

B.A. SEMESTER IV

HISTORY PAPER II (HISTORY OF EUROPE 1848-1918)

BALKANS WARS 1912-1913

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One of the results of the Young Turk movement (July 1908) was a declaration, the complete independence of his country and the inclusion of eastern Rumelia to Bulgaria by Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria (both were in violation of the terms of the Congress of Berlin ,1878). He also assumed the title of the King. The confusion in Ottoman Turkey owing to the revolution led to an attack by Italy on Tripoli(North Africa). The Balkan states took advantage of Turks' involvement in Africa and formed the Balkan League. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria took the initiative of uniting the Balkan nations against Turkey. Bulgaria made an alliance with Serbia in March 1912 and later with the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos negotiated Greco-Bulgarian alliance. Thus Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece agreed to take joint action against the Ottoman Empire later Montenegro also joined them. This is called the Balkan League.

Why Macedonia: Macedonia was populated by Bulgarians, Serbs, Rumanians, Greeks and a handful of Turks. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the serious condition of the Macedonian Christians was a source of concern for the European diplomats. In 1903 the European powers had placed Macedonia under the observation of Austria and Russia. At Murzsteg, in 1903 , Austria and Russia agreed to establish joint control over Macedonia as a guarantee for the execution of Turkish reforms. The understanding of Austria and Russia broke over Austrian ambitions in the Balkans. The

Turkish government diverted the attention of the Austrian government by an offer of a railway concession; Austria abandoned reforms in Macedonia. The Young Turks could feel that Macedonia like other Christian possessions of Ottoman Turkey may slip from her hands one day. In fact, the fear of losing Macedonia was one of the factors that hastened the Young Turk Revolution. (The Anglo Russian Convention, signed August 31, 1907, brought understanding between the two great powers, often rivals in Near East. Again in June 1908, there was a meeting in the Baltic port of Reval between Edward VII of the United Kingdom and Nicholas II of Russia). The meeting aroused a sense of suspicion in the Young Turks that the meeting at Reval was a prelude to the partition of Macedonia.

The Balkan Nations took the Turks by surprise, the Serbian army marched into Novibazar defeated Turks in the battle of Kumonov, captured the ancient capital of Uskub, advanced to Monastir and then Albania and in November seized the Adriatic port of Durazzo. The Montenegrins also invaded Albania. The Greeks invaded Thessaly and were victorious in Salonika on November 8, 1912. The Greek navy captured many Aegean Islands. The Bulgarian army marched into Thrace and won the battles of Kirk-Kilisseh and Lule Burgas and reached Adrianople and threatened Constantinople. Ottoman resistance almost collapsed in the face of the joint Balkan attack. In December 1912, less than two months after the beginning of the war, the Ottoman government sued for peace and negotiations were opened in London. One of the decisions at London was that Turkey will have to relinquish Adrianople; this caused in January 1913 the overthrow of the liberal government of Kaimal Pasha and Enver Pasha (intensely aggressive and nationalist) took the control of the government. Hostilities with the Balkan armies resumed, however, Turks were again defeated in March 1913

Bulgarians occupied Adrianople. In April 1913, Scutari was captured by the Serbs. Finally in May 1913, Enver Pasha consented to accept the peace terms of the Balkan allies. The Ottoman Empire was forced to surrender all European territory except Constantinople and a strip along the Dardanelles.

Mutual jealousies and lack of faith precipitated another war in the Balkans. Serbia demanded large part of Macedonia (for Serbia had been denied control over Albania which would have given her access to the Adriatic Sea due to the resolute opposition of Austria) where as a bitter quarrel developed between Bulgaria and Greece over the disposition of Thrace. In June 1913, fighting began with Bulgaria on one side and Serbia and Greece on the other; soon they were joined by Rumania and Ottoman Empire. Rumania was jealous of the expansion of Bulgaria, where as Turks saw an opportunity to regain a portion of what they had lost.

The second Balkan War was brief in July 1913, Turks captured Adrianople, while the armies of Rumania, Greece and Serbia attacked Bulgaria and threatened her capital Sofia. Unable to secure any help from the great powers, King Ferdinand of Bulgaria accepted his defeat and sued for peace. The treaty of Bucharest was signed in August 1913....

- (1) Serbia got greater part of Macedonia.
- (2) Greece acquired the island Crete, Southern Macedonia including Salonika and Western Thrace.
- (3) Bulgaria got a part of Macedonia and Central Thrace extending up to Aegean Sea.
- (4) Romania got Dobruja.
- (5) Ottoman Empire acquired Adrianople.

The Balkan settlement of 1913 sowed the seeds of World War I:

- (1) Bulgaria was highly dissatisfied and wanted to take revenge on Serbia at the earliest opportunity.
- (2) Russia appeared in the role of a protector in the Balkans against Austria.
- (3) The policy of Turkification received a stimulus. Turkey cemented her military and economic alliance with Germany.
- (4) The rivalry between Austria–Hungary and Serbia grew bitter. For Austria–Hungary, Serbia was a potential Piedmont, a source of inspiration to the Serbs of Hungary, whereas, Serbia could not forget that she had been denied access to Adriatic Sea by Austria twice ---in 1908 by the Austrian appropriation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in 1913 by the erection of Albania, as an independent state on the insistence of Austria –Hungary.