

MONTENEGRO IN THE FIRST BALKAN WAR

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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-

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

defence³. Or, like the report of an *international commission* investigating the reasons of the First World War evaluated Balkan War as “an honourable rebellion and the uprising of the weak against the powerful”⁴.

According to Norman J. G. Pound, “the expression Balkanization is used to express the disintegration of a geographical area among small units which are most of the time enemies”⁵. In 1922, Arnold Toynbee stated that “*Balkanization*” was coined “by German socialists to explain what happened to the West part of Russia because of Brest-Litovsk Peace”⁶.

Paul Scott Mowrer defined *Balkanization* as “the creation of a great number of more or less undeveloped, economically weak, greedy, designing, coward, small countries living in an area of varied races, exposed to manoeuvre of big countries and inhabited by people who get caught with their ambitions”⁷. This definition by Mowrer fits the policy followed by Russia in two wars vitally important for Montenegro. Since Montenegro wanted independence between the years 1852–1853, Ottoman Empire made a military expedition to Montenegro. Russia encouraged Montenegro to rebel and stated that they would support the Montenegrin government in case of war⁸. However, after Ottoman Empire’s military expedition, Russia decided not to support Montenegro and left Montenegro alone with the Ottoman Empire⁹. Russia made a similar manoeuvre during the siege of İškodra. Russia supported the international pressure for Montenegro to stop the siege and took part in the navy that besieged Montenegro from the sea¹⁰.

It is very meaningful that the word “Balkanization” which is very frequently used for the process of old geographical and political units turning into new and weak countries as a result of being disintegrated by nationalist movements was not coined/used during the 100 years Balkan nations disunited from the Ottoman Empire. When the term was used for the first time at the end of the First World War, there was only one new country on the Balkan map: Albania. The others had been founded in the 19th century¹¹.

³ L. C. Violla de Sommières, *Travels in Montenegro*, Printed for Sir Richard Phillips and CO., London, 1820.

⁴ Sacit Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik ve Emperyaliz Yüzyılında Balkanlar ve Osmanlı Devleti*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007, p.403.

⁵ Maria Todorova, *ibid.*, p.77.

⁶ Maria Todorova, *ibid.*, p.79.

⁷ Maria Todorova, *ibid.*, p.79-80.

⁸ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives) (BOA), İ. HR. 89/4368, Hicrî 11/L/1268.

⁹ Zafer Gölen, “1852–53 Karadağ Askerî Harekâtı ve Sonuçları”, *History Studies, Volume 1/1*, 2009, p.249-250.

¹⁰ Sacit Kutlu, *ibid.*, p.378.

¹¹ Maria Todorova, *ibid.*, p.75-76.

The borders of the countries founded in 19th century were exposed to change all the time as a result of *Balkanization*. For example, the borders of Montenegro changed 4 times from 1878 when they gained independence until 1913. Firstly, the square meter of its borders increased to 9.000 km² from 5.000 km².¹² As can be seen, the change in Montenegro's borders was expansion. In fact, this looks inconsistent with *Balkanization* at first.

However, in 1878, Montenegro was the smallest country of Balkans with a square meter of 9.000 km². Thus, for the bigger countries to become smaller, Montenegro had to expand. With this reason, the land that Montenegro acquired with the treaty of Berlin was not enough both for Montenegrins and for Great Powers which exploited "Balkanization". Thus, Montenegro set eyes on the wide and fertile land around and started the Balkan Wars on 8 October 1912.

1-Montenegro's War Preparations

The first preparation of a war is to lobby internationally. Thus, Balkan countries got the opinion of states such as Germany and Austria before declaring war to Ottoman Empire. Within this context, Montenegro King Nikola visited Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph on July, 6¹³. King Nikola claimed to Cetinje ambassadors of Russia and Italy that the Ottoman Empire mobilized their armies on the border and stated that he was also going to mobilize the army¹⁴. Actually, this was done perfunctorily since King Nikola had began to mobilize the armies on the border long before he spoke to Russian and Italian ambassadors. Montenegro started mobilizing its armies in 1911¹⁵ and speeded up the mobilization as of July 1912. Then, England sent a diplomatic note to Montenegro King asking him to give up on the idea of attacking the Ottoman Empire. However, Montenegrins did not mind this warning, hundreds of people died as a result of the events caused by the policies implemented in Kocana and Berane and this increased the tension¹⁶.

