

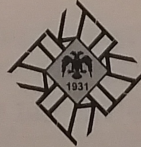
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CONTESTED STANCES

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SİYASETİNDE BALKAN SAVAŞLARI)

Dmitar Tasic*

Abstract

Although chronologically Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 represented the first wars in Europe in 20th century, actually, they were the last war of previous epoch. As in other conflicts from the 19th century overall situation became clear in a couple of months after several decisive battles followed by an armistice and subsequent peace agreements between belligerents. Wars that followed, however, proved to be long, exhausting, with enormous casualties and destruction. As for the Balkans, the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 continued to be present in all following conflicts. It seemed that they actually never have been concluded or that they just waited a new opportunity to step out from their own hibernation. In Serbia the general attitude towards their significance and legacy depended on state and ideological context in which Serbia has dwelled meanwhile. Main purpose of this paper is to present history of research and interpretations of Balkan Wars 1912-1913 in Serbia (Yugoslavia) as well to point out some understudied areas, possible new approaches and existing misinterpretations or misuses.

Introduction

For some time we are witnessing increased interest for the Balkan Wars 1912-1913 and both their immediate and long term consequences. Main reason for this is not related only with Centennial Anniversary but also with the conflicts in former Yugoslavia which eventually led to its dissolution during the 1990's.

Typical feature of new approaches in serious scientific analyses and reevaluation of the Balkan Wars is that they are not observed separately but within the context of existing diplomatic and political crisis in international relations. On the other hand, there are also shallow and oversimplified interpretations mostly focused on tracking the origins of contemporary Balkan conflicts. However, the latter rarely have connection with serious researches or have been presented by academics.

Whether they are named *Wars before the War* or, in Serbian case, *Wars for Independence and Liberation*, the Balkan Wars 1912-1913 emphasize that both their origins and outcomes have been closely connected with the crisis of existing political and diplomatic system in Europe. However, we are witnesses of still existing strong notion of the Balkans as separate space on the border of Europe with its strange and violent indigenous traditions.¹

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¹ *Am Rande Europas? Der Balkan-Raum und Bevölkerung als Wirkungsfelder militärischer Gewalt*, Bernhard Chiari, Gerhard P. Gross (eds), (R. Oldenburg Verlag München, 2009)