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Opinion

by Prof. Andrey Dimov Andreev, PhD – member of the academic jury (Order № 18/01.03.2021) for conducting a competition for the academic position “Associate Professor” at Institute of Historical Research – the Bulgarian Academy of Science in Professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, Scientific specialty “History of Bulgaria” (National Liberation Movement of the Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians (1878 - 1919)) for the needs of the section “History of the Bulgarian National Question”, published in the State Newspaper, issue 110 of December 29, 2020.

The competition for the academic position “Associate Professor” in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, specialty “History of Bulgaria” (National Liberation Movement of Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians (1878-1919)) was announced in accordance with the legal requirements and the Rules of Institute of Historical Research – the Bulgarian Academy of Science (IHR-BAS). The following candidates are admitted to participate in the competition:

1. Assistant Professor Dr. Voyn Konstantinov Bozhinov, PhD
2. Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Mitkov Slavov, PhD

Assistant Professor Voyn Bozhinov, PhD presents six monographs, two of which are co-authored. They cover various thematic circles, analyzing Balkan and

Bulgarian history, concerning the political life in Bulgaria between the two world wars, the Bulgarian national question, international relations in the Balkans, problems in the current development of Macedonia and the last years of the existence of Yugoslavia. In the study “Nationally Powerful and United Bulgaria. Far-right Formations and the National Question.” (co-authored with Nikolay Poppetrov), Gutenberg Publishing House, 2014, analyzes organizations from the far-right ideological spectrum in Bulgaria after the First World War. It is done on the basis of rich documentary material, the periodical press related to the studied parties, their program documents, etc. are widely used. Pro-fascist and pro-Nazi parties are studied, as well as those with a definite totalitarian ideology, a comparison is made between them based on attitude towards the national question, relations with the neighbors, but first of all with Yugoslavia. The second monograph, dedicated to Bulgarian problems, is “The Rule of the *Devetnadasetomaytsi*, May 19, 1934 - January 22, 1935.” “Arka” Publishing House, Sofia, 2017. The study examines the state of Bulgarian institutions after the First World War, the radical change of May 19, 1934, the management of the new regime, the change of administrative apparatus and local government, foreign policy, analyzes the reasons for the rapid fall of the *Devetnadasetomaytsi*.

Two monographs are dedicated to the modern development of the Republic of North Macedonia, its place in the modern geopolitics and the Bulgarian national interest there. The second book is co-authored. “Republic of Macedonia in Contemporary Geopolitics.”, Gutenberg Publishing House, Sofia, 2017, aims to present the development of the new state in the current geopolitics after 1991 and the Bulgarian interests there. The conclusions of the colleague V. Bozhinov are also presented in his part of the book “The Republic of Macedonia and the Place of the

Bulgarian National Interest There” (co-authored with Yordanka Stoyanova-Toneva), Sofia, 2018.

Two monographic studies are dedicated to Yugoslavia. The first one is “Socialist Yugoslavia in Agony 1980-1989.” Arka Publishing House, Sofia, 2019. Here Yugoslavia is mainly considered after the death of J. Tito in 1980. The first part covers the pre-history of the events, the role of Tito also has its place there and the reader is introduced to the topic. The author also presents interesting statistics for the country around 1980 – population of the individual republics, ethnic and religious composition. The constitutions of the country, which have formed it as a multinational state, are analyzed. The events in Kosovo have its special place, as well as the negative trends in the rule of Slobodan Milošević. In the book “Socialist Yugoslavia in Disintegration”, Arka Publishing House, Sofia, 2021, the colleague Bozhinov examines the events of the last years of Yugoslavia’s existence. The economic difficulties, the strengthening of nationalism in the country, the conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia are analyzed. Accurately presented is also the policy of the big countries (called “Great Powers”), which accelerates the processes of disintegration.

Assistant Professor Slavi Slavov, PhD participates in the competition with two monographs, one of which was presented as a habilitation thesis. In the book “IMARO between the Fanfare of Hurieta and the Roar of the Cannons (1908-1912).”, Burgas, 2018, the colleague Slavov considers a short but eventful period of the development of IMARO (Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization). This period is logically justified: the lower limit is the Young Turk Revolution and the reforms of 1908, and the upper limit is the beginning of the Balkan War. The main emphasis is on the division in the Macedonian-Adrianople liberation organization. In this case, the author does not enslave to the classic

