



# An Analysis of the Effect of the 1878 Berlin Treaty on Diplomatic Policy Making

## 1878 Berlin Antlaşmasının Diploması Siyasetine Etkisinin Analizi

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### ABSTRACT

Politically, the Balkan region was split into multiple new entities such as Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania after the Russo-Turkish War 1877-1878. The Ottoman Empire lost the majority of its territory in Europe and the Balkans became an influential competitor among the Great Powers of Europe. The ambitions and interests of these Great Powers, the consequences of a declining Ottoman influence and the interests of the newly formed Balkan nations are the key components of analysing this competition. These components feed into the Berlin Treaty's influence in laying the foundations of the Balkan Wars in the 1910's and how the meddling of Great Powers caused underlying territorial and ideological tensions to escalate into warfare on 3 occasions, eventually creating the "powder keg of Europe".

**Keywords:** Balkans, Pan Slavism, WW1, Great Powers, Balkan Wars

### Öz

Siyasi olarak, Balkan bölgesi 1877-1878 Rus-Türk Savaşı'ndan sonra Sırbistan, Bulgaristan ve Romanya gibi birçok parçaya bölündü. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Avrupa'daki topraklarının çoğunu kaybetti ve Balkanlar, Avrupa'nın Büyük Güçleri arasında bir rekabet alanı haline geldi. Bu Büyük Güçlerin hırsları ve çıkarları, azalan Osmanlı etkisinin sonuçları ve yeni oluşan Balkan uluslarının çıkarları bu rekabeti analiz etmenin temel bileşenleridir. Bu bileşenler, 1910'larda Balkan Savaşlarının temellerinin atılmasında büyük rol oynarken, aynı zamanda bölgesel ve ideolojik gerilimlerin üç defa nasıl savaşa dönüştüğünü ve Büyük Güçlerin müdahalelerinin sonucunda "Avrupa'nın barut fıçısının" nasıl ortaya çıktığı açığa çıkaracaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Balkanlar, Panslavizm, Birinci Dünya Savaşı, 93 Harbi



## Introduction

The Eastern Question became the major challenge of Europe after German Unification in 1871. The peak of the crisis can be observed during the Congress of Berlin with the signing of the Berlin Treaty. However, while hostilities had ceased for the Europeans, the opening decade of the 20th Century showed that the Treaty had actually created new hostilities in the Balkans. For example, the terms agreed on at the Congress were used as justification to attack by parties that were displeased with the agreed settlement; as seen with the 1897 Greco-Turkish War regarding the implementation of Cretan autonomy. The 1878 Berlin Treaty recognised the states of Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria as actors in the region, without much effective contribution from them in the Treaty.<sup>1</sup> When combined with a misunderstanding of the territorial, religious and ethnic composition of the region by the plenipotentiaries of the European Powers, the Treaty suspended the core issues surrounding the previous conflicts and uprisings in the 1870's without resolving them. Hence, this paper will attempt to discern the effects and legacy of the 1878 Berlin Treaty on the Balkan region through the deconstruction of strategic interests and ambitions of signatories, their interactions in the prelude and aftermath of the treaty and foreign policy goals of key actors. In addition to the aforementioned aims, the argument will explain and integrate the diplomatic processes of 1878 into the modern understanding of diplomatic practices reflected in the early 20th Century. This paper defines key actors as the signatories of the treaty and affected parties in the Balkans and further separates them into three categories.

The first category is the Great Powers of the time that had ambitions and interests in the region. These included The Russian Empire, Austro-Hungary and Great Britain. We can identify these actors as the primary Great Powers involved in the region due to geographical proximity for the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires and the proximity of Britain's colonial and trade investments. Secondary Great Powers invested in the Treaty included France and Germany, which possessed ambitions and interests, yet did not possess direct borders with the region and had significantly less to gain or lose in comparison to the aforementioned states. Russia and Britain stand out as the parties most involved and invested in the region besides the other Great Powers. Britain had supported a policy of strengthening and stabilising the Ottoman state against Russia, as seen in the Crimean War. However, this notion of strategic partnership was challenged by domestic politics and the British public, forcing a realignment of policy towards the Russians and Ottomans. The Russian Empire on the other hand saw Ottoman hegemony in the region as a threat and believed it held justified claims to the region through ethnic and religious kinship with Orthodox and Slavic populations. This stemmed from the Pan-Slavic ideals spreading in Russian domestic politics and its reception by Balkan Pan-Slavic activists

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1 Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, and England Wales. Parliament. House of Commons. Turkey. No. 39 (1878). Correspondence Relating to the Congress of Berlin, with the Protocols of the Congress. House of Commons?, 1878.

and became critical in motivating the involvement of Russia in the region. Pan-Slavism gained significant traction as an ideology throughout activists in the Balkans, replacing the attempts of “Ottomanisation” by a progressivist Ottoman Government. Therefore, motivations of the Great Powers and the treaty’s consequences on them will be analysed and critiqued in relation to themselves and the newly formed states with emphasis on Pan-Slavism due to its reception and role in the region as a motivator for activists and Russia alike.

The second category is composed of the Balkan states that were granted *de jure* or *de facto* independence but were not decision makers at the negotiations, those being Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and Montenegro. These states will be discussed in the second section, which will handle the consequences of the territorial acquisitions and formation of new Balkan states. Bulgaria (*de facto*), Serbia, Montenegro and Romania gained their independence following the Treaty of San Stefano and during the Berlin Congress, kept their independent status, with the exception of Bulgaria, which lost its *de jure* independence and some of its territorial acquisitions, the consequences of which will be analysed in regards to the onset of hostilities in future wars. Out of these states, Montenegro will be omitted from the discussion as Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania had animosities and hostilities with its neighbours while Montenegro enjoyed peace with both the Ottoman Empire and its other neighbours.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the other Balkan states possessed more investment by foreign powers which resulted in events correlating more with the focus of this paper’s main question, events such as the Serbian Uprising of 1875, the Bulgarian Uprising of 1876 and the Romanian involvement in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, which did not result in much difference for Montenegro other than its recognition of independence, which, *de facto*, had already occurred in 1852.

The third and final section will discuss the effects of the treaty on the Ottoman Empire, which previously held control of the majority of the region. The vacuum of Ottoman authority had consequences, which ultimately changed the perception of the value of the Ottoman Empire as an actor in global politics. The defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the subsequent Treaty of San Stefano resulted in the loss of the majority of its European territories and prestige, of which there was little left. The Russian victory at San Stefano after the defeat in the Crimean War greatly alarmed the allies of the Ottomans and set a new era of bilateral relations, which did not regard the integrity of the Ottomans any longer. The Ottoman reforms in 1839, 1853, and 1876 of proclaiming secular institutions, a constitution, parliament, and equal rights for all of the Sultan’s subjects failed to gain traction and create an “Ottoman” identity that resonated with the public. Through these domestic failures, it was

2 The Megali idea is the expansionist ideology accepted in Greece to recreate the Eastern Roman Empire through uniting all “Hellenic” populations in the Ottoman Empire and establishing the capital as Constantinople. Scholar Theodore George Tatsios claims the ideology is revisionist in nature, as it demands an expansion on the treaty of Constantinople (1832) to incorporate all Hellenic populations in Epirus, Thessaly, and Western Thrace. The title of King George I was made to be “the King of all Hellens” rather than the King of Greece, indicating constitutional recognition.

easier for Pan-Slavism to gain traction in the Balkans and undermine Ottoman influence, creating grounds for intervention and dependence on Europeans on political and economic matters. This observed dependence on foreign aid and the lack of recognition as a European Power will be an important point discussed in regards to the independence of Ottoman foreign policy and how the declining Ottoman authority in the region led to a power vacuum which resulted in competing influences of Russia and Austro-Hungary to escalate situations into open conflict.