One of the important preparations for war made by Montenegro was the effort to get the support of Malësians. Montenegro government secretly gave out money, weapons and armoury to Malësians¹⁷. Montenegro signed a military and

¹² H. Yıldırım Ağanoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Balkanlar'ın Makûs Talihi, Göç*. Kum Saati Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p.58; Michael Palaret, *Balkan Ekonomileri, 1800-1914, Kalkınmasız Evrim*, Çev. Ayşe Edirne, Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul 2000, p.25.

¹³ Aram Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı*, Aras Yayınları, İstanbul 2002, p.188.

¹⁴ BOA, *HR. SYS*, 147/62, Date: 11/B/1329 (08 July 1911).

¹⁵ BOA, *HR. SYS*, 142/17, Date: 04/R/1329 (04 April 1911).

¹⁶ BOA, *BEO*, 4075/305559, Date: 08/N/1330 (21 August 1912); BOA, *BEO*, 4076/305655, Date: 12/N/1330 (25 August 1912); Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı*, p.189.

¹⁷ BOA, *DH. SYS*, 78/1-04, Date: 29/S/1330 (18 February 1912); BOA, *A.MKT. MHM*, 735/11, Date: 09/R/1329 (13 June 1905); BOA, *HR. SYS*, 150/46, Date: 22/S/1330 (11 February 1912).

political cooperation agreement with Serbia on 27 September 1912 to “free the Serbians under the yoke of Turks”. In the meantime, Russia agreed to pay for the war expenses of Montenegro¹⁸.

2- The State of Montenegro Army

The population and number of soldiers for Montenegro and the other countries that fought in Balkan Wars are as follows¹⁹:

Table III: Number of Soldiers of countries in Balkan Wars

Country	Surface area (km ²)	Population	Number of Soldiers		National Income
			In peace	In war	
Ottoman Empire	170.000	24.000.000 6.000.000 in Balkans	600.000	1.400.000	697.197.200
Bulgaria	96.655	4.500.000	235.00	378.000	168.445.000
Serbia	48.803	2.750.000	200.000	324.000	103.644.200
Greece	65.662	2.750.000	50.000	192.000	234.331.600
Montenegro	9.030	250.000	25.000	35.600 ²⁰	4.182.500

A law passed by Montenegro government in 1910 said that all Montenegrins between the ages of 18-62 were regarded as soldiers²¹. 18-53 year olds were regarded as on active duty, 53-62 year olds were considered as reserve. According to this, while the number of Montenegrin soldiers was 25.000 during peace times, this number rose up to 35.600 in time of war²². Montenegro also had a small horsed troop consisting of one officer and thirty soldiers²³.

¹⁸ Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik ve...*, p.322.

¹⁹ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.214; Karargâh-ı Umumi İstihbarat Şubesi, *Karadağ Ordusu Hakkında Muhtasar Risale*, 1331, p.5; *İşkodra Savunması ve Hasan Rıza Paşa*, Hazırlayan: Genel Kurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd Başkanlığı, Ankara 1987, p.42; Selanikli Şemseddin, *Kamûsu'l Â'lâm*, V.I, p.79–80.

²⁰ This number is 37.200 in some resources.

²¹ *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi Balkan Harbi Garp Ordusu Karadağ Cephesi IIIncü Cilt, 3ncü Kısım*, Genel Kurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd Başkanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1984, p.41; Karargâh-ı Umumi İstihbarat Şubesi, *Karadağ Ordusu...*, p.5; *İşkodra Savunması ve Hasan Rıza Paşa*, p.42; Selanikli Şemseddin, *Makedonya...*, p.79–80.

