

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Анка Тодорова Ignatova, PhD,

Department of Modern and Contemporary History, Faculty of History of St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, a member of a scientific jury for the competition for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in Academic Field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archive Studies and Documentary), for the needs of the Faculty of History at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", announced in the State Gazette, issue 55 of

28.06.2024

The only candidate for participation in the announced competition is Chief Assistant Professor Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova, PhD from the Archive Studies and History Didactic Department at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University of St. Kliment Ohridski". The documentation she submitted meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for application of this law. The minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor" have been fully met.

Chief Assist. Prof. R. Simeonova, PhD is a graduate of the faculty, where she currently works. In 2000, she graduated with a degree in History with a specialization in Archival Studies, and from 2003 till 2007 she was a PhD student at the Department of Archive Studies and Auxiliary Historical Disciplines. After successfully defending a dissertation on "Regulation and management of access in modern archives" in 2008, she obtained the scientific degree "doctor" in the specialty 05.03.21 Documentary Studies, Archival Studies, Paleography (incl. Historiography and Source Studies). The professional path of R. Todorova began as an archivist in the Scientific Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, continued in the Bulgarian Historical Archives of the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", where she appears as one of the authors of item 9 of the "Overview of archival funds, collections and partial receipts stored in the Bulgarian Historical Archives". After gaining solid practical experience, she joined Sofia University as an assistant in 2012, and two years later she occupied the position of "Chief Assistant Professor" at the above mentioned department. In addition to teaching, since 2015 she has also been involved in scientific projects (7 in total, of which she is the leader of two). She is a member of the editorial board of the scientific and methodical edition of the Archives State Agency – the journal Archive Review.

The scientific production with which Ch. Assistant Professor R. Todorova, PhD participates in the current competition includes one monograph, a book published on the basis of her dissertation work, and 14 studies and articles.

Central place in it is occupied by the monograph "The Preservation of the Archives of State Security as a Source for Microhistory and the "Swamp of Communism". The chosen topic of the habilitation thesis is attractive to both specialists and non-specialists. For its writing, various sources are analysed: documents stored in the Archives of the so-called Committee on Files, the documentary series "From the archives of the DS", normative acts regarding the activity of the Committee on Files, Bulgarian and foreign scientific literature. Structurally, the work consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and a list of abbreviations used, and the volume is 213 pages.

The introduction justifies the choice of the topic, indicates the main publications related to it, the purpose of the research (due to the author's ambition "to propose new research approaches, respectively readings of the history of archival institutions in the modern period" (p. 7), the methods used, the tasks set.

The first chapter "Storage of the State Security Records" is dedicated, as R. Todorova rightly notes, to a "key moment in the process of managing archival resources", namely "their proper storage". (p. 15) Emphasis is placed on the physical preservation of the documents of the Card-index and Archives Department of the State Security. The problem of providing suitable archival repositories and equipment is considered against the background of the general condition of the material base of the archives in the country. However, an inaccuracy has been admitted here that in Bulgaria "the first buildings specially designed and built for the needs of archival institutions" appeared at the beginning of the 1970s (p. 85). In 1954, a special building for the Central Military Archives (today the State Military Historical Archives) was built in V. Tarnovo, which is also evident from the institution's official website. The text presents in detail the extremely poor storage conditions of the considered archival materials and the measures for its preservation and functional use. In this connection, although in general, the questions regarding the collection, processing, use, and also the destruction of archival documents are also affected. The fate of the State Security Archives after November 1989 has been traced, but not sufficiently thoroughly, when in Bankya a special and best-equipped so far building in the country was constructed for the needs of the Centralized Archives (established in 2006) of the so-called Commission on Files. In the second chapter, "State Security Against an Involuntary Dissident," the author presents "the State Security Archives as a source for microhistory." Through the introduced into scientific circulation documents on the

operational verification and development of a Bulgarian youth, the State Security methods and means to fight against those who opposed the communist regime are revealed. In the course of the presentation of this chapter, a number of documents are presented, in fragments or fully, which has led to several repetitions of one and the same information. However, the author's idea to seek confirmation of information contained in the State Security documents through the methods of oral history deserves admiration.

The third chapter presents the activities of the Stasi in relation to a case similar to the Bulgarian one. Analogies are made with State Security structures, their actions and related documents.

The conclusion of the monograph contains the necessary summaries. It should be noted that the author has achieved the set goals and objectives, as well as the stated aspiration "toward an objective interpretation of the topic" (p. 10).

The background of the processes of declassification of the DS files and liberalization of access to them Ch. Assistant Professor R. Todorova, PhD traces in her dissertation published in 2012 with the title "History and organization of access to archives". The book is dedicated to a current topic in the modern world, which arouses the interest of specialists. Its citations in the scientific literature are proof of this. In the article "Methodically ensuring access to the archives – a prerequisite for real use of the documentary resources" (2017), published years later, the need to develop a tool to orient the users of archive information in "the available legal framework regulating the relevant processes" is emphasized and activities, as well as with the procedure for providing access to the archives". In this regard, the author presents as an example version "Practical guide for the conditions and methods of access to archival materials on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria within the framework of a scientific project for the construction of an electronic database of Bulgarian anthroponymy".

Another thematic round in various publications by Ch. Assistant Professor Todorova, PhD aims to arouse research interest in archival documents reflecting the activities of Bulgarian polar explorers. The article presenting a little-known political emigrant in Canada outside of certain circles – Pencho Peltekov, based on documents from his archive fund at BIA - NBKM, processed personally by Todorova, is also of a contributing nature. In two other articles, she brings into scholarly circulation a number of documents from the backgrounds of the BIA, related to the history of Troyan and Teteven.

As a continuation of the efforts of Ch. Assistant Professor R. Todorova, PhD, to clarify the history of archival education in Bulgaria, the study and her article about the contribution of Prof. Todor Borov to the creation of the specialty Archival Studies at Sofia State University

should be considered, as well as the department, which serves her. For a more complete presentation of the history of the archival work in the second half of the 1950s, I should mention the first study of its kind on the history of the Islamic Department in Shumen, a branch of the National Library in Sofia (1947–1950), carried out by the author based on unpublished documents stored in the State Archives – Shumen.

Directly related to the topic of the monograph are two articles with which Ch. Assistant Professor R. Todorova, PhD participates in the competition. Three more publications based on documents from the Archive of the so-called Dossier Committee should be mentioned. One of them presents the influence of "Western music" on the Bulgarian youth in the 1970s and 1980s from the point of view of the official authorities. The other one focuses on the documentation aspect in the activities of active directions and disinformation activities of the Bulgarian foreign intelligence (1962–1989).

Referring to the publications, scientific and practical-applied contributions, as well as the teaching activity of Ch. Assistant Professor Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova, PhD I express my firm opinion that she should be selected for the academic position of "docent" in professional direction 2.2. History and Archeology (Archive Studies and Documentary), for the needs of the Faculty of History of the University of St. Kliment Ohridski".

11/10/2024
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