

# The Balkan War and Its Implications for Islamic Socio-Political Life in Southeast Europe (1876-1914 AD)

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## Abstract

This research describes the historical series of the occurrence of the Balkan Wars and their implications for Muslim life there. This study took up three main issues, namely (1) the causes of the Balkan Wars, (2) the chronology of the Balkan Wars, and (3) what are the implications of the Balkan Wars on the socio-political life of Islam in the South-East. Europe. The research method used in this thesis is the historical research method. 4 steps, namely (1) Heuristic, (2) Source Criticism/Verification, (3) Interpretation and (4) Historiography. Two approaches are used in this study, namely the political and sociological approaches. While the theory I use in this research is theory. Theory of conflict and social change. The research results that the authors obtained are as follows: chronologically, the Balkan War was preceded by the Macedonian problem which eventually served as an excuse to legitimize the war. Basically, the main cause of this Balkan War was due to ambition and personal grudge between the respective rulers of the Balkan countries and the Ottoman Empire. It is also carried by the decline of the sultanate, Russian domination, the Turkish-Italian war (1911-1912), the idea of nationalism, propaganda, the formation of the Balkan alliance and the failure of diplomacy. The outbreak of the Balkan War not only brought about geopolitical changes, but was also a humanitarian catastrophe for Muslims in the Balkans who, at that time, had to accept the fact that their situation was no longer the same as when it was ruled by Muslims because authority had passed to non-Muslims.

**Keywords:** *Balkan Wars, Social Implications, Political Implications - Islam .*



## A. INTRODUCTION

Since the time of Rasulullah SAW, there has been a policy for non-Muslims who can remain in the Muslim government by paying some kind of tax or jizya. Their rights are guaranteed and protected and their social obligations are the same. They are called Zimmis. Initially, this Dhimmi was a polytheist who originally fought Muslims and was defeated for the Prophet to establish such a policy. This policy was still followed and firmly maintained by the subsequent ruling caliphs of the Prophet, including the Ottoman Caliphate. The Balkan region, which was predominantly Christian, was able to survive for about five centuries under the rule of the Ottoman Turks with the same policy. This Balkan peninsula was actually conquered by the Muslims, not far from the time of the conquest of Constantinople. Serbia came under Ottoman rule in 1459, Bosnia and Herzegovina was captured in 1465 AD, and Greece, including Morea and Euboea,

fell to the Ottomans in 1468. However, alongside the triumphs won by the Muslims through this expansion, the other side of the European nation is trying to wake up from its slumber. The Dark Ages or what they often call the Dark Ages, slowly disappeared with the French Revolution that took place between 1789 and 1815, which gave birth to the ideas of human rights and nationalism. This idea also influenced various nations that were under the auspices of the Ottoman Turks and caused chaos (Lenczowski, 1994).

Rebellions began to be intensified by Christians who were under the auspices of the Ottomans, especially in the Balkans. Since Serbia's struggle for independence in 1804-1813 AD, one by one the Balkan countries separated from Greece (1832), Romania (1856-1878), Montenegro (1878) and Bulgaria (1878-1908), all declared themselves independent states (Lenczowski, 1994). Suspicion of the cause of the rebellion to liberate At the end of 1876, there were uprisings in Serbia and Bulgaria, but the Turkish army overcame them with a violent repression which was described as "horror in Bulgaria" by the Western press. This added to the hatred of the European public against the Ottoman government, peppered with Russian propaganda aimed at crippling the Ottoman Turks in which Russia gave hope of saving the churches to Greece, in order to reap benefits for Russia it -even who wanted to influence non-Muslims (Slavic and Greek). ) to rebel against Turkey. It can be said that when the state of the Ottoman Empire was critical, Russia dissected the body parts of the sick man of Europe for itself and for the countries of Europe (Reis, 2003).

