

## REVIEW

**of the scientific papers submitted for an academic position „Associate Professor” competition in Area of Higher Education 3. Social sciences, business and law, Professional Field 3.5 Public Communication and Information Science (Journalism - History of Bulgarian Journalism) for the purpose of History and Theory of Journalism Department in the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”**

**Head and member of the Scientific Jury: Assoc. Professor Maria Popova, PhD**

### **1. Competition information**

The competition for an academic position „Associate Professor” in Area of Higher Education 3. Social sciences, business and law, Professional Field 3.5 Public Communication and Information Science (Journalism-History of Bulgarian Journalism) for the purpose of History and Theory of Journalism Department in the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” has been announced in the State Gazette, issue 65, dated 16.08.2019. The scientific jury has been established with an Order №RD 38-598/11.10. 2019 of the Rector of Sofia University „St Kliment Ohridski”.

Assist. Professor Yasen Borislavov, PhD is the only candidate applied for the competition. He is a regular Assistant Professor in the History and Theory of Journalism Department, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication at Sofia University „St Kliment Ohridski”. This review is conformable with the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulations for the Application of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulation on terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and taking academic positions at Sofia University.

### **2. Requirement fulfilment for the academic position in the competition**

Assist. Professor Yasen Borislavov, PhD applies to this procedure with one monograph book, the second book, two long-form articles and four articles, published in the authoritative scientific journal „Annual of the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication” and in the specialised scientific online journal „Media and Public Communication”, UNWE. In the competition are presented enough publications in terms of volume, content, varieties of topics, profundity of the scientific content, which are corresponding to the scope and scientific classification of this competition for the academic position „Associate Professor”. The publications of Assist. Professor Borislavov have 41 citations (3 of them are indexed in a world database for scientific information Scopus and 3 of them are indexed in a world database for scientific information Web of Science). The candidate has satisfied the quantity and quality of criteria of the minimum national requirements of ADASRB - dissertation thesis for an educational and scientific degree PhD, habilitation work (monograph book), the required number of articles, the required number of citations.

### **3. Information for the candidate - teaching experience and qualification level for the academic position in the competition**

Assist. Professor Yassen Borislavov, PhD graduated Bachelor and Master programs „History” and „Journalism” in Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”. Between 1991 and 2013 he worked as a reporter and as an editor of the daily newspapers „Duma” and „Sega”. In 2009 he got PhD in Professional Field 3.5 Public Communication and Information Science (Journalism - History of Bulgarian Journalism) and since 2013 he is a regular Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, History and Theory of Journalism Department. For these more than six years Assist. Professor Borislavov teaches the course „History of Bulgarian Journalism” in the Bachelor program „Journalism”, as well as two courses in the Master programs „Journalism and Media” and „Lifestyle Journalism” in the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication.

My first impression of Assist. Professor Borislavov, PhD is that he is a talented and profound journalist, which variable, deep and original commentaries and analysis in the daily newspaper „Sega” I read with interest. As an Assistant Professor he is known for his good manners, large scientific knowledge, correct behaviour with the students and PhD students and loyalty to his colleagues of History and Theory of Journalism Department, that I am headed at the moment.

### **4. Features of applied scientific publication and scientific results of the candidate**

Assist. Professor Yassen Borislavov, PhD is an author of seven books (3 of them scientific monograph books in the filed of journalism and 4 popular books for food and wine), 13 scientific articles and many press publications (20 of them, mainly published in the daily newspaper „Sega”, are submitted for this competition).

The main scientific contribution of habilitation work „Bulgarian Satirical Press between the Two World Wars” (2019, 240 pages) is the choice of the original and almost unexplored field of study. Although the significant as quantity and variable as quality satirical press in the 20th century in Bulgaria, the topic of humour is almost unknown for the Bulgarian history and journalism theory.

The empirical analysis and typology of 60 satirical newspapers and magazines is the important research conclusion. The presented different statistical data explain the development and circulation of Bulgarian satirical press in two periods - from the Bulgarian Renaissance to 1890s in 19th century and between the Two World Wars in the 20th century. The satirical topic in the Bulgarian journalism began with the passionate dispute between writers and journalists Petko Slaveykov and Todor Burmov on the pages of „Gayda” and „Savetnik” in 1863 and after that is partly mentioned by the other Bulgarian writers like Christo Botev, Dobri Voynikov, Ivan Vazov and etc. In the beginning of 20th century many new satirical newspapers were published. They were dominated by parody and the texts of popular Bulgarian and European writers and journalists. According to Assist. Professor Yassen Borislavov, PhD the satirical topic was used as a weapon into political fights, because „the Bulgarian society from 1920s and 1930s could not stand the humour as a form of communication without expressed contemplation and civil solidarity, which was typical

for the European cultural model” (p.45). Another reasons were „the Bulgarian slow development and late modernisation, certain cultural deficiency” (p.47).

