

Review

By Kristina Popova, Ph. D., Associate Professor, South-West University 'Neofit Rilski' regarding: the application for the academic position Associate Professor at the Philosophy Department of Sofia University " St . Kliment Ohridski " in Professional field 3.1 Sociology , Anthropology and Science of Culture (Theory and history of culture.

Bulgarian Social and cultural history. New and contemporary history/announced in the State Newspaper: Issue 105/11. 12. 2020

Candidate: Dr. Galina Goncharova, Sofia University

Biography

The applicant for the academic position Associate Professor Dr. Galina Goncharova graduated in cultural studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski " in 1998. In 2011 she obtained her doctoral degree in the same University. In the following years she completed postdoctoral scholarships at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Sofia. She has excellent skills for team research work as a member or project leader in more than fifteen research project. Galina Goncharova is fluent in several languages: English, Russian and Spanish. She is member of national and international academic associations as well as in editorial boards among them in the 'Pyron' academic periodical for art and culture. To her biographical data I would like to add my own personal impressions of the work of Galina Goncharova , whom I have known for almost twenty years from participation in scientific forums, publications and research projects. She belongs to a generation of young scholars, who not developed their scientific activities but

also contributed much to the theoretical and thematic paradigmatic change and enrichment of the humanities in Bulgaria during the transition period after 1989.

The teaching activity of Dr. Galina Govcharova could be seen in the long list of the academic courses prepared by her for undergraduate as well as for master's degree as well as in the large number (over thirty) of theses supervised by her.

Scientific activities

For the application Dr. Galina Goncharova presents, along with her monographic work, a significant number of her scientific publications in renowned Bulgarian and foreign periodicals and other editions from the last few years, as well as some of her earlier articles. These are publications, many of which are results of successful research which outline the research areas and scientific interests of the candidate: the Bulgarian modernization processes, the cultural and social aspects of religion practices, the cultural tensions between modern medical and traditional healing activities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the methods of oral history and microhistory. The significant experience of Galina Goncharova in the methods of oral history, as well as her work on the history of the Bulgarian administrative system and the images of the Bulgarian officials and clerks, on the sociology of religious beliefs, on healing practices and other topics were important for the successful work on her monography "**Chronicles of getting rich as well as of the modernization in the Kingdom of Bulgaria . The Story of Alexander Tenev**", which has been published in the series of the Institute for the recent past in Sofia.

I will focus my review on this work of Galina Goncharova. The book consists of 414 pages, including content, bibliography and a list of used archives. The study, centred on the history of a person, is actually devoted to the great issues of Bulgarian modernization - a historical topic that excites not only scientists but also the wider society. It is also an important topic in the international research, especially in Germany. The great German projects in the Universities in Bielefeld and Frankfurt on the social history of the urban culture, the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois everyday life, proved the interrelationships of economic progress with the history of everyday life, the gender history, the history of mentalities, beyond traditional evolutionary ideas about modernization. The central question Galina Goncharova raised in her book how the national history was reflected in the family history and how an individual economic figure participated in the construction of the general picture of the Bulgarian modernization.

The study consists of an introduction (introductory words), five chapters and an epilogue entitled "The end of an era", which summarizes the main author's conclusions. Successfully titled paragraphs in each of the chapters complete the coherent structure of the text.

The introductory part "**The Champs Elysees of the Bulgarian dream about a prosperous and dignified life**" uses the Homer's metaphor to introduce in the process of searching for sources and constructing the historical narrative. This presentation is done in six steps of a kind of "archaeological" process, again metaphorically separated by the six days of biblical Creation. Each "day" presents different groups of sources. The process of their search as well as the deficits, problems and ambiguities that have appeared in the course of the work are analysed in their details. An important conclusion is pointed out: a person who kept his/ her political distance was absent from the archives. Nevertheless, in this introductory part the author manages to compose a "short biography" of Alexander Tenev (1881 - 1949) and his family chronicle. Galina Goncharova used for her research a variety of sources: documents from local archives, statistical data, local histories, family chronicles, memories, field work and oral history. Visual sources like advertisements, or photographs of people, streets and buildings are also used. The photographs illustrate in a propped way the contrasts and the significant changes during the generations in the family homes, furniture, clothing and other aspects of the everyday life.