The trigger for the Balkan War itself was the desire of Balkan countries like Bulgaria to liberate Macedonia, which was still under the rule of the Ottoman Caliphate. In fact, there was another purpose of the Balkan War itself, that in addition to taking Macedonia from the hands of the Turks, the alliance of the Balkan countries consisting of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro had its own interests and ambitions. Even though their goals were generally the same, namely to seize European territory, especially the Balkans which were still in the hands of the Ottoman Turks. They also wanted to permanently expel the Ottoman Turks from the Balkans (Karim, 2011).

This was inseparable from Russia's support and encouragement for the Balkan countries, especially Serbia. Serbia was disappointed as Bosnia and Herzegovina was ceded to Austria-Hungary in 1908 AD without the consent of the Balkan Peninsula countries. Russia was unhappy with Austria-Hungary's decision to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina as its territory, as Russia feared that Austria-Hungary's triumph would threaten Russia's influence in the Balkans. Therefore, Russia encouraged the Balkan countries to form the Balkan League (Aslizan, 2016).

The formation of the Balkan League consisting of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro sparked the fire of war between the countries of the Balkan Peninsula and the Ottoman Empire. It should be noted that although this Balkan War lasted only about a year, this war happened 2 times. The First Balkan War was the war between the Balkan

countries against the Ottoman Empire with the mission of liberating Macedonia and expelling the Ottoman Turks from the Balkans. The Second Balkan War was a war between the allies of the Balkan countries themselves in fighting over territories that were captured from the hands of the Ottomans. This was due to the actions of Sir Edward Gray in urging the Balkan countries to sign a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire without any prior agreement between them regarding the division of territories that were captured from the Ottoman Turks. This is what makes these Balkan countries dissatisfied and disappointed with each other, which ultimately sets off the drums of Balkan War II. Again, wars took place in the Balkan Peninsula (Gray, 2007).

In general, this Balkan war had important implications for Muslim life in Southeastern Europe, both politically and socially. After the end of the Balkan Wars, Muslims suffered a genuine geopolitical defeat. This geopolitical defeat was accompanied by an economic defeat that ended in the migration and massacre of the large-scale Muslim population of the Balkans, leaving only a small population that would become the Muslim minority of the national state. Balkan. Based on the above explanation, it can be said that the study of the Balkan Wars is very interesting to discuss. Their political intrigue, revenge, ambition and even mutual suspicion greatly aroused the writer's curiosity as to what really lay behind this Balkan war, so that it was considered the prelude (the beginning ) of the First World War. The author also wants to know more about the chronology of the war. The Balkans, whether it is the Balkan War I or the Balkan War II, and what are the implications for the lives of Muslims in the Balkans or what is now more commonly referred to as the Southeast Europe. Indeed, for several centuries, Muslims have controlled the countries of the Balkan Peninsula. Certainly, more or less, there are Muslim communities or communities living in the Balkans, both immigrants and natives of the Balkans who have embraced Islam.

Moreover, since there is still little discussion of the Balkan wars and the lives of Muslims in the Balkans themselves, this has further aroused the author's enthusiasm for further research on this war of the Balkans. Based on the reasons given above, he finally encouraged the author to raise it as a research topic. as part of a thesis, entitled "The Balkan War and its implications for Islamic socio-political life in Southeastern Europe (1876-1914 AD)" .

## **B. METHOD**

The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach to the literature study method using secondary data in the form of literature relating to the Balkan war and its implications for Islamic socio-political life in South Eastern Europe. ..

## **C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

After the first military expedition to the Balkans in 1354, the presence of the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans lasted more than five hundred years (Furrat, 2012). When talking about the Muslim population of the Balkans or Islam in the Balkans, it is important to recognize the diversity of this Muslim population. The Balkan Muslim society as a whole emerged from the process of Islamization which was accompanied by the arrival of the Ottoman Turks in the region from the 14th century to the beginning of the 20th century, but this Balkan Muslim society can in no way be qualified as of a homogeneous society. Since the previous chapter described the Balkan ethnic group which is very heterogeneous (Bougarel, 2005).