The scientific importance of the monograph book is the analysis of different political and satirical press products and the emphasis on the two main categories - political and entertainment newspapers and magazines. In the first category are observed left-wing newspapers (published by the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union) - for example „Cherven Smyah”, „Dumping”, „Horovod”, „Zvanar” , Maskarad”, „Vesela Bulgaria” and etc. The analysis presents many newspapers cartoons, prominent poems, parallel with other similar newspapers, typical articles, the journalists and artists professional style. In the second category are shown the boulevard and entertainment newspapers and magazines - for example „Kvo da e”, „Balgaran”, „Baraban”, „Satar”, „Chervenata ti Vrazka” and etc. They balanced between political and social satire and entertainment and popular humour. Their content was dominated by the original and clever articles with topics, typical for the urban population with the Bohemian lifestyle, political satire, love and everyday problems, social troubles and some time even banality. But these topics were indicative for the the talent of the hole generation of Bulgarian writers and artists, which works are still unknown for the contemporary readers.

Similarity may be found in another original Bulgarian press phenomenon - the newspapers so called „Parrots” - popular wall newspapers, printed in colour, with many illustrations - a local form of the fashionable by that time European colour-magazines. The articles and cartoons interpreted the current word policy topics, national stereotypes and propaganda’s attitudes. Interesting and admired were so called „Scourges” – tabloids with morality and even vulgarity texts, late and modify local version of the authoritative moral magazines in the 18th century. The Bulgarian form expressed their publisher aspiration to fulfil the morality and satire press niche, to make money, to influence and to get large attention from the audience - „the example of the traditional for the Bulgarian culture understanding of humour mainly as a manner of social repression”, according to Assist. Professor Yasen Borislavov, PhD.

Intermediated form between the political and entertainment categories is the newspaper „Shturetz”, which was written, edited and illustrated by the Bulgarian artist Rayko Alexiev. According to Assist. Professor Yasen Borislavov, PhD this newspaper is the most brilliant and solid phenomenon of the Bulgarian satire press between 1920s and 1940s in the 20th century. The newspaper was popular because its various topics and publications - political, cultural, social and international topics, as well as its genres - news, feuilletons, poems, stories, gossips, anecdotes, funny stories, parodies and most of all - significant as quantity and as a quality funny cartoons, caricatures and drawings. The important newspaper’s advantages were the conservative humour freshness, its actuality and universality, the excellent linguistic and cultural levels, the absence of the clear ideological sympathy, the interesting literary and illustrative parts, its publisher talent.

Similar to this book topics and content may be found in two long-form articles applied for the competition.

In the second book „Bulgarian Journalism between the Two World Wars (1919-1939)” (Avangard Prima Publishing, 2010, 150 pages) are interpreted the Bulgarian press

features between the two World Wars. The main scientific importance are the book correctness, applicability and the topic. The content may be separated into two parts. The first one outlines the entire historical and cultural context of the period, when Bulgarian press had the specific growth - more than 5,000 newspapers and magazines had been published with extremely variable topics - policy, information, economy, literature, humour, sport, women, faction and etc. In the second part, the author's focus is on the newspapers with the significant influence on the audience attention, which scoped the current social, political and economy transformations of the Bulgarian society. For more complex and relevant evaluation several analysing criteria are marked in the research. In the first one are presented the press that mostly attract the public opinion - for example the political and informative newspapers and magazines „Rabotnicheski vestnik”, „Zemedelsko zname”, „Slovo”, „Mir”, „Zveno”, „Zora”, „Utro”, „Dnevnik”, „Zarya”. Despite their different content (some were political - left-wing, right-wing, agrarian, others were informative, tabloid, popular) this was modern, current press with usage of the different genres, that attracted the interesting, competent professional journalists. The newspapers are interpreted by the identical characteristics - their style, design, content, topics, authors, social context, significant publications. In the second criterion is observed the press, specialised in some topics - for example some cultural and literacy newspapers and magazines „Zlatorog”, „Vezni”, „Hiperion”, „Cormilo”, some satirical periodicals „Cherven Smyah”, „Zhupel”, „Shturetz”, female magazines, sport newspapers, colour-magazines for children, wellness magazines and country newspapers. The information about the radio broadcasting launch (Rodno Radion and Bulgarian Radio) is included in the book, as well as the role of the first professional organisations of journalists and the characteristics of the regulatory system in Bulgaria (the press law, the forms of the state control and the censorship).

Similar to this book topics and content may be found in four articles that Assist. Professor Yasen Borislavov, PhD applies for the competition.

## **5. Conclusion**

The monograph book, the second book, scientific long-form articles and articles, citations, academical courses present the professional, scientific and academical progress of Assist. Professor Yasen Borislavov, PhD. The analysis of the variable history of Bulgarian journalism in the first century of its development and influence requires excellent scientific precision and patience, the ability of the profound empirical observation, the national and world history knowledge, the understanding of the media role and the journalism meaning for the social growth. For the first time in the Bulgarian media theory the Bulgarian humour and the Bulgarian satirical newspapers and magazines are so detailed studied, which without doubt enriches the history and journalism theory.

According to the quality of the candidate's scientific research, the contribution of his habilitation work and articles, his teaching experience, I strongly recommend to the Honourable Scientific Jury Assist. Professor Yassen Borislavov, PhD to be elect to the academic position of „Associate Professor” in Area of Higher Education 3. Social sciences, business and law in Professional Field 3.5 Public Communication and Information Science (Journalism - History of Bulgarian Journalism).

27.12.2019

Assoc. Professor Maria Popova, PhD