This paper, using primary and secondary sources, will identify, analyse and critique the consequences of the 1878 Berlin treaty. It will posit the treaty as a major factor that caused the first and second Balkan wars in addition to the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, suggesting it was the catalyst for territorial and political conflict that needed violence for resolution. Nevertheless, it is also crucial to consider the legacy of 1878 in the development of global diplomatic practice. The variety of Congresses that took place in the 19th Century were a product of extraordinary circumstances. These organised diplomatic exchanges remedied problems within a short period of time, however, they failed to provide conclusive and lasting results. A further need for a medium of power projection was needed to maintain the status quo achieved within these diplomatic exchanges. Even though diplomatic practices around the world had woven a network of embassies and delegations, this was simply not enough to enforce decisions extraneously of individual states. The creation of the League of Nations after the First World War demonstrates actions taken to enforce treaties (albeit ineffectively) through a new medium of multilateral diplomacy. The 1878 Berlin Congress's Legacy is worthwhile to consider through the lens of multilateral diplomacy and peacekeeping. Many reviews and analyses of the 1878 Berlin Treaty are overshadowed by the events that happened before or after the Treaty. This review of primary and secondary sources is targeted towards bridging academic attention between Anglophone and Turkophone sources to better understand the place of this Treaty within the events of the time period. Primary sources within the Anglophone world, such as the Speeches of William Gladstone, the communiqués of the Marquis of Salisbury and British Correspondence to the Berlin Congress, and others were embedded in the core of the undertaken research. Mirroring this, primary Ottoman sources, such as the memoirs, correspondence to the Berlin Treaty, and analyses of sources were integrated into established Anglophone documents. Consequently, this has brought together well studied sources to understand and explore an overlooked event in this time period and attempts to shed light on its position in our understanding of diplomacy within the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This was a key motivator in putting together this article which aims to achieve synchronisation between distinct narratives and sources within differing linguistic backgrounds to contribute towards the academic understanding of the development of diplomacy.

### **The Presence of the Great Powers in the Balkans:**

As arguably the most powerful Great Power and coloniser of the time, Great Britain had major interests within the Balkans and Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire lay on the route to Great Britain's important colonies of India and other holdings in Asia. The Suez Canal and land routes into India were critical to Britain's connection to its financial assets. As Russia increasingly dominated the Ottoman Empire and gained holdings in the Balkans through the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, Britain needed to secure its trade routes as previously established in the treaties of Dardanelles in 1809 and Balta Liman in 1838. Furthermore, Britain had signed the Cyprus Treaty a month before the signing of the Berlin Treaty with the Ottoman Empire in secret for British support against Russian aggression in exchange for the island of Cyprus, which would de jure be under the Sultan's control.<sup>3</sup> Britain did not fully trust the Russians and supported the Austro-Hungarian Empire as an entity to fill and secure the emerging power vacuum from the decline of the Ottoman Empire as stated in a letter to Lord Salisbury from Her Majesty's government:

"Your counsels on these points will, in the first place, be directed to assure the welfare and the good government of the populations concerned and you will not forget the ancient alliance between Austria and this country, and the general coincidence of their interests. It is important that in the discussions of the Congress on these matters you should support any legitimate proposals tending to benefit and strengthen the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. But in doing so you will keep in mind that if Russia should ultimately adhere to the proposals of the Preliminary Treaty, these do not touch the interests of England so closely as to justify the Plenipotentiaries in pushing their opposition so far as to break up the Congress on that account."<sup>4</sup>

As stated in the letter, Britain sought to establish Austro-Hungarian influence in the region to stabilise the region. From this policy statement, we can see that Britain did not necessarily wish to subjugate the Balkans but keep the region stable so as not to disrupt its own trade in the neighbouring Mediterranean Sea and Ottoman Empire. That situation was far more desirable for its economy and an attempt at Balkan subjugation would have antagonised actors in the region unnecessarily for less profit, which made it very undesirable. However, the balance of actors to reach stability was important, as many smaller actors, that could not effectively destabilise the region through war and which did not provide significant leverage to a single Great Power, were much more desirable. Hence, it was imperative for Britain to cut down on carving out big portions of territory to a single state.

Due to these circumstances, the emergence of a strong Bulgarian nation under the influence of Russia was a key actor that Britain wished to cut down on: "The constitution of

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3 Correspondence to House of Commons, 2-3.

4 Correspondence to House of Commons, 2-3.

the Province of Bulgaria will especially merit the attention of the English Plenipotentiaries. The tributary Principality, which, under the Treaty, extends to the Aegean on the south, and beyond the Lake of Ochrida on the west, and tranches closely on the important towns of Adrianople and Salonica, requires very material reduction.”<sup>5</sup>

This could be tied down to the fact that if an independent Bulgaria had had access to the Aegean sea, it could have meant that the Russian Black Sea fleet could have effectively bypassed the Bosphorus and granted access to the Mediterranean, which would have threatened British interests in the region. However, a Bulgarian nation, which did not have access to the Aegean, would have diminished the extension of Russian naval and political power, while also decreasing the threat of a strong nation to dominate the region, which could potentially have harmed the interests of Britain in the Ottoman Empire and Greece. The existence of a strong Bulgaria could also accelerate the collapse of the Porte, which could have directly threatened the colonial links of Britain:

“It is essential that the Greek populations which have been so largely included in the new Bulgaria by the Treaty should be preserved from the danger of absorption by a dominant Slav population; that Salonica and Cavalla should be kept at a distance from the jurisdiction of any State likely to fall under the influence of Russia; and that the Aegean littoral generally should remain in the hands of the Porte. But it is scarcely less important that in the arrangements made for the government and defence of the territory south of the Balkans, the position of the Sultan should be made strategically so secure as to enable him to discharge independently the political duties which he has to perform.”<sup>6</sup>

From these instructions to Lord Salisbury by Her Majesty’s government we can extrapolate Great Britain’s interests and aims for the Balkans. Firstly, political stability of the Balkans through smaller independent nations, with a clear divide of spheres of influence, was essential to preserve the peace in the Balkans. Secondly, Russia should not have been allowed to ascertain the power vacuum created by the decline of the Ottomans to gain free access into the Mediterranean and threaten the Suez. Finally, Austro-Hungary and the Ottomans should have been supported to preserve the balance of power. However, there also was a significant lobby against these policies which were supported by Benjamin Disraeli the acting prime minister, by William Ewart Gladstone and Lord Derby, the Foreign Minister. It is important to analyse this domestic dispute in Britain as it was the first time that public petitions were sent to voice an opinion about the Bulgarian Uprising in 1876 and the good relations of Britain with the Ottomans as unacceptable. This domestic power struggle between the liberal Gladstone and the staunchly conservative, aristocratic and imperialist Disraeli shows the extent of Britain’s position as a Great Power. This clash caused hesitation regarding intervention in the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War, effectively

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5 Correspondence to House of Commons, 3.

