

REVIEW

by Professor Doctor of Historical Sciences Radoslav Zahariev Mishev, member of the Scientific Jury in a competition for the academic position of "Associate professor", announced by the Institute for Historical Studies – BAS, professional field 2.2 history and archaeology, 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"), "State Gazette", issue 110 of 29.12.2020, specified in article 24, paragraph 3, items 1-11 of the Regulations.

Candidates Data: Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Voyn Bozhinov: From 1996 to 2001 Voyn Konstantinov Bozhinov studied history at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and received a master's degree in history. In 2002 - 2005 he was a full-time doctoral student in specialty New Bulgarian History at the chair of "History of Bulgaria". In 2005 he successfully defended his dissertation - "Andrey Lyapchev - politician, statesman, public figure" and was awarded the title "Doctor of History". Since 2005 he has been working at the Institute for historical researches at BAS (Bulgarian Academy of Science), where in 2005 - 2006 he earned a II degree of Science. From 2006 to 2008 he was awarded a degree I of Science, and from 2008 he continued as a chief assistant.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Mitkov Slavov: In 1996, S. Slavov graduated History at the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" with a master's degree in history. From 1997 to 2003 and from 2006 - 2007 he was a history teacher in Varna. Throughout the period 2003-2006 he was a full-time doctoral student at the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and in 2006 he defended his dissertation on "VMORO and the state policy of the Principality of Bulgaria (1903-1908)" and was awarded the title "Doctor". From 2007 till 2009 he was a member of the Institute for Historical Studies at BAS with a II degree of Science, and from 2010 he became a chief assistant. In 2005 he became a member of the Macedonian Scientific Institute. In the field of research, Slavi Slavov focuses on the study of the national liberation movement of the Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians.

Description and analysis of the deposited scientific papers: Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Voyn Konstantinov Bozhinov: The colleague V. Bozhinov participated in the competition with the **habilitation thesis**

"Management of the "devetnadesetomait site"¹ May 19th, 1934 - January 22, 1935", 247 p. He also attached the monographs "Republic of Macedonia in the modern geopolitics", 314 p., he also added it in a synthesized form in the book "The Republic of Macedonia in Modern Politics and the Place of the Bulgarian Interest", Sofia, 2018, co-authored. "Socialist Yugoslavia in agony 1980 - 1989", 314 p., followed by "Socialist Yugoslavia in disintegration 1989 - 1992, S., 2021, 280 p., "Nationally Powerful and United Bulgaria. The Formations of the Radical Right and the National Question", Sofia, 2014, 273 p. is co-authored with a participation of 96 p. and two monographs based on the already defended dissertation - "The globe does not cease to spin, even if we sleep". "A Tale of the Life of A. Lyapchev", 242 pages and "Andrey Lyapchev", 126 pages. Since the last monographs are on the already defended dissertation, I will not add more details about them. The monographs on Macedonia and Yugoslavia are devoted to interesting issues in the modern history of these Balkan countries, which are within the scope of the contemporary Balkan history. Parts of the latter have a political and prognostic character. In addition, V. Bozhinov has submitted 41 publications, 1 of which is an article in a referenced edition, 37 in non-referenced editions, 1 study and 2 chapters from collective monographs. 12 articles have been published abroad. Thematically, the publications are differentiated into 3 on General History, 15 on History of the Balkan Nations (which is part of the General History) and 23 on History of Bulgaria. The thematic range of publications is extremely diverse, from the coup of the "devetnadesetomait site" through Yugoslavia and to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict. **The habilitation work "Management of the "devetnadesetomait site" May 19th, 1934 - January 22, 1935"**, 247 p. is in the field of the political history of Bulgaria and consists of introductory words, followed by three chapters and an afterword. In his introductory words, V. Bozhinov distances himself from the traditional academic "extended" exposition of historiography on the topic, by offering acquaintance with the sources and literature in the course of the exposition. At the same time, he states that the coup buried the so-called bourgeois democracy and paved the way to authoritarianism. According to V. Bozhinov, in order to better explain the coup from 1934, the authorities in Bulgaria after 1879 to 1934 must first be traced and analyzed. Therefore, in the first chapter "Institutions, the political system and some phenomena, forming the image of the Bulgarian government" he states his findings and conclusions

