

## REFERENCE

For

The academic and educational degree "Doctor" in History

Human Sciences, professional field

2.2 History and Archaeology (Modern and Contemporary History - History of Russia)

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Faculty of History

Department of Modern and Contemporary History

of Stefan Petrov Petrov

Dissertation Topic:

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENTS IN THE YEARS OF  
WORLD WAR I

by Prof. Dr. Darina Grigorova Grigorova

### *Information about the PhD candidate*

Stefan Petrov Petrov was born on July 7, 1993 in Plovdiv, graduated in "Journalism" for bachelors at the UNWE (2016), and then the Master's program "Crises, Conflicts and Diplomacy in World Politics of the XVI-XXI Century" at the Department of "Modern and Contemporary History" of the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

As a Master Stefan Petrov successfully defended the topic "Anti-war movements in the European countries of the Central Powers in the years of the First World War", which he expanded and developed in his dissertation, exploring the problem of anti-war movements in the Russian Empire. Both as an MA and PhD student Stefan Petrov worked and developed academically under the scientific supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Alexander Sivilov.

## *Dissertation*

The dissertation of Stefan Petrov Petrov: THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENTS IN THE YEARS OF WORLD WAR I consists of an introduction, three chapters (the thematic-chronological approach is used), a conclusion and a bibliography. The chronological framework of the dissertation is logically limited to the period from July 1914 to the February Revolution of 1917.

The literature used consists of 266 titles, of which sources - unpublished: 35 archival documents from the Central State Archive, introduced into scientific circulation, which is also one of the main scientific contributions of Stefan Petrov's dissertation; 63 published documents, most of them published in the archival series of "Krasnyi Archiv"; 8 thematic collections of documents on the main left-wing currents and parties in Russian society; 46 titles of diaries, memoirs and letters, etc., a total of 155 titles. The bibliography on the subject consists of 111 titles in Bulgarian, Russian and English. The total length of the dissertation is 348 pp. Clear and readable style of the author with a coherent structure of the text.

*Chapter One: THE RULERS AS A FACTOR IN THE BEGINNING OF ANTI-WAR ATTITUDES* analyses the ideological disputes in Russian society about Russia's role/mismission in World War I as one of the factors in the Romanov Empire's poor preparation for the global conflict. The PhD candidate has an affinity for Leon Trotsky's view of the Russian Empire and its military-political goals in the conflict [pp. 18-19], which does not prevent him from analysing all the major critical aspects of the historiography on the subject.

A separate section is devoted to "militant nationalism" as a pre-war ideology in all the participants in the First World War. In attempting to present the historical basis of the national question/issues in the Russian Empire, inaccurate generalizations are inevitably made, such as, "Russian emperors and their ministers sought to preserve the

vast empire, and often the policy was not particularly favorable to the various nationalities" [p. 21]. Far from all emperors being "unkind" to the peoples and nations of the empire, on the contrary, there was only one such as a prevailing policy, and that was Alexander III.

Topics such as the Polish, Jewish, and German question, for which there are vast historiographical arrays, are touched upon, and the dissertation's preference for the non-specialist and journalist-popularizer Michal Zygar's book can be accepted to the extent that it is off-topic for the anti-war movements and an unnecessary digression.

The author's studies on the specific topic of the dissertation have not been included for some time [*Buldakov V.P., Leontieva T.G. Voyna, porodivshaya revol'utsiyu. Rossiya 1914-1917. M., 2015* /The war that gave birth to the revolution. Russia 1914-1917. M., 2015/; *Kolonitskii B. I. Simvoly vlasti i bor'ba za vlast': K izucheniyu politicheskoy kul'tury Rossijskoy revolyucii. SPb., 2001.* /Symbols of power and the struggle for power: To the study of the political culture of the Russian Revolution. SPb., 2001/; Dmitry Rublov, Researcher on Russian anarchism 1914-1917 and specifically on anti-war actions: *Antivoennaya deyatelnost' rossijskih anarhistov (1914-1917).* /The Anti-war Activities of Russian Anarchists (1914-1917)/. - In: Russian History, N 5, 132-146].

The "decay of the autocracy" [p. 48] is a remake of the Soviet term "decay of tsarism" popular in Soviet historiography, as is Stefan Petrov's analysis of the Romanov Empire. Of the paragraphs devoted to the royal family, the only one relevant to the topic of the dissertation is about Nicholas II as commander-in-chief [from p. 67]. The use of textbooks on Russian history [N. Werth, N. Ryazanovsky] in a dissertation is permissible only in a historiographical analysis of educational literature.

*Chapter Two: THE RUSSIAN RADICAL OPPOSITION - BETWEEN SUPPORT FOR THE FATHERLAND AND INTERNATIONALISM* - here begins the dissertation proper, which is also evident in Stefan Petrov's analysis of leftist political currents in Russian society, or as he calls them "distinctive social movements" [p. 117]. All aspects of Russ-

ian pacifism are examined. The strongest part and research aspect of Stefan Petrov's book is the analysis of the Russian left (Narodniks, Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries) and the social causes of the Russian anti-war movement. Special attention is also given to the controversy among Mensheviks on the subject of the war.

A section on Georgi Plekhanov's anti-war positions is completely out of place. Ingenious and justified in the text is the title of the section "war on war" on the tactics of the Bolsheviks [from p. 194]. Russian anarchism and the Zimmerwald movement are written into Stefan Petrov's text analytically and specifically their aspects of antimilitarism. The strongest part of the dissertation is chapter two.

Chapter Three: SPONTANEOUS RESISTANCE AGAINST WAR is devoted to pre-war sentiment and politics, and would have stood better, and more logically, before Chapter Two, and in place of Chapter One. A comprehensive picture of Russian public expectations is shown, from the escalated patriotism, mainly in the cities at the beginning of the war, to the incomprehension and indifference in the villages. All the problems in the army from food and ammunition to ideological vacuum and lack of mobilization spirit are also analyzed. On the subject of desertion, it is well to include the study of *Oskin M.V. Neizvestnye tragedii Pervoy mirovoy. Plennye. Dezertiry. Bezhency*. M., 2011. [Unknown Tragedies of the First World War. Captives. Deserters. Refugees.] And on the subject of public sentiment and war one should add the fundamental monograph by *Aksenov, V.B. Sluhi, obrazy, emotsii. Massovyie nastroyeniya Rossiyan v gody voyny i revolyutsii (1914-1918)*. [Rumors, Images, Emotions. Mass moods of Russians during the war and revolution (1914-1918).] M.: New Literary Review, 2020.

/All studies on the dissertation topic recommended in the review are available online - free of charge.

*Publications and participation in scientific forums*

Stefan Petrov Petrov has 10 publications in Bulgarian (3 published and 7 in press) on the topic of his dissertation. He has actively participated in a number of international and regional conferences, as well as in international projects with papers on the topic of his dissertation and as an organizer.

*Conclusion*

The dissertation of Stefan Petrov Petrov meets the requirements for academic research work for the educational and scientific degree "DOCTOR" in History, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Modern and Contemporary History - History of Russia). I recommend the esteemed scientific jury to highly evaluate the work of Stefan Petrov Petrov.

Sofia, 6 February 2023

Jury member:

Prof. Dr. Darina Grigorova