



SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

FACULTY OF HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF "NEW AND MODERN HISTORY"

Stefan Petrov Petrov

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

Summary of the Dissertation

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Academic Supervisor:

Assoc. Dr. Alexander Sivilov

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I. General characteristics of the dissertation work

The First World War was an epochal event that seriously changed the lives and way of thinking of people all over the world. Millions were sent to the fronts, and even more were subjected to deprivation and economic hardship. This causes a backlash among the population in the warring countries, including Russia.

For the Romanov empire, the war came less than 10 years after the humiliating defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Some see this as an opportunity for revenge on the international stage and asserting the status of a great power for the Russian Empire. However, others fear that the new major armed conflict will bring new troubles to the country and the people. Early on, it looks like the first group has a lasting advantage. The strike wave that had started months earlier was ended, opposition and even revolutionary leaders declared their support for the government until the victory over the external enemy, patriotic demonstrations were held in the major cities of Russia. However, this state turns out to be too fleeting.

The first military failures began to cause discontent. Inflation is growing in the cities, basic goods are missing. Decades of problems are resurfacing with renewed vigor. Oppressed national minorities are raising their heads, the strike movement is becoming more active, the unresolved rural question is awakening new discontent. The anti-war elements of the extreme left, after the initial shock of the outbreak of war, are making attempts to return to the political scene and make their demands.

The outdated political system no longer meets the needs of the times. The sole power of the king, partially limited after the revolution of 1905, is something that has already become history in most European countries.

It turns out that on the front, Russia lags behind its opponents militarily. The king's soldiers do not have enough cartridges, shells, rifles and artillery. This is usually reflected in the presence of a higher number of personnel casualties.

Discontent gradually grew and led to the outbreak of the February Revolution, which ended the existence of the Romanov dynasty and the monarchy in Russia, a major factor in this being the anti-war movements that had developed during the First World War.

1. Relevance of the topic

The outbreak of the First World War put an end to a number of utopias that at the beginning of the twentieth century the outbreak of the great war in Europe was impossible, due

to the cultural proximity of the peoples and material prosperity (*"the single gold standard of currencies and the opportunities for free travel created a unique an atmosphere of security and comfort, illuminated by the exquisite "liberty" style"*¹), the development of human civilization or because of the availability of too powerful weapons. For many contemporaries of these events, the war was a thing of the past, an anachronism, a "return to the primitive" or an "atavistic outbreak"². Some thinkers claim that *"periodic bloodletting is purifying - a naive thesis shattered by the First World War"*³. At the beginning of the XX century, books were published and even circles were held in which it was argued that war was pointless, because with the then financial and economic interdependence of nations, the victor would suffer as much as the vanquished, which is why armed conflicts between states are no longer profitable, and no nation is foolish enough to start them⁴. *"If in 1913 anyone had seriously predicted even a small fraction of what subsequently happened later in reality, they would have been labeled a madman"*⁵.

Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, Francis Fukuyama was quick to announce the "end of history" with the victory of liberal democracy and eternal peace, which he later canceled himself. Only 30 years after the publication of the Japanese sociologist's book, the question of peace and war is among the most relevant. The presence of new forms and weapons in no way negates the possibility of their use in the same way and with the same comprehensiveness as in 1914.

At the time of the defense of the thesis, the questions about Russia, the war and the anti-war movement could hardly be more relevant. The study of the topic of the anti-war movements in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War could contribute to clarifying the events of the specified period, but also to extracting certain historical lessons for the present. With the clarification that exaggerating historical parallels and not taking into account the specifics of each specific situation could also contribute to distorting the analysis of the events in question and deviating from the search for objective truth.

2. Object and subject of the study

¹ Гаврилов, Б. Предговор. // Голямата война. 1914-1918. София, 2009, с. 7.

² Стивънсън, Д. 1914-1918 Историята Първата световна война. Рива, 2008, с. 13.

³ Кисинджър, Х. Дипломацията. Книгоиздателска къща Труд, 1997, с. 144.

⁴ Тъкман, Б. Оръдия през август. Изток-Запад, София, 2019, с. 31-32.

⁵ Сорокин, П. Социална и културна динамика. Санкт-Петербург, 2000, с. 12.

The object of the study are the anti-war movements in their various manifestations developing in the Russian Empire. This covers the left-wing parties and organizations that declared internationalist or pacifist positions at a certain moment, the dynamics of the labor and peasant movement, the development of anti-systemic and anti-militarist sentiments in the army.

The subject of the dissertation is the behavior of the authorities in the years of the First World War and the weaknesses in the organization of military, political and economic life, as prerequisites for the development of the anti-war movement in Russia.

3. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the dissertation work are to conduct a historical study of the development of anti-war movements in the Russian Empire and their impact on society during the First World War. Each of them has its own path of development. Conditionally, they could be divided into organized and ideologically based, on the one hand, and spontaneous and unorganized, on the other. They are interrelated and influence each other during the period under study.

An additional goal of the dissertation is the study of the significance of the anti-war movements for the collapse of the Russian Empire and the end of the Romanov dynasty. The outbreak of the First World War created a new agenda in the country. Society is divided into supporters and opponents of Russia's participation in the major armed conflict. The change in the balance of power in favor of the second group during the war years led to the end of the monarchy in the country.

