

## OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Yana Andreeva,

a member of the Scientific Jury

appointed by the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” by a decree No. RD 38-787/22.12.2026,

on the dissertation of Kremena Kostadinova Dias, entitled:

“The Evolution of Resistance and Opposition Movements against the Military Dictatorship in Brazil, 1964 -1985”,

submitted for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor

Field of Higher Education: 2. Humanities

Professional Field: 2.2. History and Archaeology

Kremena Georgieva Kostadinova Dias holds a Bachelor’s degree in Portuguese Philology from the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology and a Master’s degree in Crises, Conflicts and Diplomacy in World Politics (16<sup>th</sup> - 21st Centuries) from the Faculty of History at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.” From February 2020 to February 2023, she was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the Department of Modern and Contemporary History, Faculty of History, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski,” within the doctoral programme Modern and Contemporary World History, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gergana Aleksieva. According to the documents and publications submitted for the defence procedure, the candidate fulfils the national minimum requirements for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor. The doctoral thesis has been prepared in accordance with the formal requirements for doctoral research and meets the established standards of scholarly rigour and academic defensibility.

In my evaluation of Kremena Kostadinova Dias’s dissertation, I will focus primarily on the relevance and originality of the research topic, the structure and content of the submitted work, and its scholarly contributions. The debate surrounding the Brazilian dictatorship remains highly pertinent both within Brazil’s public sphere and in contemporary Brazilian historiography. This clearly underscores the significance of the thesis, which addresses a scholarly problem that has thus far received limited attention – namely, the evolution of

resistance to the military dictatorship in its complex political, social, and cultural dimensions. The study constitutes a contribution to Bulgarian historical scholarship, insofar as it introduces Brazilian perspectives into Bulgarian research on resistance to Latin American authoritarian regimes and the subsequent processes of democratization across the region.

The doctoral thesis is substantial in scope, comprising a total of 402 pages, of which 363 constitute the main body of the work. The body of the text is structured into an introduction and three chapters. The Introduction (pp. 14–49) is well conceived and necessary, offering a coherent synthesis of the political situation in Latin America alongside Brazil’s political, economic, and social context from the 1930s to the 1960s – a period that created the conditions for the 1964 coup and the establishment of a military dictatorship. Chapter I (pp. 50–165) presents and analyses the initial phase of the Brazilian military dictatorship, paying particular attention to the multifaceted political, social, and cultural dimensions of resistance during the period 1964–1968. Chapter II (pp. 166–256) examines the opposition during the so-called “Years of Lead,” addressing the institutionalisation of the military regime, the development of its repressive apparatus, and the factors that led to the suppression of both legal and clandestine resistance movements. Importantly, the chapter also explores the scope and significance of the Brazilian “economic miracle” (1969–1974), which – despite constituting a central element of the regime’s propaganda – failed to consolidate its authority and instead accelerated the erosion of public support, thereby contributing, among other factors, to the progressive radicalisation of armed resistance. Adopting a clearly articulated historical-chronological approach, Chapter III (pp. 257–374) focuses on the final phase of the military dictatorship in Brazil, analysing both established opposition movements and processes, as well as the new forms of resistance that emerged between 1977 and 1985. It further investigates the causes of the regime’s weakening and eventual decline within the broader context of the economic and international transformations of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Of particular interest in this concluding chapter is the analysis of the revival of the Brazilian opposition, of the military-controlled process of political liberalisation after 1979 during the presidency of João Figueiredo, the intensification of the labour movement led by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the emergence of the “New Syndicalism”, and the civic mobilisation for direct elections – all of which, together with other political, socio-economic, and cultural factors, culminated in the end of the military regime and the restoration of democracy in Brazil after 1985.

The Conclusion (pp. 375–382) synthesises the study’s principal findings regarding the various forms and the evolution of resistance to the military dictatorship in Brazil. By providing a synthesized analysis of the dynamics of social and political conflict during the period of military rule – conflicts that illuminate the mechanisms of interaction between society and authoritarian power – this section of the thesis not only consolidates the conclusions reached at successive stages of the research but also substantiates the central thesis: that the gradual consolidation of the social, intellectual, and political movements constituting resistance to the dictatorship became a significant factor in the erosion of the regime and laid the foundations for the restoration of democracy in Brazil.

The appendices (pp. 383–396) present eight concise profiles of prominent contemporary figures in Brazilian scholarship, law, politics, and culture who were interviewed by Kremena Dias and who offer personal testimony regarding their participation in the opposition and clandestine resistance to the Brazilian military dictatorship. Given the considerable public standing of these distinguished individuals in contemporary Brazil, as well as the exceptional value of their testimonies, I would recommend that the candidate consider publishing a translated edition of the complete interview texts. Such a publication could be further enhanced by expanding the discussion of the scholarly, political, civic, and cultural contributions of Caetano Veloso, José Cavalcanti, Luiz Martins de Melo, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Rosa Maria Cardoso da Costa, and Yara Xavier, thereby enabling a more comprehensive appreciation of their role in the processes that shaped Brazilian democracy and the country’s contemporary identity.

In addition to the points outlined above, several further strengths of the thesis merit particular attention, as they underscore its scholarly contributions to the historiographical debate on the nature of twentieth-century Latin American military dictatorships, and especially that of Brazil. Especially noteworthy is the author’s extensive bibliographical command, encompassing both Brazilian historiography on the subject and the contributions of leading Bulgarian scholars of Latin American historical and political processes. Equally significant is the study’s critical engagement with the conceptual frameworks of contemporary Brazilian historiography addressing the period of military rule, accompanied by a clear delineation of its principal currents and scholarly debates – an approach that attests to the deep analytical reading of Brazilian history that the study offers. The candidate’s philological training in Portuguese studies has facilitated direct access to documentation from the Brazilian Institutional Archives, thereby enabling the examination of a substantial body of authoritative sources containing

significant historical, economic, and sociological data. These constitute essential foundations for a rigorous and nuanced investigation of the emergence, development, and transformation of resistance to the military dictatorship in Brazil – an objective convincingly realised in the thesis under review.

The abstract accurately reflects the structure, content, principal findings, and scholarly contributions of the doctoral thesis.

**Conclusion:** The dissertation submitted by Kremena Georgieva Kostadinova Dias, together with the accompanying documentation and publications, meet the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Based on the aforementioned and assessing the relevance of the topic of the dissertation, the achieved results and the conclusions drawn, I give my positive evaluation of the dissertation and recommend that the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury vote positively for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor to Kremena Georgieva Kostadinova Dias in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology.

15.02.2026

Prof. Dr. Yana Andreeva