

S T A T E M E N T

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Regarding: the application of the candidate assoc. prof. Bogdana Todorova D.Sc for the academic position “Professor” for the scientific specialty “Philosophy”, professional field 2.3., for the needs of the Department of “Social theories, strategies and prognosis”, ISSK, BAS. The procedure has been announced in State Gazette, issue 5, dated 15 January 2019 and Protocol N 9 dated 14 March 2019.

Common description of the candidate publications:

Bogdana Todorova entered the announced competition with 33 scientific publications, including: 2 monographs, 1 monographs as a co-author and a chapter in a collective monograph in English; 4 papers in scientific editions, referred and indexed in Web of Science and Scopus; 5 publications indexed in other world data bases; 6 scientific papers and 14 publications in collective volumes and journals with international reviews. The presented publications do not repeat the publications presented for the scientific degree D.Sc and the academic position “Associate Professor”. Eighteen of the publications are in English, the other 15 are in Bulgarian.

Considerable amount of the scientific production of Bogdana Todorova is a result of her participation in important international scientific forums in Turkey, Ireland, Romania, USA, Austria, Serbia, Poland, Egypt, France, Italy, Greece, Germany, Netherland, Spain and the Russian Federation, as well as in different events in Bulgaria. The volume of the candidate scientific production vastly exceeds the minimal requirements for holding the academic position “Professor” – this relates to all the different groups of indicators. For example, only one monograph is required for the habilitation procedure, while assoc. prof. Todorova has presented two monographs (“Objectifying of Islam” (2018) and „The concept of “unity” in the Philosophical Thoughts of Imam Khomeini“ (2017), published in Romania, as well as another third monograph as a co-author, and a chapter in a fourth monograph in English.

Scientific, scientific-applicable and pedagogic activity of the candidate:

The scientific interests of the candidate are situated in the vast field of the Islamic civilization. In this broad research field Bogdana Todorova focuses mainly on the area of the **philosophy of religion – stressing on Islam**. Other scopes of her research interests are: the Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, the political Islam, bioethics in Islam.

The candidate scientific researches offer an exclusively useful new knowledge for the contemporary Islam – new to her colleagues in the social sciences, for the vast public and the

state institutions – presenting an extremely precise and based on solid ground differentiations between Islamic fundamentalism, Islamism, Islamic extremism. The latter is considered extremely dangerous (from a Western point of view), because it is linked to the forcible implementation of the Islam dogmas on behalf of armed extremist groups such as “Muslim brothers”, “Al-Qaeda”, “Islamic state”, etc. The ideology of the Islamic radicalism is shared by representatives of the Sunni Salafism, the Shiites fundamentalism and Pan-Turkism, all of them fighting “against” the state institutions and all favouring the creation of Islamic caliphate.

In her monographs assoc. prof. Todorova elaborates a remarkable and intriguing scientific thesis, namely that in the ideological and political scope of the contemporary Islam, the latter spreads as fundamentalism as well as modernism – in other words as reformation. Therefore, she breaks the stereotype that reforms, the reason, and the progress are imminent only for the West. Such successful reformation attempt to modernize the Islam, to combine politics (such as practical social reforms) and religious thought (theology) is done by Imam Khomeini in his doctrine (“Welayat e-Faqih”). The creator of the Islamic republic obtains ideas from the Quran, he applies them in the political sphere, thus gaining power by proclamations for social justice and equity, both mobilizing the population for “progressive” social change. This is how the Shiites political theory has been modernized. The idea of the “Welayat e-Faqih” – the best system for Islamic study (philosophy, ethics, law) – has inspired the Islamic revolution in 1979 and has become the cornerstone of the Islamic republic of Iran, whose leader and first spiritual guide is Khomeini.

Another important field of the scientific activity of assoc. prof. Todorova is the elaborated by her model of co-existence between Christians and Muslims (Sunni and Alevites) in the region of the East Rhodopes in Bulgaria, by deeply analysing the “neo-Osman” Turkish strategy regarding the Bulgarian Muslims. I want explicitly to accent on the publication „The Bulgarian Mohammedans (Pomaks) in the East and Central Rhodopes: the problem of identity”, where she expresses her well-grounded alarming news about the attempts to implement Turkish identity and language on the Bulgarian Muslims in the Rhodopes mountain.

