

**THE EASTERN
QUESTION AND
ITS SOLUTION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649567270

The Eastern Question and Its Solution by Jr. Jastrow

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JR. JASTROW

**THE EASTERN
QUESTION AND
ITS SOLUTION**

THE EASTERN QUESTION AND ITS SOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE FAILURE OF EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY IN THE NEAR EAST

THE war is not over, nor will it be until the Eastern Question has been disposed of. The adjournment of the Paris Conference, and the announcement that a special conference is to be called to take up the disposition to be made of what was once the Turkish Empire, justifies the suspicion that the many conversations that must have been held on the subject during the past year among the representatives of the great powers only revealed the difficulties in the situation, but no solution. Various reasons have been assigned for the postponement of the consideration of the Eastern Question, among

THE EASTERN QUESTION

which the necessity of waiting until the peace treaty has been ratified in some acceptable form by the United States Senate may have been the most cogent, for it is a fact confirmed by competent observers and by students of European affairs, that the nations of Europe are at present looking to American participation to help the world over the serious crisis through which it is passing. This feeling is shared also by the nationalities of the Near East—Armenians, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, Arabs, Georgians, Kurds—whose fate hangs in the balance. While the sincerity of this feeling, even on the part of diplomats, always suspected of harboring ulterior motives, need not be questioned, yet in the ultimate analysis the reason why the Paris Conference adjourned after preparing the treaties with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, is to be sought in the complicated situation in the Near East through the continuation during the war of the same diplomatic methods which before

FAILURE OF DIPLOMACY

the war had made the Eastern Question a witches' cauldron, to which new inflammatory ingredients were constantly being added:

"Double, double toil and trouble,
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."

No student of Eastern affairs can close his eyes to the fact that the Eastern Question, now smoldering, now bursting into flames, has indeed been an instance of "double toil and trouble" ever since the decline of the Turkish Empire, forshadowed by the defeat of the Turkish fleet at Lepanto by Don John, of Austria, in 1571, and which more definitely set in with the signing of the Treaty of Jassy in 1792, which ceded the Crimea to Russia. The Eastern Question has been officially "solved" so often during the past century, through wars and diplomatic negotiations and through international conferences, that even an optimist might be disposed to raise the question whether it is capable of solution. It would have marked a

THE EASTERN QUESTION

decided step in advance if the delegates of the Powers assembled in Paris had been willing, frankly, to admit the *impasse* reached in the situation, for by such admission the way at least would have been cleared for approaching the problem from a different angle than that of the traditional European diplomacy.

The Eastern Question has been for more than a century the greatest menace to the peace of the world. In order to judge the problem aright, we must recognize that it was the Eastern Question that brought on two international conflicts, the Crimean War of 1854-6 and the Russian-Balkan-Turkish War of 1876-78. In both of these all the great European Powers were involved, while the second in addition embraced in its scope the Balkan nationalities. The same question was the largest single factor in bringing on the war of 1914. Germany and France might have gone on growling at each other for four more decades, without ever involv-

FAILURE OF DIPLOMACY

ing the world in a conflict to settle their difficulties. German officers might have continued indefinitely giving vent to their feelings towards England by drinking their toasts to the "Tag," but without that day ever dawning. The growing economic rivalry between England and Germany would never of itself have issued in a death and life encounter between two mutually exclusive ideas of government, which dragged in the rest of the civilized world. If the Austrian Archduke had permitted himself to be assassinated in Berlin or Vienna in the conventional form of royal murders by an anarchist or by a demented individual, Germany would not have been afforded the opportunity to embroil the world. It was the introduction of the Eastern Question into the murder that gave Germany the chance to egg on Austria and to bait Russia with whom, as the backer of the Slav states of southeastern Europe, a clash of arms at some time was inevitable in order to clear the track for German schemes,

THE EASTERN QUESTION

looking to the domination of the Near East. Serbia blocked the way of the Berlin to Bagdad Railway, and hence Austria was urged to hold Serbia responsible for the murder.

There seems to be a fatality about the Near East in thus perpetually being a disturbing factor threatening the peace of the world. No matter how trivial the cause, or how apparently remote from the larger interests of Europe the immediate reason for the outbreak of hostilities in any section of the Near East may be, an international conflagration of larger or smaller proportions results. Thiers, the French statesman and historian, characterized the Crimean War as one "to give a few monks the key of a grotto." It arose, as should be recalled, over a most trivial dispute about certain privileges claimed by Latin monks in Bethlehem to have access from their building to the sacred manger of Christian tradition. Because the French and the other Catholic Powers of Europe, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Belgium,

FAILURE OF DIPLOMACY

Sardinia and Naples, supported the demands of the monks, Russia was aroused to assert the right of Greek Catholics, and a furious blaze of international proportions was the result. It is only necessary to read the details of the diplomatic negotiations between the Powers from a few years before the war to the close of 1856,¹ to realize that the *real* cause of the international conflict was the condition created by the growing weakness of what was once the all-powerful Turkish Empire. That weakness afforded the European powers the opportunity or, if you choose, the temptation to put their clutches on the devitalized East; and that is the gist of the problem that has been disturbing the world for so long a period. Sir Robert Morier, in his *Memoirs*,² declares the Crimean War to have been "the only perfectly useless modern war that has been waged,"

¹ Set forth in detail in Marriott's *Eastern Question*, Chapter 10.

² *Memoirs and Letters*, Vol. II, p. 215.