

MONTENEGRO IN THE FIRST BALKAN WAR

Abidin TEMIZER¹

Abstract. *The First Balkan War started on 8 October 1912 when Montenegro declared war on Ottoman Empire. This was followed by Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece declaring war on Ottoman Empire. Montenegro's aim was to set out to sea with Serbia and to extend its borders to Ottoman Empire's land. As a result of the London Conference at the end of this war, Montenegrins reached their aim. Montenegro added 5.590 km² land to its borders and 161.000 people to its population, thus reaching 15.017 km² in square meter and 435.000 people in population.*

This study examines Montenegro's role in the First Balkan War, its fight with the Ottoman Empire, its army during the war years, war economy and political relations with other countries.

Keywords: First Balkan War, Montenegro, Ottoman Empire, Balkans

Introduction

Ottoman Empire established dominance in Balkans at the end of the 15th century. Actually, it wouldn't be wrong to say "Balkan conquest had been completed" during the time of Fatih Sultan Mehmet. Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Bulgaria lived under the rule of Ottoman Empire for about 400 years from the end of 15th century until the end of 19th century. Thus, there was only one country in Balkans and its name was Ottoman Empire. However, this geography had to be divided into small parts so that it could be exploited by Western countries. In other words, the implementation of the expression "*Balkanization*" used in 20th century was inevitable.

Although the expression "*Balkanization*" was begun to be used in 20th century, actually it was defining a reality that existed for centuries. Maria Todorova defined "*Balkanization*" as "*not only an expression of disintegration of big and viable political units, but also a return to tribalism, backwardness, primitivism and barbarism*"²

The term was firstly used to define the countries which disunited from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century (Greece, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia) with the effect of French Revolution. The term *Balkanization* did not have a degrading meaning then because Western countries considered these countries' fight with the Ottoman Empire as right. Just like L. C. Violla de Sommières who served in Napoleon's army considered Montenegro's fight as their legitimate self-

¹ Bahkesir University/Turkey abidintemizer@hotmail.com

² Maria Todorova, *Balkanlar'ı Tahayyül Etmek*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, p.17.