

R E P O R T

on on the dissertation of Kremena Georgieva Kostadinova–Dias on the subject
**“Evolution of resistance and opposition movements against the military dictatorship
in Brazil - 1964-1985”**

for the award of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in scientific specialty 2.2.
History and Archaeology, scientific specialty "New and Most Recent History" (Contemporary
History) with scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. Gergana Aleksieva, PhD

by Prof. Iskra Baeva PhD, Lecturer in Contemporary History at the Faculty of History,
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1. Personal data of the contest participant

Kremena Georgieva Kostadinova-Dias was born on August 6, 1982, in Ruse. After completing her secondary education in 2007, she enrolled as a student at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski in the bachelor's program in Portuguese Philology, which she completed in 2011. In 2016, she was admitted to the master's program in Crises, Conflicts, and Diplomacy, 16th–21st Centuries" at the Faculty of History, which she completed in 2018 after defending her master's thesis "The Portuguese Royal Court in Brazil, 1808–1821" with honors.

Her professional career includes positions as an adjunct professor of Portuguese at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski and as a consular officer at the Brazilian Embassy in Sofia.

2. Characteristics of the dissertation

The research topic addressed in Kremena Kostadinova-Dias's dissertation is consistent with her undergraduate education in Portuguese philology and her master's degree in contemporary history, as her dissertation presents an analytically important stage in the contemporary history of Brazil, the largest country in Latin America: the events of the second half of the 20th century, when the country went through a military dictatorship, mass resistance movements in society, and an evolutionary transition away from dictatorship.

The history of Brazil is almost unknown in Bulgaria, so the dissertation is not only a study of the dictatorship and the resistance against it, but also promotes the history of this important Latin American country in our country. This is the main reason why the events covered in the dissertation are preceded by a broader overview of the specifics of the development of Latin America and Brazil in the first half of the 20th century.

The aim of the dissertation is formulated as follows: "to offer an integral reading of the opposition and resistance against the regime – not only as a political reaction, but as an expression of a profound process of democratic, moral, and cultural revival" (p. 3) and "The dissertation examines the origins, goals, and strategies of these movements [meaning the various forms of resistance], their interaction with the regime, and their role in the restoration of democratic institutions. In this sense, the study places the Brazilian experience in the broader context of Latin American history, where the struggle against dictatorship became a central element in the process of social and political maturation of the entire continent." (p. 4). The introduction also lists in detail and convincingly the tasks, object, subject, chronological scope, and methods used in writing the dissertation. From a methodological point of view, the dissertation meets all the requirements for such a scientific text.

To write her dissertation, Kremena Kostadinova-Diash used a significant amount of documentary material drawn from 12 archival collections, mainly Brazilian, but also American, most of which are digital, as well as memoirs of individuals involved and seven personal interviews conducted by the doctoral student with such individuals. From the analytical publications, Kremena Kostadinova-Dias used six Bulgarian and 89 others of various origins, mainly Brazilian. However, it seems to me that, at least as far as the positions and activities of the Brazilian Communist Party are concerned, she could also have used Nadezhda Yankovska's book *Years of Crisis: Nikita Khrushchev and the Challenges Facing the Communist Movement (1956–1964)*. AI "Prof. Marin Drinov," 2023.

The convincing source base and rich analytical literature are a good prerequisite for the research. In her dissertation, Kremena Kostadinova-Dias has demonstrated excellent knowledge of the complex background to the military coup and the nature of the military dictatorship in Brazil, and has traced in depth the stages in the development of Brazilian public resistance, which she has subjected to both historical and political analysis.

The three chapters of the dissertation follow the logical sequence of events. The **first** is devoted to the road to the coup and the establishment of military dictatorship, which provoked the first manifestations of resistance (1963–1964), the **second** presents the most difficult period of the dictatorship during the so-called Lead Years, when the military used all means, both legal and illegal, to crush the armed resistance and largely succeeded (1967–1977), and the **third** traces the gradual evolution of both the resistance movements and the representatives of the military dictatorship, which ultimately led to the peaceful end of the dictatorship and the restoration of democracy (1977–1985).

