

Review

of the academic output for participation in a competition for the position of Professor in Professional Field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology - Historical Sociology) at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“, announced in *State Gazette*, № 32/ 9. 04. 2024

1. Information about the competition

The competition for selection of professor in professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Sociology – Historical Sociology) at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“ was announced in *State Gazette*, № 32/ 9. 04. 2024. The procedure fully complies with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

2. Information about the candidate

One candidate has applied – Associate Professor D. Sc. Martin Ivanov Ivanov. He is a lecturer at the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy et Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“. Before that, he was an Associate Professor at the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Martin Ivanov has held prestigious government positions, including chairman of the State Agency „Archives“, he was secretary for education, culture and national identity of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, minister of culture in a caretaker government, as well

as extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador of Bulgaria in Finland and Estonia. To this we must add the outstanding presence of Martin Ivanov in the public space as an active debater on important social issues and a researcher at the civil Institute for the Study of the Recent Past.

The candidate defended his doctoral degree in 1999, and obtained the scientific degree „Doctor of Sciences“ in 2021 after defending his doctorate on the topic „Swimming against the tide: Bulgarian textile crafts and their development into a factory industry. 1800–1912“. Since 2015, he has been an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Sofia University of St. Kliment Ohridski“.

He has published independently and co-authored 12 monographs in the field of political, social and economic history (not counting all his contributions with chapters in collective volumes), over 200 articles, studies, reviews in collections and periodicals. Today, without the publishing activity of Martin Ivanov, we can hardly imagine the reimagining of a number of processes and phenomena from the 19th and 20th centuries by today's Bulgarian historiography.

3. Description of academic texts

Martin Ivanov has submitted for the competition one main monographic habilitation work („Former people“ of Concentration Camp Bulgaria“, 2023), one co-authored book („The Bulgarian Foreign Debt 1944–1989: The Bankruptcy of the Communist Economy“, 2007), nine articles in refereed and journals indexed in world-renowned databases, four texts placed in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and two chapters published in collective monographs.

The main monographic work „Former People“ of Concentration Camp Bulgaria“ is 374 pages long. The work consists of an introductory part, two voluminous chapters, a conclusion, a documentary-sociological appendix, a bibliography and a list of testimonies. The text not only covers the stated topic, but is also characterized by completeness in presenting the issues and strict methodological discipline. The monograph is an exemplary contemporary historical-sociological study.

Martin Ivanov's publications in anthologies, periodicals and collective volumes can be thematically structured in *five problematic circles* formulated by the candidate himself, which show the wealth of ideas and approaches in the candidate's scientific texts. Briefly commented, they may be described thus: 1. *Elites and urban economy*: Here it is particularly valuable to focus on the changing images of the elite in Bulgarian society when crossing the boundaries of the eras in the context of the dynamics of progressive and regressive changes; 2. *External Debt*: This problematic circle is of sustained interest to the candidate. His publications from recent years continue the research from the project started on Martin Ivanov's initiative to write the history of Bulgaria's external public debt. *The debt problem* is a thematic focus in which all the problems of the Bulgarian socio-economic development are gathered; 3. *Modernization and rural economy*: Here the candidate sets the direction of a significant turn, insofar as he discovers part of the reasons for the economic and social modernization in the 19th and 20th centuries and in the rural areas of Bulgarian society. This is the „rehabilitation“ of the village as a bearer not only of backwardness and traditionalism, but also of social changes that affect the state of the entire Bulgarian world. Martin Ivanov suggests that these hypotheses from these articles can be structured into an extended monographic study devoted to the modernization of traditional

society; 4. *Standard of living*: In this circle, the articles on consumption, nutrition, wages, inflation, etc. build historical pictures of modernization, in which the life of Bulgarians from different times is often correctively commented; 5. *Regional and sub-regional dimensions of economic and social processes*: This is the least represented problem circle. Here, Martin Ivanov demonstrates his qualities in the application of a specific comparativist approach in outlining the Bulgarian peculiarities in the context of regional and sub-regional social processes in other Eastern European societies.

Outside of these problematic circles, other themes and sub-themes referred to in the publications proposed for the competition can be highlighted. More importantly, however, they show the multifaceted nature of Martin Ivanov's scientific interests and methodological approaches, which underline his profile as a complex researcher working in a broad problem-thematic area.

4. Academic contributions of the habilitation text

The monograph „Former People“ of Concentration Camp Bulgaria“ (2023) appears in a research field full of numerous testimonies, documents and commentaries, as well as on numerous public controversies, media debates, conflicting memories, misunderstandings, silences, which are devoted to the subject for the pre-war elites in the era of the communist regime. Undoubtedly, this is the most professionally polished research on the so-called „former people“, which brings scientific truth above party-political abuses. The monograph carefully illuminates the concepts of this particular political „class“, focusing on its fate after the first bloody repressions in 1944/1945. The account of the forms of terror and pressure (physical

repressions, property sanctions and discriminatory measures) grows into a description and analysis of the drama of the (im)possible return to „normality“ – the attempts to survive and adapt (the so-called reconversion). Martin Ivanov's approach is characterized by the location of the problem in time – the identification of *three generations* of „former people“, passing through different phases of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, who came under the influence of changing socio-political mechanisms and who reach their ancestral and personal life choices. The text highlights the dynamics of the transformation of this social group in *the process* of history and the regime. On the one hand, the roles of „victims“ and „executioners“ are clearly distinguished, and on the other hand, all voices sound *together* in the critically considered polyphony of the historical narrative.

Among the best achievements of the study is the balance in the work with the different sources. There has been a change in the understanding of the role of the archives of the communist secret services, perceived as a *discourse of power* in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, which today secondarily models the historical knowledge of the era. The monograph gives greater space to the voices of „former people“ themselves (in memoirs, polls, TV shows, etc.), introducing them into texts of historiographical literature, archival documents, sociological studies, etc. Such *mutual reading and interpretation* of various testimonies, which were theoretically processed and interpreted by Martin Ivanov, turn the monograph into an event for social history and historical sociology.

5. Academic and teaching activity

In recent years, the candidate has carried out rich and fruitful scientific work. He is the leader and participant in many scientific projects; presented reports at 16 scientific conferences; has published numerous studies, articles and reviews. Some of his publications have the character of bold "drafts" for future monographs. The reference, which was prepared through the databases of WEB OF SCIENCE, SCOPUS and other databases, shows that the candidate's works register 67 citations – an indicator that emphasizes the inclusion of his ideas in an intensive scientific circulation.

Among Martin Ivanov's teaching activities, his new lecture course „A village with diminishing functions? Socio-economic transformations in the Bulgarian village“ stands out. This course makes a direct connection between scholarly work and the educational process. Martin Ivanov fulfills all his teaching commitments, carrying out a full schedule every year and achieving a significant workload above the norm.

6. Conclusion

Based on everything stated, I propose that Martin Ivanov Ivanov's application for the position of Professor in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (sociology – historical sociology) at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, announced in the *State Gazette*, № 32/ 9. 04. 2024. His research work, scientific contributions, as well as his overall presence in the academic field support this view.

13.08.2024

Prof. D. Sc. Plamen Doynov