²² Živko M. Andrijašević-Šerbo Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro*, CICG, Podgorica 2006, p.139; Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain...*, p.282.

²³ Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain...*, p.282.

During the Balkan wars, Montenegro had 4 infantry legions. Each legion had 3 brigades and in total there were 12 infantry brigades. One infantry brigade consisted of 4-6 battalions, 1 cavalcade, 1 machine gun squadron, 1 mountain troop, 1 fortification platoon and 1 telegram battalion.

1 squadron, 1 legion mountain troop, 1 legion field troop, 1 fortification platoon, 1 regimen battalion and 1 range squadron were directly subsidiary to the legion commandership. Total army force consisted of 59 battalions, 12 machine gun squadrons, 12 mountain troops and 6 field troops²⁴.

Montenegro army was divided into four divisions. Each division had six rifleman legion, communication and military engineering legions, mountain gun, howitzer, machine gun troops, a few cavalymen, quartermaster and food groups. Field and mountain gun batteries were in general old knupps and there were 126 field gun batteries²⁵ and 100 guns. The army had 40.000 rifles and 44 machine guns. Each soldier carried 120 cartridges per gun. Each brigade had about 20-30 thousand spare cartridges²⁶.

Montenegro army did not have military motorized transportation except plain wagons and there were no field hospitals, medical corps or medical troops. Ammunition was carried by Montenegrin women as was the custom²⁷.

Montenegro King Nikola's aim was to conquer land in Yenipazar Sanjak, Scutari Sanjak and Adriatic Coast. Thus, King Nikola divided his military forces into three armies after the declaration of war²⁸. The First Army was the South Army (First Division) and it was commanded by General Martinovic. He started his operations from the southwest of Scutari Lake. The Second Army was commanded by General Veliko Lazarovic. It consisted of a part of the second and fourth divisions. This army moved from the southeast of Scutari Lake with the start of the war. The Third Army was the North Army commanded by General Yanko Vukotic. This army consisted of a part of the third and fourth divisions²⁹.

According to the plan, after the second and third armies completed their operations, they were to join the first army waiting in front of Scutari and they were to help with the Scutari siege³⁰. This meant that Montenegro King wanted to gather his army around Scutari because his greatest goal was Scutari.

²⁴Karargâh-ı Umumi İstihbarat Şubesi, *Karadağ Ordusu...*, 1331, p.12–13.

²⁵Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain...*, p.282.

²⁶*İşkodra Savunması...*, p.43.

²⁷Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain...*, p.282.

²⁸*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi...*, p.67–68.

²⁹Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.259–260.

³⁰Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.260.

3- The Declaration of War and the Start of Balkan Wars

Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire on 8 October, 1912. Montenegro's İstanbul ambassador Plamenatz went to Bâbiâlî, visited Foreign Affairs Minister and gave him the following diplomatic note stating Montenegro's declaration of war³¹:

*“Your excellency,
I feel sorry to inform that Montenegro Kingdom government has used up all the friendly efforts to solve the continuous disagreements with the Ottoman government.*

With the permission of my King his majesty Nikola the First, I am honored to inform your excellency that as for today, Montenegro government breaks off all the relations with the Ottoman government and both Montenegrins and their brothers under the reign of Ottoman empire intrust Montenegrin weapons in making the Ottomans legitimize their rights that have been ignored for centuries.

8 October/25 September 1912

Plamenatz”

Upon Plamenatz's statement of war declaration, İstanbul government called back their ambassador in Cetinje³² on the same day and began to take necessary military precautions since there was a possibility for the other Balkan countries to declare war, too³³.

While these advances took place in İstanbul, King Nikola invited the Ottoman ambassador to his palace in Montenegro's capital city Cetinje. After having a chat for 45 minutes, he told the Cetinje ambassador İbrahim Halil Bey that Montenegro declared war on Ottoman Empire, gave him his passport and told him that his adjutants would accompany him to the border³⁴.

After Montenegro King told the Ottoman ambassador about the declaration of war, he spoke to the Montenegrins waiting in front of the palace and explained

³¹ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.209.

