

REVIEW

by prof. Pencho D. Penchev, DSc

on the scholarly work of assoc. prof. Daniel Hristov Vachkov, PhD

In relation to his participation in the competition for the academic position Professor

Associate Professor D. Vachkov is well known as one of the few contemporary researchers of various aspects of the Bulgarian socio-economic past. His works are focused predominantly on the period after Bulgarian Liberation (1878) to the end of the communist regime (1989). Thematically, his publications (some of which are not submitted for participation in this competition) are diverse and cover topics like: foreign debt of communist Bulgaria, some important effects accompanying socialist industrialization, the Great Depression and Bulgaria, financing of the wars in which participated Bulgaria after the Liberation, the economic aspects of refugees accommodation and their integration into the Bulgarian economy, the place and role of individuals such as Ivan Evstr. Geshov and Nikola Stoyanov in the economic history of Bulgaria, the historical memories of certain events and processes, etc.

The habilitation work with which Assoc. Prof. D. Vachkov applied in the competition is the monograph *Accidents and Disasters. Chronicle of Socialist Industrialization*. Sofia, Ciela Publishing House, 2018. The first important feature and a contribution of this work is that it is dedicated to a topic that so far has not attracted the attention and research efforts of historians, economists, and other social scientists. Even the chronicle of industrial accidents and catastrophes during the communist rule in the country is in fact unknown in social sciences. The presence of the subject in the public memory is also limited, and with the time passing it fades further. Thus, one of the main merits of the author is the identification of an important research problem. As a pioneer, Assoc. Prof. Vachkov faces a number of difficulties - lack of historiographical predecessors, identification of adequate primary sources, arrangement of numerous facts in a meaningful and reliable historical narrative, finding a suitable general theoretical framework for interpreting the facts, a meaningful clarification of the terms used in the monograph, etc.

The general conclusion reached by Assoc. Prof. Vachkov is that the various accidents, catastrophes and disasters have become a lasting feature of the Bulgarian industry for the period from 1944 to 1989. The primary sources involved and the historical narrative about how, where and for what reasons serious accidents and catastrophes occur gives us reason to accept the conclusion as justified. The main factors for the high degree of injuries are also indicated: the political decision for accelerated and forced industrialization, high labor intensity, the implementation of the plan at any cost, which requires neglect of safety issues,

etc. After all, despite the officially declared, highly humane goals of the communist regime, in the conditions of forced industrialization the cost of the individual human life is not too high.

The other works – papers, studies etc. – are also valuable contributions to certain aspects of the Bulgarian economic history.

All the above justifies my opinion that Assoc. Prof. Daniel Hristov Vatchkov has all the necessary scholarly qualities and meets the requirements for the position of a “Professor”. For these reasons, I strongly recommend to the other members of the academic board to vote in favour of the proposal Assoc. prof. Daniel Vatchkov to be chosen as a professor in the professional field 2.2. History and archeology, scientific specialty "History of Bulgaria" (New Bulgarian history - Economic and social history of Bulgaria in the XXth century).

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