The first part of the book represents the growth of Alexander Tenev as open minded young peasant who took advantage of the opportunities of the agricultural development of the region at that time. After his military service during the war time (Balkan wars 1912 – 1913 and First World War) he devoted himself to his farmer's activities growing grain, cotton and vegetables. Galina Goncharova points out that the land property at that time had a priority in comparison to the house or other properties. Land was not just property, it transmitted identity and status through the generations. The diversification of the economic activities of Aleksandar Tenev as a farmer and bank shareholder helped him to be flexible and to survive during the permanent economic difficulties in the 1920-es – 1930-es, to invest in the education of his sons as well to build beautiful modern homes for them in the city centre. Simultaneously patriarchal minded and innovative, Alexander Tenev was not an exotic product of mixed traditional and modern influences, but a central economic and moral figure of the modernization process fully coherent with the Bulgarian cultural and social reality of that time.

The next part, "**The changing shape of the paternal home**" considered the house and home in their "own hierarchy and genealogy" as a symbolically controlled territory in a wide perspective of the place, the village, the municipality, as well as the nearby town. The author gradually reveals the horizons of prosperity of the village: the beginning of the construction of the water supply system, the improvement of the transport infrastructure, the telephone connections with the world, the development of the social life and the beginning of the youth culture around the community cultural center. Based on the historical research on the housework at the time, Galina Goncharova also presents the changes in the home space, food and nutrition of the family.

The next two chapters of the book discusses the questions of "**Caring for the body's and soul's health**". The leading figure in the first of these parts is the wife of Alexander Tenev - Maria. Galina Goncharova presents her personality as a spiritual leader of the family and an healer in the village. As a counterpoint to the tradition, the second part of the "Care" is looking for the new spiritual "**Temptations of modern times**". Attention is focused on the modern agents of the health practices - doctors and midwives and their empowerment in the fight against infant and maternal mortality and diseases and in competition with traditional medicine. The care of the soul and the body in the next generation appeared in a new regime. While the rural culture of the generation of Alexander and Maria Tenevi didn't know leisure, it appeared in the everyday life of the next generations - the sons and their families. The new generation changed the rhythm of their lives according to the time and the topography of modernity.

The last part of the family prosperity history before its collapse after the political turn in 1944, is titled "**Love, Science and electricity in picturesque villages and city theaters**" and is devoted to the inner life of the individuals as modern people with their feelings of love, jealousy and family disappointments. Galina Goncharova is convinced that modernization is unthinkable without the modernization of feelings and experiences. The inner world of the individual is "educated" both in the family and among the "educational pilgrimages" in various schools, universities and places of cultural interests and which expanded the cultural horizons. The education of the three children was an important value for Alexander Tenev and his investment in education proved its advantages in the time after 1944 – 1948 as the family lost its properties.

The final part of the book "**The End of an Era**" contains both the epilogue of the history of Alexander Tenev after September 9. 1944 until his death in 1949, and the main conclusions of

the study in the section "**Modernization without noise**". Based on the theory of multiple modernities, Galina Goncharova revises the traditional evolutionist views on the Balkan modernity as catching permanently Western models. This is also one of the important achievements of the study. As a biography of a 'Lost Bulgaria' it refers to the communicative memory and biographical experiences of the readers but also to the nostalgic attitudes and needs of success histories about honest work, perseverance and morality. Here I see a danger of idealization, explainable with the necessity in our society of historical samples of achieving prosperity in a natural way".

Despite this small remark about the need for a certain critical distance, I believe that the book "**Chronicles of wealth and modernization in the Kingdom of Bulgaria . The Story of Alexander Tenev** " is not only a success for the author Galina Goncharova, but also a valuable contribution to Bulgarian historiography , which will rearrange a number of ideas about the recent past.

Conclusion

The book **Chronicles of getting rich as well as of the modernization in the Kingdom of Bulgaria . The Story of Alexander Tenev** ", the valuable publications and research projects as well as the teaching activities of Dr. Galina Goncharova prove that she is in possession of the required qualification and all qualities for the academic position of Associated Professor. That's why I am fully convinced to vote positively for her application for associated professor of Theory and history of culture at Philosophy Department of Sofia University.

Blagoevgrad, 10 . 04. 2021

Assoc. Prof. Kristina Popova