

Bulgarian Historical Review

Издание на Института за исторически изследвания при БАН

Bulgarian Historical Review XLIV (2016) 3-4, 33
ISSN 0204-8906

Russia, Bulgaria, the Balkans. Problems of Peace and War 18th–21st Century (Myths and Reality)

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Bulgaria and Bulgarians in the Perception of Russian Society during the First World War: From Misunderstanding to Silence

[България и българи в възприятии руского общества в години Първои световни войни:
от непонимания к замалчиванию]

(Abstract)

The article examines the attitude of Russian society to Bulgaria during the First World War. Several stages of this are highlighted. The first is from the beginning of the war to Bulgaria's entry into it. Russian society firmly believed that the Bulgarians wanted to stand on the side of Russia, only Tsar Ferdinand and the government of V. Radoslavov prevented this. Indications of the consequences of the Balkan wars were ignored. This perception of the situation was typical for the Russian government. After Bulgaria entered the war, the Bulgarians were accused of treachery, and the Russian society reacted excessively negatively to this step. However, such assessments soon disappeared from the pages of the press, including due to censorship. The author hypothesizes that this is due to the need to assign full responsibility to the Tsar and the government. In the event of a coup d'état, this could justify taking Bulgaria on the side of the Entente and its territorial compensation in the eyes of public opinion in Russia and its allies.

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Keywords: Bulgaria; Russia; First World War; Russian public opinion; Tsar Ferdinand