

INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY AT BAS

OPINION

of: **Prof. Ph.D. Maxim Nikolaev Mizov**

Subject: dissertation work for awarding an educational and scientific degree
"Doctor" in Sociology of **Martin Konstantinov Konstantinov**

Grounds for presenting an opinion - participation in the composition of the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation according to Order №RD.09-346/bh.07.2020.

Author of the dissertation: **Martin Konstantinov Konstantinov**

Topic of the dissertation: **The confrontation between the West and contemporary Russia: attitudes in contemporary Bulgarian society (values and ideologies).**

Martin Konstanov was enrolled by order № .. on 1.10.2015 as a full-time doctoral student in the section and with a research supervisor Prof. Valentina Zlatanova. He has passed all the exams required by the requirements and regulations. After a one-year extension of the term for full-time doctoral studies, he accomplished his studies on October 1, 2019.

He presented his dissertation for discussion in the section.

The dissertation was discussed and proposed for defense by a section committee on March 5, 2020.

The dissertation proposed for evaluation is composed in a preamble, three chapters, conclusion, bibliography, contributions and appendices. The work is in a volume of 237 pages, of which 213 main text, the remaining 24 pages are tables, figures and bibliography.

The structure of the development is logically consistent and does not create collisions.

The dissertation is composed in the standard model. It contains an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and three appendices. The net volume of the dissertation is 207 pages.

During his doctoral studies he participated in 3 projects, one of which he managed.

He has participated with reports in three scientific forums, more precisely, in one national and two international scientific conferences, one of which was held abroad - Prague.

The sources presented in the bibliography are relevant to the issues studied by the doctoral student. They are 45 in Bulgarian, 231 in English and 17 electronic. But the complete lack of publications by left-wing authors makes a bad impression, if we eliminate the only reference to a monograph by Prof. Antoniy Todorov. This circumstance in fact leaves the strong impression that a significant part of the author's theses, devoted to the critique of left ideological and political positions, literally "hang in the air" because they seem prejudiced, a priori, artificially or conjuncturally attached to the dissertation text. In this case I am not talking / writing about the huge array of such literature in the West and in the world, and especially about the Bulgarian one, which is completely absent from the theoretical analysis of the doctoral student, and it is an impressive bibliographic array that is directly dedicated or

organically connected with the topic of the dissertation. It does not sound and does not seem collegial to keep silent and hide the scientific works and achievements of his colleagues from the institute, who have participated as authors in many such publications - personal and collective monographs, thematically focused collections. On top of all that, he is talking about a scientific bibliography on issues from the topic of the dissertation, which is a production with the participation of his colleagues in scientific forums from the last two decades.

The *publications* submitted for the defense are personal and all of them correspond to the problems that are in the focus of the research of his dissertation. They are 4 articles - 2 in Bulgarian and 2 in foreign editions, all published in 2018.

There are no significant differences between the text of the proposals for official defense and the content of the dissertation - everything is done correctly.

The *scientific contributions* presented for the defense correspond adequately to the content of the text and the real research goals, tasks and achievements of the doctoral student. The dissertation is dedicated to a very topical and significant problem-thematic block. It is an honor for the doctoral student that he has taken on the difficult research and creative responsibility to be a pioneer in the field of Bulgarian sociological research on such a complex issue. Taking such a big creative risk is a rarity among young scientists. This, of course, deservedly increases the quotation of the dissertation. This circumstance deserves admiration, as well as additional appreciation, because "part-time" shows that the doctoral student sincerely wants and consistently creates a scientific product that advertises his *autonomous* and *authentic creative position*, which does not need any borrowed, or reformatting of foreign author's theses, arguments, arguments, etc.

Efforts to successfully deal with the application of various theoretical and methodological principles and approaches, through which to present in the most acceptable form the validity of its hypotheses and results, should be highly praised.

