

# Balkan wars



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Balkan Wars started in autumn of 1912 when the Balkan states Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Montenegro decided to start a war in order to conquer and partition the European part of Ottoman Turkey. Prior to the war, the Treaty between Serbia and Bulgaria was forged on March 12, 1912 transforming Macedonia into an autonomous region - a compromise move to avoid territorial separation and partition of Macedonia. As soon as the treaty was signed, Greece and Montenegro joined the agreement and then the war commenced.

The article "The Balkan Wars and the History of Macedonia" provides an account of the Wars. It states that the Macedonian territory and the Thracian front were where the battles between the offensive Balkan allies against the Turkish army took place. The Macedonian people took active part in the First Balkan War with their own regiments (chetas) and voluntary units believing that it will bring them their long-cherished freedom. The victories of the Balkan allies over the Turkish army forced Turkey to sign a cease-fire and a short-term truce, but the battles went on until May 30, 1913.

However, new bloodshed started soon among the Balkan allies who could not agree on how to partition the territories taken over from Turkey. The partition was carried out by force of arms and sanctioned by the Bucharest Peace Treaty signed on August 10, 1913 according to which all the Balkan states expanded their territories. Macedonia was not only denied its autonomy which had originally been one of the causes of the war against Turkey, but it was forcefully divided and partitioned by the neighboring Balkan states.

Greece seized the biggest, southern part of Macedonia, Serbia won the central Vardar region and the Pirin part with the Strumica vicinity was given to Bulgaria. Despite assurances of autonomy, Macedonia was denied its freedom. This was made worse by a violent military and police regime by the new masters of the Macedonian regions. A regime of "special decrees" from the mid-nineteenth century was imposed in the territory under Serbian rule. In the part of Macedonia under Bulgarian rule, military commanders helped by comitadji voivodes ruled over the civil authorities and "dispensed justice" to the people.

In the Macedonian districts under Greek rule the notorious Cretan gendarmerie, which acted in support of the conservative Greek governors, kept law and order. The territorial, ethnic and economic disintegration of Macedonia caused severe damage to the economy, to the Macedonian movement for national liberation and to its socio-political development. The post Balkan Wars saw the massive devastation of Macedonia. The tragic outcome of the Balkan Wars was a real national catastrophe for Macedonia. The unresolved Macedonian question continued to be "an apple of discord" for the Balkan states.

The significance of the Balkan Wars lies in its being a precursor to World War I. As Serbia's territory greatly increased as an aftermath of the war, Austria-Hungary took alarm. This concern was shared by Germany, which saw Serbia as a satellite of Russia. It also showed that unity (as shown by the Balkan states) was the central force in expelling the Ottoman empire, but greed over how to divide Macedonia proved to be the states' undoing. This led had

left the Balkan states disunited, fragmented, isolated, and weak.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

History of Macedonia. org. The Balkan Wars and the Partition of Macedonia. 2001. (<http://www.historyofmacedonia.org/PartitionedMacedonia/BalkanWars.html>) Schurman, Jacob Gould, The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1914. Monroe, Will S. , Bulgaria and her People with an Account of the Balkan Wars, Macedonia, and the Macedonian Bulgars. Boston: The Page Co. , 1914. Gerolymatos, Andre, The Balkan Wars: Conquest, Revolution, and Retribution from the Ottoman Era to the Twentieth Century and Beyond. NY: Basic Books, 2002.