Among the objectives of the dissertation work is the tracking of the dynamics of the development of anti-war organizations in the conditions of the First World War. Due to the fact that their activity does not unfold with the same force and intensity throughout the studied period, the need to examine the influencing factors also arises.

The peculiarities of the political system in the Russian Empire and their direct or indirect influence on the mood of the masses lead to the other main goal of the present study, namely the assessment of the importance of the actions of the authorities for the development of the anti-war movements in the specified period. The behavior of the main figures in the state could contribute to the development of national unity in the face of war and the common enemy or to the decline of the spirit and motivation for self-sacrifice in the name of the motherland.

4. Tasks of the research

In order to realize the goals of the research, the main task of the dissertation is to observe and compile a thorough analysis of the objective factors that led to the emergence and development of the anti-war movement in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War. Participation in a global conflict with the most developed countries in the world requires a huge tension of forces and competition in every respect with the forces of the enemy. A number of weaknesses in the field of military affairs, the economy and the political system that existed at that time in the Russian Empire became conditions for the development of the anti-war movement in the country. In many ways, Russia fell behind its opponents in the war, leading to a decline in morale and fighting spirit.

Another task of the present study is the examination of the positions and activities of the main left and anti-system parties and movements, as well as their importance for the development of anti-war movements in the state. There are a number of political organizations in Russia that declared themselves internationalists and opponents of wars in the pre-war period. The text will carefully trace the extent to which they remained true to these principles in the years of the First World War, as well as the extent to which they succeeded in influencing public sentiment.

In addition to the activities of left-wing internationalist and pacifist organizations, spontaneous movements directed against the country's participation in the war are also developing in Russia. They find various manifestations, such as strike activity, peasant movements, desertion in various forms, twinning at the front and even in open rebellions at the front and rear. For greater detail of the research, in the present text, the examination of this spontaneously arising resistance against the war, as well as the clarification of the reasons for its occurrence, are set as an additional task.

5. Structure, methodology and chronological framework of the study

The dissertation consists of three main parts - an introduction, an exposition of three chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. In the introduction, the topic of the research, the goals, the tasks and the chronological framework of the dissertation are specified. Attention is paid to the used methodology and contributions, and the introductory part ends with a brief summary of the historiographical materials used.

During the development of the exhibition, the thematic approach was chosen. The chapters are not divided strictly chronologically, but by topics. The first examines the objective factors that led to the emergence and development of anti-war movements in Russia during the years of the First World War. The second examines the issue of the behavior of left-wing political parties and organizations in the country in the given period. And the third chapter explores the spontaneous anti-war movements.

The conclusion summarizes the main conclusions drawn during the study. The most characteristic elements of the research on the relationship between the policy of the rulers, the development of anti-war movements and the end of the Romanov dynasty in Russia are noted.

For the purposes of the research, the method of historical analysis was used. A review of the memoir literature was conducted. In addition, in order to deepen the work, on the basis of the available documentary basis, the memories of contemporaries and participants in the studied events and the historical studies used, the method of comparative analysis was applied.

Before moving on to the chronological scope of the present text, it is important to note that during the studied period the Julian calendar was officially used in the Russian Empire, which differs from the Gregorian calendar introduced in 1918 and used to this day by 13 days. In order to preserve the originality of the quotations, entering the era and using the language of the contemporaries of the studied events, the dates indicated in the dissertation are relative to the Julian calendar.

The chronological scope of the dissertation covers the period from the outbreak of the First World War and Russia's involvement in it in July 1914 to the February Revolution in 1917, when the empire ended its existence. After the end of the Romanov dynasty, the situation in the country changed radically, but the topic of the war and Russia's participation in it continues to be relevant and could be the subject of a separate historical study.

6. Sources and documents

For the purposes of writing the dissertation work, a specialization was planned on the territory of the Russian Federation, which would enable the archival materials and literature found there to be used. An action that would have allowed for an even more detailed examination of the subject and the citation of additional sources to complete the picture of the anti-war movements in Russia in the years of the First World War. Communication and exchange of experience and knowledge with the teaching staff at the Moscow State University,

where the specialization was planned, would undoubtedly add their invaluable contribution to the preparation of the dissertation.

Unfortunately, during the work on the present study, extraordinary events occurred that prevented reaching the Russian Federation and carrying out the specialization. In early 2020, a global health pandemic broke out, making travel between countries difficult. Access to many institutions, including archives and libraries, has become more complex. The implementation of the specialization was postponed until after the end of the pandemic, when the conditions for international travel and scientific work in the relevant institutions in Russia become better.

At the moment when it seemed that another Covid wave was coming to an end and the circumstances for the realization of the dissertation were improving, in February 2022 the conflict in Ukraine flared up with new force. Aggravation of the geopolitical situation and deterioration of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Russia followed. A number of moments of tension followed, including the interruption of gas supply to our country by the Russian Federation and the expulsion of 70 Russian diplomats from Bulgarian territory. This almost led to the severance of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The specified circumstances prevented the implementation of specialization in Russia, which did not allow the use of a large amount of archival materials and literature located on the territory of this country. This necessitated the use of archives and literature that are available on the territory of Bulgaria or via the Internet.