³² BOA, MV, 227/239, Date: 26/L/1330 (08 October 1912); “Padişah V.nci Mehmet Reşat'ın Karadağ hükümetinin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na Harp İlan Etmesi Nedeniyle Cetine Maslahat Güzarının Derhal İstanbul'a Dönmesini ve Düşmana Şiddetle Karşılık Vermesini İsteyen Emri. (The order of Sultan Mehmet Reşat the fifth telling the Cetinje ambassador deputy to return to İstanbul immediately and strike back the enemy since Montenegrin government declared war on the Ottoman Empire), (Document Number: 2684)”, *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, 44/99, p.10.

³³ BOA, BEO, 4094/306895, Date: 26/L/1330 (08 October 1912); BOA, BEO, 4095/307064, Date: 26/L/1330 (08 October 1912); BOA, BEO, 4095/307093, Date: 27/L/1330 (09 October 1912).

³⁴ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.255.

why they had to fight. According to the King, Montenegro was fighting for the rights and survival of Malësians and to help these people who were fighting with the Ottomans for two years in order to unite with Montenegro. King Nikola had already tried to explain the Great Powers that he supported the 1911 Malësian uprising as a humanitarian assistance³⁵.

After the declaration of war, King Nikola went to the general headquarters with Prince Danilo and Prince Petar. The Minister of Foreign Affairs General Martinovic went to the city of Bar to command the army that was going to attack Scutari.

4- Operation of the Headquarter Army

Montenegro attack started on October 9 at 08:00 with Prince Petar firing the first gun. The first target was Planica. The battles that started in the morning lasted until the noon and at noon Montenegro army conquered Planica hill and village. The next day, General Lazarovic attacked Detcic by taking advantage of Planica hill and conquered Detcic on October 10. Thus, Montenegrins conquered the first important place on the way to Scutari . Two other important points that Montenegrins attacked to cut the way to Scutari were İşkipcanik and Tuzi. These two attacks were successful, too. Montenegrins took 82 Ottoman officers and about 3-4 thousand soldiers as prisoners. They also took hold of a great number of military articles³⁶.

With these victories of Montenegrins and the fact that they were marching to Vraca Plain, the Ottoman army gathered in this plain to stop the Montenegrins. However, Montenegrins fought off the Ottoman forces here and got to Scutari³⁷. These first successes of Montenegrins surprised İstanbul. In order to prevent opposition to take action and to cheer the people up, press and the government acted together and the press started to write positive news about the battle against Montenegro. The news said that Montenegrins retreated after suffering heavy losses in Gusinje, Tuzi and Vranja. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had two announcements published on this³⁸.

³⁵Hasan Bello, *Osmanlı ve Arnavut Kaynaklarına Göre Arnavutluk'ta 1911 Malisörler İsyanı* (Unpublished master thesis) Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tarih ABD, İstanbul 2009, p.31; Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.256.

³⁶BOA, *BEO*, 4089/306621, Date: 17/L/1330 (29 September 1912); Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.262.

³⁷Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.263.

³⁸Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.264–265.

The Operation of the North Army

The North Army commanded by General Yanko Vukotic had three missions. The first one was to attack Pec through Berane and Plav; the second one was to clear the Ottoman garrisons in Yenipazar and to unite with the Serb who were to pass the border; the third one was to march to Akova (Bijelo Polje) and Prizren after Pec was conquered³⁹.