The conflicts that occurred in the Balkans in 1912-1913 were the result of symptoms of social differentiation that occurred in the Balkans. As long as the Ottoman Turks were in power, this social differentiation continued. Like the classification between Muslim and Christian communities which are treated differently, urban residents are treated differently from rural residents, and so on. It was the first spark of a protracted conflict that eventually led to war.

As the first conflict involving European countries in the 20th century, the Balkan Wars introduced modern warfare involving many soldiers, machines, including people. This war succeeded in eliminating the Ottoman Turks from Europe, with the exception of parts of Eastern Thrace. An Indian Muslim leader assessed the Balkan dispute as follows:

"The King of Greece has declared a new crusade. From councils in London there were calls, for Christian fanaticism, and St. Petersburg had ordered the placement of the cross on Hagia Sophia. Today they say so, tomorrow they will order similar things regarding Jerusalem and the Mosque of Umar. Brothers! Insyafiah, that the duty of those who truly believe is to gather under the Caliph's banner and sacrifice their lives for the security of our faith. "Referring to the theory of conflict described in the previous chapter, it is stated that conflict does not always have negative implications, in the sense that conflict is the cause of the destruction of integration and unity of the community. This shows that, on the other hand, the conflict has positive implications and is a source of change. The establishment of Albania as an independent state is an example of the positive implications of the conflict. following the London agreement, Albania became an independent state.

Talking about Islamic dominance in southeastern Europe means discussing the impact of the Balkan Wars on the continued dominance of Ottoman Turks and Muslims, especially after the Balkan War. Politically, during the First Balkan War, the Ottomans had lost all control over Europe. Obviously, Muslims who had enjoyed special status under Ottoman rule had to come to terms with the fact that they would no longer be treated in the same way. The devastating defeat that the Ottoman Turks suffered against the four members of the Balkan League had a huge impact on the Ottoman Empire and

Balkan society itself (Medland & Hatemi, 2009). Additionally, the Balkan Wars led to the diplomatic isolation of the Ottoman Empire, and Unionists believed that continued isolation meant the end of the Ottoman Empire. Wanting to avoid a political isolation that was to end badly, the Ottomans finally became involved in the World War in 1914. In an atmosphere of growing international tension, the unionist government of the Ottoman Empire tried to form an alliance. Basically, the Ottoman government was ready to accept any alliance rather than suffer further isolation. However, on the other hand, the territory of Albania where the population is predominantly Muslim has managed to gain its independence. For more details regarding the political impact arising from the Balkan war, it will be described as follows Jhazbhay, 2008).

Albania declared independence from the Ottoman Empire in November 1912, with 70% of the population being Muslim. As soon as this declaration was realized, neighboring Christian forces began to invade all Albanian provinces and incorporate them into their own territory. Serbia captured Kosovo and Western Macedonia, Montenegro subdued neighboring regions, and Greece took control of Kamiria, including the famous city of Janina.

As a result, the original area of Albania was reduced from around 70,000 square kilometers to just 28,748 square kilometers. A conference in London held the European ambassadors to meet and confirm the borders of the new state to the conquerors of Albanian lands. Worse still, Muslims are not allowed to rule in Albania but are non-Muslims. The major European powers chose a foreign Christian, the German prince Wilhelm zu Weid, to be king of Albania. The great powers themselves chose Wied, a German soldier and nephew of the Romanian Queen Elisabeth. It replaces the provisional government founded by Ismail Kemal in November 1912.

However, this Prince Wilhem only stayed in Albania for a few months. When World War I broke out 6 months later, Prince Wilhelm left Albania. Thereafter, Albania experienced a state of anarchy for a period of about ten years until Ahmad Beg Zogu declared the country a republic with himself as its first president.