6 Correspondence to House of Commons, 4.

enabling the Russians to defeat the Ottomans and dismantle the Crimean Alliance of 1853, creating the San Stefano Treaty.<sup>7</sup>

The clash of opinion and public sentiment on the prelude of the 1878 Berlin Treaty during the Bulgarian Agitation of 1876 restructured British foreign policy. Britain considered the Ottomans as a strong ally and having fought together in the Crimean War aimed to preserve its integrity against Russian aggression. After news of the Bulgarian Insurrection in 1876 came to Britain, William Gladstone began a campaign of hatred against the Ottomans and demanded repercussions and responsibility to be placed on Ottoman officials. He convinced Lord Derby and promulgated his thoughts in public and parliamentary speeches. His racial, religious and civilisational views were violently anti-Islamic and anti-Turkish as evidenced by his remarks in *the Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* calling the Turkish race “*the one great anti-human specimen of humanity*”<sup>8</sup> and comparing the Ottoman order in the Balkans to African Slavery:

“There is, in fact, a great deal of resemblance between the systems which prevail in Turkey and the old system of negro slavery. In some respects, it is less bad than negro slavery, and in other respects a great deal worse. It is worse in this respect, that in the case of negro slavery, at any rate, it was a race of higher capacities ruling over a race of lower capabilities; but in the case of this system, it is unfortunately a race of lower capabilities which rules over a race of higher capabilities.”<sup>9</sup>

The opinions of Gladstone resonated with the British public and the calls for justice against Ottoman authorities grew to such an extent that Disraeli had to revise attitudes to the Porte by being neutral during the 1878 war and preferring to support Greece over the Ottomans during the conference at Berlin. Overall however, Disraeli could not completely restructure relations with the Ottomans purely on public perceptions, as they feared a growing Russia more than an allegedly ‘genocidal’ Ottoman leadership.<sup>10</sup>

On a similar axis with Britain, Austro-Hungary had strategic interests to preserve the stability of the Balkans. For Austro-Hungary, having a big border with the Balkans meant that it had to look out for multiple actors in the region as a potential fragmentation of the Balkans into many independent states would imply many competing actors disrupting the peace of the border regions. Austro-Hungary’s primary interests in the region were the security and expansion of its borders and diminishing foreign influence in the region, primarily Russia’s pan-slavic undertones.

7 Blackwood, John. “ENGLAND AND THE TREATY OF SAN STEFANO.” Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (Edinburgh, Scotland), vol. 123, no. 751, 1878, pp. 635–652.

8 Whitehead, Cameron. “Reading beside the Lines: MARGINALIA, W.E. GLADSTONE, and the International History of the Bulgarian Horrors.” *The International History Review*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2014, pp. 886.

9 Whitehead, 881.

10 Whitehead, 877.

To understand the attitude of Austro-Hungary towards the Congress of Berlin and developments in the Balkans it is imperative to understand the situation of Austro-Hungary in Europe and Great Power politics. Austro-Hungary was a multi-ethnic kingdom spanning Central, Eastern, and parts of Southern Europe, with no overseas colonial establishments. The lack of colonial holdings could be explained by the centuries-long confrontation with the Ottoman Empire to the east, a struggle in which Austria, and subsequently Austro-Hungary, had started to come out on top. During the years of Ottoman superiority, Western European powers had the resources, security and time to expand into the New World, while Austria had to spend its resources on the survival of the state, the Holy Roman Empire, and the containment of Ottoman Invaders. After decades of internal revolution and humiliation in the eyes of the Germanic World up to 1867, Austro-Hungary needed to expand upon its interests in the Balkans as that was the only region where they could effectively project their power. The Napoleonic wars of the early 19th Century had seen the Congress of Vienna establish peace in Europe at great cost to Austria and made it infeasible to contest or fight another such large scale conflict in Europe. Deprived of overseas establishments, the sole region of interest left for the Austrians to contest and control was the Balkans, which contained populations of similar ethnic heritage within its own territories. The primary concern during liberal uprisings in the 19th Century was the Czech, Bosnian, Hungarian, Slovene and Italian populations struggling for independence and potentially fracturing the empire.

The Austrians needed to stabilise its dissident population and expand its influence in the Balkans to keep its status as a Great Power. In the Balkans, it had to combat both the Russians and the Ottomans. Russia had been meddling in Austria since the Hungarian Revolution in 1848. There, the Russians actively promoted conflict and attempted to block Austrian control over the region. For Austria, Russia represented a force of Slavic palingenesis in the Slavic minorities of Austro-Hungary that could fragment the empire in a wave of nationalistic unrest. The Ottomans on the other hand were a historical enemy and centuries of physical combat had left both of the countries devastated, but the Austrians had been making gains since the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. However, the Ottomans could not be defeated so quickly, as they possessed major territories in the Balkans and acted as a proxy against Russia. A rapid retreat of the Ottoman presence in the Balkans could cause the fall of the Porte, an eventuality which none of the European Powers were ready to confront. Austro-Hungary had to preserve its old rival, as too much instability in both empires could cause mass uprisings in the multi-ethnic neighbouring territories they possessed. Multinational empires were giving way to nation states and the collapse of the Ottomans meant their responsibilities were to be transferred to the Austrians. Foreign Minister Andrassy wrote in 1875 about the rebellions in Ottoman territories and their potential repercussions stating that the existence of Turkey and its function as the maintainer of the status quo within the Balkan region provided great utility for Austria-Hungary. In addition, Andrassy suggested that if it had not been for Turkey,

the rebelliousness and antagonism of the Balkan peoples would be directed towards Austria-Hungary, a situation that would place it in the shoes of the “sick man”.<sup>11</sup>

Andrassy’s thoughts reflected the motivations of acquiring Bosnia-Herzegovina and denying it to Serbia. In addition, these comments also evidence the perceived fragility of the Austrian position in the Balkans, even though economically and militarily Austria-Hungary was in a superior position to the Ottomans.

The Russian Empire of the House of Romanov proved to be potentially the biggest adversary of Europe after Napoleon’s France. Russia’s geographical expanse put it in range of the Asian colonies of Great Britain and in close proximity to the Balkans, while directly neighbouring Central Europe at the same time. Russia advocated for a strong Bulgaria and Serbia to counterbalance a British-supported Greece and Ottoman Empire to bypass the Bosphorus through a “Greater Bulgaria” as proposed in the Treaty of San Stefano of 1877. This Bulgaria had direct access to the Aegean Sea, which meant a potential deployment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet could circumvent a blockade of the Bosphorus and reign freely in Greek and Ottoman waters. While the Ottomans could not negotiate a better treaty at San Stefano, other Great Powers such as Great Britain did not stand for this expansion of Russian influence and laid the foundations of the Congress of Berlin in 1878. To cement its status in the Balkans, Russia firstly gained significant status as the protector of Orthodox Christianity in Ottoman territory in 1774 at the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. This gave Russia an adequate justification for future wars against the Ottomans. Following this, the consequent wars over 100 years created autonomous and eventually free states in the Balkans. The use of its status as protector of Orthodox populations was an important tool to persuade European powers of Russia’s “just cause” and preventing intervention.<sup>12</sup>

In interpreting Russian Foreign Policy of the time most of the analysis has been directed towards the concept of Pan-Slavism. While it is an ideology worth discussing, evidence suggests that this might not be the case. The origins and manifestations of Pan-Slavism or Pan-Russianism, suggest that it did not gain much traction in policymakers of Russia and was more a tool used by Russophobe scholars and statesmen of Central and Western Europe to justify their disdain for Russian expansionism and the threat it represented to them. Furthermore, having a narrative of historical significance justifies the stance of Russophobia in the public in instances that require intervention for political goals, such as the Crimean War. In addition, it is mainly cited by foreign policy analysts to generalise and codify Russian foreign policy into a formula, which does not work out as much once the details of Pan-Slavism are uncovered.

