

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИСТОРИЧЕСКО-ИСТОРИКОГРАФИЧЕСКИ ИНСТИТУТ	
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№ на доклад	№ на протокол
16	08.01.20
Докладчик: _____	
Протокол № _____	

REPORT

By **Prof. Mancho A. Vekov, DSc** – Institut of History Studies

on the thesis

of **assoc. prof. Rumen Vasilev Karaganev, PhD**

“The International Danube Commission and Bulgaria 1919-1940

(with a sequel to 1944)”

For assignment of Doctor of Science academic degree

In the Professional field: 2.2 History and Archeology

Scientific specify: Bulgarian History

According to the LSAA (2018), several preliminary requirements were imposed on the dissertation work for the acquisition of the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences". First of all – to choose a topic – in this case, it is undoubtedly different from the previous activities of the Doctoral candidate. As is known, Dr Karaganev has dealt with problems and defended a dissertation, which in its geographic location are oriented in the south direction – currently, it offers work with a precisely opposing vector available. This is a formal sign, and essentially it is a speech to explore with radically different characteristics and content from those already mentioned, to the same extent related to basic events, institutions and personalities, political concerns and actions. The published studies and articles on the subject and several participations in international conferences confirm the finding. Concerning the tabular standards for the degree of the LSAA and BAS (publications, citations, points), they fully cover the required.

The proposed dissertation work examines a completely distinct cycle of the functioning of a specific international institution from its establishment, through its practical and political reception in the dynamic inter-military peace period, to the conversion of Year after the start of World War II. Eventually, during the wartime period, she had to stay into a different political and event-coloured reality. In the same sequence, the participation, role and position of Bulgaria positions in its capacity as one of the links in the regional Danube co-company in question is tracked. The presentation in the work of the two-way linking in question together with its adaptation to the emerging trends in international relations enhances the impression of a successful and timely choice of the topic with the logically prominent quarter-century period.

An additional justification for such a statement gives me the fact that in national historiography such thematic interest as geographical orientation is almost entirely lacking, and not to mention some specifics, such as political, managerial, visionary or public attitudes. The proposed time range from 1919 to 1940 is indisputable and the sequel to 1944 is undoubtedly inseparable and constitutes a valid conclusion to the problem in its political and military incarnations.

As for the structure of the work, it should be noted that the approach is quite unconventional. The preamble of the study contains three conditional introductory guidelines, presenting:

- The pre-history of the problem in its directional modern European context – the Danube in the prerequisite and the real image of the idea of the "International River",

- The Danube as a full geographic and political presence in the initial post-liberation Bulgarian reality, even until the end of the First World War,
- Impressive landscape historiography review, combined with notes on the legal framework of the problem as International Rivers.

The dissertation work on it is constructed in two distinct parts. The first covers 1919 to beg. of 1934 – a distinctly formed stage of the developments of the International Danube Commission (IDC), recognized by the author as a creative for the regional institution. It is common ground here that the preeminent and original concerns the interpretations because of the provisions of the Treaty of Neuilly regarding the Danube and in the same direction the post-war project implied by the clauses. It follows a panel, tracking the Constitution of the IDC and the elaboration in the French capital of the Danube final status (DFS) and another, related to the practical realization of the venture onward over the years. At the end of the part in several thematic rounds were traced the Bulgarian political, public, anthropological and others. Attitudes and definitions regarding the Danube during the same period.

When I cursory read the content of work, I was left with some doubts concerning the place of their positioning. After I met the text in full, I was gradually convinced that taking these problems according to the Fabula of events is timely because of the changing in the next period Paradigms – International situation/Bulgaria/the Danube Aquatopia/IDC.

In the second part, the author follows the link between the galloping dynamics of the interstate relationships and combinations with their

reflection on the activity, the movements and the defensive reactions of the IDC. Thus, the positions of Bulgarian field institutions, politically responsible figures in the country or immediately tied with the subjects in question becoming known. I believe that Dr Karganev successfully dealt with such a complex and multidimensional task, succeeded without unnecessary deviations and enough sparingly to trace the essence of the passing through the Danube area political processes, the deviations that they acquire in the performances of the IDC as well as the findings and interpretations because of the basic documentation of the Bulgarian expert and power levels.

Especially meaningful, of course, and bearing the evaluations, conclusions and conclusions of the author in this part of work. It is not possible to list them here. However, some of them should be marked specifically as:

- the circumstances that led to the denunciation by Germany of the Versailles provisions on international rivers,
- updating with facts, different interpretations and consequences, especially in the time after the Anschluss of Austria (Sept. 1938) Concerning the moves taken by the great Powers, the same as for the neighbouring Danube states, the IDC, the EDC, etc.,
- The period around the preparation and signing of the Krajova agreement with an unbiased combination during the agreements on the inclusion of Bulgaria to the German version of the "provisional Rules" (Sept. 1940).

In an extremely curious and not-clichéd way, the conclusion is presented. In it in the retrospective is shown the integer contribution of what the IDC has done in the geographic region, along with the traces it has left in the

international relations of the Old continent. Special attention is paid to the difficult adaptation of Bulgaria according to the real opportunities that the country's membership provides in this collective message. Of course, all this accompanied by original served summaries, affirmations and findings.

With the conclusion, here otherwise named-"In Memoriam", however, the study does not end. The following is a final part/block, where the political transformations in the newly formed version of the Danube Commission during the period up to 1944 are tracked in a weakened way, but for this, with an increasing interest in the Bulgarian saga in connection with the organization and acquisition of own River trade fleet, accompanied by analysis and reference qualifications around this significant for the Kingdom event.

Any work of this kind can be claimed and may be accompanied by certain negligence and omissions. In this case, in my opinion, they are insignificant and in no way can change the elated reviews about the qualities of the dissertation. Moreover, they are essentially more of a technical nature, which is why it is not worth putting them to the attention of the esteemed colleagues of the Jury. One pass, however, could not be passed. It refers to the absence of any data or references beyond the time-range of the text for any previous or subsequent career pursuits of the expert and the unchangeable representative of the Kingdom in the IDC, as well as the main figure in the study-G. Lazarov. That remark should be adopted as advice on the inclusion of such information in the more established publications on the subject.

In the finale, I must say once again that I have not even the slightest hesitation to determine the dissertation work presented as a significant achievement in the Guild. With complete conviction, I recommend the Honourable Scientific Jury to award Dr Rumen Karaganev the scientific degree "Doctor of Historical Sciences".

8. XII. 2019.



D. H. M. Vekov