**OPINION**

By Assoc. Prof. Dzheni M. Madzharov - PhD

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

On the documents of the competition for the occupation of the academic position of **"Professor"**

**Scientific field:** 3. Social, Economic and Law Sciences

**Professional field:** 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences

(Ethnology - Political Ethnology)

The competition was announced for the needs of the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski" (Darzhaven vestnik No. 65 of August 16, 2019)

For participation in the announced competition for the occupation of the academic position "Professor" in the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski", documents were submitted by only one candidate - Assoc. Prof. Vesselin Ivanov Tepavicharov - D.C.S. The submitted materials for the participation of Vesselin I. Tepavicharov meet all the requirements of the "Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for the Conditions and the Procedure for Acquisition of Academic Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski".

**Contest procedures**

   At a meeting of the Department of Ethnology (May 20, 2019), a discussion was held on the work with topic *The Nostalgia for Socialism in Bulgaria (Ethnological Research*). On the basis of the positive evaluation of the participants, a proposal was made for announcing a procedure for opening a competition for the occupation of the academic position of "Professor". With Order No. RD 38-568 of 01.10.2019, by the Rector of Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski", a Scientific Jury has been drawn up for the competition, which holds its first meeting on October 24, 2019.

All the regulatory requirements were met and no omissions and violations were observed during the separate stages of the procedure for announcing and conducting the competition. After reviewing the submitted documents, it is established that the procedure for announcing and conducting the competition for the occupation of the particular academic position has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the "Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria", the Rules for its Implementation, and the "Rules for the Conditions and the Order for the Acquisition of Academic Degrees and for the Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski". The follow-up of the procedure fulfills the requirements in the above mentioned normative documents.

**Biographical information**

   Vesselin I. Tepavicharov graduated secondary school in Yablanitsa (1975) and gained a master degree in History, at the Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski" (1981). In 2017, he obtained the degree of "Doctor of Cultural Sciences" for his monograph work *Political Anthropology of UDF Supporters* (2016). Since 1982 - currently he is teaching at Sofia University, growing from the position of Assistant Professor of History to Associate Professor of Ethnology (2000). He has served for two terms as Head of the Department of Ethnology (2007 - 2015). Five terms was a member of the Faculty Board of Faculty of History (2003 - present), one term was Chairman of the General Assembly of FH (2008 - 2012), and he was also a member of the Supervisory Board of Sofia University (2012 - 2019). As a full member he participated in the work of the Committee on Minority Education (2009 - 2012). He is a member of the International Association of Anthropologists. During the period 2006 - 2018 he was a scientific supervisor of four PhD students in the Department of Ethnology, who successfully defend their dissertations.

The applicant submits documents for an extremely active scientific and practical activity, according to which he was a participant in 13 projects. According to that, he was the main coordinator of 1, the leader of 9 and the ordinary participant in 3 projects. The projects implemented are mainly ethnologically themed, which includes the following problems: collective memories of historical events; cultural-historical heritage; local holidays and traditions; nostalgia for socialism; intercultural dialogue; place of ethnology in education; training of bachelor, master and doctoral students, etc. A large part of the projects ended with the publication of collections containing scientific researches of their participants.

   In the competition the candidate is presented with a general scientific production created after the acquisition of the academic position "Associate Professor" (2000), which includes some earlier publications too. The general list includes: monographs, one of which is co-authored - 4; studies, one of which is in English - 12; articles, 6 of which in refereed journals and collections (4 pcs. in English) - 25 pcs. By their subject, the publications cover various problems of political history, general ethnology, economic and political anthropology, history of anthropology, education in secondary school and more. Here are several important and innovative for our ethnology studies on the political culture of the subgroups and the political structure of Bulgarian society. Contribution to the Bulgarian science are the monographs *UDF - It's me (Political Anthropology of UDF Supporters)* (2018) and *The Nostalgia for Socialism in Bulgaria (Ethnological Research)* (2019). The publications are the result of years of fieldwork and collected large factual material that has been analyzed using political ethnology methods. Both studies impress with the depth of their ethnological analysis and the credibility of presenting individual perceptions and reflecting on the historical events of the participants in them. Also worthy of attention are such in-depth studies on the subject as: *January Rebellion '97: Slogans and Symbols as Ideal Props* (1997), *Post-Communist Oligarchy and the Transition in Bulgaria. Ethno cultural Aspects* (2014), *Adherents of Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha as a Political Subgroup after 1989 (Development Dynamics and Leading Political Orientations)* (2008), *Zhivkovism as a Political Subculture (Ethno cultural Interpretations on the Concept and its Content)* (2008), *Tradition and Modernity in the Political Culture of the Population from the South Carnobathian Villages at the Beginning of the 21st Century (Some Basic Aspects)* (2015) and others. The candidate also presents a small list of very interesting theoretical and applied developments in the field of intercultural interaction of communities, as well as the opportunities for using ethnological knowledge in the educational process not only in Bulgaria.

