

ВЪВЕЖАЩА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ И ПРОГРЕСЪТ ВАНКО ВРАБЦЕВСКИ И КОЛЕДЪТ ДАМИЯ	
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REPORT

of Prof. Dr VESELIN KOSTOV YANCHEV,
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "
On Dissertation of RUMEN VASILEV KARAGANEV
"The Danube, the International Danube Commission and Bulgaria 1919 –
1940 (with a sequel to 1944)"
for the award of the scientific degree" Doctor of Historical Sciences
"professional direction: 2.2. History and archaeology
Scientific speciality: History of Bulgaria, code 05.03.06.

During the last few years, the professional interest of R. Karganev concentrates on the "Northern Natural phenomena" – the Danube and its place and role in the inter-state economic and political processes between the two world wars. On this subject, he delivers three reports at international conferences, publishes studies and articles. In 2018 he presents for discussion a large doctoral thesis "The Danube, the International Danube Commission and Bulgaria 1919 – 1940 (with a sequel to 1944)", this in 2019 was issued as a separate monograph.

The title accurately reflects the chronological scope of dissertation work, but it is necessary that the author goes beyond it and presents an overall picture of the problem of river traffic and the Danube issue since the XVII c. and the touch of Bulgaria with it from the first days of its self-existence. The motives of the author himself, for choosing the topic, can be reduced to 1. The enormous importance of this waterway in economic, technical, social, cultural and "oriental" terms, the "traditional distance" of the population in its "Bulgarian" section and the Bulgarian rulers; 2. The resulting absence of a serious Bulgarian historiographic interest in the Danube issues and activities of the International Danube Commission, with slight exceptions, in contrast to the numerous and versatile foreign publications and with the actual presence of the country in this important regulatory state.

Karaganev builds a multi-layered and profound picture of the Danube issue and the role of Bulgaria in it, resting on two main pillars. The first is the detailed knowledge of the Bulgarian and foreign historiography, the work of contemporaries, professional historians, economists and lawyers. The already written on the problem is approached with respect but also taking into account the time and national peculiarities and bias. The second pillar is the widest

spring base of Bulgarian and foreign origin. Documents stored in the CGA – the Fund of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Religions, the Directorate General of Railways and ports, the Bulgarian Legazioni in the Balkan and some European capitals were explored and used. As well as the personal archival fonds of Dimitar Shishmanov, Bogdan Morfov, Dechko Karadjov. Additional but valuable information is also found in the scientific Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the State Archives – Ruse. There has not been without published collections of documents for the era and the activities of the Commission, the press, single and Jubilee prints, memoirs, and diaries. One-third – the excellent knowledge of intrastate, international and business processes and phenomena in the interwar period and in the years of World War, which allows the entry of the Danube question in General trends.

The main objectives of dissertation work, highlighted by the author, are kept to follow the problems related to the specifics of the post-war device in the swollen space, referenced to the activities of the International Danube Commission and the participation of Bulgaria in it, as well as the developments changes on the eve of and during the Second World War and the Bulgarian reflection. The accompanying objectives are related to the clarification of the appearance, organization, functioning, achievements of the International Danube Commission and the Bulgarian track in it – with the realized and unrealized opportunities and the reasons for it.

The findings of Rumen Karanganev for the Bulgarian Danube Policy are non-panegyric but righteous. According to him, despite the real favourable opportunities, it is characterized rather by distance, lack of insistence and activity or with "unconscious dimness". A successful attempt was made to indicate the historical, ethnopsychological and political reasons for this condition.

Dissertation work ends with a recap of the conditions and factors leading to the Life International Danube Commission, its main achievements and its "legacy". The role of Bulgaria in this project is analytically presented, the profit and the merits of her Permanent Representative G. Lazarov for the removal of the country from the international vacuum after the end of the First World War.

The final chords of the work of the new Danube Commission from 1940 to 1944, conducted under German control, are presented as a conclusion. There is a special interest in the data for the Bulgarian Danube awakening with

the creation of its own commercial and passenger fleet and ferry connection Ruse-Giurgiu.

The accompanying maps and chronological table of the more significant dates and events on the topic further illustrate the exposure. Dissertation work is an innovative presentation of a virtually unknown subject not only to the general but also to the specialized audience, interested in the historical past. The successful problem is addressed in a long chronological period covering its entire lifecycle. High professionalism, thoroughness and dimensions demonstrated. An important contribution was made to clarify not only the Bulgarian but also the European interwar history through the prism of the Danube issue. The language of the exhibition is highly scientific, but at the same time artistically alive and enthralling. The presented Summary objectively and comprehensively reflects the content of the work.

All this gives me a reason to vote positively for the awarding of Rumen Karanganev to the scientific degree "Doctor of Historical Sciences".

Sofia, 7.01.2020

Prof. Dr Veselin Yanchev