Praiseworthy is the wide range of sociological (theoretical and empirical) research and publications, which are skillfully harnessed to achieve creative goals, which is an indisputable testament to a high and very well selected information culture.

The efforts of the doctoral student to "examine" the subject of his scientific-theoretical analysis from parallax positions, which provide good opportunities for description and interpretation of different profiles, dimensions of the studied phenomena, should be appreciated with dignity.

Another distinctive quality that deserves a positive assessment is the contrastingly noticeable passion with which the doctoral student has taken on and is fulfilling his creative commitments. Unlike many other dissertations in which the author is completely absent, the evaluated work is a shining mirror of his personal ideological positions, feelings, likes, dislikes and passions.

A number of critical remarks can be addressed to the dissertation work, which are of both theoretical-methodological and empirical, practical nature. Since I do not have the opportunity to dwell on all of them, I will focus on only a few of them.

First, the general oppositions, which the doctoral student legitimizes as constitutively significant in the work, seem too reductionist and inadequate. The ideological opposition between liberalism and conservatism sounds rather artificial and exaggerated, because in our time we see the opposite - a continuation and addition of certain policies of neoconservatism,

borrowed from the neoliberalism that preceded it in power. It is very curious why the doctoral student did not make a correct theoretical analysis of the similarities and similarities between Vladimir Putin and D. Trump, who profess the same conservative principles, but, keeping silent about the sins of the latter, tries to "totally break" the former. The assumption that the West is only a symbol and embodiment of liberalism and Russia of conservatism is vulnerable and rebuttable in a purely scientific context from too many points of view.

In theoretical and methodological terms, the linking of the left-right bipolar dimensions with the economic sphere, and of Liberalism-Conservatism - with the social sphere, is also inadequate and deliberately reductionist, as liberalism and conservatism approach social issues mainly from their positions to and in the economic sphere. sphere, as well as the left and the right justify their economic principles and visions on the basis of their social projects and engineering. In this context, the self-referential position that such conceptualization avoids patterns, inaccurate definitions and allows visual positioning of the individual's views is contrary to the logic of research, which clearly shows the presence and power of ideological patterns, prejudices.

Linking liberalism to multiculturalism is also perverse, as it does not debate the left-wing origins of multiculturalist ideology and practice and their subsequent expropriation and exploitation of neoliberal globalist scenarios. But it also applies to the amalgam of conservatism with statism and nationalism, because history provides us with a lot of solid evidence revealing the exact opposite constellations.

Unrealistic and diverging from the socio-historical and political practice in our country, in the years of the so-called "Transition to democracy and market economy" is the thesis that the classical Western political science definitions of leftist ideas and parties with social liberalism are not relevant for Eastern Europe and Bulgaria. The real practice obviously proves the opposite, that the infiltration of the "social" models of neoliberalism in the ideological and programmatic mutations of most left parties in our country led them to political bankruptcy, and to the strongest of them - BSP - to striking losses of membership and electorate. The social-liberal consensus - started by G. Parvanov and completed by S. Stanishev - is a flagrant practical refutation of the claims for authenticity of the author's theses.

The thesis that the left parties are originally and currently conservative, traditionalist and nationalist oriented and engaged is also ideologically clichéd and does not correspond to the real status and contribution of left formations in a number of processes and trends, which the doctoral student fully attributes to the right organizations over the years. of transition. From this perspective, the most puzzling is the imputation of the sins of the left to the refugee or ethnic problem, because they completely ignore the contributions of left-wing parties to avoiding and speculating on the ethnic map or threat that right-wing parties have used extensively.

Assumed and alien to real political practice is the doctoral student's basic statement that the left insists on avoiding insecurity and is a supporter of traditionalism. The strongest right-wing formation in the last 10 years - GERB, is a symbol and embodiment of frantic proclamation and political imposition of the thesis of preserving stability and fidelity to the traditions in the field of Christianity, anti-communism, etc.