During the work on the dissertation, a study of the information of the diplomats of the Kingdom of Bulgaria related to the events in the Russian Empire was carried out. An important clarification is that during the First World War, Bulgaria was at war with the Russian Empire. Therefore, the information is received from the Bulgarian diplomats who are in third countries, such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Bulgaria's allied countries, Germany and Austria-Hungary. The envoys of Sofia receive information through the official press, through their contacts or through the ministries of foreign affairs of the respective country in which they are located. It can be assumed that especially in London and Vienna, Bulgarian diplomats receive information that rather coincides with the interests of Germany and Austria-Hungary. This should also be taken into account as regards the assessments of the domestic political life of diplomatic agents, as regards the domestic political life in Russia, which is usually presented as apocalyptic and pre-revolutionary. On the other hand, subsequent events show that such a picture, although probably exaggerated, is not far from reality. Moreover, Bulgarian diplomats located in enemy countries of the Russian Empire and in contact with their offices and foreign

ministries often have access to information that not everyone in Tsar Nicholas II's state has access to.

A number of documents published in different historical periods in thematic collections were also used for the preparation of the dissertation work. They provide information on the activities of the various left-wing organizations in Russia, such as the Mensheviks⁶, the anarchists⁷, the narodniks⁸ and the Socialist-Revolutionaries⁹, are compilations of the programs of the various parties¹⁰ or give a chronicle of the development of the strike movement in the country¹¹. Collections of published archival materials provide insight into the most characteristic moments of certain historical events or the development of certain political organizations. This type of publications makes it possible to compensate to a certain extent the lack of access to original archives located on the territory of Russia. However, the content and layout of such compilations largely depends on the attitude of the compilers and the specifics of the socio-political conditions under which they were published. A fact which is duly taken into account in the use of these editions. Various published materials available on the Internet or located in historical studies were also used for the writing of the dissertation.

Various memories, memoirs and diaries of contemporaries of the observed events, as well as direct participants in them, represent a serious source material for the preparation of this study. Russian Tsar Nicholas II himself left a brief description of the past day in his diary every day¹². Unfortunately, however, what is written in it leaves too little information on current political events, at the expense of regularly described royal walks and breakfasts. An event of such enormous magnitude as his abdication is recorded in just one short paragraph¹³. Based on what he wrote in his diary, the king was often accused of not being interested in state affairs. In favor of the accuracy of the study, it is important to note that it is possible that such behavior was due to a specific fashion for keeping a diary among European monarchs at the time.

More information about life in the royal court was left by the tutor of the royal heir to the throne, Pierre Gillard¹⁴. His memoirs leave information about the characteristic features

⁶ *Меньшевики. Документы и материалы. 1903-1917 гг.* Москва, 1996.

⁷ *Анархисты. Документы и материалы. 1883-1916. Том 1.* Москва, 1998.

⁸ *Революционное народничество 70-х годов XIX века: сборник документов и материалов в двух томах.* Т. 1. Москва, 1964.

⁹ *Партия социалистов-революционеров. Документы и материалы. Том 1. 1900-1907 гг.,* 1996.

¹⁰ *Программы политических партий России. Конец XIX – начало XX вв.* Москва, РОССПЭН, 1995.

¹¹ *Стачное движение в России в годы Первой мировой войны. Июль 1914 – февраль 1917.* Хроника. Москва, 2019.

¹² *Романов, Н. Дневник Николая II (1913-1918).* Издательство Захаров, Москва, 2007.

¹³ Пак там. С. 236.

¹⁴ *Жильяр, П. Император Николай и его семья.* Книгоиздательство „Русь“, Вена, 1921.

among the highest circles in the Russian Empire, including some destructive tendencies, such as the tendency to mysticism and seeking trust in irrational forces.

Memories left by personalities such as the Minister of War in 1909-1915 Vladimir Sukhomlinov were also used¹⁵, as the Russian military and political figure Anton Denikin, various political figures, such as Pavel Milyukov¹⁶, Zinaida Gippius¹⁷ and Alexander Potresov¹⁸ and revolutionary leaders such as Trotsky¹⁹, Kropotkin²⁰ and Lenin²¹ - active participants in the studied events. In their analyzes and memories, they proceed from different ideological positions and, accordingly, have different assessments of the developed processes. In order to clarify the historical events that took place in the Russian Empire in the First World War and the anti-war movements that it provoked, it is undoubtedly necessary to make a thorough comparison of different opinions of the participants of this era. When considering their assessments, one should take into account both the place of the individual on the power-opposition axis at the specific historical moment, as well as his positioning in relation to the world conflict that broke out and Russia's participation in it. For example, the supporters of the war to a victorious end tend to present the military enterprise as a common people's cause, behind which all worthy children of the fatherland stand. Opponents of the Russian Empire's involvement in the world conflict usually portray it as forced upon the people and bringing only destruction and suffering.

