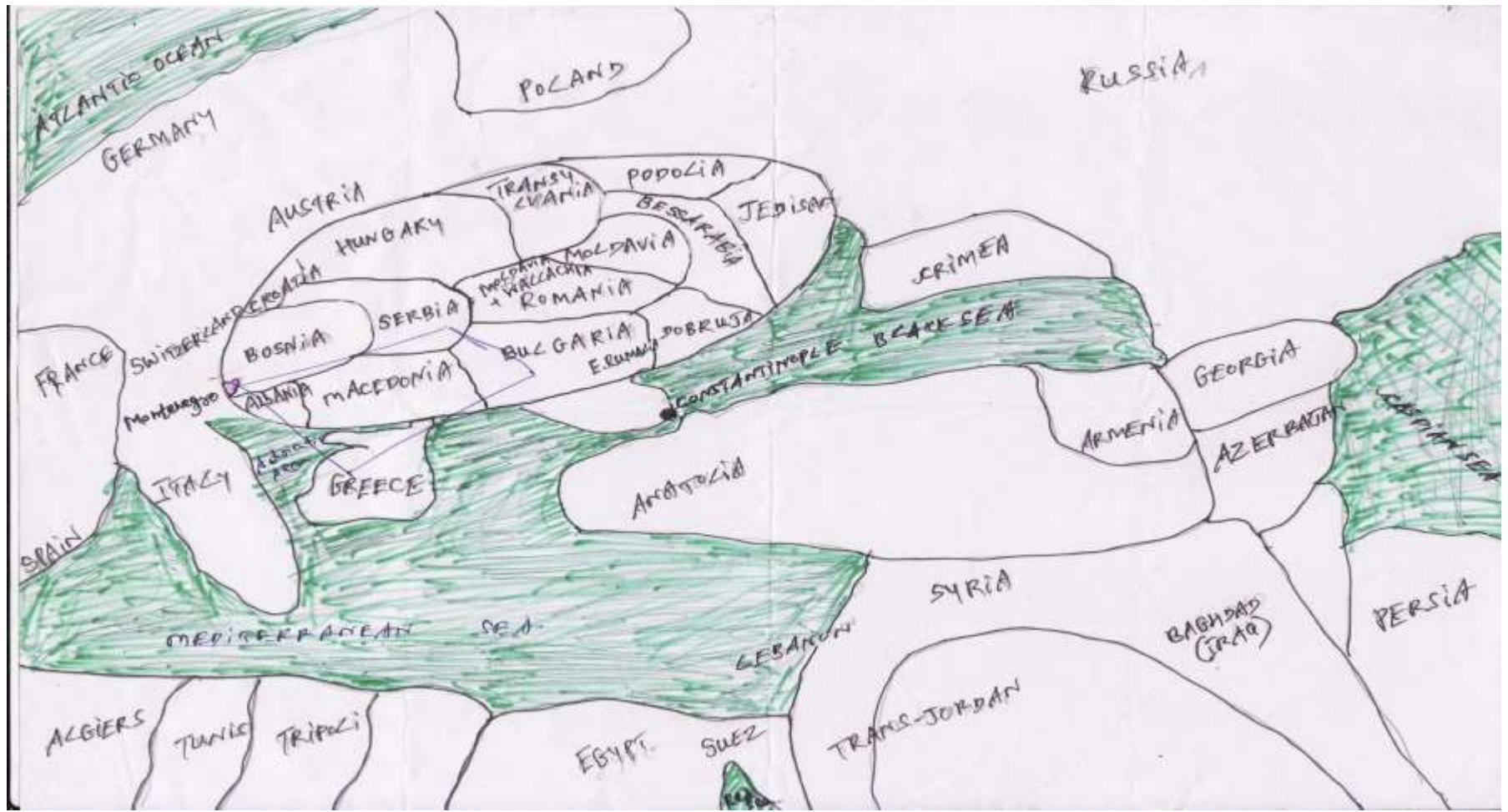


PEACE RUMORS
Let Us Have (A) Peace (Piece)
(The Turk wishes he was a Christian)

SE Europe / Asia Minor

Decline of the Ottoman Turkish Empire





Questions

1. “The Eastern Question has always been an international question”. Elucidate

Synopsis

1. Introduction
2. Eastern Question-Meaning ✓
3. Rise of Ottoman Turkish Empire & its steady decline;
Problems connected with it
4. Interest of European Powers:
 - i. Russia
 - ii. Austria ✓
 - iii. England ✓
 - iv. France ✓
 - v. Italy & Germany

