

OPINION

for Boris Kirilov Stoyanov

candidate in the contest for Associate Professor in direction 2.2. History and Archeology (Contemporary History: History of European Integration), announced in SG, no. 61/2/08/2022

PhD Boris Stoyanov is the only candidate in the current contest. The submitted documents meet the requirements. PhD Stoyanov has graduated with a master's degree in History from the History Department at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". He has started his scientific career with doctoral dissertation on the topic: "Building a united Europe, 1948-1957". In 2007, he started working as an Assistant Professor at his Alma Mater where a year later he became Chief Assistant Professor. His reputation among the students is of a demanding Professor, but he sets high standards as a professional for himself as well. PhD Stoyanov has been supervisor of many graduated and graduating young colleagues and I have witnessed of how devotedly he has worked with them.

The candidate has entered the contest presenting 19 publications - one monograph and 18 articles in scientific journals, anthologies and series. He is also author of high school History and Civics textbooks. Among his other professional tasks, I would like to single out his contribution in the compilation of several collections. Boris Stoyanov has also participated, as a part of a team, in more than 10 successfully implemented scientific projects.

The development of European integration is a topic of long-term scientific interest for colleague Stoyanov and most of his research is entirely in this field. Four articles make exception to this trend – two related to events and processes from the first decade of the Cold War, and two which are more chronologically located in the New Age. In this line of thought, I will allow myself to recommend that in the future he devote himself to new and different research problems and topics, because I think he can contribute to Bulgarian science.

The Monograph: Europe Before Europe: The Projects for Third Power, European Federation and United States of Europe and Their Fate, 1945-1949 University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2022 is the habilitation thesis of PhD Stoyanov. He uses a variety of published documentary sources; a rich body of scientific research has also been drawn upon. Here is the moment to point out that the introduction to "Europe before Europe" lacks the traditional historiographical overview, but the theses of the individual authors are earnestly

presented in the text; the author sometimes disputes already imposed theses, but does so with reason.

The research relies on the thematic approach. Structured in 4 chapters, which differs from the traditional and I would even say already trivial "three-headed structure", it traces the earliest phase of European integration. The destruction and suffering of the societies on the Old Continent experienced during the Second World War lead to the understanding of their causes and to the conviction that there must be global changes in order not to repeat these tragic events. Western European countries started to realize that division made them weak and uncompetitive in the face of the looming all-out confrontation between the USA and the USSR, and that together they would do much better defending Europe's lost positions. The introduction, aptly titled "QUO VADIS, EUROPA?", is devoted to these facts. After the ascertainment of the problems comes the turn of planning and implementing their resolution. It must be decided whether the approach should be traditional or innovative, which in that era appeared to be the supranational model of integration.

Chapter One is entitled: "ARBITER MUNDI: Britain, France and the Mirage of the Third Power". At the beginning of the second half of the 1940s, it seemed that the initiators of the integration and the construction of the Third power would be London and Paris, especially since the concept of the Third Power had been close to the heart of Great Britain from the very beginning. On page 25, the following analysis of the views of the West European left is presented: "An interesting reading of the effort to achieve post-war unity is given by the West European left. In the view of labors, socialists and social democrats on international relations, the continental structure cannot be anything else than the equal to the United States and Soviet Union center of prosperity, power and influence. It will not allow a return to the type of realpolitik characteristic to the conservatives, because it will be based on principles and not on brute force and interests." In this relation I would like to present a different perspective set out in the pages of the Spanish newspaper La Vanguardia in September 1945. The side but contemporary commentary on Labour's behavior expressed through Foreign Secretary Bevin is that he lead conservative in nature foreign policy.

The exposition traces the ideas and various political and economic initiatives proposed by politicians and public figures from both countries. Apparently, the bone of contention and, accordingly, the reason for the failure of Europe to constitute itself as a Third Power is the

different attitude of the two countries towards Germany, as well as the fear of a reaction from the global superpowers - USA and USSR.

Chapter Two, "Ideas of (Con)federation and Movements for European Unity," draws attention to the "non-power factors" that underpin the Grand Initiative for Integration. Federation was seen as the right solution by many European intellectuals, some of whom were associated with the Resistance. Fighting against Nazism, these people saw salvation in the construction of a federal Europe. After the war, they defended their ideas and their implementation through the creation of the European Union of the Federalists. The so-called unionists proposed an alternative approach to unification, namely confederation. However, the ideological concepts of the two movements did not find enough political and diplomatic support and by 1949 there was still no result, i.e. real political and economic union.

The Marshall Plan (1947) is the boundary line in the American attitude and plans for the unification of Europe - and accordingly the third chapter: "Problems of European unity until the Marshall Plan" is devoted to "before", and the fourth: "More desirable than possible: the failure of the American idea United States - to "after". These two main components of the monograph trace the evolution of Washington's attitude toward the unification of the Old Continent. The US realized over time that Europe could be not a competitor or even an enemy, but an equal partner. All the factors for Washington's increasingly positive attitude towards the integration of Europe are distinguished, including even the search for a more stable ally against the Great Enemy within the framework of the Cold War and the possible economic benefit. America was well aware of federalism as a model of government, and it was logical to propose the well-known "United States" formula for implementation. In view of the reality, The US had the confidence to declare it very successful. It is clearly highlighted that for the USA economic integration, and in particular the customs union, is more important, but the author analytically presents the factors that made Europeans neglect this possibility of integration.

The conclusion "Why France?" presents the dissatisfaction of Paris with what happened in the second half of the 1940s and why it initiated the Beginning of real integration processes in the 1950s.

The period 1945-1949 was the time in which the mechanisms were sought to start European integration. The differences in the proposed options are significant, and this is clearly evident in the exposition, which at times seems like a mechanical collection of presented facts

and processes, but this is understandable when the extreme chaos of the era is taken into account.

A series of articles with which the candidate participates in the current competition trace the integration processes after the Rome Treaties of 1957. Logically, they are an objective analysis of the history of the European Economic Community up to the 1980s, as each of them is dedicated of a separate decade.

The article: "The European Union in the break of the Bulgarian school. European integration in History and Civilization textbooks for the 10th grade" definitely deserves special attention. The author, based on his experience as a teacher in secondary education and a researcher of European integration, makes a critical analysis of the content of current textbooks on History and Civilizations, which refers to the history of European integration in the second half of the 20th century.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the candidate fully meets the minimum national scientometric requirements, there is no evidence of plagiarism in his works, and all the necessary criteria for his promotion to Associate Professor are covered and present. With complete conviction, I give my positive assessment and support for PhD Boris Stoyanov in the contest for Associate Professor of Contemporary History.

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