UNIVERSITY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE TECHNOLOGIES

REVIEW

from

Prof. Dr. Boryana Bujashka-Dancheva

of the monographic work of **Petya Dimitrova Pavlova** on the topic

"TURKEY IN BULGARIAN POLITICS 1989 – 2004"

Dissertation
for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, Professional field 2.2. History and archaeology, Scientific specialty History of Bulgaria (Modern Bulgarian History)

1. Data about the dissertation candidate

Candidate for the competition is Petya Dimitrova Pavlova, senior expert in the Presidential Administration, doctoral student in the Department of History of Bulgaria, modern Bulgarian history at the Department of History of Bulgaria of the Faculty of History of Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski"

2. Relevance and significance of the problem developed in the dissertation:

There is no more sensitive component in Bulgarian foreign policy than relations with the Republic of Turkey. It should be noted from the very beginning that in the studied period of Bulgarian-Turkish relations 1989-2004, Turkey has established a long-term retreat from the secularism of K. Ataturk, its domestic and foreign policy is based on Islam and neo-Ottomanism, as a strategy for regaining control of the Balkans and a new geopolitical role for Turkey, which puts Bulgaria in a completely new situation. Turkey is a rising military, demographic and economic colossus compared to the 10 small states with complex and conflicting

relations in the Balkans. Moreover, Bulgaria is at the greatest risk because it is on the immediate border with Turkey, the scale of the Turkish and Islamic population can be used as a fifth column than in other Balkan countries, and the Bulgarian military, intelligence and counter-revolutionary structures in this period have been destroyed, trust in them has decreased greatly, efficiency and capabilities have decreased greatly. In this situation, a series of questions arise about the trends that we can expect and what should be done.

The dissertation aims to study and analyze the place of Turkey in Bulgarian politics in recent times, thus building on what has already been achieved in Bulgarian historiography both chronologically and thematically. The lower chronological limit of the study is the end of 1989, when relations between the two countries reached their lowest point. This is happening as a result of the policy of the communist regime in Bulgaria towards the Bulgarian Turks (the so-called "revival process"), which ultimately becomes one of the reasons for the overthrow of Todor Zhivkov from power on November 10, 1989 and the subsequent collapse of socialism. The upper chronological limit of the dissertation is related to the accession of the Bulgarian country to NATO in 2004 and the transformation of Bulgaria and Turkey into allies within the Alliance. In this direction is the author's ambition not only to analyze and study Bulgarian-Turkish relations in the period 1989-2004, but also to find and outline the possible "most correct tone" in communication between them. The chronological period is very well chosen, but this does not make its study easier. A difficult topic, with an ambition for research that is commendable for the author. Here I would also like to congratulate her scientific supervisor - Prof. Ev. Kalinova, an undisputed expert and specialist in Bulgarian-Turkish relations during critical periods for them. In the general presentation of the study, I would like to express my approval of the sources used to build the exposition. The very broad thematic scope - political, military, economic and cultural-educational problems is built on the basis of numerous sources. The selected approaches of the study - situational, comparative analysis, analysis of archival documents and research, functional, geopolitical and historical analysis - allow for a comprehensive analysis and assessment of Turkey's place in Bulgarian politics in the period 1989 - 2004 and the identification of the main issues.

The attention of Bulgarian researchers has been drawn over the years to Bulgarian-Turkish relations, and a large volume and diverse content of literature has been created. However, the studies are fragmentary in nature, and in their

predominant part they are dedicated to individual, mainly crisis moments in these relations. The study demonstrates the rich historiographical awareness of its author, who paid due tribute to all who have worked on the topic. But the most valuable thing built into its foundation is the wealth of documents from Bulgarian archives. Along with well-known documents, Petya Pavlova introduces for the first time into scientific circulation a rich set of authentic documents - documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic reports, letters, reports, expert opinions, stenographic diaries, etc., which reveal Bulgarian-Turkish relations in a previously unknown completeness. Among the main advantages of Petya Pavlova's methodological approach to the study of this complex issue is the development, in the broadest possible context, of the dynamically developing international situation, the development of Bulgarian-Turkish relations and Bulgaria's efforts to preserve Bulgarian national interests. It can definitely be said that such a study has not been done and presented before, and the task set has been accomplished.

