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| БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ | |
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OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Ivan Metodiev Petrov

for the materials submitted by participants in the competition for an academic position of "*associate professor*" in professional direction 2.2. History and archeology, scientific field of "History of Bulgaria" (National liberation movement of Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians (1878-1919), for the purposes of section "History of the Bulgarian national issue", declared in "Official Gazette ", No. 110 of 29 December 2020.

Participation in the announced competition took *Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Slavov* and *Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Voin Bozhinov*. The presence of two candidates requires a comparison between the participants' works and a final opinion in favor of one of them.

For the competition *Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Slavov* presented two scientific monographs. The main habilitation work of the candidate is the book "*IMORO between the fanfare of Hurriyet and the roar of the cannons (1908 - 1912)*". *Burgas. Ed. Libra Scorp , 2018 .*

The work is composed of a preface, two chapters, a conclusion, and a list of used sources and literature. The foreword provides an extensive historiographical review, presents the state of research on the topic, explains some key concepts of the main body, reveals the main processes and trends characteristic of the IMORO in the years after the Ilinden-Preobrazhen uprising. The main body of the book consists of two chapters. The first examines the changes that occurred with the IMORO after the Young Turk Revolution and the announcement of the so-called Hurriyet in 1908. The deep division between the two main currents in the organization is shown, which under the new conditions got deeper. Here the main conclusion of the author is that despite the cessation of armed activity and the

Internal Organization continues to exist as a factor, in parallel with the emerging political parties of the Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire. Along with this, the complex and changeable relations of IMORO with official Sofia are presented. The second chapter examines the gradual intensification of repressive trends in the Young Turks regime and the following withdrawal of some heads of the Organization from legal activity and their return to armed struggle. He reveals the complex relationships inside the organization and the problems in accordance with its recovery, the antagonism between fractions, and the role of the Bulgarian government. The main conclusions and summaries are presented in the conclusion, the volume of which is consistent with the overall volume of the book.

The main scientific contribution of this work is revealing IMORO in this complex and insufficiently studied period. A peculiar focus has been made on its condition and development, of its many ideological and organizational incarnations. The author's achievements in revealing the multi-layered contacts of IMORO leaders with the Bulgarian state are quite specific. For the first time, based on the unpublished source material is shown the support that IMORO obtained from the Bulgarian government and the mechanisms by which this was done.

As a recommendation, I would like to note that the author could have paid more attention to the interaction of the IMORO with the other Bulgarian factor in Macedonia - the Exarchate. Overall my impression of the monograph is that it is a scientific work with a significant contribution to the Bulgarian historiography dealing with the problems of the Liberation movement in Macedonia and Thrace.

The candidate's other book is "IMORO from Ilinden to the Balkan War (1903-1912)". Sofia, "Simolini-94", 2016. As this monograph is not a major habilitation work I will only mark its presence in the competitive materials. It also represents a valuable scientific study in which acknowledges the overall achievements of the

author in this area and coincidentally was nominated in the "Help Book" program at the Ministry of Culture.

The problems of the Bulgarian national liberation movement in Macedonia and Thrace are affected in a number of separate publications of the candidate. For the needs of the competition, he has presented 44 scientific publications in the format of studies and articles, of which 18 are studies. Slavov is a participant in many international and national scientific forums, as well as in the compilation of scientific and applied works. Such are the documentary collections "Sources for the Balkan Wars". S., 2015 and "Bulgarians and the Great War". S., 2016.

In the provided reference Chief Assistant Professor Slavov was mentioned in 83 citations and among them there some by foreign authors, which is an indication of the interest towards his publications abroad. Moreover, the applicant is the author of many scientific reviews and feedbacks on monographs, collections, and scientific conferences. He has participated in important national projects, including "Bulgaria - sources and documents", supported by the European Social Fund.

The main habilitation work with which *Chief Assistant Professor Voin Bozhinov* appears at the competition is "*The governing of the devetnadesetomaytsite. May 19, 1934 - January 22, 1935*". *Arka Publishing House, Sofia, 2017.*

The book consists of "introductory words", three chapters, and an "afterword". The structure of the work shows some imbalance - the first chapter, which is entirely devoted to the description of institutions and political system of the Third Bulgarian State until the coup of May 19, seemed too aggravated while the afterword, playing the role of conclusion, is only two and a half pages. There is also a lack of historiographical review, although the author mentions that it makes it easier for the reader. In the second and the third chapter, the main part of the exhibition is monitoring the ideology of devetnadesetomaytsite, the way they came into power,

their influence and ambitions to renovate the state, and the events in all spheres of political, economic, and social life. Relatively well is represented the attitude of the new regime to national liberation organizations and in particular to IMRO. One of the highlights of the study is the consequential deterioration of relations and the subsequent conflict between devetnadesetomaytsite and King Boris III. Although its background of an interesting historical narrative, I cannot fail to note the fact that the work completely goes beyond the chronological and thematic framework of the competition, which is evident from its very title.

The applicant presents two monographs that are not essential Habilitation works - "Republic of Macedonia in modern geopolitics." Gutenberg Publishing House S., 2017., and " Socialist Yugoslavia in agony 1980 - 1989" . Arka Publishing House, Sofia, 2019. They deal with problems from modern Balkan history and the place of the Republic of Northern Macedonia in the complex Balkan geopolitical node. The two monographs also go beyond the thematic and chronological framework of the announced competition.

Voin Bozhinov represents total 39 publications as studies and articles of which 1 is a study. A substantial part of the articles was published in foreign magazines, which is undoubtedly the dignity of the author. In addition, the candidate is the author of two chapters of collective monographs, has participated in a number of international and national scientific forums, as well as in four national and international projects. From the presented publications several articles have to some degree relation to the profile of the competition. This refers primarily to two publications on Bulgaria and Young Turk Revolution where briefly, along with the Independence, are discussed the problems of the Bulgarian national liberation movement in Macedonia and Thrace.

The production of Voin Bozhinov is varied by themes. It is characterized by a wide thematic range. The writings and publications affect to varying degrees the problems

of Bulgarian political history, of totalitarian and authoritarian ideologies of geopolitics, political science, and even art. The language is readable, figurative, in some places is too journalistic. Theses, although are presented in intriguing vocabulary, are not always very convincing, it is because extract information from the press or other media. My main message is that most publications have no connection and you are only indirectly related to the topic of the competition. Thematically, the materials provided by V. Bozhinov can be grouped in several main directions: different aspects of the political history of Bulgaria in the period between the two world wars, with an emphasis on authoritarian and far-right formations; the problems of Tito's Yugoslavia and its disintegration; The Republic of Macedonia within the framework of socialist Yugoslavia and as an independent state entity.

The two candidates, who appeared at the competition, presented themselves as good writers of scientific production. The materials submitted by them correspond to the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the other normative documents. Both applicants cover categorically the minimum that science-metric requires for the academic position of an "associate professor". On such a competition apart of the important role of the total volume of scientific production is very essential whether and to what extent the research of a candidate meets with the profile of the particular competition.

In accordance with the above, I propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to propose to the Scientific Council *to elect Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Slavov for the academic position of "Associate Professor"* for the announced competition for the needs of the section "History of the Bulgarian National Question".

03.04.2021
Blagoevgrad

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