

REVIEW

BY

PROF. DOCTOR OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES

MILKO PALANGURSKI

of the dissertation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Ivanov Ivanov on "Swimming against the tide: Bulgarian textile craftsmen and their growth into the factory industry, 1800-1912" for the award of the degree "Doctor of Science" in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences (Sociology).

The dissertation presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Ivanov was discussed at the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski". I am not aware of any violations during the course of procedure.

The proposed dissertation is dedicated to the transformation of the Bulgarian textile crafts into a factory industry. The structure of the dissertation goes within the classical understandings of this type of research - Introduction, three chapters, which are divided into 21 paragraphs, as they follow the logic of the study and are not formed in accordance with any accepted matrix type, conclusion, literature. I immediately want to emphasize that a huge part of the proposed text - more than half of the 502 pages is in the form of appendices, 12 of which are devoted to individual issues that practically support and complement the main text in the three chapters. Each of these applications is essentially a completely independent study of a particular problem and on top of that, the data analyzed in them is systematized in a huge number of tables.

Even before getting acquainted with the text of the dissertation, anyone who has professionally worked on the reconstruction of the Bulgarian past and society, cannot help but notice that it is a violation of at least two canons of the Bulgarian historiography and understanding of historical and economic process. The author does not hesitate to place the object of his research in a long historical period - beginning with 19th and until early 20th century. This in itself should not be an exception for generalized research, but it does not completely cover the periodization of the processes conditioned by the political dominants and especially by the opposition of the national independence with the Ottoman past. Here, we must say that Assoc. Prof. Martin Ivanov did not hesitate to look for the roots of the process during the pre-reform period of the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, he does not hesitate to, and I must emphasize, to manage and

successfully show the Bulgarian economic development on the basis of global economic logic, which in combination gives a very accurate and clear reconstruction of the historical process.

As the author successfully points out, this is a study of the development of the first wave of modernization, which attracts and pushes forward the Bulgarian nation with some contradictory consequences of facing the industrialization and transformation of handicrafts into the machine-textile industry. I fully agree with the conclusion that the transition between old and new production structures is slow and is dominated by mixed and hybrid forms of production.

The first chapter is devoted to the development in the 1850s until the mid-1870s. The dissertation traces several main points - the role of government procurement for the textile flourishing, the particularities of the development of individual regions, the role of wage conditions and the cost of labor. The analysis is divided into micro and macro-regions, showing the similarities and differences in each of them, the possibilities for exploitation and the availability of cheap labor, production and quality of wool. This extremely interesting information confirms all the strong and at the same time not particularly joyful conclusions about the quality of production, labor, etc.

The first manufacturing units and their internal production organizations are very well described. The details clearly show that the production is created by a large number of people in the proto-industrial towns, as the manufacturing organization plays mainly the role of a coordinator in the chain of raw materials - sales. There is a complete inventory of the organization and structure of the industrial establishments in Bulgaria. However, calculations show that they never became leaders in production volumes - with the highest estimates showing that industrial enterprises accounted for one-fifth of production, making manufacturing and domestic production completely dominant until the end of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, government procurement allows a huge number of people to receive additional income without leaving their economic model, producing raw materials on their own, or with their family which required a lot of funds. This in turn changed not only the way of life but also its social attitudes and educational level.

An undoubted contribution are the pages dedicated to the quality of wool and its processing into fabric. All specific processes are well-thought-out, reaching extremely detailed characteristics of fleece weight, quality, hair length, etc. These seemingly routine actions turn out to be the basis of the quality and quantity of

production and daily productivity. The individual breeds of sheep and the manufacturing of their wool in the coarser and finer productions, exports and specialization in separate regions are also presented. The information about the sorting of the wool and the not very good execution of this important task for the production turned out to be very interesting and especially important, as well as the attempts of the empire and later of free Bulgaria to find a way to improve the sheep breed and create conditions for better sorting and hence production of woolen products. A lot of attention and consideration has gone to the role of each process - from cleaning, washing, passing through the comber and spinning the wool, as well as the final operations - finishing, painting, ironing, etc. These seemingly at first glance small activities are very accurately shown as part of the general production process through the tools of market logic.

I cannot help but notice that the calculations made based on the employed workers, the remuneration of the employees - apprentices and journeymen, as well as the individual producers are completely defensible and they must now serve as a starting point when assessing the financial income at a public level. The depiction of the technical modernization is comprehensive, showing the way in which, different kinds of equipment enter all spheres of production.

For Martin Ivanov, the textile boom was initially due to several factors - government procurement for the army, gradually increasing market demand through population growth in cities, economic liberalization due to reforms and the demographic boom. The calculations of imports and exports and their impact on the hybridity of the textile industry are at a level that allows them to form the basis of a new type of attitude toward these processes in the Bulgarian lands. Without pathos, but with the strength of arguments, it is confirmed that there are "enough enterprising Bulgarians who literally carry on their backs the old handicrafts... and successfully turn them into modern factories."