This army gathered in Kolasin on the day the war was declared and the next day the army divided into two divisions and moved to Akova, Plav and Berane. On October 11, Montenegrins conquered Akova which was defended by a force of 2.450 men⁴⁰. On October 16, Montenegrins conquered Berane which was defended by a force of 2.900 men⁴¹ after long battles and taking 500 Ottoman soldiers as prisoners⁴². Some of the soldiers from the garrison defending Berane were able to escape by breaking the siege⁴³. Since the fall of Berane meant that Ottomans lost contact with Pec, the Ottoman commander in Pec sent the Albanian clan leader Asım Bey with a force of 2.000 to take back Berane. Asım Bey set out without any reconnaissance because he trusted the size of this force. When they reached a rocky location nearby Rugovo, 15 kms away from Pec, he tried to move along from a pass that was on the way. The pass was among rocks and too narrow to make it possible to climb. Here, the Montenegrin soldiers had laid an ambush waiting for the Ottoman soldiers to pass. While Asım Bey's army was moving on this pass, Montenegrin soldiers attacked them. Meanwhile, Montenegrin soldiers ceased fire with the order of their commander. They were ordered to save on bullets. After this order, Montenegrin soldiers started to roll down huge rocks. When the Montenegrin soldiers stopped, 1.720 of the 2.000 Ottoman soldiers who did not beg for forgiveness had died, 280 of them had survived. Asım Bey and his 280 soldiers were taken as prisoners and they were taken to Podgorica⁴⁴.

At the time of the conquest of Berane, General Vukotic's army was marching to Plav and Gusine. Montenegrins conquered Plav which was defended by a unit of 2.400 men⁴⁵ on October 19⁴⁶ after six attacks. Plav had been ruined as a result of the attacks and Ottomans had lost about 500-600 soldiers there.

³⁹ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.267.

⁴⁰ *İşkodra Savunması...*, p.51; *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi...*, p.69.

⁴¹ *İşkodra Savunması...*, p. 51.

⁴² Andrijašević-Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro...*, p.140; Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.268.

⁴³ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.268.

⁴⁴ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.268-269.

⁴⁵ *İşkodra Savunması...*, p.51.

⁴⁶ Andrijašević-Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro...*, p.140; Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.269.

On October 20, General Vukotic's army conquered Gusine defended by a garrison of 2.400 men⁴⁷ and the army marched to Rojaye from there and conquered this city on October 26⁴⁸. Then, they began to march to Pec. When the defence lines of Pec, Poklin and Ziliyet were easily conquered, Montenegrin army reached Pec on October 30 without any resistance. Since Pec was an important religious center for the Slavic people, the conquest of this place by the Montenegrins was their most important spiritual victory in history⁴⁹.

The troops that conquered Akova advanced to Siyeneca and met the Serbs there. The Serbs conquered the city in the evening hours after heavy gun fire. The next day, Montenegrins entered the city⁵⁰. Meanwhile, Austria began to be annoyed since there became a possibility for the Montenegrin army to advance to Pljevlja (Taşlıca). Pljevlja was on the border of Austria. Thus, Austrian government ordered its armies in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia mobilization as a precaution and signed a treaty of friendship with the Ottoman government⁵¹. After Siyeneca, the North Army of Montenegrins advanced to Pljevlja on the Austrian border⁵². The army commanded by General Bujovic entered the city after breaking down the Ottoman defence lines of 5.000 men⁵³. However, they met the resistance of Ottoman soldiers who were defending every street of the city. The Serbian army marching to Pljevlja got there just then. Three armies started to fight heavily and suffered heavy losses. Major Ali Mümtaz Bey, the commander of the Ottoman garrison defending the city, passed the border with his 1.380 privates and 77 officers who had survived and entered Bosnia-Herzegovina and preferred to surrender to Austria here. With the fall of Pljevlja on October 28, Montenegrins conquered the whole Yenipazar Sanjak⁵⁴.

After this, Montenegrin army commanded by General Vukotic attacked Akova with the Serbian army. After a few hours' battle, Akova fell on November 4 and Montenegrin soldiers entered the city with Serbian soldiers⁵⁵. After General Vukotic conquered Akova, he advanced to Scutari to help the troops there as planned before. In the meantime, a division of the Serbian army advanced to Durazzo Harbor while another division went there to help the Montenegrins for the Scutari siege.

⁴⁷ *İşkodra Savunması...*, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Andrijašević-Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro...*, p.140; Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.270.

⁴⁹ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.270.

⁵⁰ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p. 270–271.

⁵¹ BOA, A. MKT. MHM, 741/19, Date: 08/Za/1330 (20 October 1912).