A large amount of military memoirs, such as the memories of Gen. Alexey Brusilov²², gen. Alexander Lukomsky²³, gen. Andrey Sensarev²⁴, Colonel Boleslav Vevern²⁵ and others. It gives an idea of the situation at the front and the mood among the soldiers. Here again, the positions of the specific author must be taken into account, and not only in the studied period, but also in the subsequent Civil War in Russia (1917-1922). For example, gen. Lukomski later joined the White Movement and tended to describe opponents of the war as traitors and cowards, while Gen. Brusilov joined the Red Army and wrote about the difficulties faced by

¹⁵ *Сухомлинов, В. А.* Воспоминания. Берлин, 1924.

¹⁶ *Миллюков, П. Н.* История второй русской революции. Москва, 2001.

¹⁷ *Гиппиус, З.* Петербургски дневници – 1914-1919. София, 2017.

¹⁸ *Потресов, А. Н.* Война и вопросы международного демократического сознания. Петроград, 1916.

¹⁹ *Троцкий, Л. Д.* Европа в войне – 1914-1918 гг. Москва, 2018.

²⁰ *Кропоткин, П.* Записки на революционера. Издательство Захари Стоянов, София, 2002.

²¹ *Ленин, В. И.* Съчинения. Т. 21. София, 1953.

²² *Брусилов, А.* Мои воспоминания. Издательство „Вече“, Москва 2014.

²³ *Лукомский, А. С.* Воспоминания генерала А. С. Лукомского: Период Европейской войны. Начало разрухи в России. Борба с Болшевиками. Т. 1 Берлин, 1922.

²⁴ *Снесарев, А. Е.* Дневник: 1916-1917. Кучково поле, Москва, 2014.

²⁵ *Веверн, Б. В.* 6-я батарея. 1914-1917 гг. Повесть о времени великого служения Родеине. Москва, 1938.

ordinary soldiers in the tsarist troops in 1914-1917 and about the serious backwardness of Russia militarily compared to its opponents.

After the memoirs, those of the British military attache Alfred Knox²⁶ should also be mentioned and his fellow diplomat Bruce Lockhart²⁷. They give a kind of "outside" view of the situation in the Russian Empire and army in the years of the First World War. Although the two Britons can by no means be credited with sympathy for the revolutionary elements in Russia, they leave evidence of the shortcomings in the country's public and military life which contributed to the development of anti-war sentiment.

Various historical studies were also used for the preparation of the dissertation. Among them are the large-scale works devoted to the First World War, such as those of David Stevenson²⁸ and Barbara Tuchman²⁹, which explore in depth the reasons for the outbreak of the great armed conflict in the summer of 1914 and the dynamics of its development in the following years. In connection with the anniversaries of the start and end of the First World War in 2014 and 2018, numerous studies and proceedings of scientific conferences have been published, which also contain valuable information related to the researched topic.

Were also used general historical studies devoted to the history of Russian revolutions³⁰, pacifism³¹ and political parties³². Again in conjunction with anniversaries, this time of the events in Russia in October and February 1917, 2017 saw the release of a large amount of literature related to Russian history, the First World War, the fall of the monarchy and the rise of the Bolsheviks to power. The fact that the dissertation was written after these anniversaries, the possibility of researching the materials published in connection with them, is its undoubted merit.

For the study of the specifics of the historical time, various biographies of important personalities from the studied period, such as Tsar Nicholas II³³, Georgi Plekhanov³⁴, Vladimir Lenin³⁵ and others, were used. The various authors of these books often sympathize with the individuals they write about, which should be taken into account when using these works.

²⁶ *Кнох, А.* With the Russian army, 1914-1917. Vol I. London, 1921.

²⁷ *Lockhart. В. Н.* Memoirs of a British Agent. The Shenvall Press, 1932.

²⁸ *Стивънсън, Д.* 1914-1918 Историята Първата световна война. София, 2008

²⁹ *Тъкман, Б.* Оръдия през август. Изток-Запад, София, 2019.

³⁰ *Судейн, Дж.* Кратка история на руската революция. София, 2017.

³¹ *Павлова, Т. А.* Долгий путь российского пацифизма. РАН, ИВИ, Москва, 1997.

³² *Политические партии и общество в России 1914-1917 гг.* Москва, 2000.

³³ *Фирсов, С.* Николай II. Пленник самодержавия. Молодая гвардия, Москва, 2017.

³⁴ *Орлов, Б.* Георгий Плеханов и Февральская революция 1917 года. Москва, 2007.

³⁵ *Логинов, В. В. И. Ленин.* Полная биография. Москва, 2019.

In order to study the reasons for the emergence and development of anti-war movements in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War, in the dissertation, great attention is paid to the military life of the country. To gain an idea of the state of the Russian army, numerous studies devoted to this issue have been cited³⁶.

As for the works dedicated to the history of the various revolutionary movements, it should be pointed out that they have different specifics, depending on when and in what historical conditions they were published. In the Soviet period, it is noticeable that the emphasis falls on the activities of the Bolshevik party³⁷, in order to emphasize their role in the political life of Russia in the period under study³⁸. On the other hand, after 1991 there is more research devoted to the activity of other left parties³⁹, their leaders⁴⁰, as well as conservative monarchist circles⁴¹.