The study is organized into an introduction, 4 chapters, conclusion, bibliography and is 502 pages long.

The introduction offers a very detailed conceptual framework with a precisely defined object, subject, objectives of the study, working hypotheses, time scope and research tasks. The research methods have been precisely selected in view of the interdisciplinary nature of the study. Here it would be good to clarify the theoretical apparatus - when and in what cases the Muslim community, Turkish ethnic group, Turkish ethnic minority, etc. were used. The introduction includes a retrospective of the events during the revival process. The retrospective of the causes of the revival process summarizes all the studies on the issue done so far, but I still lack a detailed explanation of why the authorities are doing it. In my opinion, the position of the supporters of the revival process should be outlined more closely. One of the arguments of those who approve of the revival process is the Turkish policy towards minorities in Turkey. It should be noted that the doctoral student cannot work in Turkish archives, but there are some studies on this topic that can be referred to. The conclusions after each chapter should be very synthesized, but cover all the topics that have been considered. The presentation is very readable, but in places the assessments are rather diplomatic - e.g. "how correct the assertion of the legal status of the exarchate properties is difficult to establish" - p. 155, the signed agreement on the demilitarization of the Rezovska River "leaves doubts about political pressure", there is talk of repressive measures by the Turkish authorities, when hundreds of

Bulgarians were murdered, mainly women and children, and about 100 thousand Bulgarians were expelled from their homelands. Here I can note another recommendation that applies to the entire text of the study. The author quotes individual researchers, but she does not always take a position on the opinions expressed in this way.

Despite these remarks, the graduate should be congratulated for her excellent approach to the topic and overall presentation.

Chapter One –" Political relations between Bulgaria and Turkey (1989 – 2004)"

The research in this chapter is very serious. A very good analysis of the relations has been made, using not only scientific works on the subject, but also many documents. And yet, the question remains open whether the Angora Treaty of 1925 is good. There are opinions that it should be denounced. They are based on the fact that it is the root cause of our inability to resolve the issue of compensation for the heirs of the Thracian refugees. A more categorical position would give the reader reason to assess how adequate Bulgarian diplomacy is with the 1992 treaty. Here I must note that this is now one of the main open issues in Bulgarian-Turkish relations.

The approach of making parallel assessments of the individual governments in the negotiations with Turkey is particularly valuable . A complete picture of the domestic political and international conditions under which they operate is given. But individual conclusions about mistakes made should be more categorical - e.g. the decision to pay social pensions to the government of Iv. Kostov practically blew up the Bulgarian position in the negotiations and this has long-lasting consequences to this day. In the text, the author has tried to literally "drain" the information he has from the numerous documents. This makes the text "chattery", at times the presentation has the form of a statistical reference book for a given event or era, the author's conclusions are missing. E.g. consular relations, the Rezov problem. Flowery formulations are used such as "it is difficult to determine within the framework of this study", "it is difficult to say" about the position of Iv. Kostov. In such a way of presentation, after each paragraph and chapter there should be a very serious summary and conclusions.

In my opinion, this chapter should address the issue of dual Bulgarian citizenship, which is excellently developed. In addition to the need for a review of

international legislation on the issue of dual citizenship, the benefits and harms of it for Bulgarian national interests should be assessed. The "Turkey" case suggests more extreme solutions, which I am not a supporter of. But they imperatively require a change in the Law on Bulgarian Citizenship and taking into account the specifics of each individual case and each country. Over the years, there has been interference from outside in the electoral process through the use of voters with dual citizenship - the so-called electoral tourism. This is the use of the ethnic vote to influence the election result. In other cases, it is necessary to facilitate the granting of Bulgarian citizenship and passports to members of the Bulgarian minority in Turkey and persons with proven historical or family ties to Bulgaria. The most general conclusion is that the procedure needs to be refined.

