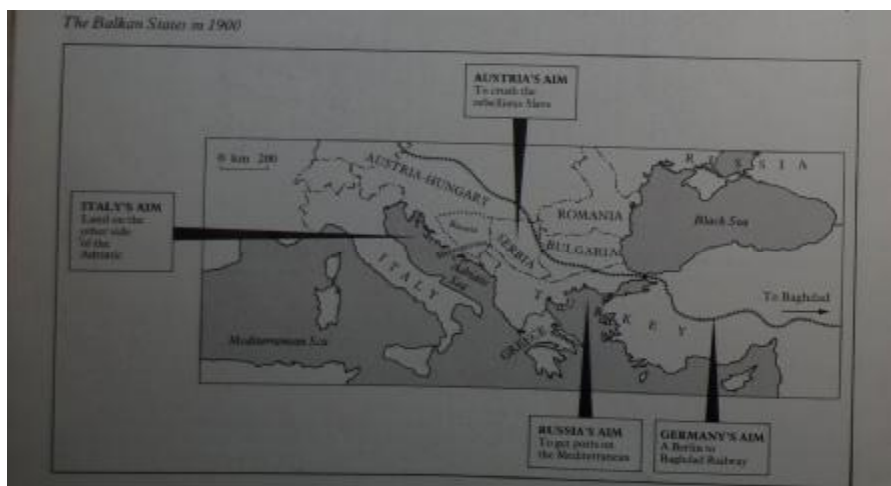


The Balkan Crisis and Wars

The Balkan states in 1900:



Turkey: “sick man of Europe”, the Ottoman Empire very weak now. Other countries wanted to take advantage of Turkey’s weakness.

Russia: hoping for ports on the Mediterranean Sea. This would make trade easier and in time of war, Russian warships would not be limited to the Black Sea.

Austria-Hungary: Serbia encouraged Slavs to rebel against Austrian rulers. Therefore the Austrians wanted to control Serbia and any other troublesome Slav areas before any rebellion could start.

Germany: building a railway from Berlin to Baghdad in Persia where there were rich oilfields.

Italy: they wanted to control not only Italian, but also Austrian-Hungarian land of Adriatic Sea.

Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy were keeping a careful watch on the Balkans, waiting for a chance to take land and gain influence there. The chance they were waiting for came in **1908** when a **revolution by a group known as the “Young Turks”** caused chaos everywhere in Turkey. This was followed by the events in:

Bulgaria: The ruler of Bulgaria crowned himself King and declared his country independent.

Crete: The island broke away from Turkish rule and united with Greece.

Austria-Hungary: took most advantage of the chaos in the Balkans. The monarchy seized the provinces of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** from Turkey and made them part of the empire.



Study this cartoon of the Balkans at the beginning of 20th century and give answers to the question:

1. Who is the man on the left of the cartoon meant to be?
2. What is he doing, why?
3. Who do you think the figure on the right is meant to be?.....
4. Why has the cartoonist made him look so unhappy?

The Balkan Wars: First and Second

After the “Young Turk” revolution in 1908 Turkey grew more and more weak. The Balkan countries now saw a chance to drive Turks completely out of Europe. The **Kings of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro** joined together in **the Balkan League** and in 1912 their armies attacked Turkey.



1. **The First Balkan War (1912-1913): The Balkan League = Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro X Turkey**

Picture: Before the First Balkan War: (members of Balkan League shaded)

Results of the war: Turkey surrendered. At the peace conference held in London, the Turks gave up vast majority of the land in the Balkans and this was shared out among the four victors. In addition, a new country named Albania was created.

Four kings of the Balkan League soon began to quarrel about their shares of the land. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria wanted more land than he had been given and in 1913 he made war on Serbia and Greece in an attempt to get it. But both Turkey and Romania joined in the fighting so that Bulgaria was under huge pressure. As a result

Bulgaria lost 50 000 men and some land.

2. **The Second Balkan War (1913): Turkey, Romania, Serbia, Greece X Bulgaria**



Picture: After the Second Balkan War:

Results of the war: The Bulgarian army lost 50 000 men as well as some of the land they gained just a year before. Bulgaria defeated.

Situation in the Balkans after the First and the Second Balkan war:

The country which came out best from the two Balkan Wars was Serbia. Serbia doubled its size. The Serbs living in Bosnia and Herzegovina became restless and wanted more than ever before to belong to Serbia. **The Serbs wanted to create the state of the Slavs in the Balkans, but those were living largely in Austria-Hungary.** The Austrians became even more worried that the Serbs would rebel.

Ferdinand of Bulgaria grew to hate Serbia and was set on getting revenge.

As you can see, **The Balkans were now seething with hatred, resentment, hatred. The Balkans was like a “powder keg”, ready to explode if a single spark fell in it. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand - the heir to the throne in Austria-Hungary - in Sarajevo (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908) on June 28 1914 was such a spark. This murder and the events that followed led to World War I.**

