

SU "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

FACULTY OF HISTORY

STONOVISHTE

by

Assoc. Prof. PhD. Milen Vassilev Mihov,

member of the scientific jury, appointed by order RD-38-788/ 22.12.2025. to conduct a procedure for awarding the educational and scientific

degree "doctor" to

Andoni Kirilov Andreev

full-time doctoral student at the Department of History 2.2. History and Archaeology, Department of New and Recent General History (Contemporary Balkan History: Political and Social History of Yugoslav Macedonia after World War II), with the topic: "Everyday Life and the Press in Yugoslav Macedonia (1945 - Mid-1960s)"

#### I. Data about the dissertation candidate

Andoni Kirilov Andreev graduated from the Master's program "European Southeast" at Sofia University in 2017. The following year he was enrolled as a doctoral student at the Department of "History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples" at the Faculty of History of Sofia University with the working title of the dissertation "Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslav Macedonia (1945-1965)".

The internship programs and work activities of the doctoral student testify to professional skills that are important in the development of the peer-reviewed dissertation and deserve to be noted. During his studies, A. Andreev was an intern at the State Agency "Archives", Administration of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Information Center at the European Parliament Office in Sofia. Currently, the doctoral student is professionally connected with the administrative activities, technical and digital services of the Faculty of History of Sofia University.

It is necessary to note the doctoral student's enduring interests in the problems of the history of Yugoslavia in the second half of the twentieth century, which is directly related to the topic of the dissertation. This is evidenced by the number of publications listed in Appendix No. 1.

#### II. Procedure data

A. Andreev has been discharged with the right to defend his dissertation "Everyday Life and the Press in Yugoslav Macedonia (1945 - mid-1960s)" with the scientific supervisor Assoc. Prof. PhD. Naum Kaichev.

The attached report on individual scientometric indicators shows that A. Andreev meets the minimum requirements for the number of points for indicators Group A and Group D. The number of publications on the topic of the dissertation is 10, which exceeds the required number several times.

This gives me reason to conclude that all legal requirements have been met during the doctoral studies and the public defense procedure.

### III. Data on the dissertation and abstract

The peer-reviewed dissertation is dedicated to a topic related to the history of everyday life in an interesting period in the history of socialist Yugoslav Macedonia - the time immediately after the end of World War II until the mid-1960s - a time of significant political, social and economic changes. The object of the study is the periodical press of the federal unit, which should be considered as a mirror of everyday life, but also as a powerful tool for social engineering. The aim of the study is "to observe and analyze the way in which everyday life is reflected in the press", but at the same time to reveal "the shadow of power and how it wants it to look and/or be presented" (pp. 7, 9). The author's ambition does not end there, because, considering the palette of topics, he seeks to give "a broader and more generalized view of the observed phenomenon" and thereby create the basis for further research. The proposed topic has not been the subject of research in our historiography so far and, with one exception, the same is valid for Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav historiography. The chronological boundaries of the study are clearly and reasonably defined (p. 8).

The dissertation work is developed on rich source material, which is presented in detail in the introduction (pp. 10-13). It is necessary to note that, along with the use of periodicals, the dissertationist worked in the State Archives of North Macedonia and, despite the "specific" conditions, managed to touch upon some archival documents.

Structurally, the proposed text is divided into 11 chapters - introduction, summary, list of sources and literature used, with a total volume of 411 pages. The content is developed in detail, with some chapters having separate parts in the form of separate topics or "fragments". This presents the issues well and makes the text convenient and enjoyable for the reader. It is necessary to note the good language and the pleasant style of the presentation, which is a certain merit of the dissertation.

In the introductory pages, the topic is defined, the chronological boundaries and the methodological framework are determined, a review of the source base used is made and the character of the era and reality in Yugoslav Macedonia is outlined.

The first chapter is dedicated to the "creation of the socialist Yugoslav everyday life" under the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its projection in Vardar Macedonia. The author's attention is drawn to the importance of the newly created bodies of the communist government and the propaganda machine of the regime as creators of the new everyday life. The author examines in detail the role of the People's Liberation Committees and the People's Liberation Front in building the new everyday life through targeted policies in education, agriculture, the mining and processing industry, culture, the tax system, etc. The conclusion made in this chapter is fundamental, that the new Macedonian everyday life is not a natural product, but the result of the purposeful policy of the communist party, based on "agitation and strong state power" (p. 63).