Pan-Slavism was not a concept created by the Russian intelligentsia in the 19th Century to further its ambitions, at least not in its core. The origins of Pan-Slavism date back to the Poles

11 Connelly, *The 1878 Berlin Congress: Europe’s New Ethno-Nation- States* 2020 p.217.

12 Stavrianos, Leften S. 2008. *The Balkans since 1453* (London: Hurst) p.191

and Czechs of the medieval era and later, to the Croats of the Renaissance period, tied with Georgius Crisanius as a proposed union of Orthodox Christianity.<sup>13</sup> However these ideas of Pan-Slavism did not gain much traction until the 19th Century, where it was dusted off by scholars in Central and Western Europe as a justification for the impending arrival of Russian expansion, a possible interpretation that could have originated from Russophobes of the era to further their agenda. This could be evidenced from the fact that early modern Pan-Slavic prose was published in German in 1830 and not translated and published in Russian until 1867. Interestingly, the modern revitalisation of Pan-Slavism was developed by L'udevít Stur, a Slovak Lutheran who wrote "The Slavs and the World of the Future" as a manuscript for this ideological concept in German while never actually having visited Russia itself as evidenced by his ignorance in his description of Russia and its conditions.<sup>14</sup> His work and fellow Pan-Slavist Jan Kollar's work were both in German and had to be translated into Russian to gain traction in the Russian media, an ironic eventuality for the founders of an ideology which became synchronised with the Russian language, alphabet and Orthodox Christianity which had none of these qualities in its creators. The primary modern influence of Pan-Slavism as argued by Hans Kohn could be attributed to three European movements of the time: German romantic nationalism, German unification movements, and Austro-Hungarian compromises in the Balkans and after the 1867 war.<sup>15</sup>

This can all be extrapolated to deduce that there was no grand, master ideological plan in Russian foreign policy in the Balkans. While the modern adaptation of *Pan-Russianism*/Pan-Slavism was a good tool to convince a younger more romantic generation of Balkan Intelligentsia, the evidence suggests nothing more than a pragmatic use of this concept. The only credible connection that could be linked to this policy was Russia's attempts to secure its border and access the Black Sea. As a reaction to the Crimean War, Russia aimed to prevent another Great Power intervention and strike into a zone where it could not be contested by the strongest navies of the time, which belonged to Great Britain and France. This strategic approach points to a rational understanding of foreign policy based on balance and maintaining interests, rather than one based on ideological ambitions. Therefore, this struggle for power would inevitably lead to conflict as the situation came to a diplomatic stalemate with the lack of another diplomatic medium of resolution.

As the Great Powers competed over the resources and land of the Balkans, they did not take into account the will of the Balkan states. The Balkan nations would increasingly deviate from the path set out by their creators and guardians, which would result in the Great Powers themselves getting into conflicts with each other on the pretext of Balkan problems. However, this pretext was merely a cover for their own aspirations.

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13 Kohn, Hans. "The Impact of Pan-Slavism on Central Europe." *The Review of Politics*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1961, pp. 323

14 Kohn 324

15 Kohn 325

### **Crisis of the Nation in the Balkans:**

While the 1878 Congress of Berlin did much to decide the fate of the newly formed Balkan states, it did not solve the core issues between them. While new entities such as an independent Serbia, Romania and autonomous Bulgaria were formed, the status of Balkan states as being properly European was not recognised as evidenced by the lack of concern for solutions at the Congress of Berlin. Many of these states had European “benefactors”- Great Powers who supported, used, and arguably created these states in an effort to further their own interests in the region. While these states were agreed on during the initial treaty of San Stefano, their legal and territorial constitution changed during the Berlin Congress. The reactions to these changes in the Balkan states would greatly supplement narratives of oppression by the nationalists.

Nationalism as an ideology in the Balkan region was not of organic origin but a process of cultivating and creating an intelligentsia within ethnicities, ethnicities which created an identity for themselves.<sup>16</sup> Mazower posits his stance using travel articles of European travelers’ interviews with the locals.<sup>17</sup> The result was that many of the locals considered themselves Christian, devoid of an ethnic identity.<sup>18</sup> These are representative of centuries of Ottoman policy disregarding subdivision between its subjects, only categorising them as Muslim or non-Muslim.<sup>19</sup> This severely hampered the development of national identity, argues Mazower, and attributes the process of nationalism to religious education. In contrast to Europe, which went through a process of secularisation and, in challenging the dogma of Catholicism, the Balkan populations formed their identities on the creation of national churches. In parallel, the preaching of religious documents in native languages of Bulgarian and Romanian rather than Greek, expanded the division of ethnic identities into the illiterate peasantry.<sup>20</sup> As autonomy levels rose and national churches gained more control, these institutions became more legitimised. Mazower’s analysis of this process parallels the developments observed by the Ottoman administration, as the old Phanariot church began to lose its authority over the Balkans, the administration had to compromise with the Tanzimat edict.<sup>21</sup> Once these churches established their legitimacy, Bulgarian and Romanian identities were easier to formulate into a set of values. These values became a cornerstone in romanticising local or global events to create a mythos for the separatist Bulgarian and Romanian populations. While these populations had their own history and identity before Ottoman conquests, these narratives had been forgotten until nationalism became widespread.

16 (Mazower, *The Balkans*: Mark Mazower 2000 p. 80)

17 (Mazower, p. 66.)

18 (Mazower, p. 50.)

19 (Mazower, p. 52)

20 (Mazower, p. 84)

21 While technically there was conflict between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire, this essay does not incorporate those due to the severity and scale of those conflicts in comparison to other ones. The conflicts regarding Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece are more consequential in answering the question of this essay.

This distant history and identity gained new meaning under contemporary values and was exacerbated further by foreign actors aiming to further their own interests. Years of Ottoman rule were regarded as oppression according to Palabiyik and Bozkuş, who state that Bulgarian historians blamed the Ottomans for their states' economic and political backwardness.<sup>22</sup> The idea, proposed by Ottoman historians, however, evidences the opposite by claiming that the Bulgarians had received centuries of political, economic, and religious privileges and were being manipulated by foreign powers.<sup>23</sup> Despite this dual narrative, for the general population it was easier to accept that their difficulties were not by their own making, therefore the narrative from the Bulgarian perspective was accepted. Nevertheless, these constructed identities gained traction in the populations of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania, which helped their cause in gaining independence. Cultural preservation against the demonised Ottomans attracted attention from European populations, which created a sense of sympathy for their struggles. Within this group of ethnicities local and foreign actors attempted to propagate the ideology of Pan-Slavism with the aim of a grand state comprising all of the Southern Slavs under one banner. The life of Olga Novikoff as a Pan-Slavist offers insight on how the idea of Pan-Slavism and armed insurrection worked for and against the newly formed Balkan states in the prelude and aftermath of the 1878 Congress of Berlin.

