

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
Изходящ №	201 г.
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## REVIEW

from Corresponding Member Prof. D.Sc. Alexandre Kostov

concerning the activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Vachkov, only candidate in the competition for the academic position "Professor", announced by the Institute for Historical Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the "State Gazette", issue. 66 of 24 July 2020.

Professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, scientific specialty "History of Bulgaria" (New Bulgarian History – Economic and Social History of Bulgaria in the XX century), for the needs of the Department "New Bulgarian History"

From the presented reference it is evident that Assoc. Prof. Vachkov meets the minimum requirements according to the Law on the Protection of Bulgarian Studies for participation in the announced competition for the academic position of "professor" in the history of Bulgaria. He presents a solid number of scientific publications. Among them are one independent monograph, four chapters from collective monographs, 36 studies, articles and reports, 3 participations in compilation and scientific editing. He is also a co-author of 3 textbooks for primary and secondary schools and has published three reviews. All materials with which he participated in the competition for graduates after his election as an associate professor in 2008.

Dr. Vachkov's main research interests are related to the economic history of Bulgaria from the end of the 19th century to 1989 and are a continuation of his previous research stage, if we assume that the limit for him is his election as associate professor. In chronological terms, the scientific works of the candidate after 2008 are dedicated to two periods.

The first of them covers the period from the Liberation of Bulgaria to 1944. Part of the publications of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov are dedicated to the development of finance and banking. The author systematically and methodically traces the state of Bulgarian finances in peak periods of tension for the country, and mainly the wars. In them he outlines the enormous financial efforts of Bulgaria for the preparation of the armed forces and the

conduct of wars, especially those from 1912 to 1918, as well as the many problems that need to be solved in connection with overcoming the consequences of these wars.

The conclusions in them are competently presented and substantiated on the basis of archival materials and published documents and with knowledge of scientific publications on the researched topics. By the way, this characteristic is valid for the other works of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov, with which he participated in the competition.

The candidate's articles dedicated to the banking and financial history of Bulgaria in the 1930s based on the activities of a semi-state bank "Balgarski kredit" are also interesting and contributing. The author also has important publications on more general issues dedicated to the economic policy and development of Bulgaria during the interwar period and the years of the Second World War. All of them show the ability of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov not only to make an in-depth analysis of individual phenomena and processes, but also to position them in a broader problem-theoretical framework.

Related not only to the economic but also to the social history of Bulgaria are several publications by Assoc. Prof. Vachkov, which clarify the process of integration of Bulgarian refugees from Macedonia, Thrace and South Dobrudja after the wars of 1912 - 1918). In these publications, which can be highly appreciated, D. Vachkov examines, through the prism of financial and economic policy, the efforts of governments to integrate Bulgarian refugees in the economic and social life of the country.

In some of his works, Assoc. Prof. Vachkov has dedicated his efforts to revealing the role of prominent public figures in the economic life and politics of Bulgaria before 1944. Among them are articles about the famous political and public figure (and chairman of BAS) Ivan Evstratiev Geshov, which outlines his merits for the formation and development of the financial and tax system in Bulgaria, as well as the works dedicated to Prof. Nikola Stoyanov - longtime head of the State Debt Directorate.

The publications of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov, dedicated to the economic development of Bulgaria during the period of communist rule in Bulgaria from 1944 to 1989, which includes nine articles, can be united in a separate group. It includes the main work with which he is presented in this competition, namely the monograph "Accidents and catastrophes. Chronicle of Socialist Industrialization "(Sofia, Ciela, 2018). In several articles he discusses various

issues related to the functioning of the economy in Bulgaria before 1989, such as pricing, monetary system, economic reforms.