The second chapter examines political processes and everyday life until the early 1950s and is a thematic continuation of the first. The author's focus is on the mechanisms through which the "mobilization practices" of power are imposed on society through various labor actions, rallies, cultural and educational initiatives, etc. It is worth noting the "fragment" in this chapter, dedicated to everyday life and de-Bulgarization, which focuses on two key events – the transfer of Gotse Delchev's remains to Skopje in the fall of 1946 and Tito's visit

to the People's Republic of Macedonia in 1949. The text prepares the transition to the next part of the dissertation, in which the author's attention is focused on the implementation of political messages in various spheres of social life. The third and fourth chapters are dedicated to everyday life in the village and socialist labor as the highest social value. In an agrarian country with backward agriculture, in which the majority of the population is rural, the modeling of everyday life in the village is a key issue for the communist government. The narrative of the government-controlled media builds the image of optimistic rural life, dictated by collectivization, modernization and new technical introductions. One emphasis in the chapter is the issue of the Turkish population in the countryside, the policy of removing the veil and the expulsion of the Turks from Yugoslav Macedonia (pp. 124-127). Labor in Marxist ideology is the primary source of wealth and in Yugoslav propaganda is more than just an economic activity. It is transformed into a moral duty and the highest virtue of the new socialist worker who is a conscious creator and builder of the bright communist future. Work must be not only conscious, but also intensive, which leads to the sustainable imposition of the model of socialist competition in the media environment. Competitions are announced on a specific occasion, but become a permanent series and part of everyday life (pp. 140-145). It is worth noting the problem examined by the doctoral student about the influence on the image of labor, which the introduction of self-management in the economy from the beginning of the 1950s has. The emphasis in this chapter is on education, which is a natural transition to the next two chapters.

The next two chapters are devoted to the life of youth and pioneers in Yugoslav Macedonia. The youth and its organization into various organizations is a key element in the doctrine of social transformation of society and sustainable reproduction of the socialist model of the totalitarian state. A. Andreev rightly notes that there is a long way "from the ideological construction to the appearance of everyday life, even more so when it comes to a utopian ideal" (p. 167). The conclusions of the exposition draw the image of youth and pioneers as a reflection of socialist ideas about society and models of conscious workers, students and citizens.

Two chapters are devoted to leisure (chapter VII) and humor (chapter X) in everyday life. In them, the author's attention is focused on sports, tourism, unorganized leisure, etc. "red laughter". The exposition answers the question of how propaganda includes leisure and entertainment in the ideological modeling of morality. The author traces the evolution of satire directed by the authorities from a weapon directed against "enemies" immediately after the war to entertainment convenient for the regime.

Chapter eight is devoted to the emancipation of women and everyday life at home. Home life is presented by propaganda as the most striking evidence of the prosperity of self-governing socialism, and women as the main figure in this reality.

Also of interest are the pages dedicated to the tragedies that disrupt the everyday course of events and are an extreme test for society. Here, the doctoral student focuses his attention on two major tragedies related to the disaster during the construction of the Mavrovo Hydroelectric System in 1956 and the earthquake in Skopje in 1963.

The last chapter is dedicated to the interpretation of the exemplary personality in propaganda, through which the ideological postulates of the regime find their "everyday argumentation".

In the final part, an attempt is made to synthesize the results obtained and the achievements of the dissertation work are presented. The abstract presents the dissertation work completely and reliably.

#### IV. Scientific contributions

The summary of the scientific contributions of the dissertation work presented in the abstract reliably reflects the results achieved in the scientific research process. The main contribution of doctoral student Andoni Andreev is the placement of the topic of everyday life in Yugoslav

Macedonia as an object of historical research, which is being done for the first time in Bulgarian historiography and can be defined as the beginning of a new and promising direction in our historical science.

Without ignoring the contributions indicated in the summary, I would like to note the historiographical significance of the following contributions:

1. The analysis of everyday life in the press of the People's Republic of Macedonia unfolds against the background of historical processes in Tito's Yugoslavia, and this creates a more relief picture of "History with a capital H";
2. The study goes beyond the chronological boundaries of the topic and has cognitive and methodological significance for the history of Vardar Macedonia in the following decades, and in certain respects also affects the contemporary problems of the Republic of North Macedonia;
3. The author's interdisciplinary approach, which combines elements of political and social history with the tools of sociology and media studies, deserves to be appreciated;
4. Despite the difficulties faced by Bulgarian scholars in working in the archives of North Macedonia, the documentary and bibliographical basis on which the study is based should be noted;
5. The selection of the thematic circles that are the subject of the study is impressive. They create a broad and interesting picture of everyday life for the reader.

#### V. Notes

In expressing a recommendation for publication of the dissertation work, I take the liberty of making a recommendation for some editing of the text, which would lighten the scientific apparatus and eliminate some repetitions.

#### VI. Conclusion

All of the statements above give me full reason to conclude that Andoni Kirilov Andreev (a full-time doctoral student at the Department of History and Archaeology 2.2) meets all the requirements of the LDASRB and the existing regulatory framework necessary for the acquisition of the ONS "doctor".

I would like to propose to the members of the esteemed scientific jury to vote positively for the awarding to Andoni Kirilov Andreev of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, New and most recent general history (Modern Balkan history: Political and social history of Yugoslav Macedonia after the Second World War.

February 5, 2026

City of Veliko Tarnovo

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(Assoc. Prof. PhD. Milen Vassilev Mihov)