division of “left” and “right” but seeks the dynamics in the process of opposing the various wings, the individual parts of the organization and even the individual leaders. The author also touches on such a delicate matter such as the financing of the IMARO by the Bulgarian state on the basis of documentary material. Sl. Slavov also emphasizes on familiar facts, for example the fact that IMARO continued its existence and activity during the relative liberalization in the Ottoman Empire after 1908. Interesting is the coverage of persons who belong to the ideological circle of the IMARO, who act rather as politicians and diplomats, and their influence in Macedonia and Adrianople region after 1908. The author considers the organization of the Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians as connected with the Bulgarian state and highlights the specific contacts of the leadership with the governmental circles. At the same time, the contradictions reconciled considering the great goal – complete liberation of the Bulgarian lands, are not overlooked. Attention is paid not only to the material support, but also to the use of the Bulgarian territory as a base of the Macedonian-Adrianople organization. The second monograph presented by the colleague Slavov “IMARO from *Ilinden* to the Balkan War (1903-1912).” Sofia, 2016, is a logical continuation of the first book. Here is traced the turbulent period in the history of the IMARO from the suppression of the *Ilinden-Preobrazhenie* uprising to the beginning of the Balkan War (1912). The severe ideological crisis after 1903, the unsuccessful attempts to restore the unity, the efforts to maintain a presence in Macedonia are being analyzed. In his study the author emphasizes on the correspondence of the leading figures of the organization, their relations with Bulgaria, but not so much on program documents and official events. The division of the movement is also concerned, the author believes that the “left” – “right” is overexposed and relies on the analysis of individual fractions, such as the “*Sarafist*” trend, defined as a major factor in individual revolutionary districts until early 1907. A significant number of

pages are dedicated to the acts for the restoration of the revolutionary organization, to the relations with the Bulgarian governments, a topic which obviously attracts the interest of the colleague Slavov.

Assistant Professor Sl. Slavov, PhD also presents participation in two collective works, specifying the parts of which he is the author. The topic is related to the liberation movement in Macedonia and the Adrianople region.

For the participation in the competition Assistant Professor V. Bozhinov, PhD has also submitted 39 studies and articles. As in the monographs, the problems are extremely broad. It covers problems such as: personalities in history, an indisputable dignity for a researcher, the role of Tsar Ferdinand, Tsar Boris III, Andrey Lyapchev, Ivan Mihaylov, Kiril Drangov has been considered. The Bulgarian national question, the problem of independence and the relations of the Bulgarian government with the Young Turks are studied, the author has publications about fascist and National Socialist organizations, he researches Bulgarian political parties between the world wars, problems in the Balkans, also present are contemporary themes – processes in Yugoslavia and Northern Macedonia, the development of Turkey after 1989, the Caucasus problems are also affected – the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia. This speaks of a scholar with diverse interests who does not research just one topic.

Assistant Professor V. Bozhinov, PhD has participated in national and international projects, he has also presented a report on the indicators of his scientific growth.

Assistant Professor Slavi Slavov, PhD, presents 44 studies and articles dedicated to his research topic – the history of the IMARO from the end of the 19th century to the Balkan Wars, and it is necessary to take into account the publications for the period up to 1919. The colleague Slavov studies in detail the development of the

IMARO, analyzes the relations with the Bulgarian governments, the divisions and infightings within the organization, presents the leading figures in the struggles of the Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians. This is a leading theme for him, ever since his doctoral dissertation “IMARO and the State Policy of the Principality of Bulgaria (1903-1908).”

Assistant Professor Sl. Slavov, PhD has participated in research projects. In addition, he is the author of popular academic articles, something particularly important for the presentation of Bulgarian history to those interested in our past. He also has done expert work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has presented a report on the indicators of his scientific growth as well.

In the competition attend two scholars with a large number of academic papers, participation in projects, citations and indisputable academic achievements. The choice here is extremely difficult. I express the opinion that both of them deserve to hold the academic position of “Associate Professor” at Institute of Historical Research – the Bulgarian Academy of Science (IHR-BAS). The two colleagues have a different approach to the historical research. Assistant Professor V. Bozhinov, PhD demonstrates a wide interest in topics related to Bulgarian and Balkan history. This is evident from the books, studies and articles submitted for the competition. Assistant Professor Sl. Slavov, PhD goes into detail on his chosen topic: the history of the IMARO in the early 20th century. Remarks can be made to both candidates, but the positives prevail. IHR-BAS has announced a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, specialty “History of Bulgaria” (National Liberation Movement of the Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians (1878-1919). The publications of the colleague Sl. Slavov are focused within this topic. From this point of view, I rank in the first place Assistant Professor Sl. Slavov, PhD and I

believe that he can take the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the section “History of the Bulgarian National Question” at IHR-BAS.

Prof. Andrey Andreev, PhD

March 30, 2021