5.Revolts in the empire

i. Serbia

ii. Greece

6.Turkey-Egypt Wars

7.Crimean War

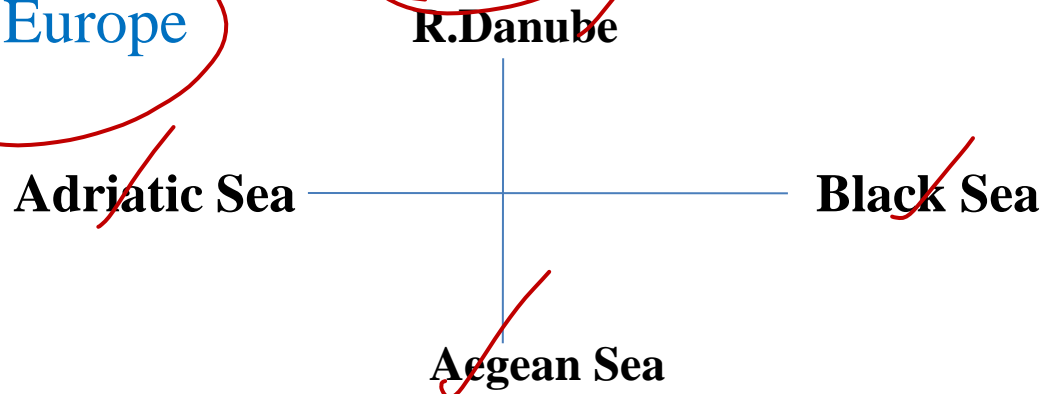
8.Russo-Turkish War & Congress of Berlin,1878

1) Introduction:

- Problems > Turkey - 'sick man of Europe' - the Eastern question.
- Involvement of Russia, Austria, England and France in problems Turkish empire > Crimean war & Russo-Turkish war.
- Devts connected with Eastern question > World War I.

2) Eastern Question-Meaning

- Euro hist-3-Far East, Middle East, Near East
- EQ > Near East ie, Balkan Peninsula & Turkey
- Balkan Peninsula-SE Europe



Balkans Map



- EQ-Balkan Problem
- Mostly **Christians**-Greeks,Serbians,Bulgarians,Albanians etc-Turkish rule
- 18th c-Ottoman Empire declined

“The Eastern Question is the problem of filling up the vacuum created by the gradual disappearance of the Turkish Empire from Europe”-Miller

- EQ revolved around 4 problems
 - i. Decline of the Turkish Empire in Europe
 - ii. The nationalist aspirations of the Balkan people
 - iii. Rivalries of the European Powers wrt sharing of Turkish spoils and
 - iv. The divergent interests of the European powers.

The Eastern Question has been described as “a shifting intractable and interwoven tangle of conflicting interests, rival peoples and antagonistic faiths“-Lord Morley

3) Rise of Ottoman Turkish Empire & its steady decline- Problems connected with it

- **Turks**-tribes>original homeland -Central Asia.
- **Middle Ages**>Mesopotamia^{Iraq}, Syria, Egypt and particularly to Asia Minor-Adopted the Muslim religion
- 1300 AD-Osman or Othman-Chief of one of the Turkish tribe;title Emir (prince) of the Turks>Ottoman Turks
- **Military State**





- This growing State of the Ottoman Turks
 - i. **Championed** the cause of **Islam**, and
 - ii. Renewed the **struggle with Christendom** for mastery of the **Near East**.
- **14th end-Asia Minor, SE Europe-Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece** except Constantinople and a few other parts.
- **Sultan Muhammad II-Constantinople(1453)** > final blow to Byzantine Empire in East.

Mehmed the Conqueror



Suleiman the Magnificent



- **Sultan Suleiman II** (1520-1566), "the Magnificent"- upto Vienna.
- **16/17AD**(ht)-**Balkans, Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt** and almost whole of **north coast of Africa**.
- **17th end**-OT began to **disintegrate**-lost Hungary to Austria in 1699.
- **18th -decline rapid**;central government unable to control ~~governors of distant provinces.~~
- By **1815 Turkey** was regarded as the "**sick man of Europe**".

- Christian races - Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Rumanian
- The Governors and military officers-Muslims > large-scale massacre of the Christians in the Balkans.
- Due to gradual decline of military power of the Turks, and spirit of nationalism generated by the French Revolution, the subject people began to assert their independence.

