OPINION

for

Sergey Metodiev, participant in a competition for associate professor in professional direction 2.3. – *Philosophy* (scientific field *Philosophy of Religion*), announced for the needs of the department "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview" at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) in the State Gazette, No. 61, 29. 07. 2025

by Prof. Ph.D. Nina Dimitrova (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS)

Sergey Metodiev is the only candidate in the competition for associate professor, announced for the needs of the "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview" section at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS. He has submitted orderly and complete documents that meet the minimum national requirements for participation in the competition.

Sergey Metodiev has been a senior assistant professor in the section since 2017 and has been a member of the research projects conducted there. He has declared participation with reports at 23 scientific forums. He has provided scientific supervision to a doctoral student who successfully defended his thesis. For the current procedure, Sergey Metodiev has submitted for discussion one monograph (habilitation thesis), one study (2025) and 16 articles.

"The Clash of Civilizations or the Clash of Civilization with Its Own History" (Sofia 2025, Propeller Publishing House, 262 pp.) is the candidate's habilitation thesis. The motto of this book could be Spinoza's ethical principle, emphasizing the understanding of human motives and actions ("...non ridere, non lugere neque detestari sed intelligere"). As the author says in the course of his presentation, “Our goal is not to expose or justify anyone…” (p. 168). Metodiev is trying – and successfully (what the overall reading leaves me with) – precisely *to understand* his object, and in this sense the text presented to our attention is a de facto apology of philosophical thinking, for which there are no taboos, which is not afraid to study any object. And the "object" in this case is the *Project for a New Ideology* by the famous Russian geopolitician and philosopher Alexander Dugin.

Sergey Metodiev's monograph has an adequate structure for the purposes of the study – an introduction, four chapters (detailed), a conclusion, and a bibliography covering numerous sources in Cyrillic and Latin. It is important to note that right from the beginning, Dr. Metodiev argues for the importance of the accessible language with which philosophical topics are presented and interpreted, thus making more readers empathize with the "crucially important" question posed by the author.

The first among the stated goals of the book is to draw attention solely to the *philosophical* side of the researched object, leaving in parentheses the ideological, geopolitical, economic, legal, military-strategic, etc. aspects of the studied theory. A prerequisite for a successful endeavor is a well-written introduction – in Sergey Metodiev's book, this first part introduces us to the context of the world philosophy of history, discusses the famous theories of Fukuyama and Huntington, thereby preparing the transition to the topic of the first chapter.

Called "A Look at the Preceding Socio-Historical Situation," it introduces the main emphasis of the entire book – on the difference between reason and reason, from which every subsequent philosophical analysis will be conducted. In discussing the topic of intercivilizational dialogue, the crucial role of the three disciplines is emphasized: the history of philosophy, the philosophy of history, and the philosophy of religion, as well as the most important one, according to the author – the philosophy of philosophy, i.e. metaphilosophy, in whose field the positions of Hegel and Heidegger are located. In tracing the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman roots of modern European civilization, Dr. Metodiev emphasizes that clarifying the place of a given thinker in the overall historical-philosophical process is a prerequisite for understanding his philosophy – and he strictly follows this belief in his analysis of Dugin's concept.

Comparing the concepts of Fukuyama and Huntington, Sergey Metodiev proceeds from Hegelian positions and repeatedly notes the "crucial distinction" between mind and reason that is missing in the first thinker, insofar as without it "the question of anthropogenesis, and hence of sociogenesis, and ultimately of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history, cannot be resolved in any way" (p. 39).

Chapter two is called "On Philosophy and Its History" and logically begins with an explanation of the history of philosophy as a science. Here, attention is expectedly directed to Hegel's formulation of the question, again with an emphasis on the relationship between mind and reason. As already stated, the entire study is based and conducted on the philosophy of Hegel – the author notes that "if we do not include Hegel's philosophemes in the

"metabolism" of contemporary philosophical visions, then such a Hegel remains simply a museum exhibit." This danger is categorically avoided in the present book, and Hegel's philosophemes are constantly harnessed into action.

