

THE SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN CONTEXT IN THE PERIOD OF THE BALKAN WARS, 1912-1913

Leonida MOISE*

Abstract. Between 1912 and 1913, the Balkan Peninsula was affected by two wars, which are known in the region historiography, as well as in the public consciousness as the *Balkan Wars*. The process of ending the Ottoman domination over the states in that area generated a virulent campaign for clarifying the ethnic as well as territorial identity. Not involved in the First Balkan War, in 1912, Romania firmly imposed its point of view in the Second Balkan War, in 1913, after Bulgaria had surprisingly attacked its former allies. The Peace Treaty of Bucharest, masterfully led and concluded by Titu Maiorescu, the Romanian Prime Minister, laid the foundations for a balance of forces in the region. Romania became an important actor in the area because of his mediating role recognised by both the belligerents and the great powers.

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One should search for the origins of the Balkan Wars in the years 1912-1913 in the situation occurred in the Balkan Peninsula in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The new independent states, emerged after 1878, were faced with particularly complex issues related to the fate of the territories still under Ottoman rule and to the drawing of borders.

On the other hand, the states in the region were convinced that it was only together that they would get rid of the Turkish domination in Southeast Europe, despite their divergences, especially as far as splitting the liberated territories was concerned. Therefore, following negotiations between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, military treaties and alliances were concluded, which, in certain situations, such as the case of the Bulgarian-Serbian Treaty, had a secret annex stipulating that Serbia was bound to start a military intervention against Romania, if our country would have attacked Bulgaria, just as Bulgaria undertook to support Serbia in case of an Austro-Hungarian attack. The undeniable truth was that all states in the Balkans, including the Romanian one, located north of the Danube, had to reach an extremely sensitive goal, namely of accomplishing national unity, by getting back certain territories, which were part of the Ottoman and Austro-

* Phd. Dr., Hyperion University, Bucharest.