4) Interest of European Powers:

(Russia, Austria, England, France, Italy & Germany)

1. Russia:

- Orthodox Catholic religion, Slav race
- Big brother
- Access to other European countries through Mediterranean
- Baltic (Peter), Black (Catherine)
- Sought control of straits-Bosphorus & Dardanelles

Straits of Bosphorus & Dardanelles



2.Austria

- Short coastline
- Access to sea for trade only through River Danube
- Feared possibility of Russian control over Danube
- 'Pan-Slavism' inspired by Russia may prove detrimental

Danube River



3. England

- Feared **Russia** might harm her **commercial interests** in the East
- **Russian control over Turkey** would **weaken British colonies** in the east.
- 1869:Suez Canal-aggravation in conflict between the 2
- Wanted to keep **Turkey strong and united** to maintain balance of power

Suez Canal 1869



4. France

- Protect commercial interests in the east
- Religious issues

5. Italy & Germany

- Share spoils
- Bismarck-away from Balkan Politics
- 1878: Congress of Berlin-Rebuffed Russia and befriended Austria
- Germany came closer to Turkey

5.REVOLTS IN THE EMPIRE

1. SERBIA

1830

- 1804: Karageorge; support of Russia until 1812 (Napoleon)
- 1820: Milosh Obrenovitch-Prince of Serbians; supported by Russia
- 1830: Independent



2. GREEKS

1832

- 1821: Prince Alexander Ypsilanti-6 yrs
- T.Sultan > Mehemet Ali, Pasha of Egypt-Ibrahim-atrocities
- England, France, Russia threatened joint action
- 1827: Treaty of London: England, France, Russia X Turkey-To compel Sultan by naval blockade to grant Greeks autonomy
- 1827: Battle of Navarino:
England, France, Russia X Turko-Egyptian fleet
(England withdrew from Balkans affairs- 'Splendid Isolation')
 - Only Russia continued the war

- 1829: Treaty of Adrianople: Turkey X Russia:
 - a. Greece self-governing state under Turkey
 - b. Moldavia & Wallachia autonomous but under Russia
 - Greeks protested
- 1832: Convention of London:
- Greece independent
- Recognized by England, France, Russia



6. Turkey-Egypt War

I. 1832-33

- Serbian, Greek independence exposed Sultan's weakness
- Vassals became ambitious
- Mehmet Ali (Egypt) - Demanded Syria and independence for Egypt - Sultan refused
- 1832: Ibrahim occupied Syria, threatened Constantinople
- Turkey (Russia) X Egypt

- 1833: Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi: Turkey-Russia
 - a. Russia to help Turkey when in danger
 - b. Turkey to open Dardanelles to Russian warships only ▲
- Diplomatic victory for Russia

II.1839: TURKEY-EGYPT WAR

- Russian gains in the Balkans not liked by England and France
- Turkey X Egypt (England, France, Austria)-Turkey defeated
- 1841: Treaty of London
 - a. Set at naught the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi
 - b. No war ships to enter the Dardanelles-to be enforced by England, France, Austria
- Russia-loser; England-gainer; Turkey-saved
- Diplomatic victory for England

THE CRIMEAN WAR (1854-56)



- Crimean War: Reopened EQ
- First great European War after Waterloo.
- Fought b/w European powers with conflicting interests in Balkans

□ CAUSES

a) **Political unrest in the Balkans**

- Romanians, Bulgarians & Albanians revolted for freedom-
inspired by Serbs and Greeks

b) Rivalry between Britain and Russia

- Growing Russian influence since Greek war
- Eye on Constantinople
- Czar Nicholas I-Turkey “the sick man of Europe”.
- Russia-natural heir
- England-felt commercial interests threatened-wanted strong Turkey

c) Religious Question-Immediate cause-EQ

- 1854: Dispute regarding custody of holy places in Turkish Empire-
Jerusalem & Bethlehem

Church of Nativity

Monks	Door	Countries
Latin (RC)	Side	France (Napoleon III), England, Turkey
<u>Greek</u>	<u>Great</u>	<u>Russia</u>

- Sultan refused to recognize Russian demand made as protector of Greek Christians in the Ottoman Empire

Church of the Nativity-Bethlehem



- Crimean War (1854-56)

England, France, Turkey X Russia

- Russia expected help from Austria(N)
- Florence Nightingale-Red Cross Society
- Press & Telegraph



Course of the war

- Chiefly fought in Crimea.
- **Russians were defeated**-Alma, Balaclava and Inkermanu.
- **Turks expelled Russians** from Wallachia and Moldavia.
- Allies captured **Sevastopol**-9th of September, 1855-the Crimean War came to an end.
- The new **Tsar, Alexander II** (succeeded Nicholas I in 1856), sued for peace.
- Treaty of Paris

❑ **Treaty of Paris**-March 30, 1856.

Provisions:

1. **Russia** was deprived of **Wallachia and Moldavia**. These two united to form an independent State named **Romania**.
2. **Black Sea** was **neutralized**, its ports to be **open only to merchant ships of all nations**.
3. **River Danube**-internationalized.
4. **Russia** was given back **Crimea**.

5. Powers-to guarantee independence and territorial integrity of Ottoman Empire; not to interfere in internal affairs of Turkey.
6. The **Sultan** promised to treat his Christian subjects in humane manner, and to introduce liberal reforms.