II. Main content of the dissertation work

The dissertation examines the development of anti-war movements in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War. The different structural elements of address different issues and have their own characteristic features.

1. Introduction

The introduction of the dissertation contains clarification of the topicality of the topic of anti-war movements in the Russian Empire in the years of the First World War. The chronological framework of the study is outlined. Methodological clarifications are made and the subject, goals and tasks of the dissertation are formulated. The sources used are summarized.

2. Chapter One: The rulers as a factor in the emergence of anti-war sentiments

³⁶ *Ланник, Л. В.* Русский фронт 1914-1917 годы. Наука, Санкт-Петербург, 2018.

³⁷ *Соболева, П. И.* Борьба большевиков против меньшевиков и эсеров за ленинскую политику мира. Издательство Московского университета, Москва, 1965.

³⁸ *Бескровный, Л. Г., Гапоненко, Л. Д., Тютюкин, С. В.* Борьба большевиков за армию в трех революциях. Издательство политической литературы, Москва, 1969.

³⁹ *Галли, З.* Лидеры меньшевиков в Русской революции. Москва, 1993.

⁴⁰ *Волгогонов, Д.* Троцки – демонът жертва. Прозорец, 2008.

⁴¹ *Хереш, Е.* Николай II – животът и смъртта на последния руски цар. Издателство Св. Георги Победоносец, София, 1995.

The first chapter of the dissertation aims to clarify the objective circumstances that contribute to the emergence and development of anti-war movements. This part of the dissertation examines the weaknesses that existed in the Russian Empire in the specified period, as far as the work in the field of ideology, the political structure of the country, the behavior of key state figures, the economic life and the state of the armed forces are concerned.

The first sub-chapter examines the ideological rationale for the Russian Empire's involvement in the First World War. The text reveals how war exacerbates a number of problems in Russia and raises internal tensions related to the national problem. Poles, Jews and Russian Germans were subjected to systematic discrimination, leading to open pogroms with victims and material destruction. The tsarist regime made additional enemies at a time when it had enough and failed to address the national question in the war years, which came after decades of attempts to Russify and impose Orthodoxy on various inhabitants of the empire. This contributes to new internal tension. Attempts to promise Poland autonomy within the Russian Empire did not win the favor of the Polish population towards tsarism. Many Poles are trying to use the international controversy to restore an independent Polish state. Even before the war, Jews were subject to a number of restrictions related to the "settlement line" and the lack of equal access to a number of public services. After the summer of 1914, in the new atmosphere of prejudice and suspicion towards everyone, a new wave of aggression, persecution and pogroms poured out against them. The same befell the Russians who had the misfortune of bearing German surnames, although most of them were entirely loyal to the authorities and there was no real evidence to incriminate them in collaboration with the enemy. With its actions, the government rather contributes to the attempts of the agents of Germany and Austria-Hungary to have greater success in finding agents and allies on Russian territory. This is an important way of modern warfare in the early 20th century.

The second sub-chapter draws attention to the dissolution of the autocracy as a factor in the deterioration of the monarchy. The person of the tsar has enormous political and symbolic significance for the Russian Empire. However, his behavior in the studied period did not contribute to the unity of the country. In the eyes of many of his contemporaries, he is indecisive, ignorant and easily manipulated. These are qualities opposite to those that the Russian population is accustomed to associate with the figure of the Russian Tsar, or at least with that of a successful one. Already in the years before the war, in the reign of Nicholas II there were a number of crisis moments that cannot be noted and which contributed to his unpopularity among the people. These are the Khodin tragedy at the time of the coronation ceremony, the Russo-Japanese War and the shameful loss in it, the "Bloody Sunday" of January

9, 1905, the First Russian Revolution and the October strike of 1905, the Lena events of 1912 and the shooting of the workers' demonstration, the resistance to all changes in a democratic direction, etc. Although Nicholas II could hardly be blamed personally for all these events, he definitely had a role in them, and due to the specifics of the political system in Russia, society inevitably associated these upheavals with the figure of the monarch. Popularity among the majority of the people in the country is not enjoyed by the empress, who actively tries to interfere in the political life of the country, something that is generally not traditional for the wife of the tsar in the Russian Empire. All this had its impact when Nicholas II addressed the people with a call to protect the homeland. Taking the post of supreme commander, thinking that he would thereby contribute to the pro-war sentiment in the country, is the last major mistake in his administration. In fact, the result is exactly the opposite and further ties the defeats at the front and the hardships of the war to his personality. Thus, anti-war sentiments invariably turn into anti-monarchy and anti-system sentiments.

The proximity of the royal family to various dubious mystics, soothsayers, healers and sorcerers also contributes to this. The royal couple is prone to mysticism and from the very beginning of their reign sought contact with such people. The tragic events in the country, which began with the coronation of Nicholas, encapsulated the royal family, isolated it from society and deepened the tendency to spiritualism and non-standard spiritual practices. The illness of Crown Prince Alexey and the need to alleviate his suffering also contributed to this. The feeling is created that the country is not run by rational people. There are even accounts of attempts to summon the spirit of the dead Tsar Alexander III to advise Nicholas on what to do during the crisis of 1905. After various strange entities pass through the royal court, the search for a court mystic and healer is completed with the appearance of the Siberian monk Grigory Rasputin. The closeness of the royal family to him turned out to be toxic for the authority of the figure of the monarch, led to the distancing even of the right and conservative circles from the representatives of the Romanovs. Many are convinced that Rasputin is the main political figure in the country and appoints and dismisses ministers. This especially intensified after the tsar's departure for the front in 1915. Because of this behavior, Nicholas fell into political isolation.

The third sub-chapter examines the problems in the army and their impact on anti-war sentiment. An important factor for the development of the anti-war movement is the technical difficulties experienced by the Russian army during the years of the First World War. Already at the first hostilities, it became obvious that Russia was lagging behind its opponents in many respects. The German army began to look invincible in the eyes of the Russian soldiers, which was directly related to the fall in morale and the desire to win. It turns out that the front

lacks a sufficient amount of weapons, shells and artillery. There are almost no planes. Russia's field medical aid proved inadequate to the needs of modern warfare. To all this is added the systematic harassment of the officers towards ordinary soldiers. It often leads to senseless and unjustified violence, humiliation and harsh punishments. There are also many doubts about the quality of the command staff of the Russian army. Many of the villagers sent to the front feel that their lives are not valued by their commanders. The mobilized soldiers sent to defend the fatherland observe these processes and gradually lose motivation for the continuation of the military conflict. Injustices in the army, the poor organization of military operations and the supply of equipment and food were factors contributing to the decline in combat morale and to the increase in the desire to end the war as quickly as possible.

Weaknesses existing in the organization of life and the army of the Russian Empire lead to the fact that many inhabitants of the country lose motivation to defend it. With their actions and behavior, the rulers fail to achieve national unity in the face of the external enemy, but contribute to the development of the destructive tendencies existing in the state. Rather than becoming a unifying factor, World War I catalyzed the problems in the empire, exacerbated them, and brought the rule of the Romanov dynasty to an end. One of the main reasons for the beginning of the February Revolution in 1917 was precisely the desire for peace of a large part of the country's population.

3. Chapter Two: The Russian Radical Opposition – Between Support for the Fatherland and Internationalism

Divided into two sub-chapters, **Russian pacifism in the Great War** and **the Radical Left in Russia between "defenseism"** and internationalism, this part of the text examines the question of the behavior and attitude of left-wing parties and organizations in the Russian Empire towards the outbreak of the World War. This includes the representatives of religious minorities, who declare against killing under all circumstances, and of the socialist and anarchist movements. According to this indicator, they are divided into two main groups after the start of the First World War - supporters of the defense of the fatherland, despite their oppositional and even anti-system orientation (the so-called "defenders") and rejecting cooperation with the authorities even in the face of danger an external hostile power (so-called internationalists).

Sometimes the positioning in one of these two main camps is surprising in view of the declared positions in the pre-war period. Some of the many religious sects that are traditionally

pacifist (even radically pacifist) take a compromise position on this issue or even support the tsarist government and its war efforts. Others were greatly weakened by the repressions and practically failed to play a significant role in the unfolding events. In this regard, the group of Tolstoists stands out, who, despite serious resistance from the authorities, continue to issue appeals against the country's participation in the fratricidal carnage.

Russian pacifism, based on Western liberal values, also experienced hard times in the years of the First World War. Some of its prominent representatives became among the most ardent supporters of continuing the war to a victorious end. Thus he leaves the entire political niche for peace in the hands of revolutionary socialists.

Among them, the palette of opinions, positions and interpretations of the happening events is even more diverse. In most cases, this turns out to be more of a weakness than an advantage. The war created (or contributed to the development of) such states of crisis among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks that the energy expended in intra-party conflicts between the various shades of "defenseists" and internationalists practically paralyzed all their political activity.

Similar is the fate of the Russian anarchists, who never managed to create a unified political organization. Even among these seemingly most radical representatives of the Russian left, there are prominent figures who advocate postponing conflicts with power until after the victory in the war.

There are vivid examples, such as those with the Socialist-Revolutionary Alexander Kerensky, the Social Democrat Georgi Plekhanov and the anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin. Bearing the authority of oppositional, even revolutionary, leaders, they stand in solidarity with the tsarist government for engaging in a world armed conflict whose predatory aims seem obvious to many of their political comrades. Their position becomes an argument in favor of the "defenseists" against the internationalists within the organizations of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Social Democrats and the Anarchists. This makes it difficult for the anti-war representatives of these currents to consolidate.

Nevertheless, they do appear. Their proportion to those supporting the war in different organizations is different, but the general thing is that it only grows with the passage of time.

The party of the Bolsheviks is different in this respect. From the very beginning of the world conflict, they took a firm position against Russia's participation in it. They declare the war predatory and imperialist and call for its termination as quickly as possible. In the summer of 1914, when there was a strong patriotic upsurge and enthusiasm in the country, such a formulation was unpopular, and the repressive authorities concentrated their attention precisely

on the Bolsheviks. Their faction in the word was arrested and exiled to Siberia. As time passed, anti-war sentiment among the people of Russia gained strength, and the Bolsheviks' decisive position at the beginning of the conflict, which then brought them heavy deficits, now won them many supporters.

This finds its expression in the Working Groups of the Military Industrial Committees, created by the representatives of big capital in order to support the war effort. These groups become another field for ideological competition between leftist parties on the question of the attitude to the war. The Bolsheviks called for a workers' boycott of these new structures, and this call met with sympathy.

The international events devoted to the search for ways to conclude peace are also becoming a similar arena for the contests of the views of the various Russian socialist parties. Most European parties from the left spectrum that participate in these forums initially adhere to positions closer to those of the moderate internationalists of the SRs and Mensheviks. Over time, however, the Bolshevik radical slogans gained new sympathies at the international level as well.

In general, the Russian radical left greeted the outbreak of the great war in Europe differently. The world conflict leads to a redistribution of forces in the political life of Russia. In connection with their attitude to the war, some parties lost popularity and broke up, at the expense of others, who managed to consolidate the dissatisfaction with the horrors of mass extermination and use it to their advantage.

4. Chapter Three: Spontaneous Resistance Against War

The third chapter of the dissertation examines the development of the spontaneously arising anti-war movements. They have different manifestations and are inextricably linked to the role of the rulers and the influence of left-wing organizations, which are explored in the first two chapters.

The first sub-chapter presents a complete picture of the evolution of public opinion in relation to the war. The progression from the patriotic upsurge at the beginning of the campaign to the clearly formed anti-war sentiment over the course of the conflict is traced. A large part of the researched literature on the subject testifies to the fact that a significant part of the population of the Russian Empire did not recognize the cause of the First World War and the victory in it as their own. Among the main reasons for this is the decades-underestimated

educational problem in Russia. Many soldiers cannot give a clear and structured answer to questions about the reasons and meaning of the war taking place with their participation.

In certain parts of the country, the news of Russia's involvement in the world armed conflict was not received with enthusiasm, despite patriotic demonstrations in major cities. Even during the first mobilization in some provincial areas, there were open riots and manifestations of discontent. The authorities are trying to counter mainly by intensifying repression. However, this does not calm things down. Harsh measures and heavy punishments do not solve the structural problems in the country.

The second sub-chapter examines the appearance in the army of various forms of spontaneous resistance against the war. The most widespread of these is desertion in its various forms, when soldiers arbitrarily leave their positions and head home, surrender without a fight to the enemy or self-injure themselves in order to avoid military service. More than one million (according to other data, almost two) soldiers of the Russian army participate in similar events, the most of all warring countries. This suggests that the war in Russia is particularly unpopular.

Defeats at the front took their toll on soldiers' motivation to fight and their desire to continue the war. After the great retreat of the Russian army in the summer of 1915, cases of open rebellion in the Russian army became more frequent. The military authorities failed to deal with them, despite threats of serious punishment for those involved in the riots. Cases have been recorded when soldiers refused to go on an attack or to surrender a given position without a fight, for which there seemed to be no necessary arguments. In places, attacks were even carried out against some officers, which only generated hatred in the eyes of the rank and file.

The most poignant form of anti-war resistance during the First World War was the so-called twinning at the front. Russian soldiers conclude informal truces with the belligerents on the opposite side for several days. During this time, they meet with representatives of the opposing side in the no man's land between the fronts, where those serving in the two warring armies demonstrate anything but hatred for each other and a desire to kill each other. This reinforces the notion that war is forced upon nations and they are sent to war primarily by force. This is especially true for Russia. Twinned soldiers from warring armies often find that they speak a similar (often literally the same) language, celebrate the same holidays, and have similar traditions. This undermines nationalist propaganda that paints enemies in war as bloodthirsty barbarians who want to enslave the homeland. Nothing contributed to the development of anti-war sentiment like the personal experience of soldiers.

The third sub-chapter is devoted to the resistance formed in the rear of the Russian army. The readjustment of the economy to a military regime and the mobilization of millions

of working men created a serious crisis in the country. Economic life in the country rests on women and the elderly. Basic goods are in short supply, inflation eats away at workers' incomes. Women left in the rear line up in long lines for bread, which further unnerves the situation.

The news of the outbreak of the First World War momentarily slowed the progress of the strike movement in the Russian Empire in mid-1914. A sense of national unity was created in the face of the external threat. This turns out to be a very short-lived impression. The economic difficulties that occurred in connection with the war gave their reflection. In 1915 and 1916, an even more massive strike wave developed. Millions of workers already participate in labor protest demonstrations, in total for the entire year. Riots break out more and more often in the villages. Combined with the riots at the front, this contributes to the overall crisis situation in the country. In certain situations, the government decides to send in the army to quell labor unrest. This leads to cases of fraternization between workers and soldiers. The government is losing ground under its feet.

The socio-political-economic crisis caused by the war finds its natural end. A people's revolution broke out in Petersburg, which set as its main demands the provision of bread for the population and the conclusion of peace. The dynasty was overthrown and the Russian Empire ceased to exist. The country's history is entering a qualitatively new stage, with new regularities, driving forces and political figures. However, the war did not end with the end of the Romanov era. Therefore, the question of how and when peace should be concluded continues to be the main question in the political life of Russia and in the inter-revolutionary period.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of the dissertation confirms the main conclusions made in the exposition, that the anti-war movements in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War were caused by a number of objective and subjective factors and had diverse manifestations. For the purposes of the study, they are differentiated into spontaneous and unorganized or politically motivated and ideologically motivated. Despite this conditional division, they are interrelated and influence each other. The anti-war movements were instrumental in the collapse of the monarchy and the end of the Romanov dynasty. The social and economic difficulties caused by the country's entry into the world conflict further contributed to the end of the empire.

The failures in the economic sphere of the royal power also contributed to this, which strengthened the anti-war movements and led to the outbreak of the February Revolution.

However, the issue of the war and Russia's participation in it is not resolved in favor of those who want immediate peace. In the following months, these sentiments gained even greater importance and eventually became one of the main slogans of the Bolsheviks, with which they came to power.

III. Contributions of the dissertation

The dissertation is a contribution to Bulgarian historical science. The question of the anti-war movements and the Russian Empire in the years of the First World War is treated in maximum completeness, in view of the available sources. For the first time in Bulgarian historiography, research is being conducted on the mentioned topic. Until now, the issue of organized and ideologically based anti-war movements, on the one hand, and of spontaneously arising ones, on the other, has not been considered in the literature. The topic of the role of the rulers in the development of anti-war movements, including what concerns the ideological life of the country, the closeness of key state figures to mystics of dubious reputation, the failure to deal with the national question and the state of the army, is discussed in detail.

For the first time in Bulgarian historiography, a detailed analysis of the reactions and behavior of the main left-wing organizations in the Russian Empire regarding the outbreak of the First World War is made. The topic of these political movements is poorly researched in Bulgaria. There is little published literature, and information is found only in general publications devoted to the history of Russia or the First World War. For the purposes of the dissertation work, the available literature in English and Russian languages dedicated to these organizations was studied.

The question of the anti-war movements in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War has not been treated in its entirety in this way either in Russian or in Western literature. There are various studies dedicated to individual individuals, organizations or certain trends in Russia during the specified period. The dissertation for the first time explores the issue of the anti-war movement in the Russian Empire with similar structural elements. This is an indisputable contribution to historical science in Bulgaria.

For the preparation of the dissertation, archival materials from the Central State Archives of the Republic of Bulgaria (CSA) related to the topic are included in circulation and published for the first time. Due to the impossibility of specialization in Russia and the use of the archives there, the research activity in the CDA is the main archival source for the writing

of the dissertation work. The correspondence of the Bulgarian diplomatic agencies with the authorities in Sofia was studied and the information of the Bulgarian diplomats about the situation in the Russian Empire was included. Various archival materials available on the Internet or published in collections and studies were also used.

IV. Publications on the topic of the dissertation

1. 1. "The First World War and public consciousness in Russia" - (from the Conference "The War for History - 75 years since the end of the Second World War" - December 2, 2020, SU) - In process of printing
2. "Problems in the Russian Imperial Army during the years of the First World War and its backwardness compared to its opponents" (From a conference - March student readings - VTU - canceled due to coronavirus) - In process of printing
3. "The First World War and the role of the royal family as factors in the collapse of the Russian Empire" (From the Conference "The War for History - 75 years since the end of the Second World War" - December 2, 2020, SU) – In process of printing
4. "Mysticism, superstitions and prophets - the decline of the elite of the Russian Empire during the time of Nicholas II" - ANAMNESIA, Год. XV, 2020, кн. 3, с. 61-79, ISSN 1312-9295
5. "The officer corps in the army of the Russian Empire in the years of the First World War" - ANAMNESIA, Год. XVI, 2021, кн. 7, с. 1-12, ISSN 1312-9295.
6. "Anti-Semitism in the Russian Empire during the reign of Nicholas II" (from the Doctoral Readings at SU - April 23, 2022) - In process of printing
7. "Military enthusiasm and apathy - the mood in the Russian Empire during the years of the First World War" (from the conference "Crisis as catharsis" in the Regional History Museum in Pleven - October 16, 2021) - Collection: "Crisis as catharsis - political, social, economic and cultural dimensions of extreme situations in history", a collection of reports from the scientific conference "Pleven historical readings" - first edition, held on October 15 - 16, 2021 in the city of Pleven. ISBN 978-619-207-253-7, стр. 194 – 208.
8. "The Party of the SRs and the participation of the Russian Empire in the First World War" (From "Autumn Doctoral Readings, 2021" at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (November 24, 2021) - In process of printing

9. "The Russian anarchists in the years of the First World War." (From the XII March Student Readings (March 26, 2022) at VTU) – In process of printing

International publications:

10. "Why do we fight? - The problem of understanding military goals during the First World War in the Russian Empire" (from the conference - I International Student Russian-Bulgarian Conference "History and Construction of Modernity: Slavic Context" Moscow - Sofia, November 11-12, 2021) - In process of printing