It is in this context of his activities for the period 1944-1989 that his monograph "Accidents and Catastrophes. Chronicle of Communist Industrialization". The author deserves praise for the choice of the topic of his work for habilitation, which is new to Bulgarian historiography. So far, there are no scientific developments on it, both as a whole and on its individual aspects. There are not many publications on the subject, relating to the history of Eastern European countries in the period after World War II. All this has complicated the task of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov, due to the lack of a clearly established theoretical framework and conceptual apparatus. In preparing his monograph, he encountered more difficulties related to finding the relevant published and archival sources on which to build an adequate to his goal statement and argumentation of the relevant conclusions. The result of his research work shows that he has found a successful solution to these problems. His efforts to find a suitable source base for writing his work are commendable. He used numerous archival materials, as well as published documents.

Structurally, the monograph includes a preface, six chapters and a conclusion (215 pages in total). It is built on a historical-chronological principle, and in my opinion is properly consistent with the changing characteristics of the development of the communist regime and the process of "socialist industrialization" during its various stages from the establishment of "people's power" to the end of the BCP. 1989

In his monograph, the author documents the ruling party's policy regarding accidents and incidents during the various stages of the construction and development of socialist industry and the economy as a whole. He makes it clear that during the period of imposition and domination of Stalinism in the late 1940s and early 1950s, in view of the domestic and international situation at the time, the causes of these phenomena were justified by the regime of "deliberate damage". "Of" "enemy elements". In this way, attention is diverted from the real problems and preconditions for the frequent accidents and incidents. And they, as in this period, and further, are hidden in the bigger and smaller mistakes or deliberate wrong decisions in the field of economic policy of the country. The desire to build a modern industry in a short time, and in all its forms, leads to serious pressure on workers and managers to implement ahead of schedule plans, which are already quite short. It is in this way that bad and even dangerous working conditions are neglected, relying on the ideological treatment of

workers and their enthusiasm. The author rightly notes that this line of conduct on the part of the authorities continued not only during the Bulgarian "great leap forward" of the late 1950s, but also during the next two decades, when numerous attempts were made for more serious economic reforms. . In these conditions, however, accidents and incidents do not decrease, but even increase. In this direction, Assoc. Prof. Vachkov provides numerous pieces of evidence for the findings and unsuccessful attempts to improve working conditions and reduce accidents on the part of parity and business leaders, as well as the trade unions.

The competent study of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov ends with the period after 1984, when the situation was again favorable to look for external enemies who wanted to cause deliberate accidents in industrial enterprises and transport. Similar to the period of the late 1940s, the security services were tasked with identifying potential perpetrators of such acts, this time explaining the danger by the complex situation in the country in connection with the so-called "revival process".

In conclusion, the author concludes that accidents and incidents are a lasting feature of the socialist economy, while the regime obscures or downplays their true picture in the mass media it controls.

In conclusion, I can say that the study of Assoc. Prof. Vachkov is an undoubted contribution to the discovery of the real picture of "real socialism" in Bulgaria until 1989 and provides a basis for further research (his and other historians) based on attracting new sources, discovery and comprehension of new facts, and, if possible, without extreme emotional or ideological addiction.

Along with the publications mentioned so far, mainly on issues of economic history, Assoc. Prof. Vachkov is also the author of articles that trace the development of Bulgarian historiography, going beyond the economy.

High appreciation for the activity of Assoc. Prof. Daniel Vachkov can be given for his participation in various projects. It is worth noting his activity as a participant in numerous (44 in total since 2008) national and international scientific forums (congresses, conferences, seminars, etc.).

All that has been said so far speaks of an already established scholar with proven contributions in the field of research, covering mainly the economic history of Bulgaria for more than a century. Adding his merits in administrative and research-applied terms, I have

no choice but to vote positively for the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Daniel Vachkov to the academic position of "professor" in the competition in the scientific specialty: History of Bulgaria (New Bulgarian History - Economic and Social History of Bulgaria in the XX century) for the needs of the section "New Bulgarian History" of the Institute for Historical Research at BAS. I call on my colleagues on the Scientific Jury to do the same.

Sofia, November 20, 2020.

Reviewer:

(Corresponding Member Prof. Dr. Al. Kostov)