

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
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REPORT

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THESIS ON THE TOPIC:

"THE BALKAN POLICY OF AUSTRO-HUNGARY. 1897 - 1906"

Ph.D. STUDENT: TOMASH BUDAI

THESIS FOR AWARDING THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC  
DEGREE "DOCTOR"

Before us we have a well-thought-out and interestingly written thesis, dealing with important issues in the development of the Balkan nations and showing the leading role of two great powers - Austria-Hungary and Russia. The paper consists of a preface, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The foreword outlines the geographical and chronological scope of the work. The goals and tasks of the research are presented, the expected results are indicated, the contributions that are necessary for the thesis are outlined. Research methods are described. The archival sources are presented. Historiography is very voluminous, but this is understandable, given that the topic covers the history of several countries and nations, and for this reason many authors of different nationalities have shown interest in the issues raised.

The structure is well thought out, following the events that are academically presented and arguably related to what is happening in the Balkans. The reasons and interrelations are sought, the interests of the big countries and the aspirations of the small ones are taken into account. The period was successfully chosen. The start and end years of the study are justified.

The paper provides a scientific answer to the question of what events marked in the years 1897 - 1906. The exhibition outlines the interests not only of Austria-Hungary and the Balkan states, but also of Russia and other great powers in Europe. The emphasis throughout the text is on Austro-Russian relations, although this is not apparent from the title. However, the preface explains that although the title refers only to the Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary, the main event around which this policy gravitates is in fact the Austro-Russian agreement of 1897 signed in St. Petersburg and the vicissitudes of its implementation / non-implementation, the events it generates or prevents.

The author analyzes the Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary during the Austro-Russian cooperation in 1897-1906 on the basis of old and new historical research, documents from Bulgarian and foreign archives, as well as published collections of documents. Tomash Budai emphasizes the key role of the Albanian factor, which became decisive in the Balkan actions of the Danube Monarchy during the period under review, and also reveals the crucial role of Austria-Hungary in determining the fate of Macedonia.

The main event is undoubtedly the Austro-Russian Agreement for the Balkans in 1897. Issues affecting many countries are carefully considered, showing the interests of all those involved in the conflict. This also affects Bulgaria, which is quite naturally represented from the outside, and not according to domestic political views on its foreign policy interests. And this is a good look at the internal attitudes and moods of the Principality of Bulgaria.

The individual problems in the thesis are interpreted not on their own, but against the background of Pan-European or Balkan events, they are well explained and logically connected. It has been shown that bilateral Austro-Russian relations are often provoked by certain actions of the Balkan states as

well. Balkan events are presented against the background of global politics; the preparation and conclusion of the Austro-Russian agreement, its clauses, their consequences for the Balkans, for Russia, for the Danube monarchy are shown in detail.

The issues considered are basically known among the scientific community, but in the thesis they are detailed and refined, viewed from another angle, enriched with new archival sources, and accents are inserted, for which a huge amount of literature is used.

The author Tomash Budai seeks to present not only politicians but also individuals and to characterize some of the key figures defining the directions of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy. The topic of the thesis is presented in many ways. The problems of almost all Balkan nations and countries are shown, which makes the study multi-layered. Issues of not only foreign policy but also domestic nature are raised in order to present a more complete picture of events with many possible perspectives. The considered events are carefully selected and presented in a way that enriches the considered topic and further strengthens the focus of the dissertation.

The author shows the place and role of Austria-Hungary, not only in Vienna but also in Budapest. The role of Budapest as the second most important political center in the empire is successfully illustrated. Its influence in the formation of domestic political processes is outlined and the foreign policy accents of the Danube monarchy are determined. This is definitely a contribution, because so far the focus has been on Vienna's politics.

The abstract objectively reflects the content of the work and outlines the scientific contributions that give an idea of the importance of research. The abstract largely repeats the preface, but in this way, from the very beginning, the

author Tomash Budai has pointed out the main problems he solved through his doctorate.

As a weakness it should be noted that sometimes the author's opinion is lost, otherwise the events are well presented in documents, in archives. However, there is a need to rethink and expand the author's opinion. At some point, the analytical part is lost.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the work meets the criteria for research and has a number of contributions and merits. Based on the findings of the opinion, I would like to recommend to the esteemed members of the Honorable Jury to award Tomash Budai the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor", for which I will also vote.

Sofia,  
May 15, 2022

Assessor:  
Prof. Yordanka Gesheva