As a direct consequence of the First Balkan War, the independence of Albania may have limited Serbia and prevented it from becoming a new maritime power in the Adriatic. This was due to Austrian insistence, whose main political objective was to prevent Serbia from gaining an exit to the Adriatic. This was done by Austria because the strength of Serbia feared to compete with it as a new power in Europe. Of course, this was not what Austria wanted. European states forced Serbia and Montenegro to withdraw from Albanian territory they had conquered in the First Balkan War. The Serbian government, frustrated by the loss of Albanian territory, sought satisfaction in the territory of Macedonia controlled by Bulgaria and Greece. The Bulgarians, who believe they have played an important role in the battle against Turkey, refuse to cede any territory to Serbia and reject Russia's attempts at mediation. On June 29–30, 1913,



Bulgarian forces attacked Serbian and Greek territory in Macedonia, starting the Second Balkan War.

The London Accord, which was originally intended to end the First Balkan War peacefully, led to the outbreak of the Second Balkan War due to an unresolved power struggle. This shows that the existence of dissatisfaction with the resolution taken to resolve the war can in fact lead to war again.

The breakdown of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Turks led to political polarization in Istanbul. Losing Libya was nothing compared to giving up Albania, Macedonia and Thrace. Since being seized from the Byzantine Empire five centuries earlier, European territories have been at the economic and administrative heart of the Ottoman world. These three regions are also the most prosperous and developing provinces in the entire Kingdom. Additionally, Macedonia, Thrace and Albania were the wealthiest and most developed provinces and part of the ruling Ottoman elite came from there (Rogan, 2016) The loss of income was exacerbated by the cost raised from the First Balkan War on Ottoman coffers. Thousands of refugees are in need of resettlement efforts. In addition, hunger in turn makes the population vulnerable to epidemics, which usually attack people weakened by lack of food. The government also faced huge expenses to rebuild the Ottoman armed forces after the loss of life and property caused by two failed wars (Turkish-Italian War and Balkan War I). The construction of resettlements posed major problems for them, and many refugees spent the following years in squatters in cities.

The kingdom lost almost all of its territory in parts of Europe, totaling around 60,000 square miles, with a population of around 4 million people. After all, as in 1878, Istanbul was filled with Muslim refugees who had lost everything. There, typhus and cholera epidemics struck and there was a high death rate among the refugees. Apart from Eastern Thrace, all Ottoman territory in Europe was lost (Zurcher, 2003). The dominant impact is the impact of public morality. Defeat against a relatively advanced European country like Italy was bad, but neither the military nor the general Ottoman population could accept defeat at the hands of the small Balkan states that had once been part of their Khilafah. Yusuf Akcura, a young Turkish intellectual wrote:

"The Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Greeks whom we colonized for five centuries, whom we hate, defeated us. This reality, which we cannot even imagine in our imaginations, will open our eyes ... if we are not not completely dead" (Rogan, 2016).

This shows that initially the Ottoman Empire underestimated the strength of the Balkans it had colonized. However, the Balkans they underestimated were able to defeat them, which made it difficult for them to come to terms with the fact that they had lost and lost a lot of territory. The impact of the Balkan war on the social life of Muslim communities in South Eastern Europe.

The wars that took place in the Balkans in 1912-1913 AD caused enormous human devastation. During the First Balkan War, Bulgaria lost 14,000 lives, 50,000 were injured and 19,000 died of disease. During the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria suffered 18,000 casualties, 60,000 were wounded and 15,000 died of disease. Bulgaria's high losses in the Second Balkan War occurred during intense battles with Greece and Serbia for only a short time (Hall, 2000). Unlike the case of Greece which suffered only 5,169 victims and 23,502 wounded during the 1st Balkan War. Meanwhile, during the Second Balkan War, only 2,563 people were killed and 19,307 wounded. Meanwhile, during the First Balkan War, Montenegro lost 2,836 lives and 6,602 were injured. Most of these losses resulted from military operations around Scutari. Montenegro also lost 240 lives and injured 961 in the Second Balkan War. These losses are high for a country as small as Montenegro.