¹ Devetnadesetomait site – established Bulgarian term, used to denominate participants in the coup from May 19, 1934 to January 22, 1935.

about the Constitution of Tarnovo, the monarchical institute, the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the parties. It is pertinently noted that after the murder of Al. Stamboliyski and other radical farmers, the Agrarian Union (BSNS) disintegrates into different fractions. Practically the liquidation of the agricultural leader Al. Stamboliyski deprives the Agrarian Union of an integrative figure. Chapter Two "The Road to May 19 - Who Initiated the radical change?.The coup and the reasons for its success" reveals the origin and essence of the Military Union and the political circle "Unit ", the road to the uprising and the previous coup on June 9, 1923. The cooperation of the coup perpetrators with other opposition parties and organizations. Chapter Three, "The Administration of the "devetnadesetomaisite". The Bulgarian version of the reorganization" examines the main activity of the "devetnadesetomaisite". Voyn Bozhinov presents all aspects of their ruling, such as political events, changes in the administration, social processes, financial and economic initiatives, the ideology of the regime and the attitude of Tsar Boris III towards it. According to the author, the "²devetnadesetomaistvoto" is the successor of the "³devetojunstvoto" (p. 158 - 159). Special attention is given on the Directorate for Public Affairs as the most important propaganda institution of the regime (p. 161 - 162) and the imposition of organizations by classes is followed, which should replace the already banned parties. The ideology of the "devetnadesetomaisite" is thoroughly analyzed (p. 221), the author also differentiates the goals of the "devetnadesetomaisite" as an ideology (p. 232). The coup plotters were reserved towards the king, while the "devetnadesetomaistvoto" promoted the idea of a king-nation-state. Ultimately, Tsar Boris III successfully removed their radical representatives and exploited the changes in their government to establish his authoritarian regime. In this sense, perhaps involuntarily, but objectively, the "devetnadesetomaistvoto" served his secret intentions.

Scientific contributions: The habilitation thesis "Management of the "devetnadesetomaisite" May 19, 1934 - January 22, 1935" is the only independent monograph on this issue. The author chooses as an approach an analytical review of the authorities in Bulgaria after 1879 up until 1934. For the first time he differentiated the "devetnadesetomaistvoto" as an ideology even

² Devetnadesetomaistvo – established Bulgarian term, related to the ideology of the coup of the devetnadesetomaisite (May 19, 1934 to January 22, 1935). However this ideology is pro-king/pro-monarchy related unlike the devetnadesetomaisite.

³devetojunstvoto - established Bulgarian term, related to the political views of the coup plotters, participated in the coup from June 9th,1923.

after the fall of the regime. A reconstruction of the activities of the "Unit" was made, in comparison with the dictatorship of King Alexander in Serbia, the rehabilitation in Poland and others. Attention is also paid to the new power structures of the "devetnadesetomaitsite" and their ideology is thoroughly characterized. The book "Nationally Powerful and United Bulgaria. The Formations of the Radical Right and the National Question", Sofia, 2014, 273 p. is co-authored with a participation of 96 p. For the first time, the National Question in the programs and actions of the far right forces after the First World War is considered as well as their reaction towards the territorial plunder of Bulgaria. Voyn Bozhinov makes a brief description of the Bulgarian national question between the two World Wars (p. 31 - 46). A critical attitude towards Ivan Mihaylov's policy in the Pirin region is also expressed. There is a more objective understanding of right-wing political formations. Some of the articles address aspects of the Bulgarian national question after the First World War. The monograph "Republic of Macedonia in Modern Geopolitics" is dedicated to the creation, development and role of the new state in the geopolitical situation in the Balkans, as well as to the Bulgarian interest in it. According to the attached report, the candidate collects a total of 1685 points, which exceeds the minimum requirements for "associate professor". The works have an original character. Voyn Bozhinov has participated in 2 projects - national and international.

