

## **Bulgarians and opiates. Production and trade (1879 – 1944)**

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**(abstract)**

The subject of the fight against drugs in Bulgaria in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century is largely unexplored in Bulgarian historiography. The aim of this monograph is to research the legal production of narcotic substances, the smuggling of opium, morphine, heroin and hashish, and the attempts of the Bulgarian authorities to prevent it. The subject of the research is the development of international law and its implementation in the Bulgarian legislation against opioids and the activities of the responsible factors in Sofia against the illegal trade with narcotic substances. Without pretending to be comprehensive, this is the first major publication on the topic of the development of the policy towards alkaloid derivatives in the country until the Second World War.

The chronological framework of the research covers the period from the restoration of the Bulgarian state to the end of the Second World War. The lower chronological limit is from 1879, the time when the poppy and the opium produced from it were used not only for medical purposes but were also part of the economic life of the country. The period between the two world wars occupies a central place in the exposition with a view of giving clearer historical picture of Bulgaria's place in global phenomena such as the production, trafficking, and distribution of drugs. During the inter-war period, a new policy aimed at the introduction of more detailed prohibition of certain narcotic substances took hold throughout the world, imposed both by individual countries and by international organizations such as the League of Nations. The upper limit was set in 1944, when the coup of September 9 led to a radical change in political governance, which in turn also affected the policy toward narcotic drugs, while at the same time the world organization ceased to exist, and the problem of fighting drugs underwent a radical transformation in international relations.

The research is based almost entirely on archival sources, which provide detailed information for the reconstruction of state policy and public attitudes towards narcotics during the period under consideration. In the process of research were studied documents of the Bulgarian state institutions involved in the problems of smuggling, as well as the relevant international documents binding

Bulgaria to the prohibition of the production, export and sale of narcotics. The research is based on the study of laws, decrees, reports, opinions, recommendations, files, statistical information, etc. from the funds of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religious Affairs, the Royal Legation in Bern, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health and other state institutions, which are now stored in the Central State Archives (CSA).