Olga Novikoff (also known as Olga Novikova) was the daughter of a Russian noble who supported the ideas of Pan-Slavism. Her own ideas on Pan-Slavism were documented in a compilation of letters published under the title *Is Russia Wrong?* where she advocated the need for sympathy for the Pan-Slavist movement which would entail the elimination of prejudice against the Balkans and prophesied a war which would stop the Turks' discrimination and violence against the Southern Slavs. In addition, she stated that the Pan-Slavist Slav committee was not an organisation with clandestine operations and that they were only aiming for the salvation of their Slav brethren.<sup>24</sup> It can be firmly seen that Olga Novikoff was a staunch believer in the cause of Pan-Slavism and wanted to see armed insurrection against the Ottomans to cast them out of the Balkans.<sup>25</sup> At the onset of a Serbian insurrection in 1875, Olga's brother Nicholas volunteered to fight and was killed during the insurrection. This filled Olga with revanchism and she turned her focus to creating negative sentiment towards the Ottomans throughout Europe. She aimed to accomplish her goal through Pan-Slavist propaganda in Britain and eventually found her way in to contact William Gladstone, the Leader of the Liberal Party at the time. Through manipulating and exploiting Gladstone's vices of women, arrogance, and religion she gained the counsel and cooperation of Gladstone to further her

22 Palabiyik, Mustafa Serdar, and Yıldız Deveci Bozkuş. "THE PONTUS QUESTION: A GENERAL VIEW." *Uluslararası Suçlar ve Tarih*, 2011, p. 78.

23 Bozkuş, Palabiyik, p. 78.

24 Novikoff, Olga "THE M.P. FOR RUSSIA (1909): Reminiscences Correspondence of Olga Novikoff" London, p. 20-22.

25 Novikoff p. 13.

own agenda. She used Gladstone against the prime minister of the time Benjamin Disraeli, who supported pro-Ottoman sentiment, which gradually shifted the stance of the parliament to a hostile one. This situation was exacerbated since, during this time of government shift, Gladstone's own views of antagonism against the Ottomans increased. As Bulgarian nationalists prepared an armed insurrection, Olga Novikoff became a major supporter of them through the Russian and British embassies in Istanbul and Edirne. Reports by the Edirne consulate of Britain indicated a majority of known Pan-Slavist activists comprising the rebels instead of ethnic Bulgarians themselves.<sup>26</sup> The planned insurrection broke out in 1876 and targeted the settlements of Filibe, Tatarpazarcık, Karlovo, Ihtiman, Izkadi, and Sofia with the intent of forcing Bulgarians to join their cause and to raid, loot, and ransack the area. In areas that had a mixed population of Turks and Bulgarians, all Turks and Muslims would be killed and their settlements burned.<sup>27</sup> Through this event, Olga pressured Gladstone into writing *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, which propagated a cry for help in the 'genocide' of the Bulgarians and the slandering of Ottoman administrators. Gladstone's treatise sold 200,000 copies in a week and presented Europe with an unprecedented investigation of the Balkans and Eastern Question.<sup>28</sup> This sparked anti-Ottoman sentiment throughout Europe and eventually forced the British Parliament to shift their policy of Ottoman support to abandonment.<sup>29</sup> This created a vacuum where the Ottomans became too weak to defend themselves against the Russians and lacked a European benefactor to combat Russian aggression. Russia seized the opportunity and this resulted in the 1877-1878 war.

The case study of Olga Novikoff shows us that the fate of the Balkan populations was not entirely in their own hands. Activists such as Novikoff proved decisive in creating opportunities and sympathies towards the Balkan populations which transformed these nationalist ideals into independent states. While this helped them in the prelude of the 1878 Congress, it did not do much for the aftermath of the situation since these European negotiators did not have an intricate knowledge of the region, or much care, as evidenced by the haphazard allocation of territory and their interests of using these fledgling nations as pawns. Therefore, analysing the attitudes of influencing the European Great Powers became important in the actions of these newly independent states. The European Powers cooperated in international peacekeeping and diplomatic mediation initiatives, which were unprecedented in their scope and application. The Greco-Turkish War of 1897 was the first time an international force of Italian, Austro-Hungarian, French, British, German, and Russian troops was deployed to prevent hostilities. Even though its scale was small, this action demonstrated that any military or diplomatic action could be interjected by the Europeans. It demonstrated a lack of respect for the sovereignty of the states in the Balkan region, cementing the idea that they were not

26 FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING AFFAIRS OF TURKEY 1876, p. 4.

27 FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING AFFAIRS OF TURKEY 1876, p. 4.

28 MILLMAN Richard (1979); Britain and Eastern Question 1875-1878, London p. 183.

29 FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING AFFAIRS OF TURKEY 1876 p. 6.

equals. Besides the disregard for sovereignty, this international peacekeeping delegation is vital in comprehending the legacy of the 1878 Berlin Treaty. It was a very early application of the use of multilateral force against a common objective and the formation of international diplomatic “hard power” enforcement. Nevertheless, on its own, this was not the decisive factor in the formation of an international diplomatic medium, however, it can be seen as adding to the collective development of permanent diplomatic enforcement. While scholars such as H.P. Willmott claim that the war of 1897 was inconsequential in comparison to the other major wars of the late 19th and early 20th Century, it was important in comprehending the effects of the 1878 Berlin Treaty on the Balkans.<sup>30</sup>

The Greco-Turkish War of 1897 has become obscure in academic literature due to the bigger conflicts surrounding it, but it cannot be disregarded while analysing the legacy of 1878. The war came as a result of the Cretan uprisings and Greek support against Ottoman administrators. The Ottomans agreed to reform their administration in Crete to be more autonomous in the Pact of Halepa in 1878. Tensions between the Turkish and revolutionary Cretan populations rose as the treaty was abrogated by the Ottoman administration in 1889. H.P Willmott describes the intervention of the Great Powers as being detrimental to Ottoman peacekeeping attempts and argues that it caused an escalation of the situation. From the Greek perspective, the intervention was a sign that Greece could pursue its Megali idea<sup>31</sup> and use Crete as a stepping-stone into Anatolia itself. However, the demand for a Greek withdrawal by the Europeans frustrated the Greeks and caught them by surprise. From a geopolitical point of view, the Great Powers wanted to enforce the treaties in place and keep the situation as they wanted. For the Greeks, this meant the creation of a stronger Greece as Britain advocated strongly in their favour. However, in the battles of Crete and Macedonia, the Greeks received no support and collapsed. Although, due to the Europeans demand to keep regional peace, an armistice was forced onto the Ottomans and the Greeks were spared, albeit with a humiliating defeat. This reinforces the idea that the signatories of the Berlin Treaty did not inherently desire strong Balkan states. Greece’s victory in an alternate scenario could have pulled the Balkan Wars to an earlier stage. The weakness of the Ottomans would have been apparent earlier and individual Balkan states would have attempted to gain territory or concessions by force. Conversely, the exact opposite can also be argued; the Balkan Wars would only have been possible on the scale that they happened due to the Greek defeat. The Greek defeat showed that the interventionist Europeans did not always support the Balkans states and that a single state was no match for the Ottomans. The defeat demonstrated the need for an alliance of

30 Willmott, H. P. 2009. “The Greco-Turkish War of 1897,” in *The Last Century of Sea Power: From Port Arthur to Chanak, 1894-1922* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), pp. 31.