The chapter ends with two paragraphs addressing the contemporary philosophical situation. The first discusses the difference between continental and analytic philosophy – the descriptions are convincing and present an accurate picture of the two alternative philosophical visions, with the conclusion drawn predicting their impending interpenetration. The other paragraph deals with the era of postmodernity and postphilosophy, while also raising the question of the possibility of going beyond Hegel through Hegel, i.e. through his own method.

The third chapter is already dedicated to the main points in Alexander Dugin's concept, starting with an analysis of Dugin's interpretation of Heidegger, discussing pre-modern, modern and postmodern society. This section addresses interpretations of Weber's concept of "disenchantment" of the world in light of Dugin's interpretation of Heidegger's idea of the "Last God". Metodiev shows the Russian ideologist's intention of presenting the Fourth Political Theory as identical to the *Ereignis* itself, to the very saving work of the Last God/Radical Subject. Dugin's views on the nature of Russian philosophy – an important aspect of the central *Russian discourse* for him – are also carefully followed and critically commented on; on Russians as the main bearers of the Logos, as a people with an exceptional God-bearing and saving mission in world history. Dugin's analysis of his native philosophical history, viewed from the perspective of its participation in the great East-West debate, is competently presented. And, of course, the Russian ideologist's sharp criticism of Western thought, attacked by him, however, as solely rational thinking, as Metodiev once again reveals to us. And the result is that "... postmodern philosophy, and after it Dugin, leave us in the dead intellectual notion with its complete hermeneutical incapacity for the Absolute" (p. 155). I would also like to specially note the analysis of the claims for the exclusivity of Russian thinking, asserted by Dugin; of his specific interpretation of the original Russian philosophy, assessed in terms of its place in relation to the oppositions Apollonian/daytime – Dionysian/nighttime Logos. The author's conclusion that "spiritual collisions, lightning-like illuminations, sacred feelings," etc. cannot be the basis of a philosophy, no matter how original it may be, if it truly claims to be a *philosophy*, and not some other spiritual phenomenon, is fully justified. The critical reading of Dugin's book "The Fourth Way" is particularly successful – Metodiev manages to convincingly show and prove that the metaphilosophical position of the Russian ideologist is far from being *an apodictic*

*unshakable truth*. And the reason is found in the fact that the mental construct under discussion is *ideological*, not philosophical; that in the new political theory, philosophy is assigned only a subsidiary role. From then on, all of Dugin's subsequent statements are shown to be untenable, philosophically helpless.

And the conclusion made sounds quite logical: "Dugin presents us with an eclectically mixed and "indigestible" mental product that cannot possibly enter the world's mental "metabolism" in its saving and eschatological capacity" (p. 191).

Sergey Metodiev's work, dedicated to the ideological and political theories of Alexander Dugin – such an ambiguously perceived personality – deserves congratulations. The most important contribution is the exercise of the *philosophical* approach to Dugin's work and, respectively, finding the *philosophical flaws* of the ideas discussed. And, as I pointed out at the beginning, this research was conducted with understanding (but not *justification*); it is research at a highly professional level, thorough and erudite, with a subtle sense of humor. I am not aware of any other similar study on this topic in Bulgarian philosophical literature.

Dr. Metodiev has also presented for discussion a study on contemporary social networks – "Tik-Tok and the Absolute Idea" (2025), as well as a significant number of smaller publications that reflect his diverse interests in the fields of philosophy of religion, philosophy of history, etc.

I have not found any plagiarism in his works.

In conclusion: considering the highly professional scientific activity of Sergey Metodiev, which meets the criteria for holding the academic position he requested, as a member of the scientific jury for this competition, I fully support his candidacy and propose to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to elect him as an "associate professor" in the professional field 2.3. Philosophy, scientific specialty Philosophy of Religion.

15. 10. 2025 Signature: