

AN ACADEMIC REVIEW

By Prof. PhD Andrey Dimov Andreev, Department of History, St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, a member of an academic committee.

Concerning: presented thesis by Prof. PhD Darina Grigorova Grigorova on the topic: *Between the end of the union and the beginning of the federation. Russia in the Bulgarian diplomatic analysis (1990-1999)* to be awarded an educational and academic degree Doctor of Historical Science in Higher Education Field 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, Scientific Speciality: Modern and Contemporary General History (History of Russia), for which I cast my vote.

In order to be awarded a doctor degree in history, Prof. PhD Darina Grigorova Grigorova presents before the academic committee a thesis on the topic of *Between the End of the Union and the Beginning of the Federation. Russia in the Bulgarian Diplomatic Analysis (1990-1999)*. The structure of the work corresponds with the goals, set by the author. The thesis is separated in an introduction, three chapters (with paragraphs), a conclusion, and a detailed bibliography, including unexplored documents as well. The chronological scope is concussively defended.

The topic is undoubtedly relevant. The Russian history, especially the contemporary one, has always been of great interest for scientists around the world. Specialised institutes in many countries explore this topic. From this point of view, Grigorova has chosen a unique subject, which is the result of hard and extensive work. The documents of the Bulgarian diplomatic archive present the Bulgarian point of view on the topic. Such work, up to this date, does not exist not only in the Bulgarian historiography, but in the European one as well.

Prof. Grigorova explores the period of the establishment and development of the Russian Federation from the moment of USSR's collapse until the end of the twentieth century. Subjects of scientific exploration and analysis are the international relations between Bulgaria and Russia, the Bulgarian point of view on the processes in Russia, and the relations between the two states during this period.

Numerous historical sources are used for this thesis to be written. Unpublished materials from the Bulgarian Ministry of foreign affairs' diplomatic archive and from departments responsible for Russia and the post-soviet countries are worth mentioning. These sources have not been analysed yet. Published documents, the press, and memoirs are extensively presented. The author covers other academic works in their depth. The documents, which are used, are in Bulgarian, Russian, English, and Ukrainian.

Quite interesting theses of Grigorova's are to be found in the first chapter *Factors for the USSR's dismantling*. For instance, the term "Belovejka gora", which is nowadays widely used, is being analysed. It is imposed for the term "Union of Brest" to be avoided, which evokes memories of the Union of 1596 and the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 1918. The latter two symbolise national betrayals for Russia. The results of both are renounced: a part of the Ukrainian people converts to Catholicism and the major territorial concessions that the Bolsheviks make in 1918. For this reason, the term "Union of Belovej" is presented.

The author provides her own understanding of the factors which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union: ideological and political. The collision between M. Gorbachev and B. Eltsin and the Putsch of August 1991 as a catalyst for the events are outlined. Furthermore, economical, legislative, geopolitical, and regional factors are also closely examined.

Chapter Two *An Enlightened Authoritarianism. The Russian political system (1992-1999)* covers the establishment and the development of the Russian presidential republic. The author's position on the establishment and the development of Russia's political system is clearly stated. The problem is holistically covered, as great emphasis is put on the dual power between the president and the Parliament (1991-1993). The thesis that the dual power always brings terrible crisis upon Russia is highlighted. A significant role is given to numerous factors that influence Russia's situation. That being: a regional factor – the opposition between the central power and the periphery; a geopolitical factor – most of all, the US' support towards Boris Eltsin; an ideological factor – Eltsin's methods for winning the informational war with the president are thoroughly presented.

Chapter Three *Geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation (1992-1999)* consists of two logically separated parts:

1. Strategic sensibility of the Russian foreign policy.
2. A cold war between Russia and Ukraine during the battle for USSR's heritage

Prof. Grigorova explains the term “ideological dualism”, which is one of her own numerous contributions. An interesting comparison between liberalism and conservatism in Russia is made as well. For instance, liberal diplomacy on the one side, and conservative generals in the other. A new term is presented – “civilisational dualism” – “European – Eurasian” beginning. In this part various positions on Russia are analysed, namely whether it is an European country, or a great Eurasian state. The role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the international policy is outlined as well. An interesting point is the examination of another type of dualism – between Bulgaria and Russia. As an example are given the economic convergence and divergence between the two countries.

Of course, great emphasis is put on the *Ukrainian case* during the 90s. Bulgaria’s concern towards the Bulgarian minority in Ukraine is covered as well. This problem’s importance and complexity, as well as the Russian *sensibility* on the subject are analysed.

An interesting analysis is presented in the conclusion about the diplomatic analysis from Bulgaria and the Russian power centralism. It is performed by covering various sources and fieldwork.

Diplomatic documents – published and unexamined – are widely examined.

The academical work includes numerous undisputable comprises:

The topic in and of itself. It has been previously outlined that such work, up to this date, does not exist not only in the Bulgarian historiography, but in the European one as well.

New and unexplored documents are presented. The sources are primarily derived from the diplomatic archive of the Bulgarian Ministry of foreign affairs.

A great number of new terms are presented. They are clearly explained and competently defended.

The author presents an original analysis of the events.

In such a study, the remarks are mostly in the form of friendly suggestions. I would recommend that this thesis is being published. It will be warmly received by those readers who are interested in the

modern history of Eastern Europe. I would propose a possible redaction of the title – shorter and more attractive.

Prof. D. Grigorova presents six articles on the subject of the thesis, which are published in high-profile periodicals in Bulgaria and abroad.

I present the position that Prof. PhD. Darina Grigorova is qualified to be awarded an educational and academic degree *Doctor of Historical Science* in Higher Education Field 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, Scientific Speciality: Modern and Contemporary General History (History of Russia), for which I cast my vote.

Prof. PhD Andrey Andreev