On the topic of the competition Vesselin I. Tepavicharov presents a list of publications consisting of: one monograph – *The Nostalgia for Socialism in Bulgaria (Ethnological Research)*; articles in refereed journals (one co-authored and in English) - 3; articles and reports in non-refereed editions (one in English) - 6; studies in non-refereed editions (one in English) - 9 pcs. The topics of the publications are heterogeneous with the majority of them being on the topic of the announced competition - Political Ethnology (8 pcs.), 3 pcs. address the problems of self-determination of ethnic and political communities and sub-groups; one traces the entry of early anthropological methods into Bulgarian Medieval studies; 2 pcs. historical in nature; one is for modern mythmaking and 4 pcs. examine educational problems and the possibilities for practical application of ethnological knowledge in secondary school programs.

   According to the submitted data, (in connection with Art. 115, par. 1, item 5 a, from the Rules of the SU on ZRASRB of 17.07.2019, for the Minimum National Requirements), the candidate meets all the indicators corresponding to the following values ​​by groups: A - 50 points; B - 100 points; C - 100 points; D - 250 points; E - 155 points; F - 305 points. These indicators speak of a high scientific and teaching intensity, which fully meets the requirements for occupying the position of "Professor" at Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski".

**Habilitation work**

   Transition times are always an interesting subject for study by historians and sociologists. But there is also something for ethnologists and anthropologists to say about them. The presented monograph by Assoc. Prof. V. Tepavicharov *The Nostalgia for Socialism in Bulgaria (Ethnological Research)* in one indisputable way shows that the problems of the recent past and the transition can be viewed in depth from the positions of political anthropology. For ethnology, it is not essential to clarify the factology of events, but to what effect they find in individual and collective memory. How do people perceive the past in the present? Decades after its historical conclusion, what a feeling and attitude the past has for the individual. Although it has gone down in history, socialism in Bulgaria is still alive in the present and the memories of our contemporaries. This emotional attitude is the strongest manifestation in the difficult to understand nostalgia, which has many different dimensions. It is this complex problem that has been raised in the author's monograph, whose answers he has sought through the analysis of hundreds of interviews made over the years. Looking at the mechanism of the individual and collective memory of Bulgarians in the twentieth century, he sought an answer to the reasons for the mythologizing of socialism. The contribution of the study is to use the approach to group the baseline information according to gender, age, status, etc. informants' indicators. On this basis, the author outlines several clearly distinguished groups of nostalgics for socialism, whose characteristics he very faithfully presents. The indisputable merit of the author is to search for and analyze the specific causes that lead each group to create their nostalgia for socialism. From the standpoint of ethnological research, the monograph represents a significant contribution not only to science but also to socio-political life in the country, because the author presents his views on the visible consequences in the present of this growing nostalgia for dead socialism.

   This pioneering monographic study is certainly of a bearing on political ethnology because it sets out a model that can be followed by others. For its part, the issue of nostalgia raised before the public offers new opportunities for reassessment of the recent historical past, as well as a deeper insight into the problems of the peculiarities of the Bulgarian transition.

**Conclusion**

    The facts presented here about the teaching, research and project activity of the candidate, as well as the applied habilitation work, give me the full right to declare that in terms of quantity and quality they fully meet the requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor". For this reason, I recommend the members of the distinguished Scientific Jury to select Assoc. Prof. Vesselin Ivanov Tepavicharov – D.C.S. for the academic position "Professor" at Sofia University "St. Cl. Ohridski", professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Ethnology - Political Ethnology), which I fully support.

November 29, 2019

      Sofia Assoc. Prof. Dzheni Madzharov - PhD