⁵² Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.273.

⁵³ *İşkodra Savunması...*, p.51.

⁵⁴ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.273.

⁵⁵ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.274; Andrijašević-Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro...*, p.140.

Scutari Siege

Scutari , which had been the capital city of Montenegro, was a salvation for the Montenegrins with its fertile land. Besides, it was to become the capital city again since it was the capital city in the past.

Turkish garrison defending Scutari had about 15.000 soldiers on the day the war was declared. The number reached 20.000 with the volunteer Albanians who joined the army⁵⁶. The garrison was commanded by Colonel Hasan Rıza Bey. Hasan Rıza Bey assigned Drac deputy Esat Paşa (Toptani) as Scutari fortress commander both to win back Malësians and to win the support of Muslim Albanians. Esad Pasha had a strong Redif division of 8.000 Albanians⁵⁷. Traboş, Kraya, Şiroka, Murikan, Oblika, Gorica, Brdica, Bardanyoli, Golemi and Boksi are fortresses that make Scutari safeguarded⁵⁸.

While Montenegro's headquarter army besieged Scutari from northeast front line, the South Army commanded by General Martinovic moved from Bar and Elgün and passed the border from two points on October 10. 9 troops of Montenegro army commanded by Martinovic attacked and burned down the Muslim villages and killed the women and children on their way to Scutari⁵⁹. Martinovic was commanding the army during the Scutari siege. The first attack on Traboş, one of the fortresses of Scutari , took place with a division of 1.000 men. However, 300 of the 1.000 men died, 600 were wounded and only 100 went back in one piece. This is at the same time the first attack of Montenegro army to Scutari and it was an unsuccessful attack. On October 20 Scutari castle was attacked with gun fire. Especially the parts where Muslims lived extensively were hit with gun fires. In the meantime, King Nikola moved his military quarters from Podgorica to Planica to follow the siege better⁶⁰.

On the evening of October 15, King Nikola sent a committee to the Scutari castle commander Rıza Pasha and wanted him to quit the city. However, Rıza Pasha did not accept this. There is an important point here. Before the Balkan Wars started, King Nikola gave medal to Hasan Rıza Pasha and his officers and tried to impress him. This act shows the importance the King places on Scutari⁶¹. After Rıza Pasha's negative answer, the left wing of the Montenegro headquarter army attacked the Ottoman batteries on the east of Scutari on October 17⁶².

⁵⁶Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.277.

⁵⁷"İslam Dünyası'nın Tefrikası/Osmanlı Karadağ Muharebesi Sene 1328 İşkodra Mıntıkası", *İslam Dünyası*, 2 Eylül 1329, p.222; Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain...*, p.285.

⁵⁸Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.278.

⁵⁹BOA, *BEO*, 4101/307538, Date: 09/Za/1330 (20 October 1912).

⁶⁰Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.280.

⁶¹BOA, *İ. TAL*, 477/1330/RA-24, Date: 26/Ra/1330 (16 May 1912).

⁶²Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.285.

On October 22, Montenegrins continued their attack to both Traboş and Scutari but the Ottoman forces did not suffer too many losses. On the contrary, Montenegrin army suffered heavy losses because of the gun fires of Ottoman army. The Montenegrin soldiers who were wounded here were taken to Rijeka or Cetinje for treatment and since many of them had to go on foot, they lost their lives before they reached the city⁶³.

On October 24, the left wing of the army conquered Şiroka and Kraya, the right wing conquered Murikan and General Martinovic's left wing conquered Gorica. King Nikola again called for Traboş and Scutari to surrender but the answer was again negative. On October 25, Oblika fell. On October 27, Boksi was conquered with the help of Malësians. The battles continued until October 28. In the mean time, General Martinovic was attacking Brdica, the place he considered to be the key to Scutari.