Regarding property, social and humanitarian issues
between Bulgaria and Turkey, which are present in this chapter, I must note that this part of the study is developed very well and the researchers who worked on the topic are correctly cited. But here too, the author's categorical opinion is missing. With the policy pursued by the Bulgarian state towards Turkey, we will neither receive compensation for the Thracian refugees, nor will we get back the exarchate properties. The topic suggests proposals for resolving the controversial issues.

Chapter Two "Cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkey in the Field of Defense and Security 1989-2004". The ten-year military and political confrontation and the difficult path of transforming Turkey from an "enemy" into an "ally" are excellently shown. The extremely important issue of the border line at the Rezovska River and the inter-maritime spaces of Bulgaria and Turkey, cooperation in solving the fight against illegal trafficking and terrorism, cooperation between judicial authorities, the Kurdish issue are also examined. Here we again come across issues that do not protect Bulgarian national interests. The question remains controversial as to how far the issue with the Rezovska River has been resolved in favor of Bulgaria. It is not clear from the text to what extent the decision is in favor of Bulgaria.

Chapter Three – “Bulgarian-Turkish Relations in the Sphere of Economics”. Well-presented text, numerous materials drawn upon. Particularly readable and educational for non-economists in this field is the issue of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. Given the specific nature of this topic and the leading role of Turkey

and its geopolitical aspirations in its creation, the study shows very clearly the positions of Bulgarian representatives and their efforts to protect Bulgarian national interests.

Chapter Four - "Bilateral Relations in the Sphere of Culture, Education and Science". Here the graduate is relieved because there are no monographic studies on the topic. The analysis made of the project of the Ministry of Culture from 1992 and the possibilities for an agreement are impressive. An important place in this part of the study is paragraph 1.1. - learning Turkish as a mother tongue in Bulgarian schools. A very good analysis has been made and mainly the solution to the issue in the independent Bulgarian state after 1878. The Turkish position on the impossibility of learning mother tongue in Turkish schools is also given. In my opinion, learning mother tongue in Bulgarian schools does not lead to better integration of Bulgarian Turks. The same applies to the subject "Religion" in Bulgarian schools.

The topic of cooperation between universities, libraries and archives is developed extremely correctly. Unlike the other chapters, a comprehensive and very complete conclusion is made here.

The conclusion drawn at the end of the work is an expected synthesis of the conclusions and judgments made in the course of the presentation. The most significant advantage of the study is its objectivity, the huge documentary resource on which the analyses and judgments are based, as well as the generation of a number of new problem situations, which will undoubtedly give rise to new original solutions. The conclusion drawn is very good. But the most important problems must have been drawn from the study - the Thracian refugees and their compensation, the exarchate properties, dual citizenship, the Rezovska River, the social agreement. Not without importance is the lack of a national doctrine, the restoration of the activities of the bilateral commission on unresolved issues, established in 2008, which has not met since 2016.

Throughout the study, the graduate shows the ability to analyze and summarize. That is why it is good to outline proposals for effective policies, to solve the emerging problems and preserve Bulgarian national interests. Of key importance for the future development of balanced and mutually beneficial bilateral relations will be the answer to the question of how far Bulgaria will be able to distinguish the two planes of contact - state-state and state-society. This means positive and multi-

layered international relations and cooperation with Turkey on the one hand and preventing direct intervention and influence of the Turkish state on society and internal processes in Bulgaria (at the level of ethnicity and religion) on the other.

The presented dissertation work, as well as the abstract, publications and other deposited materials, show that doctoral student Petya Pavlova fully meets the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the relevant Regulations of Sofia University "Cl. Ohridski" for granting the educational and scientific degree "doctor". Therefore, I give my positive assessment with conviction and propose to the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote positively for awarding doctoral student Petya Pavlova the educational and scientific degree "doctor".
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(Prof. Dr. Boryana Bujashka)