STATEMENT

From

Assoc. Prof. Valeri Kolev,

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of History

on the competition for the defense of the dissertation thesis of Veselin Kostov Yanchev

"Army, Public Order and Internal Security: September 1923. The Failure of an Ordered Uprising"

for the award of the degree of Doctor of Science in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology

The dissertation proposed for public defense is a comprehensive and thorough study, for which I can definitely say that it defends the high criteria and traditions in the scientific achievements of the Department of History of Bulgaria and the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski.

I have known its author Prof. Dr. Veselin Yanchev since our student years. We have participated with him in hundreds of meetings and numerous scientific conferences.

Even then he stood out as a dedicated and objective expert and researcher of the New Bulgarian History.

The dissertation presented is persuasive and multifaceted. It sets new standards for how such research is done - in terms of methodology, attitude to the problem, and finding the necessary sources.

Let me start with the latter: apparently, there is a wealth of material on the subject in various archival collections, as well as in published documentary collections, memoirs and diaries.

The year 1923, which is one of the stormiest in the New Bulgarian History, is presented in detail, from a variety of perspectives. Quite naturally, the September Uprising is the focus of the exhibition. But it is not the only one: the adoption of the Law for the Defence of the State in the following year 1924, the illogical continuation of the course towards a new armed uprising by the BCP, the whole social situation, are thoroughly studied and presented to the reader in a detailed but readable manner. However, I would have liked to have read a little more about the position of the traditional parties, for example, Alexander Malinov's Democrats, on these events, but also those on the left spectrum who are part of the government or in opposition and who firmly support legal methods of political struggle.

Two things particularly stand out in these nearly 500 pages. The author of the dissertation has devoted a lot of effort, and pages, to examine not only from a historical but also from a philosophical point of view problems related not only to the 1920s but also to the whole period of the New Bulgarian History, and not only to it. One of them is to be found behind the orders and reports, behind the description of combat action, behind the movement of various military units and armed clashes. This is the question: who should obey the laws? Is it only the duty of the authorities? This is one of the main questions in the text and C. Janchev has examined it in detail. It is clear from the solid number of pages devoted to this topic that both sides in the conflict cannot be accused of unnecessary drifting towards following the law. But Prof. Yanchev does not stop there, but also tries to find where the line is between military necessity and laws. People who have chosen the path of armed struggle probably do not feel obliged to comply with the laws. This should not serve as an excuse for them, but it is understandable to some extent. But does this also apply to the authorities? Do difficult times always call for difficult decisions, as the famous phrase goes? That is to say, does the emergency situation give the government reason not to respect the laws and constitutional decrees? And who decides this? These are problems that are not only Bulgarian, one could say that almost all countries face them at different times.

The second thing is the role of the Comintern in the events described in the text - an organisation that was ahead of the times of globalisation with its claims to universality, to represent and lead the world proletariat. For decades the Comintern was shrouded in fog and secrecy, and only recently have more detailed documentary accounts of its activities begun to emerge. To the delight of the historical guild, Prof. Yanchev was one of the first to draw major attention to the role of the Comintern, to the goals it pursued, to the influence it acquired, not without the assistance of insiders, over the Bulgarian Communist Party.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the author has dealt with these complex issues in depth, even if they seem to stand a little apart from the topic thus formulated. And he has unobtrusively offered readers his answers. And they seem irrefutable because they are supported by strong logic and numerous facts.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that we have before us a complete work that addresses a long-neglected topic, deliberately shrouded in numerous myths, and it refutes most of them in a well-reasoned manner.

All of the above gives me full confidence to vote positively **for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF SCIENCE in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology to Prof. Dr. VESELIN KOSTOV JANCHEV** under the announced competition of the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

 Assoc. Prof. Valeri Kolev

Sofia, 04 December 2022