Montenegrins conquered Buzati, the right wing of the South army on October 29; however, the next day they lost 1.000 men in the battle⁶⁴. On November 12, Austria, Hungary and Italy wanted Serbia to withdraw their soldiers in Albania and Montenegro to end the Scutari siege⁶⁵. But the Scutari siege still continued on the 19th of November. In the meantime, winter had gotten worse. King Nikola became the operational commander of the army and assigned Prince Danilo as the commander of headquarters and North Army and General Vukotic as the chief of defence. General Martinovic continued his duty as the commander of the South Army. In the meantime, Serbian army and Montenegrin North army commanded by General Vukovic had joined the siege of Scutari⁶⁶.

The attacks that started on November 21 stopped until November 29 because Boyana and Drina rivers had flooded. The attacks started on November 29, but Traboş and Scutari had still not fallen. Moreover, Montenegrins had lost 300 men and there were a great number of casualties. On December 3 when Bulgary and Ottoman Empire negotiated for peace, Bulgarian government suggested King Nikola to stop the military operations. This caused some comfort to King Nikola but he did not neglect to announce that he would take up arms again to conquer the "future capital city"⁶⁷.

Although an armistice was signed, the battles between the Ottoman forces and the Montenegrins continued on and off until January 28. In the meantime, King Nikola passed on a big part of his responsibilities as the genral commander of allied armies to General Bajovic, the commander of Serbian army. When the

⁶³ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.275–276, 81.

⁶⁴ *İşkodra Savunması...*, p.58.

⁶⁵ Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain...*, p.288.

⁶⁶ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.286–287.

⁶⁷ Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.288.

international committee gathered for peace in London without reaching a conclusion on January 29, the battles started again on February 2. Montenegrin forces continued to attack Scutari and Traboş with all their power.

Scutari castle's commander Hasan Rıza Bey who had been defending the castle successfully against Montenegrins since October was shot and killed by three people on 30 January 1913 at 18:45 while returning from the house of the archbishop of Scutari Malësians⁶⁸. Although it is not known for sure who had Hasan Rıza Bey killed, it is commonly accepted that it was Esad Pasha who gave the order⁶⁹. Hasan Rıza Pasha had promised to support Esat Pasha in being elected to the Assembly of Notables. However, Esat Pasha got the news about the government change and thought that Hasan Rıza Pasha could not have any effect on the supporters of Confederation. Thus, he wanted to be powerful in Scutari to get a chance for negotiation. After Hasan Rıza Pasha's death, Esat Pasha overtook the command of the garrison in Scutari and continued the defense⁷⁰.

The attack on Traboş that took place on February 8 lasted for three days. In the battles, Serbians supported Montenegrins. While Montenegrins had 3.500 losses and casualties, this number was 4.000 for Ottomans and 6.000 for Serbians. Montenegrin King was disappointed when the Ottoman soldiers taken as prisoners said that there was enough arms and food in Scutari castle. Montenegrins had failed in conquering Scutari and lost a great number of men. The capital city had become a hospital. Cetinje, in which 5.000 people lived in times of war, had 2.000 casualties at the time⁷¹.

Montenegrin attacks that started on February 14 continued until February 27. Montenegrin armies attacked the city on March 16 with the Serbian forces that came for help in March, but they could not succeed again. In the meantime, Austria had started diplomatic contacts for the city to be left to Albanians. At the London Conference, Austria's offer was supported by England and Russia. They also offered for Montenegro to get land and money donations. However, King Nikola was decisive to conquer Scutari no matter what. Naturally, he refused these offers. In the meantime, Austria wanted the Muslims and Christians in the city to be evacuated. At first, King Nikola did not take this offer into consideration. Because the supplies that were running low in the city were to determine the city's fate. However, because of the pressures of other countries, Nikola accepted to evacuate the people. Only this time Esat Pasha did not allow the evacuation. He did not care for the pressures from both İstanbul and other countries⁷².

⁶⁸Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi..., p.149.

⁶⁹Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi..., p.149-150; Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik*..., p.377.

⁷⁰Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik*..., p.377.

⁷¹Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı*..., p.295-296.

⁷²Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı*..., p.298-299.