Kremena Kostadinova-Dias demonstrates not only a deep understanding of the power and social processes in Brazil, but also links them to the actions of external forces – both the US, which supported the military dictatorship and its economic policy, and neighbouring and more distant countries that sympathised with the Brazilian resistance. The doctoral student's ability to present social movements, economic challenges, and cultural trends through the prism of leading global trends and discussions is impressive. This has allowed Kremena Kostadinova-Dias not only to accomplish the tasks she set for herself, but also to significantly exceed them in terms of the breadth of her approach and understanding of the multidimensional nature of the opposition: dictatorial power versus a resistant society.

3. Assessment of scientific results, contributions of the dissertation and other publications by the doctoral candidate

Kremena Kostadinova-Dias's dissertation is a valuable contribution. First, because it presents for the first time in Bulgarian historiography a complete picture of the crisis-ridden development of Brazil, the largest Latin American country, from the 1960s to the 1980s. Second, because it carefully and comprehensively traces the complex development of Brazilian resistance to the military dictatorship. Third, because it delves into the cultural history of Brazil, pointing out the social conditioning of the new protest trends in the country. Fourth, because it has managed to reveal and trace the interconnection between the evolution of the military authorities, which led them to gradually abandon repressive practices, on the one hand, and the resistance, which also changed its forms of action, on the other, in order to achieve a peaceful return to democracy. Fifth, because it has managed not only to conduct personal interviews with important figures as part of oral history, but also to weave them into its narrative.

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation, and its format complies with academic requirements.

Kremena Kostadinova-Dias has published seven articles on the topic of her dissertation, two of which are currently in press. They appear in reputable academic publications—conference proceedings, journals, etc.—and address various issues in 20th-century Brazilian history, reflecting the theses presented in the dissertation.

In addition to these publications, Kremena Kostadinova-Dias has other articles in scientific publications, among which, to my surprise, I do not see her publication "Development of Brazil-Russia Relations" from the collection "Eastern Europe and Latin America," St. Kl. Ohridski University Press, 2017.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

My overall assessment of Kremena Kostadinova-Dias's dissertation is high, but that does not mean I have no comments.

As a criticism, I would point to the overly numerous political analyses of individual elements of the resistance, which are often repeated. It seems to me that the abbreviation BCP, which stands for the Brazilian Communist Party, should be BrCP, both because of the coincidence with the popular abbreviation for the Bulgarian Communist Party in our country and because it already has citizenship – it is used in the book by Nadezhda Yankovska, which I mentioned above... For the role of Dilma Rousseff, the doctoral student could also use the article by Kadrinka Kadrinkova, "Three Traces of Eastern Europe – in the Peaks of Venezuela, Brazil, and Peru," from the collection Eastern Europe and Latin America, in which she herself has an article. In some places where Kremena Dias sees paradoxes, it is more a matter of regularity.

As can be seen, my comments are insignificant and aim to improve the text.

5. Evaluation of the scientific indicators

The assessment of Kremena Kostadinova-Dias's scientometric indicators is positive. She received 50 points for her dissertation, and her publications related to the topic of the dissertation, which have been published, earned her another 50 points, for a total of 100 points. This means that doctoral student Kremena Kostadinova-Dias meets the scientometric requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "doctor."

5. Conclusion

Kremena Kostadinova-Dias's dissertation, "The Evolution of Resistance and Opposition Movements Against Military Dictatorship in Brazil – 1964-1985" demonstrates the doctoral student's ability to research, use, and analyze various documentary material, to effectively use historiography on the subject, and to independently develop issues related to the historical development of Brazil during the years of military dictatorship and resistance against it. The research is thorough and analytical, which proves the doctoral student's maturity in her chosen professional field.

All this gives me reason to state my position that Kremena Kostadinova-Dias has fulfilled the academic requirements for the award of the scientific and educational degree of "doctor", for which I will vote.

9 February 2026

Reviewer:

(Prof. Dr. Искра Баева)