31 The Tanzimat Edict of 1839 represented the first tangible effort to modernise by the Ottoman government. It aimed at providing equal rights for Muslims and non-Muslims by secularising the law, promising a reconstruction of taxation, mandatory conscription, combating corruption and introducing private property to the entirety of the population. Ottoman land was structured in a feudal way of rent extraction and the Muslim peasantry did not own land, while the non-Muslim peasantry did have the right to own land with the cost of extra taxes.

Balkan states that could defeat the Ottomans, at a time where Europeans were hostile to the Ottomans and did not have the capacity to intervene. Both of these arguments can be supported and argued proficiently, but they are inevitably either hypothetical or lack academic attention. Nevertheless, they do prove the opposite of Willmott's claims of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 being inconsequential, as it proved that the 1878 Berlin Treaty was flawed and the Balkan states would attempt to rectify them through force.

1908 was a year that propelled Berlin Treaty revisionist thought into an action phase in Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. In the resulting chaos of the Young Turk coup in the Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Bulgaria declared its independence. According to Nikolai Vukov's research, observers in Europe believed that peace in the Balkans would not last much longer.<sup>32</sup> The sudden dismantling of Ottoman suzerainty was believed to indicate a much larger collapse of the empire, and ignited the aspirations of Bulgarian revanchism. Bulgaria had been promised a much larger extent of territory and independence in the Treaty of San Stefano, but had been cut down in size and authority in the Congress of Berlin. The desire to regain Western Thrace, Macedonia and the rest of the Bulgarian population in the Ottoman Empire came much closer to realisation after 1908. Attempts to stabilise the Ottomans by the Great Powers were abandoned as the Berlin Treaty was being dismantled by both Austro-Hungary and the Balkan states, showing their pragmatic duality. This presented an opportune moment for Bulgaria to gain as much territory as possible from the dismantling of the Ottomans. Comparing Vukov's research to the Ottoman perspective, through the research of Mustafa Burma, demonstrates overlaps with Ottoman parliamentary thought.<sup>33</sup> After the repeated loss of European territories, Ottoman policy redirected itself to focus on consolidating the remainder of its territories through extensive political, economic, and military reforms envisioned by the ambitious Young Turk coup d'état. The declaration of independence was recognised by the Ottoman parliament in 1909 with the Istanbul Protocol, which officially made the Turks in Bulgarian lands a minority, protected by articles 23 and 62 of the Berlin Treaty.<sup>34</sup> This demonstrates a consensus between Ottoman and Balkan historians on the status quo. Bulgaria and Austro-Hungary were decisive in furthering their agenda and made war an inevitability to resolve their other aspirations. Bosnia's annexation antagonised Serbia and Montenegro, while Bulgaria's independence signalled the war over Macedonia. Macedonia had been claimed by Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia, where they undermined each other through propaganda organisations. The actions in 1908 accelerated the upcoming war by exploiting Ottoman political instability. These diplomatic manoeuvres represented the last phase of compromise between states, which laid the foundations for the next stage of unification wars in the Balkans.

32 Vukov, Nikolai. "The Great Expectations: Political Visions, Military Preparation and National Upsurge in Bulgaria at the Onset of the Balkan Wars." p. 129.

33 Vukov, p. 145.

34 Correspondence to the House of Commons, p. 46.

After the events of 1908, Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia were roused to pursue their national aspirations at the expense of war. Richard C. Hall argues that the events of 1908 brought Bulgaria and Serbia to the same page regarding their aspirations in the Balkans, but the point that solidified this cooperation was the Italo-Turkish War of 1911. The war came at a very opportune moment to divert Ottoman resources and attention away. The Balkan Alliance of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro was based on self-interest and a common hatred of the Ottoman presence in the Balkans. Macedonia and Kosovo were the areas in which Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece all possessed overlapping claims, which meant that when the Ottomans had been dealt with, they were left to contest each other's claims. However, until the Ottomans had been defeated, they did not have the strength to individually pursue their agendas. Consequently, the First Balkan War became a tool to advance national aspirations of all involved states to the stage of inter-Balkan conflict.

The Carnegie report in 1913 about the Balkan Wars briefly explains the prelude of the war as a centuries long cycle of regional domination, which offers the European perspective of the Balkan states.<sup>35</sup> The report suggests that various Christian states of Bulgarian, Serbian, and Byzantine origin fought over the region until the Turks came and froze these conflicts. In the retreat of the Turks, this centuries-long struggle for domination erupted into conflict, similarly to the conflicts of pre-Ottoman domination. The Carnegie report shows the European view of how the conflicts transpired, as it was composed by European intellectuals undertaking a field investigation into the Balkans rather than an indigenous report. Therefore, when considering the European perception of what the Berlin Treaty's legacy was, the Carnegie Report primarily represents the most informed privately funded European investigation into the subject. It posits national and religious conflict as the main reason for the uprisings for independence, rather than economic reasons, even though it does describe the costs of the Balkan Wars. When compared to other literature on the subject, there is a common consensus that national and religious identity were the main core conflicts, however the Carnegie report falls short of giving an explanation on the conflict over resources and territory that sparked violence. The report metaphorized Turkic rule over the region as a refrigerator that preserved national and religious identity and that its weakening "defrosted" tensions. In spite of going into detail on the economic analysis of the cost of the Balkan Wars, the Carnegie expedition failed to explain to its European audience the economic deterioration that happened before the war. The region of Kosovo and Macedonia became the focus of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece due to its economic potential and prestige value. The Manastir vilayet (province) and the city of Bitola were large population centres, which possessed railways, prestigious academies, and cultural organisations. Kosovo had a population of 1.6 million according to the 1911 Ottoman

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35 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and d'Estournelles de Constant. "The Origins of the Two Balkan Wars." Report of the International Commission to Inquire Into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan War, 4th ed., Washington D.C., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914, p. 10.

census, which meant it was half the population of Serbia and nearly that of Bulgaria alone. This made both of these historically contested provinces important areas of growth economically and demographically for any ambitious Balkan state, and its status under the Berlin Treaty meant that war was the only solution.

National aspirations and betrayal by the Berlin Treaty drove the Balkan states to take matters into their own hands. As a result, the problem of Ottoman presence was resolved, yet the frozen conflicts of the past were reawakened and the region plunged into conflict through local and foreign agents.

### **The Crumbling of the Old Order:**

The Ottoman Empire at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 was a struggling relic of a past era amidst the Great Powers that dictated its fate. Multiple defeats since the late 17th Century had seen a radical change in the foreign policy of the Ottomans. The latest defeat in the war of 1877 had put an end to the progressive set of political reforms and showed great weakness in the Empire, when the Russian Army set up camp outside Istanbul. The Sultan had used the pretext of war to abolish the newly established Parliament and instigated a reign of oppression over his subjects. He saw this as a necessity for the survival of the state at all costs, as by 1878 it was clear the state had passed its prime. This was reflected in the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire that evolved into a multipolar approach. This approach meant that Great Power rivalries were to be manipulated and the allies and enemies of the Porte would be determined by the most benefits it could get at the time. Russia was generally the major threat to the state's survival and the enemies of Russia were generally where the Ottomans found their allies.<sup>36</sup> However, these enemies also had interests within the Ottomans themselves and used the ethnicities of the empire to their own advantage. The most prominent foreign power that manipulated ethnic tensions in the Balkans alongside Russia was Great Britain.