After seeing that the siege of Scutari got weaker, Austria began to pressurize King Nikola for ending the siege. When Nikola persisted in not doing this, they threatened to blockade Montenegro coast. In order to prevent Austria from acting alone and to pressurize Nikola for ending the siege, the Great Powers decided to make a sea protest on Montenegro coast on March 31⁷³.

Despite all, of that, Nikola did not stop the siege. While the Great Powers were debating on the sea protest, Montenegrin and Serbian forces attacked Traboş and conquered the place. The fall of Traboş was the biggest victory for Montenegrin army since the day the siege of Scutari started. Because of these developments, the Austrian navy advanced to Bar without waiting for the other countries. Thus, the other countries (Italy, England, France and Germany) sent their war ships there. Russia did not send an armada but supported the decision of Great Powers. The Great Powers sent a notice to King Nikola and told him to end the siege. Nikola did not accept this by saying that he would not give up on the siege⁷⁴.

Nikola did not listen to the Great Powers, but the Serbian government tried to look nice to the Great Powers so that they could keep the places they conquered and withdrew their support in the siege. Russia warned King Nikola many times to stop the siege. The international navy blockaded Montenegro coast on April 10. They cut the country's communication and transportation such as telegram, post and road. Montenegro was disconnected with the world. However, Nikola did not give up on his decision. While the blockade was continuing, the news of the fall of Scutari arrived on April 22. But, King Nikola had not conquered the castle through fighting. He had induced Esat Pasha with the promise of making him the king of Albania. With the dream of being supported by Nikola, Esat Pasha agreed to turn in the city that he had been defending for months with an agreement on April 23. Montenegro army marched in Scutari on April 24. On April 25, Nikola came to the castle and took the key of the city from Esad Pasha⁷⁵.

Esad Pasha left the city with 12.000 people and as much food, arms and weapons as they could get with them⁷⁶. With the fall of Scutari, the martial part of the war ended. However, Montenegrins could not stay long in Scutari. As a result of the pressure from the Great Powers, Montenegro government had to leave Scutari to the newly founded Albanian government on 14 May 1913. The First Balkan War ended with the treaty of London signed in London on 30 May 1913.

⁷³Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.300.

⁷⁴Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.302–303.

⁷⁵*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri Tarihi...*, p.212; *İşkodra Savunması...*, p.88–89; Andonyan, *Balkan Savaşı...*, p.309.

⁷⁶Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik...*, p.379.

Conclusion

At the end of the First Balkan War, Montenegro government expanded its borders with Pljevlja, Berane, Majkovac, Rojaje, Plav, Gusinje, Tuzi, Pec and Akova. During the war, Montenegrins lost 3.000 men and they had 6.500 casualties⁷⁷.

The country that was the most advantageous in the war was Bulgaria. Greece and Serbia were very annoyed with Bulgaria's keeping a big part of Macedonia. Especially the disagreement about Selanik and Manastır caused Serbia and Greece to unite against Bulgaria⁷⁸. Montenegro accused Bulgaria of extending the war unnecessarily because of their ambition to conquer Edirne⁷⁹. The two countries signed an alliance agreement on 1 June 1913. The Second Balkan War started on June 29-30 following the Bulgarian armies attack on Greek armies. Romania, wanting to get land from Bulgaria, declared war on Bulgaria on July 10 and went to war. Ottoman Empire took advantage of the fight of Balkan countries with one another and took back Edirne on July 20. Ultimately, the war ended with defeat for Bulgaria. Balkan countries signed the treaty of Bucharest on 12 August 1913. Montenegro had 150 losses and 700 casualties⁸⁰. With the First Balkan War, 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 population⁸¹.

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⁷⁷ Andrijašević-Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro...*, p. 141.

⁷⁸ Halil Akman, *Paylaşılmayan Balkanlar*, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2006, p. 89–91.

⁷⁹ Kutlu, *Milliyetçilik...*, p.351.

⁸⁰ Andrijašević-Rastoder, *The History of Montenegro...*, p. 141.

⁸¹ Ağanoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e...*, p. 25.

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