

OPINION

by Prof. Georgi Yakimov, PhD
for the participation of Chief Assistant Professor Ralitsa Todorova, PhD

in a competition for the occupation of an academic position “Associate Professor” in professional field: 2.2. History and Archeology (Archival Studies and Documentary Studies), announced by Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” in State Gazette, № 55 of June 28, 2024, for the needs of the Faculty of History.

In the competition for Associate Professor in Archival and Documentary Studies, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova presents 16 publications – 1 monograph, 1 book and 14 articles.

The main place in the presented scientific production is occupied by the monograph “The preservation of the archive of State Security as a source for the microhistory of the ‘swamp of communism’” (Sofia, 2024, “Star” publishing house, 214 pages). The research was done on the basis of a rich source base – archival materials of the Commission for disclosure of documents and for declaration of affiliation of Bulgarian citizens to State Security and the intelligence services of the Bulgarian People’s Army, collections of published documents, etc. The study of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova is also based on a wide range of scientific literature on the subject.

The scientific contributions in the monograph can be outlined in the following directions:

1. Ralitsa Todorova introduces a number of hitherto unused documents from the departmental archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which are stored in the Centralized Archive of the Commission on Dossiers (AKRDOPBGDSRSBNA), into scientific circulation. They allow her to explore the history of the archival repositories of Department III “File and Archive” of State Security in the 1950s - 1960s.
2. At a high scientific level, two of the main stages in the existence of the 3rd Department of the State Security have been studied and the main characteristics in the establishment and functioning of base ‘G’ near Gabrovo and base ‘Z’ in the metropolitan district “Zaharna Fabrika” have been outlined. The author convincingly proves that the site not far from the town of Gabrovo is suitable from the point of view of its protection, but does not meet the normal standards for the storage of archival documents, which leads to a threat to their physical preservation. The lack of sufficient funding is a constant factor that hampers the work of the department. The remoteness of the base makes it difficult for archival materials to be used even by the limited circle of readers who receive permission to work with them. The relocation of a larger part of the archival repository to the capital in 1963 improved the operational efficiency in the execution of the requested documents and favored the beginning of the scientific and technical processing and the thematic arrangement of the archival units, in accordance with the requirements of the developing archival science. Ralitsa Todorova links the facilitation of the use of documents for official purposes within the framework of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Security to the initiative of Nanka Serkerdzhieva, who headed the III Department of State Security for a long period. The author does not overlook the continuing difficulties in the department’s work - insufficient funding, the lack of a Methodological Code, the

proximity of an industrial enterprise, a railway junction, the building's vulnerability in the event of a military conflict, and the limitations characteristic of the totalitarian regime in the use of the specific documented resources of the State Security. Ralitsa Todorova reveals the activities of this structure of the regime as part of a comprehensive control of the lives of Bulgarian citizens and careful documentation of the manifestations of dissenters.

3. The examination of the documents on the "Fugitive" case shows in detail the repressive measures of the law enforcement agencies against the free-thinking Georgi Hristov, a young man disillusioned with the reality in the "people's republic" and ready to emigrate to England. The impossible departure from the "socialist paradise" forcibly turns him into a dissident, and his work "The Swamp of Communism" provoked his fierce persecution by the totalitarian state. The Soviet practice of the 1970s and 1980s, in which dissidents were isolated more in psychiatric institutions than in prisons, was applied to him. The broken life of Georgi Hristov is just one of the examples of the repressive role of the State Security, which the author of the monograph has revealed in detail.
4. The "Gilbert Radulovich" case study gives Ralitsa Todorova the opportunity to compare the closeness of the actions of the political police in the GDR (the so-called Stasi) with those of the State Security in Bulgaria and to outline all the means, methods and possibilities for dealing with dissidents.

For participation in the competition, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova also presents the book "History and organization of access to archives" (Sofia, 2012, 266 pages). This study examines in historical terms the problem of access to historical archives abroad and in our country from the time of the French Revolution (1789) to the present day. The main emphasis is placed on the practical aspects of access to archives and methodical provision as a necessary condition for the use of archival resources.

In the candidate's articles, a wide range of problems are developed, in which the archival theme naturally dominates - the documentary work of the Bulgarian foreign intelligence (60-80s of the XX century), the archive of the Bulgarian polar explorers, the contributions of Prof. T. Borov in Bulgarian archival studies, the methodical provision of access to the archives, documents on the history of Troyan and Teteven, etc. Some of the presented articles are related to the disclosure of the activities of the State Security and the main monographic study of the candidate.

Until 2024, Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova has participated in numerous scientific conferences (the annual scientific seminars of the archival and documentary studies department, summer didactic seminars in Kiten, etc.). She was also a participant in the team for the preparation and implementation of the Strategy for Digitization of the Institutional Archives of the Sofia University.

The educational and teaching activities of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova are quite voluminous and include lectures in two faculties of Sofia University – History and Philosophy. In the academic year 2022/2023, she has 2089.4 hours, of which 1278 hours are classroom employment.

In the bachelor's degree at History and Philosophy faculties, Ralitsa Todorova teaches the main courses in "Archivistics", "Archaeography", "Archival Studies", "European Institutions and Archives", "Documentary and Archival Resources", "Archiving Technologies" and "History and Organization of Archives". She also leads the courses "Electronic governance, e-government and archives" and "Institutions of the European Union" in the Master's program "Documentary and archival resources".

With a minimum requirement of 400 points in the field of History and Archeology (Archival Studies and Documentary Studies), the publications of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova bring her 495 points (50 – for the doctoral dissertation, 100 – for the monograph, 220 – for other scientific publications, 125 – for citations or reviews).

In the publications of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova, I did not find any cases of plagiarism.

I am convinced that in the current competition all the requirements of the law and the rules for its implementation, as well as the Rules for the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” have been met.

I declare that I fully support the election of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ralitsa Todorova for Associate Professor in professional field: 2.2. History and Archeology (Archival Studies and Documentary Studies) and I will vote unreservedly for her to occupy this academic position.

Sofia, September 22, 2024

Member of the Scientific Jury:
(Prof. G. Yakimov, PhD)