A serious problem is the frank admission of the doctoral student that the empirical sociological survey used in the dissertation is not representative and the extrapolation of its results to the whole population is not justified (p. 14), because it calls into question many of the theses, arguments, arguments and conclusions in the work. Another recognition that the GERB party does not enter the focus of the theoretical analysis due to unspecified contact is an extremely serious problem, which is shocking, as no definite conclusions can be drawn on temporarily touring right formations, but the strongest and most influential one. the party to be isolated and uncommented in the dissertation for the next decade; even more so, given that the ideological options and the real policy of GERB are in complete dissonance with the fundamental ideas and analytical "matrices" of the dissertation.

The third doctoral student's admission that reductionism is presumed due to the short 30-minute interviews, which did not allow to delve into the topic, also torpedoed any claims or assurances of objectivity, credibility, impartiality and adequacy of the asserted ones with the real political dynamic.

The consideration of values without their connection and dependence with the norms in the society and in a concrete social / political community also raises a number of questions and disagreements.

The thesis of p. 19 that values are transituational and abstract, and attitudes with understandable normative content and practical commitment are concretely tied to practical objects and situations, is absolutely incorrect - Kant's categorical imperative is the most unconditional and indisputable refutation of such a thesis, namely, it stands at the foundation of most moral codes, attitudes and stereotypes of public behavior.

The allusion (p. 19) that values and ideologies stand for standards, while attitudes reflect changing and numerous opinions, is also easily refuted - the historical longevity, sociocultural tenacity and stubbornness of traditions, habits, rituals and stencils illustrate precisely against to and overcoming the dependence on doxa, on conjunctural productions and mass consumption of opinions.

The typologies of the personality preferred by the doctoral student according to its value orientations are also reductionist, incomplete and incorrect compared to the real palette of many social types in this context, and are also built on heterogeneous criteria and eclectic symbioses of quite different profiles, which also raises a number of questions.

The thesis from p. 38 that individualism conceptually overlapped with intellectual and affective autonomy is incorrect, as it ignores the main thing in this phenomenon - the will to separate the interests of the Self, without which its mentality and autonomy are nothing.

The uncritical attitude and discreet approval of Hibbing's idea (p. 60) that "politics may not be in our souls, but it is probably in our DNA" is puzzling.

Serious errors in work are related to and conditioned by the large-scale ignorance of the true nature and functionality of postmodern reflection and its political-ideological application in real social practices in the West and in Bulgaria.

The thesis about the ideological vacuum after the collapse of the USSR and the need to fill it with traditionalism, authoritarianism and nationalism, which are antipodes of the liberal model (p. 71), is partly true, as the correct terms are other, Orthodox, statehood and patriotism. In addition, the neoliberal bacchanalia of the Yeltsin era is silenced and hidden, as

is Putin's inability to free himself completely from undisputed neoliberals such as Dmitry Medvedev, Alexander Chubais, and other neo-elites.

In this order many gaps, weaknesses and shortcomings in the evaluated dissertation can be formulated, but also justified, but these are enough to understand that in both the conceptual and empirical-applied part of the work there are many "Achilles' heels", which in a future publication of the dissertation must be eliminated if the author does not want to become easy prey for critical discourses.

Among the aspects of the dissertation development that deserve a positive assessment is the good stylistic "design" of the work. The dissertation is written and designed to be readable, intriguing and understandable for those interested in the issues addressed in it.

In conclusion, with respect and understanding for the ideological biases openly professed by the doctoral student, which discourses I do not sympathize with, because they are alien to Weber's call for axiological neutrality, and having in mind the successful implementation of research goals and objectives, as well as the demonstrated professional and creative qualities, I definitely believe that **Martin Konstantinov** can be awarded the educational and scientific degree of **Doctor of Sociology**. I also call on the colleagues from the jury to support this choice, because it is objective and fair in view of what is actually shown in the dissertation paper referenced by all members of the jury.

Sofia, July 30, 2020

Signed.....
/ Prof. Maxim Mizov /