The second chapter is devoted to the period from the 1870s until the beginning of the Balkan Wars, which should and shows the way out of the long recession of the textile industry and its growth at the beginning of the 20th century. The answer to the question when the decline of handicraft production begins is extremely accurate - the cycles of growth and decline follow a different trajectory in different industries, a thesis completely defended by the material presented to us. And something else brings the end of domestic, artisanal production and its transition to factory, accompanied by the introduction of machines that replace manual labor.

All this applies to the mid-1870s. The calculations of wages, purchasing power and the decrease in employment in the textile industry from 100 to 35 and the subsequent increase to 57 thousand people is indisputable, as well as the data on reindustrialization after 1902. The role of Turkish emigration after 1879, the loss of markets of the Ottoman Empire and the change in the demographic structure of the population as a purchasing power. The data on the annual rate of increase in productivity and quantities, which are "evidence of technological modernization and not so much of deindustrialization", are also completely correct and irrefutable.

The third chapter is devoted to the "agents of reindustrialization", as the factories, manufactories and domestic producers operating in the 40-year period after the liberation have been successfully defined. The author's hard work has led to the inventory of 150 factories engaged in wool processing and located in all regions of the country, even where there is a minimal presence of industrial structures. Information such as founding year, capital, type of activity, owned equipment, production volumes and number of employees are sufficient to conclude that the Bulgarian reindustrialization has two distinct periods which are separated from 1902 onwards. So far, the mechanization was going on mainly in terms of mastering labor-intensive processes, and then the scope of machine production included all processes with increase in the use of steam and electricity, thus leading to a change in production patterns.

The undoubted contribution of the dissertation is the outline of generations of entrepreneurs and the entry of new, young aged and educated entrepreneurs - the second generation, which is much more systematic and methodical, thanks to their education, which cannot be said about their predecessors, frequently remaining in their economic past. The success of this generation is also due to the hiring of foreign craftsmen who have the necessary training to modernize the native industry and bring it to a new level. Finally, in this chapter it is clear that this is a well-profitable business, that however, never reaches the levels of Ottoman times.

The internal reorganization of the sector is also brought to light by considering the cotton, hemp and silk textile enterprises, which at the end of the aforementioned period already produce a quarter of the production. The change of tastes and the world situation also have their influence - the consumption of cotton clothes enters all levels and regions, although their full dominance occurs later than the studied period. What's interesting is that number of failed projects happens to be just in this area whit the survival of only 6 factories.

The social profile of Bulgarian textile workers is also measured, showing all the weaknesses of employees, lack of education and work habits, the demand for women's and especially child labor as a basis for the employee. Youth and low-paid women's work have an advantage over entrepreneurs, which leads to low mechanization by the owners, poor hygiene and working conditions, naturally backed by social problems and tremors.

The sociological view of the 196 textile industrialists undoubtedly covers the largest volume of domestic entrepreneurs. The biographical indicators that have been collected and analyzed show the full profile of these unquestionably economically active and enterprising people. The conclusions - that these are people with financially stable family environment, that only half continue some family traditions, which gives an advantage of capital over tradition, being middle age, which shows experience and participation in business networks, family ties in all its varieties, which shows low level of trust in public circles, political affiliation, etc.

Contributing moments are the pages dedicated to the capital shortage and technological modernization. The difficult conditions for access to finance and the cost of acquiring new equipment are a serious problem for the sector, which practically doubles costs and explains the slow processes of change, which are still accelerating in recent years and installed capacity is reaching Sweden and Russia. The domestic industrialists are not neglected either - the domestic weaving is dying out, small elements of spinning remain in remote regions.

I cannot overlook the applications to the dissertation, which, as I already pointed out, is a separate study in which a lot of work and methodological analysis has gone. The collected and systematized information covers all the main issues addressed in the dissertation. In this regard, I cannot fail to note the huge number of sources and research processed by the author, and this is done with full awareness of the depth of the materials used and with tribute to previous authors. As far as I know the source base, I think that from now on it will be very difficult to revise the achieved scientific analysis and synthesis in the dissertation. This depth of the processed factual basis gives a solid support to the conclusions made and it is not by chance that in many places Martin Ivanov corrects the existing ones and creates his own new historiographical theses. The abstract reveals the content of the dissertation to the greatest extent and completeness. The work is designed in accordance with the requirements for such scientific work, as the goals, objectives,

and research methodology are set very precisely, and the structure is completely adequate. It makes a good impression to bring to the fore the accents presented in the text: subject, purpose, tasks, methods, deadlines, structure.

These scientific contributions and merits give me reason to state categorically that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Ivanov has presented a paper that fully meets the highest requirements for a dissertation for the degree of "Doctor of Science", for the award of which I will vote with pleasure and firm confidence.

Professor, Doctor of Historical Sciences Milko Palangurski

Veliko Tarnovo

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