After the 19th Century, international treaties forced the Ottomans to sacrifice economic and territorial integrity to preserve the state. The Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians supported by Russia and Britain, were the most problematic ethnicities for the Ottoman government. Greece gained its independence earlier than Serbia through the intervention of France, Britain, and Russia, an event that fuelled the Oriental Crisis in 1840, where Ottoman-Egyptian tensions rose into open conflict. While the Oriental Crisis was not a direct point of intervention for Britain, Egypt and Cyprus were a strategically important region for trade routes to India and the rest of Britain's colonies, due to Russian presence in Asia and the opening of the Suez

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36 The collection of tax was a problem with agricultural revenues. The previous years had seen a drought in Anatolia and the crop yield deteriorated. The Ottoman tax system directly taxed the produce the farmers made and once the yield became lower, tax revenue took a hit. The revenue was not enough to satisfy the needs of the government, therefore tax was increased on the meagre yield of Anatolian farmers. This caused great resentment in the empire, as taxes on agriculture were raised nationally rather than locally. A correlation between the increase of agricultural taxes and dissent in the Balkans could be created, however there is a need for more research to establish a clear practical correlation or causation.

Canal in 1869. The defeat of the Ottomans in 1878 presented a great opportunity for Britain to exploit, as the Ottomans were increasingly pressured by the Russians, where British diplomats could capitalise on their fear and demand concessions for protection. In the aftermath of 1878, Cyprus was leased to Britain as a base against further Russian aggression but de jure remained under Ottoman control. The British intervention in 1882 and effective takeover of Egypt along with the lease of Cyprus, demonstrates the Ottomans desperation for survival at all costs. De facto, the Ottomans lost control of important shipping lanes and the industrial build-up in Egypt, while the British solidified their economic presence. Arguably, this shifted the focus of Ottoman foreign policy towards Germany. As Germany became a contender to Britain, it sought to use the Ottomans against the British and expand their military reach to threaten British possessions in Asia. In addition, the new wave of British hostility towards the Ottomans after 1876 presented an opportunity for Germany to antagonise Ottoman revisionists against Britain. Therefore, the split between Anglo-Ottoman cooperation guaranteed Balkan safety because of British hostility and their support to uphold the treaty of Berlin. British hostility meant that any Ottoman attempt to regain territory would antagonise Britain further. Ottoman revisionists became isolated in their pursuit to regain the lost territories, as Germany did not pursue a confrontational policy towards Britain until the 20th Century. Meanwhile, the independence movements for Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians combined were too debilitating for the Ottoman treasury and military, which forced them to either accept their demands or risk conflict with Russia or Britain, which deadlocked any aggressive actions by the Ottomans.

The retreat of the Ottomans from the Balkans substantially changed government policy and ideology. In the earlier decades of the 19th Century, the Porte had pursued a reformist agenda based on equal rights and an ideology called *Ottomanism*.<sup>37</sup> Ottomanism was an idea that the government could reform itself based on the current European ideals of nationalism and human rights, by creating an "Ottoman" identity for all its subjects irrespective of religion or language. They aimed to do this via the Tanzimat Reforms in 1839 which promised a more secular state which upheld the rights of its citizens through secular law and provided basic rights to its people. This was followed by the more pragmatic and opportunistic Edict of 1856 at the end of the Crimean War, which increased the rights given to non-Muslims in the empire by allowing local councils to apply for privileges and abolished the death penalty for religious conversion out of Islam. This could be seen as a concession at the end of the Crimean War aimed at France and Britain as a prerequisite to be considered a "European" state by the increased secularisation it preached.<sup>38</sup> While this does indicate that conditions were improving and the Ottoman economy was surviving, it also shows that these reforms were of limited success, as the lack of industrialisation and the debt commission were detrimental

37 Çilliler, Yavuz. 2015. "Modern Milliyetçilik Kuramları Açısından 19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Fikir Akımları," *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, 10.2 p.52.

38 Çilliler, p.53.

to additional improvements.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the waves of immigration coming from lost provinces placed a huge burden on Ottoman infrastructure and economy. As a consequence of rapid territorial changes, many waves of immigration occurred to and from Ottoman territory, which eventually reached a resolution in the Lausanne Convention of 1923. The result was the first agreed population exchange in history, occurring between the Muslim population of Greece and the Orthodox Greek population of the Republic of Turkey.<sup>40</sup> Be that as it may, it took decades from the aftermath of 1878 to reach a consensus on ethnic structure, while those decades in between were filled with ethnic cleansing and forced migration.

The influx of refugees that sought protection in the Ottoman state presented both a crisis and an opportunity. The refugees were a target of discrimination and fled from persecution in their homelands, which made them easier to be subjected to Ottoman rhetoric. As most of these refugees arrived with minimal possessions, they had left behind all of the belongings that had created their identity. The ambitious Young Turks could capitalise on this to provide an alternative meaning and identity to the lives of these refugees. To give purpose to these refugees economically, an extensive resettlement policy was chosen.<sup>41</sup> The resettlement of these refugees was aimed at ethnically consolidating the remainder of European territories. Ethnic composition was key to lay claim to territories in the Balkans and the resettlement of these refugees were an attempt at legalising Ottoman claims to those lands. Furthermore, the Young Turk governments' nationalistic agenda was aimed at cultivating a Turkish identity for the Muslims that had fled from the Balkans, Central Asia, and South Caucasus, which were culturally different from the population of Anatolia.<sup>42</sup> Their only binding to the Ottoman state was their historical ties to the tribes of Oguz, who migrated to Anatolia in the early 11th Century, and that they shared a common religion. For the government, this presented a split in policy goals. They could either continue on the path that the previous sultans had tried with Ottomanism, or pursue a new path to accommodate this influx of refugees. The Young Turks chose the latter, partly due to circumstance and partly to their own education.<sup>43</sup> The Young Turks were composed of the Western educated officer corps of the Ottoman Army, mostly from the Balkan region. These officers had been educated at premier institutions in the city of Bitola and Istanbul, under a German inspired education system. The education they received romanticised the struggle of German Reunification and their quest for identity heavily inspired the young officers to embark on a quest of their own. Additionally, being exposed to the ethnic and religious conflict within the Balkan populations during their stay in Macedonia aggravated

39 Çetin, Engin Can. 2018. "The Review of the Administration of Public Debts and the External Debt of Ottoman," *Balkan Journal of Social Sciences*, 7.14: p. 238.

40 Palabıyık, Mustafa Serdar, and Yıldız Deveci Bozkuş. 2011. "The Pontus Question: A General View," *Uluslararası Suçlar Ve Tarih*: p. 82.

41 Barut, İlgin. 2018. "Osmanlı Dönemi'nde Gerçekleşen Göçlerin Kurumsallaşma Ve Göç Politikaları üzerindeki etkileri," *Sosyal Politika Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 18.40/2: p. 164.

