

‘We are soaked in blood’: The Balkan wars in the thought and action of Serbian women

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The paper examines the perception of the Balkan wars among middle-class and social democratic women.

After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1908, the middle-class women’s organisations played a part in the strengthening of Serbian national identity and the intensive mobilisation of the military strength of the Serbian people. It was impressed upon Serbian women in numerous ways that their duty in times of war was to organise the military hospitals and care for the sick and wounded soldiers. The middle-class women’s organisations – the ‘Srpski narodni ženski savez’ (Serbian national women’s alliance) included – felt obliged to support Serbia’s national plans.

In the period leading up to the Balkan wars, however, the focus of the ‘social democratic women’s secretariat’ founded in 1910 was on the fight for women’s suffrage and full political, legal and economic gender equality.