Notes and recommendations: The habilitation paper could comment more on the Tarnovo Constitution and the functions of the monarch in Bulgarian political life than on the role of monarchs in other Balkan countries. As well as more about his attitude during the events on June 9, 1923.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. S. Slavov participated in the competition with 2 monographs "**VMORO between the fanfare of the huriate and the roar of the cannons (1908 - 1912)**", Sofia, 2018, 256 pp., presented as a habilitation thesis and "VMORO from Ilinden to the Balkans war (1903 - 1912) ", Sofia 2016, 347 p. In addition, he has submitted 2 participations in collective works - documentary collection "Sources for the Balkan War ", Sofia, 2015, compiler and author of the preface - 84 p., doc. Proceedings "Bulgaria and the Great War", Sofia, 2016, compiler, 50 pp. The colleague presents an impressive number of studies and articles - 6 after the award of the title "Doctor", 44 after taking the academic position of "Chief. assistant". There are also 8 scientific articles and reviews. Ten of all 52 publications are devoted to the wars of Bulgaria in 1912-1918 and some other problems. All the others are for the Bulgarian national liberation movement in Macedonia and Edirne Thrace. The

habilitation work "VMORO between the fanfare of the huriate and the roar of the cannons (1908 - 1912)" is very well structured and considers an important stage in the history of VMORO. The book consists of a preface, 2 chapters, a conclusion, sources and literature. The foreword identifies and explains the crisis in the VMORO after the Ilinden-Preobrazhensk Uprising, which is expressed in its fragmentation and mutual contradictions, from which it will no longer be able to get away from. The reasons for the crisis are very well explained and the various fractions and ideological currents are pointed out in detail. **Chapter One** "Huriate" Hopes and Disappointments: The internal organization after the Young Turk Revolution (1908-1909) "emphasizes on the explicable legalization of the revolutionary committees and detachments immediately after the euphoria of the Young Turk Revolution, but " in a committee" way - with the preservation of structures and concealment of weapons. The relations in the triangle VMORO - the legal Bulgarian movement in the Ottoman Empire – and the Bulgarian state are very well analyzed. The author shows the objective incompatibility of the goals, although temporarily concealed, of the Young Turks and the Bulgarian revolutionaries. J. Sandanski's group did not take appropriate advantage of the opportunities for action after the Young Turk Revolution and the fragmentation of ideological currents and revolutionary groups that had begun continued in an unfavorable direction for the Bulgarian national idea. Ultimately, there was a new deepening of the contradictions in VMORO and the exploitation of the Sandanski supporters by the Young Turks. Only after the real intentions of the Young Turk leaders, it became apparent a painful sobering up take place among the activists of the Serres and Strumica revolutionary districts. The **second chapter**, "From Ottoman Constitutionalism to Armed Struggle (1910-1912)" describes and comments in detail on the resumption of revolutionary activity after the turn in the policy of the Young Turks and the events on the eve of the wars. Sl. Slavov presents a very good picture of the complex processes in European Turkey. The text contains the negotiations between Bulgaria and Russia in 1910, the prevailing tendency among most former voivodes to fight for unification with Bulgaria, as the latter is no longer perceived as an unwanted partner. In this way the author logically marked the unification of BNMORO with VMORO in 1911. Practically after 1910 the ideological shifted from the tactical. The organization sought to prepare the conditions for Bulgaria's war against the Ottoman Empire through attacks and sabotage (p. 183). In addition, the organization knows from historical practice that the Ottoman authorities always responded to revolutionary events with medieval means of repression

against civilians. In this way, the VMORO strongly compromised the desire and objective possibilities of the Young Turks for reforms in favor of the Christians.