When it comes to the scientific-applicable activity of the candidate, I will outline the participation of assoc. prof. Todorova in multiple international and national scientific projects and more specifically her management of the following projects: 1) “Is there a Bulgarian ethnical model? (2006-2009); 2) The future of religion. The global Christianity and Islam. (2012-2014); 3) The model of co-existence in the regions of Central and East Rhodope and its reflection on the national security (2008-2010); as well as two current projects focused on the

cultural (including religious) Bulgarian relations to Azerbaijan and Turkey. The names of the projects themselves shown their scientific and applicable value and actuality.

Her **teaching activities** assoc. prof. Todorova fulfils at the Training Centre for PhD students of BAS, in the scope of the post-doctoral program funded by the operative program “Human resources development” by the Ministry of education, youth and science (2010) and at the Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”. Some of her essential lection courses are: “Islam and contemporaneity”, “Islamic fundamentalism”, “EU law and security”, etc.

Essential analysis of the scientific achievements:

The scientific contributions of Bogdana Todorova publications are many, but due to the limitations in the opinion length here I will focus on the most important ones that in my opinion are concentrated mostly in her habilitation book “Objectifying of Islam” (2018). For the first time in Bulgaria, this monograph analyses the Islam by the prism of contemporaneity – the new visions of the world, that recede further and further the classical Islamic tradition from the contemporary dimensions of the religious authority. These new concepts are presented in new forms of society and state organization, rendering the effects of the new technologies in the digital era. In the core of the process of objectivization of the Islam, assoc. prof. Todorova presents **the specific Shiite system of state government – “Welayat e-Faqih”**, elaborated and applied by Ayatollah Khomeini. Her conclusions are based on personal interviews with Shiite religious leaders. For the first time (in Bulgaria and abroad), based on Khomeini philosophical ideas Bogdana Todorova postulates the idea of a “new social contract” as an alternative to the idea of the “social contract” of Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke and Kant – the representatives of the modern Western political thought.

Another fundamental scientific contribution in Todorova’s monograph are the elaborated **two contemporary strategies of the Islamic political activism**, constructed by the prism of the key Shiite-Sunni contradiction for the Islam. The first strategy is the one of the “red Islam”, constructing new Sunni identity, and the second one – the strategy of the “black Islam” – directed to create a new Salafi identity.

In her researches, assoc. prof Todorova uses a broad-spectrum **interdisciplinary approach towards the Islam** as a religion, politics, moral, culture (way of living), thus allowing her not only to use the philosophy, but also considers the potential of other humanitarian sciences such as sociology, political science, cultural anthropology, ethnology, etc. Being a political scientist, I am deeply impressed by the established correlation between democracy and Islam (especially the modus of their compatibility and incompatibility), that reflects in the “Theodemocracy” as a political project for the development of the Iranian society.

Personal impressions and questions to the candidate:

After getting acquainted to the impressive as a volume and quality scientific production of Bogdana Todorova on the topic of the Islam and related to it ideas, actions, their subjects/objects in the contemporary world, I became aware of the existing deficit of such knowledge in the scientific and public environment in Bulgaria and Europe. The monograph “Objectifying of Islam”, written with passion, scientific precision, with understandable and perspicuous language, brings a specific message to the educated audience: It is time to become acquainted with the Islamic world and the Muslims, and not to be afraid of them. The knowledge of the Islam will lead to its better understanding against the background of the widespread islamophobia in the Western world. After we became acquainted to the religion, the culture and the Muslim way of living, we will be able to communicate and co-exist in a civilized manner – despite being part of different civilizations.

I have not critical notes to the candidate, and I am very impressed by the solid scientific contributions, recognized highly on national and international level. I would like to pose a question: What parallel can be drawn between the contemporary Islamic republic as a specific political regime and the regimes in the Western world after the “end of history” (F. Fukuyama) in relation to the realization of a major goal: “harmonization of the relations religious-secular; moral-politics; spiritual and material values”?

Conclusion: It is my profound conviction about the merits of the scientific publications of assoc. prof. Bogdana Todorova and I consider she fulfils all criteria to hold the position “professor”. I propose the scientific jury to vote positive and to grant assoc. prof. Bogdana Todorova the academic position “professor” for the scientific specialty “Philosophy”, professional field 2.3.

Date: 26.04.2019

Signature:
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