42 Barut, p. 168.

43 Barut, p. 180.

their own sense of national belonging because of hostile attitudes by minority citizens of the Empire.<sup>44</sup> Lastly, for Young Turk officers such as Mustafa Kemal, having their families displaced from their birthplace further emphasized their own national struggle against the nationalism of the Balkan peoples, therefore culminating in policy choices that favoured the Turkic, Muslim refugees over the multi-ethnic nature of the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, this ideological development was not enough to save the economy from the massive strain the millions of refugees put on the Ottoman state.<sup>45</sup>

The refugee crisis of 1878 created an economic burden on the Ottoman Empire and would lead to the expulsion of the remainder of Ottoman influence in the Balkans.<sup>46</sup> Many Turks and Muslims fled the Balkans starting from 1877 due to fears of Russian and Bulgarian attacks.<sup>47</sup> During the war, up to 1.5 million Turks and Muslims fled to Rumelia and Anatolia according to immigration archives investigated by Justin McCarthy and Ilgin Barut.<sup>48</sup> Contributing to these statistics, most of these refugees attempted to flee through the railway network which negatively affected the war effort and intangibly worsened the situation. The additional burden on the railway network also put a major strain on military logistics due to the scarcity of locomotives and railway tracks.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, Ottoman logistics were stretched thinly, even doubling the number of shifts to service the army and the population failed to adequately supply both. As a result, on many occasions the sick and wounded military personnel had to be left behind in order to evacuate the civilians, ramping up the human cost of the conflict immensely. The state's financial situation added greatly to the human cost of the conflict by increasing public debt. This public debt forced the Ottoman economy into a financial nightmare that changed the perspective European states had when dealing with the Ottoman Empire.

The 1875 default on Ottoman public debt solidified the inferior status of the empire in the lead up to the establishment of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration.<sup>50</sup> As Ottoman debt started to increase rapidly after the Crimean War, the state was pushed into financial difficulties with the payment of salaries, collection of tax, and managing debt payments. Financial clauses in the Berlin Treaty had addressed the necessity of reform in Ottoman debt, going as far as allocating their share of debt to Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Serbia. The default in 1875 followed by the defeat in the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War concerned debtors regarding the ability of the Ottomans to pay their debt. Consequently, the Decree of Muharram in 1881 paved the way for the creation of the Public Debt Administration (OPDA) and a foreign restructuring

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44 Barut, p. 179.

45 Barut, p. 185.

46 Barut, p. 166.

47 Barut, p. 161.

48 Barut, p. 164.

49 Barut, p. 166.

50 Abdiođlu, Hasan. 2018. "The Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA) in Debt Process of Ottoman Empire," Researchgate: p. 2.

of the debt payment system that restricted the ability for resource allocation.<sup>51 52</sup> Many direct revenues were attached to pay off the immense debt of £191 million, which tied down many projects and investments into the economy.<sup>53</sup> The OPDA provided great leverage for the states that were in its board of directors (France and British interchangeably with a board of Dutch, German, and Austrian creditors) over the remaining resources of the Ottoman economy. Scholar Hasan Abdioğlu argues that the OPDA was in fact a great success at modernising and commercialising the Ottoman economy, at the expense of financial freedom. He notes that the OPDA controlled where the investments would go and monopolised liquid revenues such as tobacco and liquor tax, which he argues, represented an inherently colonial model. This colonial attitude towards the Ottoman Empire emphasizes its inferiority towards the Concert of Europe, in addition to reinforcing its status as a non-European state.<sup>54</sup> Overall, the OPDA benefited the creditors most, with a debt pay-out of £113 million between the years of 1882 and 1914. The OPDA funded infrastructure projects for the railways, telegraph, and telephone lines, while also speeding up the commercialisation of the Ottoman economy.<sup>55</sup> Critically, the OPDA gave good credit standing with the creditors of Europe and allowed for additional loans to keep the Empire alive. While this state of financial affairs kept the economy from crashing further, it did put the economic, and in turn, the political situation in a state of dependence. This dependence would in essence put an end to independent foreign and economic policy and semi-colonialise the Ottoman state. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire was excluded from the Concert of Europe for the rest of its existence.<sup>56</sup>

The old order of the Balkans had ceased to exist with the Berlin Treaty. As the Ottomans held onto their last bastions, it would become clear that the time had come for the Ottomans to redefine themselves. The Concert of Europe had rejected them and their struggle to prevent the collapse of the Empire had failed.

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51 This multipolar foreign policy approach would both benefit and harm Ottoman standing in Europe. It benefited them through the rapprochement with Austro-Hungary and better relations with Germany, at the cost of Anglo-French assistance. In addition, this would give them less leverage in economic treaties, as the Ottoman desperation for aid became apparent to the European states. This would increasingly put them in a colonial position and cause domestic confrontation through the legitimacy of the state. Dissidents would claim the sultan or parliament had sold the state to the foreigners and did not care about the wellbeing of its population but rather their own coffers. This confrontation could hint at an underlying reason in the increased democratisation seen in the later stages of the empire and possibly in the formation of the Republic of Turkey, yet more research needs to be done to establish this phenomenon.

52 Abdioğlu, p.2.

53 Abdioğlu, p.2.

54 Abdioğlu, p.10.

55 Abdioğlu, p.11.

56 Abdioğlu, p.13.

## Conclusion

The Congress of Berlin in 1878 was an important contributor to the legacy of Balkan conflicts in the 20th Century. The Treaty of Berlin failed to keep the peace and stability of the Balkans to the extent that it was supposed to. The interests and ambitions of the Great Powers themselves betrayed the treaty at the first signs of trouble, such as the Bosnian Crisis of 1908. Pan-Slavism was pacified through the creation of Bulgaria and Serbia as centres of Slavic union, brought on by Russia's failure to consolidate Greater Bulgaria alongside the loss of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austro-Hungary. The Pan-Slavist dream of a united Slavic state would be supported by activists such as Olga Novikoff throughout the rest of the 19th Century yet would fail to achieve concrete results until after the First World War. In the struggle against Pan-Slavism, Austro-Hungary indirectly inherited the Ottoman mantle of pacifier in the region but ultimately failed in its colonisation project in Bosnia-Herzegovina and could not stop the onset of the July Crisis. The Macedonian question remained unresolved and would be a catalyst for deteriorating relations and fuel for territorial conquests for Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria. The Greco-Turkish War of 1897 demonstrated the necessity for an alliance against the Ottomans and laid the foundations for the formation of the Balkan League. The Ottomans were plagued with an economic crisis and further with a struggle to ascertain their own national identity. Britain attempted to preserve the stability of the region with additional concessions from the Ottomans, by establishing a presence in Cyprus and Egypt, in addition to strengthening Greece as its protégé in the region. Yet, this failed to take into account Greece's own aspirations in the region and ended up being a relationship of reigning Greece in through interventions. The Balkan states formulated their own national identities based on their struggle against the Ottomans and themselves. This struggle unleashed the carnage of the Second Balkan War, a war of extermination and self-determination in the pursuit of national awakening. Consequently, Europeans observing the unfolding of events through published works such as Gladstone's Bulgarian Treatise or the Carnegie Report of 1913, deduced that the Balkans had an intrinsic character of violence. This attitude put the blame on the barbaric and unpredictable nature of the Balkans rather than the inadequacies and misinformation of European plenipotentiaries and treaties. While researching the development of multilateral diplomacy the 1878 Berlin Treaty can be seen as an accelerant in the process of permanent international enforcement and the creation of international bodies of peacekeeping. The Berlin Treaty of 1878 was a bold attempt at preventing the explosion of the "powder keg" that was the Balkans, however, it only succeeded in delaying the eventual conflict that would end up consuming the world.

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