The monograph "VMORO from Ilinden to the Balkan War (1903 - 1912), Sofia, 2016, 338 p. draws attention to the main aspects in the development of VMORO after the Ilinden-Preobrazhensko uprising to the Balkan War. To this end, it is constructed with a preface, three chapters and a conclusion. The preface, among other problems, analyzes the similarities and differences between the policy of the VMORO and the Bulgarian state (p. 9). **The first chapter** "Ideological and organizational tests and crises (1903 - 1908)" traces and explains the crisis in the VMORO after the uprising. Here one could comment on the attitude of the Bulgarian government towards the uprising as one of the reasons for the crisis after that. The failure of the Rila Congress to prevent a split in the organization is also shown. Significant place is given to the financial and material assistance of Bulgaria for VMORO. **Chapter Two** New Hopes, New Disappointments. The internal organization after the Young Turk Revolution (1908 - 1909) is a narrative of the legalization of the revolutionaries and the policy of Bulgaria towards the legal movement of the Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire, as well as towards the pro-Ottoman faction. Chapter Three "From Constitutionalism to Armed Struggle" (1910-1912) focuses on the resumption of revolutionary work during and after the disarmament action of the Young Turk authorities and the terrorist practice on the eve of the Balkan War.

Scientific contributions: The habilitation work "VMORO between the fanfare of the huriate and the roar of the cannons (1908 - 1912)" demonstrates the following scientific contributions: The work is the first independent study on this topic. It is reasonable to conclude that after 1910 the VMORO was weaker, but more pragmatic with new tactics. Through attacks and sabotage, the organization seeks to facilitate Bulgaria's path to war against the Ottoman Empire. The various ideological currents, factions and personal groups in the revolutionary movement are very well differentiated. On the basis of new or partially used archival material, the financial and material assistance of the Bulgarian state to the revolutionary movement is revealed. The directions of this support are also specified. The role of various influential people in the movement is shed more light on. At the same time, the previous idealization of the VMORO is avoided in parallel with the highlighting of the interrelations and contradictions between Sofia and the VMORO. **The monograph "VMORO from Ilinden to the Balkan War (1903 - 1912)"** examines the ideological and organizational state and processes of VMORO during this

period. At the same time, an original study of the Sarafist faction was made. The author's contribution is that he promoted the opinion that it works in cooperation with the left in the VMORO. On this problem Sl. Slavov also dedicates two **studios**. His contribution is also the use of Serbian documents as additional sources on the issue. The works of Sl. Slavov have an original character. In addition, he applies the noted 83 citations to his publications. In the field of scientometric indicators he scores 1265 points, which is more than the minimum requirements for "associate professor". He also participates in 3 national research projects.

Notes and recommendations: A brief comparative analysis could be made between the nature and activities of the VMORO and the organizations of other Balkan nations in European Turkey. In places in the deposited scientific researches repetitions are noticed. These things do not prejudice the undoubted scientific contributions of Sl. Slavov.

The candidates participate in the competition with interesting and significant publications. **Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. V. Bozhinov** presents works on various topics in Political History of Bulgaria and History of the Balkan nations with a wide perimeter of study. Some of his monographs and publications cover topics from Contemporary Balkan History. The habilitation work for the government of the 19th century is focused on the political history of Bulgaria, including the history of the Bulgarian state institutions until then. **Ch. Assistant Professor Slavi M. Slavov** has submitted works that are directly aimed at the history of the national liberation movement of the Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians in 1878 - 1919. Accordingly, his leading scientific contributions are in the field of this topic. In this sense, his research results are more appropriate for the specific topic of the announced competition.

Conclusion: After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition on the basis of the scientific contributions of the two candidates highlighted so far, I believe that the research activity of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Mitkov Slavov meets the specific requirements of the announced competition and it covers the legal requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor". I rank the candidates in the following order:

- 1. Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Slavi Mitkov Slavov**
- 2. Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Voyn Konstantinov Bozhinov**

I give a positive review and propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote positively on the candidacy of Ch. Assistant Professor Slavi Mitkov

Slavov, PhD, for holding the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the field of 2.2. History and archeology, scientific specialty "History of Bulgaria" "National Liberation Movement of Macedonian and Thracian Bulgarians (1878 - 1919) for the needs of the section" History of the Bulgarian national question ", as well as to make a proposal to the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Studies at BAS.

7.04.2021

**Prof. Dr. of Historical Sciences Radoslav
Mishev**