Results:

- i. Turkey-temporarily saved from territorial disintegration.
- ii. British interests in Near East were protected, Russian designs undermined
- iii. Czar Alexander II-forced to carry out a large number of internal reforms to win over people.
- iv. Treaty led to estrangement b/w Austria and Russia & friendship b/w Russia and Prussia.

Criticism

- i. Provisions of Treaty of Paris-insufficient and unsatisfactory.
- ii. Treaty gave fresh lease of life to Turkey, but could not arrest its disintegration.
- iii. Serbia and Montenegro practically became independent, and the separation of Wallachia from Moldavia was only short-lived.

- iv. Russia repudiated the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty in 1870.
 - v. The Sultan had not introduced any reforms in the Balkans.
- ❑ Thus, the Peace of Paris failed to provide a permanent solution to the Eastern Question.

1877:RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

- **Causes**
 - i. **Russia's** reluctance to keep quiet, for her **co-religionists** were being persecuted.
 - ii. **Russia's bargain with Austria:**
Austria>**Bosnia & Herzegovina**
Russia>**Romania & Bulgaria**
 - iii. **Immediate cause-****Bulgarian Revolt (1876)**-Violently suppressed by the Sultan

- British statesman Gladstone's pamphlet "The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East" (1876) served to arouse public sympathy in Europe for the Bulgarians and other southern Slavs attempting to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire.
- Russia declared war on Turkey
- **24 April, 1877: Russo-Turkish War**
Russian armies defeated the Turks, and threatened to occupy Constantinople.

- **Treaty of San Stefano** (3 March 1878)
 - i. Sultan recognized complete independence of Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Romania & Bulgaria
 - ii. **Russian** control over Black Sea and the Straits became complete
 - iii. **Russian protectorate** over the orthodox church was recognized by the Sultan
 - iv. **Turkish forts** along the Danube were to be destroyed.

- ❑ Treaty of San Stefano enhanced Russian influence in Balkans.
- **England and Austria** feared that **Russia** would dominate the new Slav state of **Bulgaria**.
- England argued that according to the international law of Europe, EQ could not be settled by one nation, but only by a concert of powers, as it affected them all.
- Austria supported England > share the spoils of Turkey.
- **Russia** rejected this proposal-threatened with war-Agreed

CONGRESS OF BERLIN, 1878

- President-**Bismarck** (offered to play the role of an “honest broker”)
- Attendees: Russia, England, France, Germany, Italy & Austria
- Berlin Congress drew up the Treaty of Berlin-13th July, 1878.

❖ Provisions

i. Independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania recognized.

ii. Bulgaria > divided into two- Bulgaria & E.Rumalia

a. Bulgaria > Russia

b. E.Rumelia > Turkey

(Bulgaria reduced in size but declared as tributary of Turkey)

iii. Macedonia was given to Turkey for direct rule.

- iv. **Austria** > occupy and administer **Bosnia and Herzegovina** but not permitted to **annex** the same
- v. **England** > **Cyprus**.
- vi. **France** > free hand in **Tunisia** (part of Ottoman empire)
- vii. **Russia** retained **Bessarabia and Kars**
- viii. **Russian control** over **Black Sea**, the **Straits** and over the **Orthodox Church** **came to an end**.
- **No territorial gains for Germany & Italy**

❖ Criticism of the Settlement

- i. Congress of Berlin upset the settlement of Treaty of San Stefano. It was not the final solution to the EQ.
- ii. It totally ignored the principle of nationalism by dividing Bulgaria into two parts, and by giving administrative control of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria.
- iii. **Turkish Empire** > completely ruined and dismembered. **England and Austria** helped themselves to large portions

of the Turkish spoils, instead of protecting the Turkish Empire.

- iv. Transfer of **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the two Slavonic provinces to Austria **angered Serbia**.
- v. **Russian** acquisition of **Bessarabia** offended Romania
- vi. Treaty still left large number of **Christians in Macedonia** under the Turkish tyranny.

❑ Why Congress of Berlin is considered a landmark in the history of Europe?

- i. Seeds for the Great War of 1914 were sown in the Berlin Congress.
- ii. Britain, instead of supporting the Sultan, hurried to acquire a share of the spoils out of the crumbling Ottoman Empire.
- iii. Russia having lost her hold in the Balkans turned to Central Asia & Far East theatre of Anglo-Russian conflict shifted from Europe to Asia.

- iv. In the Balkans, Macedonia became the bone of contention between Turkey and the Balkan states-led to two Balkan Wars, those of 1912 and 1913.
- v. The Treaty brought about a complete estrangement between Serbia and Austria, Russia and Germany.
(Serbia X Austria Russia X Germany)
- This led to the division of the Europe into two rival camps-Triple Alliance and Triple Entente-on the eve of the outbreak of World War in 1914.

END