The greatest winner of the Balkan wars was Serbia. Not only did the Serbian army win battles against the Ottoman forces in Albania, Macedonia, Thrace and against the Bulgarian army in Macedonia, but Serbia greatly expanded its territory and population. This expansion surely resulted in cruelty to the Muslim population. Serbia, which was the main victor in the Balkan war, is estimated to have lost only about 36,550 people and injured 55,000. Other figures indicate that Serbia's losses in the war with Bulgaria were around 9,000 battlefield killed, 5,000 cholera dead and 36,000 wounded (Hall, 2000). Meanwhile, the loss of life suffered by the Ottoman Turks is difficult to determine. Indeed, Ottoman troops often retreated or fled the battlefield, so the Ottomans were not always able to produce an estimate of the number of dead and wounded. During the First Balkan War, the total casualties of the Ottoman Turks probably amounted to around 100,000. Other sources suggest that around 125,000 Ottoman soldiers were killed during the war or died of disease and starvation. Most of these deaths were a direct result of the war, for example, Turkish POWs killed by Bulgaria at Stara Zagora numbered 500-600 (Hall, 2000).

This high death toll led to a decline in the population of the Ottoman Turks and accelerated the process of disintegration. Apart from this, the Balkan Wars also wiped out many generations of Bulgarians, Greeks, Montenegro and Serbs. Especially for Bulgaria, which suffered heavy losses in the two Balkan wars. The author will describe the situation and the conditions experienced by the Muslim communities in South-Eastern Europe after the Balkan war.

While Serbia and Montenegro accepted the Albanians, the Greeks followed a policy of expelling Albanian Muslims from the territories they conquered. Indeed, before the Balkan war, the persecution and mistreatment of Muslims had already taken place, but the situation worsened when the Muslim authorities, namely the Ottoman Turks, suffered a crushing defeat in the war. of the Balkans I. For example, in 1876, Muslims were the majority in many large cities, such as Varna, Plovdiv (filipe), Pleven, etc. Muslims are also a significant minority in the city of Sofia. After the Crimean War, the

Ottoman state placed Crimean Muslim refugees in the region, about 350,000 people, including 100,000 Tartars and 90,000 Circassians. However, the war between Turkey and Russia in 1877 was disastrous for the Muslim population and caused major dislocations and mass emigration to Anatolia (McCarthy, 2017).

Persecution of the Muslim community intensified after Bulgarian independence in 1908, leading to a new wave of emigrants to Turkey. In fact, the Royal Bulgarian government continued to adhere to a policy of eliminating the Muslim population with a spirit tinged with religious fanaticism. This led to a reduction of the Muslim population in Bulgaria from around 50% in 1876 to just 13% in 1939 with only 858,000 Muslims out of a population of 6,600,000 (McCarthy, 2017). Moreover, in October 1912, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro agreed to attack the Ottoman Turks and expel them from the Balkans. The problem is that their population is a minority in Ottoman Europe. 51% of their population is Muslim, mainly Albania in the west and Turkey in the east. They realize that the majority of Muslims will always be a threat to their power. The solution is to expel and kill Muslims (McCarthy, 2017).

There is no doubt that the Albanian population of Kosovo and northern Albania suffered terrible suffering at the hands of the Serbian and Montenegrin armies. Fritz Magnussen, correspondent for the Danish newspaper *Riget*, wrote: Serbian military activity in Macedonia has taken the position of annihilating the population of Arnaut (Albania). The soldiers committed a terrible war atrocity. According to officials and soldiers, some 3,000 Arnauts were massacred in the area between Kumanova/Kumanovo and Skopje and some 5,000 near Prishtina. The village of Arnaut was set on fire, and its inhabitants were driven from their homes and shot like rats. Serbian soldiers happily informed me of their manhunts (Hall, 2000)

Besides Fritz Magnussen, other sources also mention war atrocities committed against Muslims through the writings of a British consulate, namely Lamb who wrote: "In the regions of Kilkish, Doiran and Ghevgheli, almost all the rulers Muslims were killed, their property was confiscated or destroyed, their farms and homes were burned. Their wives are abused, and often worse" (McCarthy, 2017).

