

STATEMENT

**by Prof. DPSc Alexander Metodiev Kanev – Lecturer in Contemporary
Philosophy**

at the Philosophy Department, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

on: competition for the occupation of the academic position "Associate
Professor"

at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

in the field of higher education 2. Humanities,

Professional field 2.3. Philosophy (History of Philosophy. Modern Philosophy
– 19th Century)

Asst. Prof. Dimitar Bozhkov is the sole candidate in the competition for the
academic position of Associate Professor in Philosophy (Modern Philosophy –
19th Century Philosophy) for the needs of the Chair of History of Philosophy at
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, announced in the State Gazette, Issue
48 of 28. June 2022, and on the internet page of Sofia University “St. Kliment
Ohridski”. Asst. Prof. Bozhkov meets the minimal national requirements for the
position and has submitted all necessary documents and information. He
participates in the competition with one monograph and 10 papers.

Dimitar Bozhkov was born in 1986. He studied philosophy at the University of
St. Kliment Ohridski", where he was later a doctoral candidate in the "History
of Philosophy" department. In 2012, he successfully defended his dissertation
„History and Emancipation - K. Marx, V. Benjamin, J. Rancière”. In 2013, he
became assistant professor in contemporary philosophy at the University of St.
Kliment Ohridski", where he still teaches today. He speaks English and French.
The monograph with which Dimitar Bozhkov participated in the competition
(Marxism in Messianism) presents in-depth knowledge and original

observations on the interaction of the traditions of Marxism and Messianism. It undoubtedly has a contributing character in the context of Bulgarian humanitarian studies and is clearly and eruditely written. The monograph consists of an introduction, 5 chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography, including titles in Bulgarian, French and English languages.

The view of Marxism as a secularized version of Judeo-Christian messianism is well-known and there is a considerable literature on it. However, Dr. Bozhkov chooses a different problem for analysis: not simply the presence of messianic motifs in Marxism, but the dynamics of mutual influence between the two traditions in the interwar and postwar period. The provocative title (Marxism in Messianism) overturns the usual formulation of the problem to indicate that the past of the relationship between Marxism and Messianism is not complete and finished, but continues to be redefined in the present. The book has an interdisciplinary profile, discussing interactions between philosophy of history, theology and politics. The horizon from which it takes place is the idea of a *critical* philosophy of history. By 'critical' Dimitar Bozhkov understands a metaphysics-free philosophy of history, i.e., a philosophy of history without dogmatic, ahistorical, universal principles and schemes of explanation. Given the author's sympathy for the Marxist philosophy of history, an implicit premise of the monograph is that it is non-metaphysical, or at least could be interpreted non-metaphysically. In any case, the author insists that we methodologically focus more on contextual aspects and dynamics of the traditions of Marxism and Messianism, and not so much on their static and universal characteristics, with contextual conditioning not tied to arbitrariness and randomness, but thought as situated between necessity and contingency. An expression of this critical perspective is the peculiar privileging of the present and its possibilities: it is not a function of the past or the future, but co-determines them. This non-metaphysical (by design) philosophy of time is supposed to favor productive interactions between Marxism and messianism.

Chapter One ("Problem Statement") introduces the reader to the aims of the study, the history of the traditions discussed, the possible perspectives to and spaces of their (neither necessary nor merely accidental) entanglements and influences. The main protagonists of the study are also presented: Marx, Benjamin, Bloch, Taubes, Rosenzweig, Scholem, as well as figures such as Löwitt and Carl Schmitt. While some significant differences between Judaism, Christianity, and Marxism are addressed, the emphasis is more on historical and potential lines of continuity in the context of ideas of alienation and salvation.

The second chapter discusses contemporary (20th century) interpretations of messianism, with an emphasis on texts by Scholem, Rosenzweig, Taubes and Bloch. Chapter three analyzes Marxist takes on the Peasants' War and the figure of Müntzer, in particular those of Engels and Bloch. Bozhkov argues that Engels demonstrates the flexibility and contextual adaptability of the Marxist approach by avoiding economic reductionism and simplistic interpretations of events through the concepts of base and superstructure. Bloch, however, emphasized even more strongly the interdependence between economic and non-economic factors, including between economics and religion. The question, then, is why it still makes sense to speak of a social base if the economy is in terms of mutual determination with cultural and spiritual factors. The fourth chapter presents the views of Jacob Taubes on Jewish messianism and its relationship with Marxism, and the fifth chapter discusses the poorly researched Catholic Marxism in our country. In general, the monograph is a professionally conducted study, presented clearly and reasoned, with indisputable contributions to Bulgarian philosophy and humanities. The same evaluation can be given to the presented studies and articles.

I know Dimitar Bozhkov as a respected and conscientious teacher, with an open and friendly attitude towards students and colleagues. He is very well known and accepted in the collegium of the Faculty of Philosophy, and is actively involved in academic life.

The contributions of the publications are adequately presented. I found no plagiarism data. I have no joint publications with Dr. Bozhkov.

CONCLUSION: The works with which Dr. Bozhkov participates in the competition contribute to the development of the philosophy of history and of the Marxist tradition in our country. His teaching and overall academic activities are at a very good professional level. In view of this, I strongly recommend the members of the esteemed jury to support his election as associate professor at the Department of History of Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in professional direction 2.3 Philosophy (History of Philosophy. Modern Philosophy - XIX Century).

Sofia, 10.11.2022

Prof. DPsC Alexander Kanev