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Violences contre les civils de la Dobroudja, 1916–1918: Historiographie et mémoire en Bulgarie et en Roumanie

(Abstract)

For the first time in human history during the First World War (1914–1918) a military conflict affected with equal intensity the military and non-combatant population. This study presents the forms of violence against civilians –ethnic Bulgarians, Romanians and others, in Dobrudja during the years 1916–1918 and compares their places in the historiography and collective memory in Bulgaria and Romania from the Great War to our days. Most attention is paid to the deportations of civilians committed by the Romanian authorities before the beginning of hostilities in the area in 1916. The interpretations of the War and the acts of violence are divergent and even opposed south and north of the Danube. The reasons for the conflict and violence are seen mainly in the “court” of the neighbor. However, in both national cases the points of view are based mainly on the same ideological basis – the nationalism that uses history as an instrument of construction and cohesion of the nation. The diversified sources, the distancing from the national discourse and the comparative approach could offer some guarantees to avoid the risks of double standards and speculative uses when dealing with a historical subject as contradictory and dangerous as the violence. The revisions in the national historiographies and politics of memory are the prerequisites for the reconciliation with the troubled past. Examples of such changes already exist in the context of the European integration.