

## REVIEW

by **Prof. Dr. Yuri Todorov Todorov**, Department of "Archival Science and Methodology of History Education", Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",

member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of associate professor in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Archival Science and Documentary Studies), announced in SG no. 55 / 28.06.2024,

with the only candidate Assistant Professor **Dr. Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova**, Department of "Archival Science and Methodology of History Education" at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

The procedure for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the Department of " Archival Science and Methodology of History Education" of the Faculty of History at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Archival Science and Documentary Studies), competition announced in State Gazette no. 55 of 28.06.2024 is valid in all its stages and is lawful. The documentation is fully and accurately prepared and is available in electronic format. I am preparing this review in accordance with the order of the Rector of the University of St. Kl. Ohridski" No. RD 38-429/16.07.2024 and decision of the scientific jury from the meeting on 11.09.2024.

One candidate participated in the competition, Dr. Ralitsa Todorova, assistant professor, lecturer in the Department of " Archival Science and Methodology of History Education" at the Faculty of History. She was born in the city of Teteven, where she completed her secondary education at the "Georgi Benkovski" secondary school in 1995. Ralitsa Todorova received her educational qualification at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the professional field 2.2 History and archaeology, and in 2000 she graduated as Master in History with specialization in Archival Studies and with the professional qualification "Teacher of History". In the period from 2003 to 2007, she was a full-time doctoral student at the department of "Archivistics and Auxiliary Historical Disciplines" of the faculty of History. In 2008, she defended her doctoral

dissertation on the topic "Regulation and management of access in modern archives" in the scientific field of Documentary Studies, Archivistics, Paleography (including Historiography and Source studies).

Dr. Ralitsa Todorova begins to accumulate her professional experience as an archivist from 2002 to 2003 in the Scientific Archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Science and then in the same position in the Bulgarian Historical Archive at the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" - until 2008. From 2008 to 2012, she worked as a first-year research assistant at the same place. In 2012, Dr. Todorova participated in and won a competition for an assistant in the department of "Archivistics and Auxiliary Sciences", working in this position until 2014. From 2014, after completing the competition procedure, she continues to work in the same department in the academic position assistant professor and teaches there until now. I specifically emphasize this path of professional growth, because it is clear that the candidate has taken all possible exams and competitions in her career and completed them with high success.

The teaching experience of Dr. Ralitsa Todorova is entirely within the scope of the current competition. She teaches compulsory subjects in the bachelor's degree of the Faculty of History: "Archival Science" - in the bachelor program of History, and in the bachelor program "Archivistics and Documentary Studies" - "Archeography" and "European Institutions and Archives". In the bachelor program Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, she teaches the course "Documentary and Archival Resources". In addition, Dr. Todorova presents specialized courses for the Bachelor's degree of the Faculty of Philosophy, namely: "Archival Science" and "Archiving Technologies". In the master's program "Documentary and archival resources" of the Faculty of History Ralitsa Todorova reads the mandatory disciplines "Electronic management, electronic resources and archiving" and "Information resources of the European institutions", as well as the elective courses "Institutions of the European Union", "Archeography and Communication in an Archival Environment". Dr. Todorova's lectures explain the high rate of classroom and study employment, presented in the attached report from the "Educational Activities" department of the Sofia University for the last five years.

Dr. Todorova's scientific research and applied project activities are rich in active participation in scientific forums and conferences, as well as scientific projects, where she is the leader and participates as a member. Mention should be made of the project on the value of archival resources from the activities of the Bulgarian explorers of Antarctica, as well as a project on the current state of the Ottoman archival documents of the entire territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. Ralitsa Todorova takes part as a member of teams organizing seminars on archival topics, is involved in maintaining contact and scientific communication with the archival guild on professional and institutional issues. As a consultant to a team for the preparation and implementation of a Strategy for digitization

of the Institutional Archive of Sofia University, she takes part in the development and concept of digitization. Participates in the editorial board of the magazine "Archive Review".

