

Results of the 5th Bulgarian History Competition 2007/2008

The topic of the 5th National History Competition for students from 8 to 12 grades: *“Trips, journeys and migration: stories of modern nomads”* was announced by the Values Foundation in December 2006. The topic was found interesting because the aspiration for travelling and journeys is an essential man’s desire towards new worlds. The movement of individuals as well as of groups with the aim of earning ones living, but also movement as a way of life is a part of every nation’s history. Experts, working in different scientific fields connected with the main topic, prepared the traditional information materials – *leaflet and magazine*, which were distributed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science to 28 regional education inspectorates.

The Values Foundation realized a fruitful co-operation with the Teachers` Information and Development Department – Sofia concerning the seminars for students and tutors. Such seminars were carried out in several Bulgarian towns with lecturers form the Department.

The deadline for submitting the research papers was *15 December 2007*. The number of entries was 86 and 147 students participated in the competition. Compared to the previous years the number of working papers varies. The reason for that can probably directly be associated with the 6-week Bulgarian teachers’ strike in autumn 2007, which is be the most intensive research/working time for tutors and students. The strike demands were not satisfied and the teachers (which represent more than 95% of the tutors) went back to schools demotivated. In addition it should be mentioned that the tutors’ work is not financially stimulated and frequently there is not even moral recognition from the school management. Finally, the demographic crisis of the early 90’s in Bulgaria resulted in the decreased total number of young people between 15 and 18.

According to the researched object the received papers could be divided into the *following 17 subgroups*:

- Immigrants;
- Journeys;
- Business trips;
- Jews;
- Minorities (Gypsies, Karakachans);
- Emigrants;
- Urbanization;
- Exiles;
- Education abroad;

- Repression;
- Personal Stories;
- Pilgrimage;
- Refugees in result of Balkan conflicts;
- Foreign workers.

The Jury under the chairmanship of *Prof. Lyubomir Ognyanov* (Sofia University) and members as *Dr. Rositza Stoyanova* (Institute of History – Bulgarian Academy of Science), *ass. Prof. Vesselin Yanchev* (Sofia University), *Dr. Michail Gruev* (Sofia University), *Vanya Elenkova* (Sofia University), *Petko Hristov* (Ethnographic Institute and Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Science) selected and defined the 15 prize-winners. The background of the competition proves that the 2-phase selection (pre-selection and national defense), as it was in the previous editions, did not change considerably the final results. For that reason during the 5th round of the competition the national defense phase was eliminated, which also led to budget optimization.

The following positive conclusions from the last competition round can be drawn:

- the fruitful working process with the Teachers Informational and Development Department – Sofia, which included within their program the History Competition seminars for tutors;
- the ambition more tutors to be encouraged and stimulated because this group is evaluated as the “moving force” of the competition (almost all tutors received awards and diploma);
- There are more special awards issued by various institutions.

Because of financial difficulties the website was not updated with the latest information concerning the competition activities.

The 5th Bulgarian National History Competition was held under the auspices of the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Science *Dr. Daniel Valchev*. The official award ceremony was traditionally held in the National History Museum on 7 June 2008 where the *Mr. Assen Petrov*, Department Director to the Ministry of Education and Science handed over the prizes. *Anton Fotev* and *Vladi Karastoynov* from Madan (tutor *Milka Terzieva*) won the First Prize with entry entitled: “*The city of migrations*”.

The official monetary fund consists of one 1st, two 2^{nds}, three 3^{rds}, nine encouraging and six prizes for tutors. In order to raise the award fund many institutions and organizations were contacted and it was suggested that they set up an award on their behalf for papers dealing with the activity of the respective institution or administration. The *Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgarian*

Teachers' Syndicate, Military Publishing House, Teachers' Informational and Development Department – Sofia, Bulgarian History Teachers' Association, Ethnographic Institute and Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Science, "Aerotravel", Association for Minority Research "Studii Romani" issued such special awards. For the first year the *"Ednorog" publishing house* provided an award for the school with the highest number of participants, as well as over 50 books for students. Many other institutions and publishing houses – *"Prosveta", Sofia University, National Archive Agency, Military publishing house* donated book sets. All students and their tutors received - personally or by mail – a certificate for their participation in the history competition.

After the award ceremony the participants and their tutors were invited to a discussion organized in co-operation between the Values Foundation and the Freidrich Naumann Foundation for the Liberty – Sofia, with title: *"Migrations within the EU – challenges and perspectives "* moderated by *Dr. Asparuch Panov*, (Co-ordinator for Bulgaria and Macedonia, Freidrich Naumann Foundation for the Liberty).