In each area, villagers were stripped of everything from livestock to agricultural seeds on which their lives depended. They had no food and not a single victorious country provided them with food, so they starved to death. European observers report cases of murder, vandalism and starvation in all of Turkey's former European territories.

The Muslim population that fled to the Serres region reached a thousand people. When the fighting ended, the new authorities informed the Muslim population that it would be safe to return to their village. When they arrived, they saw that their village had been destroyed and they gathered in towns like Petrich, where 200 people were killed by Bulgarian troops, 120 people were massacred in Orman Ciftlik, another 150 people in Gjurgjevo . Meanwhile, the 364 people who survived Petrich were ordered to



assemble in the town barracks, but in the end 260 of them were killed there with bayonets. It is not known exactly what happened to the 100 survivors, they probably went to the rest of Turkey (McCarthy, 2017).

At the end of the war, the survivors who could not escape from Europe fled to Eastern Thrace and Anatolia, and took what was left of their possessions. Their lands, their homes, their businesses and even their farms are lost, and of course there is no compensation for that. No one has calculated the large death toll in Albania. This is because there was no census in post-war Albania to compare the numbers of survivors from before the war. Outside Albania, 2.3 million Muslims lived in pre-war Ottoman territory. In 1926, only 870,000 people still lived in their home town.

Meanwhile, Macedonia's ethnically diverse Muslim population died out and became refugees like their Christian counterparts, mostly as a result of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. This shows that with the change in the political situation, namely the transfer of power from Muslims to non-Muslims, the number of Muslims in the Balkans has decreased.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that the Balkan War was a war between the Balkan countries and the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans which lasted from 1912 to 1913. Basically, the main cause of the Balkan war was the ambition and personal grudges between the respective rulers of the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire. It was also encouraged by the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Russian domination, the Turkish-Italian War (1911-1912), the idea of nationalism, propaganda, the formation of the Balkan alliance and the failure of diplomacy. Chronologically, the First Balkan War began on October 8, 1912 AD, counting two to one, the Ottomans were quickly defeated by the four members of the Balkan League. Only three city defenses can be defended long enough, namely Yanya (Ioannina), Uskudar (Shkoder) and Edirne. However, all of them fell in April 1913 A.D. Apart from Istanbul, at the end of the First Balkan War, all Ottoman territories in Europe were lost, which was marked by the London Agreement on May 30, 1913. Also, on June 1, 1913, the member states of the Balkan League clashed to fight on the conquered territories that were captured from the Ottoman Empire so that the Second Balkan War broke out. The Ottoman Turks took advantage of the Balkan conflicts to retake Edirne and Eastern Thrace (now European Turkey).

The implications of the Balkan Wars on Muslim life in the Balkans or now more commonly referred to as South Eastern Europe are not only negative, but also positive. Politically, there are three impacts that arise, namely: a. Boundary disputes, b. Power struggles between members of the Balkan League, c. Destruction of territorial unity. Apart from this, from the social point of view of the Balkan Muslim community, three

implications arise, namely: a. Destruction of values and norms, b. Group discrimination, and c. Increased internal solidarity, which is one of the positive implications of the Balkan wars. In general, Muslims in the Balkans form a minority among the Christian majority in the Balkans.

As a result of the atrocities of the war, many Muslim populations fled to Anatolia, so the Muslim population in the Balkans at that time drastically decreased. Massacres of Muslims, the destruction of Muslim villages, and other atrocities occurred during and after the Balkan Wars. The Muslim population that was able to survive in the Balkans had to adapt to the new government held by Christians.

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