Dr. Todorova presents a general list of all publications, which includes a book, a monograph, 9 articles in scientific journals (four of them co-authored), 10 articles in series and 12 articles in collections. One book and one monograph, as well as a total of 16 scientific studies and articles, are planned for the current competition, all publications are not co-authored and represent original scientific works.

The main ones in the list of publications are the two books by Ralitsa Todorova - one under the title "The preservation of the archive of State Security as a source for microhistory and the 'swamp of communism'", ISBN: 978-619-7582-37-6, Sofia 2024 (monograph); the other - History and organization of access to archives, ISBN: 9789545231247, Sofia 2012 - revised and supplemented book on the content of the candidate's doctoral dissertation, already peer-reviewed.

Dr. Todorova's monograph "The preservation of the archive of State Security as a source for microhistory and the 'swamp of communism'" is central to the current habilitation. The topic and content of the publication are on the topic of the competition and correspond to the teaching profile of the candidate. The exposition is structured in an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion of 13.5 printed cars. Includes a bibliography of references (68 cyrillic and latin titles and a list of archival and documentary sources) as well as a list of abbreviations.

In general, the mentioned essay draws attention to the problems in the archival sphere arising from the changes in Bulgaria after 1989 and the new stage in the development of the Bulgarian archives, the so-called archival reform. The latter can emerge with the liberalization of archival institutions and their opening to the general public. Thus, the presented publication can successfully fit into the actuality of the problem surrounding the role of archives in our time. It is not by chance that the author chooses for this purpose the presentation of a sore problem in society, characteristic of all countries after the era of socialism, namely – the archives of the secret services. The author aims, on the one hand, to present a new approach to the work of archival institutions, meeting the modern requirements of society. It is about including hitherto unused documentary resources in the circulation of historical science. Research methods based on comparative analysis and archival heuristics are applied to the study of the relevant document arrays in the monograph. The particular case that the author calls "micro-historical" is of interest, it is the other side of the approach chosen by Dr. Todorova. This methodology allows the consideration of the specifics stored in the document, which should be typologized and summarized. In addition, Dr. Todorova is committed to the use and application of the institutional approach in researching documentary resources. This is how the

administrative reforms accompanying the social changes in the period under consideration are tracked. Emphasis is placed on the new paradigm in the field of humanitarian studies, based on the liberalization of access to documents to shed light on the activities of repressive bodies and regimes in order to build a collective identity.

Dr. Todorova examines, in particular, the activities of the so-called "Commission on files", the physical construction of the relevant archive and the real state of the documents received in it. Basic in this view are the normative acts on the activity of the commission. Parallels are being sought with the activities of similar bodies in Eastern European countries. The construction of the archive of the Dossier Commission is presented in detail in the first chapter of Ralitsa Todorova's monograph, entitled "Storage of the State Security Archive" - pp. 15 - 100. As a professional archivist, the author describes all stages of the creation of this complex - from the archive repository to the archive unit. It is important to preserve the reference apparatus, which makes it possible to reconstruct the logic of the relevant funds by creating the "File and Archive" and "Assembly and Storage" departments. The author defines the activities of creating the described archive as a prerequisite for its use by the general citizenry and as subject to the requirements for open access to State Security documents by every citizen and by researchers. It should be emphasized that the collection of information by documenting all manifestations of deviation from the correct line of thinking and action by people, by every member of society in the socialist era, results in the creation of a specific information array. It is of interest to citizens today and to researchers of modern history. The same has a high information saturation, as is clear from the descriptions of Dr. Todorova in the next chapter of the monograph.

