

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
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София 1113, бул. Шипченски проход № 52, бл. 17 тел.: 02/ 979 29 98 ; факс: 02/ 870 21 91	

REVIEW

by acad. Georgi Markov, scientific supervisor of Tamás Budai's dissertation thesis, entitled "The Balkan Policy of Austria-Hungary 1897–1906" (329 p.) for obtaining the scientific degree of "Doctor" (PhD) in professional area 2.2. (History and Archeology)

I have read carefully the presented dissertation, including preface, introduction, first, second, third chapter (the first one with three subchapters and the other two with four subchapters), conclusion and extensive bibliography – all 329 pages. The colleague focused on the study of the overall Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy, because the relations between the dual monarchy and Bulgaria were largely developed, which of course does not mean that no new research should be done on the Vienna-Sofia axis, as science is endless. The emphasis is right on the Balkan dimension of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy and the reasons that had led to this limited geographical landmark.

In the initial part (foreword and introduction) the objectives of the research are very well set, the level of previous Bulgarian and foreign publications is specified and a transition to the first chapter is made. OUR colleague Tomás Budai demonstrates excellent awareness of the sources and literature, which is evident from the attached extensive bibliography. At the same time, it shows opportunities for in-depth research, activity characteristics and comparative analyzes. It is described in its various vicissitudes with the application of opinions of different authors, findings and attitudes of the dissertation. The emphasis is very well placed on the role of the Hungarian factor in the common Austro-Hungarian foreign policy, in fact until the First World War.

In the detailed text of the first chapter, entitled „The Austro-Russian Agreement on the Balkans (1897)” the author in three subchapters examines the winding road during the raging Eastern Crisis that had led to the agreement of the two empires. The text made pleasant impression on me, it is readable and I liked the presentation of the new Foreign Minister - Count Agenor Goluchowski. The second chapter traces a crucial and dangerous moment for Vienna, when in Russia, led by Ambassador Nelidov, forces that are determined to change the status quo in the Balkans are temporarily gaining ground. The third subchapter describes the circumstances under which the Austro-Russian agreement was reached and the reasons that led the Anglophile

Gołuchowski to finally reach an agreement with Russia to preserve the status quo in the Balkans, setting a new period in Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy at the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office.

The second chapter in the topic developed by T. Budai entitled “The Agreement in Action (1897-1902)” is divided into four subchapters. The first subchapter is devoted to the ongoing extramural collision in the Balkans between Vienna and St. Petersburg. In this context, it is rightly noted that despite the new alliance accompanied by joint declarations and joint diplomatic action, the invisible mistrust and rivalry between the two European powers in the Balkans continues. The most voluminous second chapter presents a very important and key moment in determining the focus of the Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary during the period under review - the adoption and implementation of the memorandum on Albania. The colleague using the latest research in Bulgarian, Hungarian and others. Foreign authors provide very valuable information about the reason for this new emphasis with a written action plan in the Balkan policy of the Monarchy, which in its implementation leads to the first serious clash in absentia between the two allies in the Novi Pazar Sandzak and Kosovo. The author draws attention to the exceptional role of Kalay and especially to the Talozi scholars and politicians in the realization of the set goals together with the well-prepared consular network, and for some diplomats detailed biographical data are given. The colleague's thesis is curious that in addition to efforts to build a Ukrainian and Bosnian nation on its own and occupied territory, the Monarchy with its Albanian program launched such “national engineering” on foreign soil, namely in the Balkans, and even has authoritative voices in the face of the Commander-in-Chief of the Austro-Hungarian Armed Forces Gen. Beck in support of the initiation and similar impact in favor of the birth of Macedonian self-awareness. Pointing out this important fact to Bulgarian historiography is also a scientific contribution of the developed work. In the third chapter, the emphasis is on Macedonia and the hardships of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement in the area left without serious support, unlike Serbs, Albanians, Greeks and even Romanians by the Great Powers to achieve their goals. The last subchapter is dedicated to the importance of Romania in Vienna's Balkan policy, and it has been rightly stated that it is crucial for Vienna in view of its geopolitical location and the loss of positions in Serbia and Bulgaria. It is no coincidence that this axis is the second extramural clash between the two allies, whose true roots lie in Macedonia.

The third chapter of the study is entitled “Austro-Russian Interaction in the Balkans (1903-1906)”. It describes the turbulent events in Macedonia during the Upper Juma Uprising and the

Ilinden-Preobrazhenskiya Epic as a watershed between the two phases of Austro-Russian cooperation in the Balkans and describes well the events based on rich source material. It has been objectively stated that they did not lead to a rupture, but to the strengthening of the Austro-Russian Union. The second subchapter emphasizes the economic and multinational factor for the successful realization of foreign policy goals. My colleague Budai is very well aware that in economic terms Austria-Hungary is a kind of middle power with significant differences in development between the two halves, and compared to the leading Western powers it is the most ethnically diverse. It is logical to conclude that in the time of rapid industrial development and strong state-building national movements, these characteristics prevent the dual monarchy from becoming one of the strongest on European Chessboard Day. The third subchapter is devoted to the infamous "February Reforms" and the Mürzsteg Reform Program. The course of the second stage of co-operation between Vienna and St. Petersburg in the Balkans is traced in detail, emphasizing that Russia's involvement on the Far Eastern front in parallel with its domestic political problems and Germany's patronage of the Almighty Northern Ally over the Monarchy are the main reasons for its acquisition of a leading role in Balkan affairs and the implementation of reforms in Macedonia's three provinces in European Turkey. In the last chapter, Austria-Hungary is placed on the international podium during the First Moroccan Crisis of 1905-1906, with a very accurate analysis of its increasingly tangible subordinate role within the Double Union, which the colleague rightly emphasizes The "beginning of the end" of this once powerful Central European power, a trend that took hold during the annexation crisis before the turbulent times of the First World War.

The dissertation was developed on the basis of various sources and literature, and T. Budai correctly has judged that for obvious reasons, he was expected to use more Hungarian sources and literature, that he has done. An additional advantage of his work is that in addition to the skillful and extensive handling of Bulgarian archival sources and specialized literature, he has used in detail and cited materials (along with Hungarian) also from other, foreign sources and literature of leading authors in his research, mostly in German and English. Some of them have only recently been published. The use of rich source material and multilingual foreign literature is a great advantage of the presented work, which allows the doctoral student through the eyes of several national schools to illuminate and research and accordingly draw the conclusions in his topic, which are well summarized and mentioned in the conclusion of the dissertation. It is rightly stated

there that the hallmark of Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy for the period 1897-1906 was dynastic conservatism.

The dissertation is an in-depth study of the topic and structurally is very well constructed. It is presented ready and fully completed for defense and aware of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD), which is why I will vote with a resounding “yes”, hoping that the colleagues from the esteemed Scientific Jury will do the same.

Acad. Georgi Markov

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