The specifics of the individual case are presented in Ralitsa Todorova's monograph in the second chapter of the book under the title "State security against an involuntary dissident" - pages 101 - 174. The author presents the fate and life path of Georgi Hristov Georgiev, stepping of documents, mainly from the fund АКРДОПБГДСРСБНА – М, III - 34935, items 1, 3 and 4., and memories collected from interviews with his sister, Siyka Georgieva. The text reveals both biographical data and the system that the then State Security was building to conduct and implement the so-called "agency-operational measures". The detail with which the author develops and traces the activities of agents and managers and their results is impressive, all based on the documents in volume 1 of the said fund, sheets 1 - 203, also volume 3 - a total of 190 sheets and volume 4 with 132 sheets, and their fascinating book presentation. Reveals the archival approach of Ralitsa Todorova, through which she transforms the dry texts of documents into a generalized narrative of real events. The openness of the archives in this sense enables, on the one hand, the ordinary reader to gain access to information that was secret at the time, and on the other hand, the professional researcher to recreate events and hidden facts about history. The presented case is not an

exception, but a characteristic of life in a society ruled by one party through repression of ordinary people.

In the third chapter under the title "Stasi against the 'Pisar' object. A Look Through the Distorted Mirror of Socialist Reality" presents the structure and activities of the Ministry of State Security of the German Democratic Republic, known by the popular and more benign short word Stasi, to avoid the complexity of the institution behind it. Dr. Todorova traces the full path of creation and development of the secret services of the German Democratic Republic and gives an accurate description of the structure, activity and purpose of the Stasi departments. The organizational structure is presented as a pyramidal hierarchy of departments, each of which performs certain tasks - intelligence, counterintelligence, internal security, protection of the constitution and administration. Stasi, like all secret services in socialist countries, takes the form of a huge "octopus", as Ralitsa Todorova defines it, or a state within a state. A dense structure of informers, called "non-official collaborators" in the Stasi, was created, reporting everything about everyone. The way the services work in the GDR, the author describes in the case of "Radulovich", a member of the popular punk movement there in the 1980s. The two specific examples of Hristov and Radulovich examined in the monograph give the author the opportunity to identify parallels in the organization of work of the services with informal groups and their supporters. Indicative of the means, methods and capabilities of the State Security and Stasi are the actions of their employees, but also of the wide network of agency apparatus. Evidence of this is the documentary materials, postponed as a result of the activity of the political police.

The monograph presented by Dr. Todorova is an original, useful and highly contributing study that clarifies the structure and activity of the secret services in the countries of Eastern Europe. The high scientific style of the exhibition and the competent handling of huge archival material, unexplored until now, make an impression. Thanks to her professional experience and the long-term teaching activity of the candidate in the Archival and documentary studies specialty, she stands out as a researcher and teacher in the field with high and indisputable opportunities and perspective.

The evaluation of Dr. Todorova according to the minimum national requirements and mandatory criteria of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" can be made with the attached reference in accordance with Art. 2b of ZRASRB for the scientific field of History and Archeology 2.2. Ralitsa Todorova has a defended dissertation work and a monograph - a major habilitation work on the topic "The preservation of the archive of State Security as a source for microhistory and the 'swamp of communism'", with which she fulfills the minimum national requirements in groups A and B (total 150 points). The monograph is entirely in the field of the competition, with which the candidate meets the basic requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". According to group D indicators,

she has presented a book, apart from the main habilitation thesis, there are publications with reference in global databases with scientific information, studies, articles and reports with scientific review or editing. Group D indicators total 220 points. The presented list of noted citations for Dr. Todorova's publications includes citations in scientific publications and monographs with the corresponding bibliographic reference. The 125 points achieved in group D exceed the minimum national requirements. This definitely demonstrates the response that the works of Dr. Ralitsa Todorova find among the scientific audience. In conclusion, it can be said that the scientific production of the candidate fully meets the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

In terms of main content, Dr. Todorova's production is exactly in line with the theme of the announced competition. Her scientific work is characterized by high competence, detail and originality. Her academic interests fully correspond with the subject matter of the university courses she teaches, have relevance, as well as applied significance in the training of future archivists and in related specialties.

What has been said so far gives me reason, with full conviction in the scientific and teaching qualities of Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova, to support her candidacy in the current competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional direction 2.2. History and Archeology (Archival Science and Documentary Studies) in the Department of Archival Studies and History Teaching Methodology at the Faculty of History at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Sofia, 30.09.2024

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Yuri Todorov Todorov