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Beyond Essentialism  
Bulgarian Inclusive Nationalism - The Case of Turkish Minority

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**BEYOND ESSENTIALISM  
BULGARIAN INCLUSIVE  
NATIONALISM - THE CASE OF THE  
TURKISH MINORITY**

by

Ivaylo Grouev

A thesis submitted to the Faculty  
of Graduate Studies and Research in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of

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## NOTE OF TRANSLITERATION

I use modern Bulgarian spelling for all Bulgarian terms, names and book titles, as well as the transliteration of Ottoman and Turkish publications and documents. Geographical names of major cities appear according to their modern version, while smaller settlements may appear according to the form used in the past. Words that have gained acceptance in the English language are rendered according to the spelling found in the Webster's Dictionary.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ASVP-89</i>	<i>Association for Support of Vienna-89</i>
<i>BCP</i>	<i>Bulgarian Communist Party</i>
<i>BEPR</i>	<i>Bulgarian Embassy Press Release</i>
<i>BSP</i>	<i>Bulgarian Socialist Party</i>
<i>BTA</i>	<i>Bulgarian Telegraph Agency</i>
<i>CSCE</i>	<i>Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe</i>
<i>FBIS/EEU</i>	<i>Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe</i>
<i>FPRI</i>	<i>Foreign Policy Research Institute</i>
<i>ISIM</i>	<i>Institute for the Study of International Migration</i>
<i>MRF</i>	<i>Movement for Rights and Freedoms</i>
<i>NATO</i>	<i>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</i>
<i>NBKM</i>	<i>National Library of Bulgaria SS. Cyril and Methodius</i>
<i>NMSII</i>	<i>National Movement Simeon II</i>
<i>RF/RL</i>	<i>Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty</i>
<i>OMRI</i>	<i>Open Media Research Institute</i>
<i>UDF</i>	<i>Union of Democratic Forces</i>
<i>UN</i>	<i>United Nations</i>
<i>ZZD</i>	<i>Zakon za Zachtita na Darzavat [State Protecting Law]</i>

**ABSTRACT**

**TITLE:** Beyond Essentialism, Bulgarian Inclusive Nationalism - The Case of the Turkish minority

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**DEGREE:** Ph.D.

In the following pages I try to present my interpretation of the enigma behind the successful co-existence between the two largest ethnic groups in Bulgaria - the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority - by offering a new theoretical rationalization of this atypical phenomenon in the context of the Balkans. My hypothesis is that the Bulgarian national project was defined as a manifestation of a political attachment. With this element as the common denominator/anchor, which resulted in the supremacy of common citizenship over ethnic and religious loyalties, I argue that the Bulgarian national vision clearly contradicted other South-eastern European nationalisms known to emphasize a population's cultural heritage and its ethnic continuity. I argue that in the case of Bulgaria we are dealing with a political, civic, inclusive nationalism. Using L. Greenfeld's situational constraint theory I assess those critical variables/factors of the Bulgarian nation-building process, which, I argue, enabled the emergence of a political and inclusive national project. This path contrasted other Balkan states, where this process emphasized ethnicity and religion, rather than citizenship, as major criteria for establishing a person's membership in the national "imagined community." Hence the Bulgarian liberation movement was atypical in terms of the pattern of regional nation building where the subordination of citizenship rights to the principle of statehood was generally the norm. Yet, while this may be attributed in part to the absence of certain conditions (religious or ethnic fervour, for example), Bulgaria's national project seems to have been the result of a conscious adoption of political universalism.

## *Introduction*

### **OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

#### *Statement of the Problem - Bulgarian ethnic paradox*

Lying at the very heart of the Balkans, Bulgaria represents a rare success story of a stable praxis of ethnic accommodation – in a sense, almost an *oasis in a desert of ethnic strife*, a virtual "island of stability" in the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> This statement does not come from the headlines, for it is a phenomenon largely ignored and unnoticed in the mass media, as well as in Western scholarly literature. I, however, argue that it is not a trivial exaggeration or propaganda exercise to draw attention to the facts of the "ethnic reality" in this country.

Regardless of the ideological, philosophical and methodological/theoretical approaches taken when assessing the complex Bulgarian case, there is one element of this ethnic paradox that stands out - the manifestation of a stable pattern of ethnic/religious accommodation in this country. What is undeniable here is that Bulgaria was able to maintain a continuity of ethnic peace for a period of over 120 years and *never experienced a pronounced inter-ethnic crisis leading to communal violence*.

Furthermore, it can be shown that even during critical periods, such as the Russian-

---

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Eagleburger, "The future of democracy and economic transition in Bulgaria", Transcript US Department of State Dispatch, March 16, 1992 [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1584/is\\_n11\\_v3/ai\\_12097719](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1584/is_n11_v3/ai_12097719)

Turkish war, the Balkan wars, and WWII, - all conflicts in which Bulgaria was at war officially with Turkey - there was never a crackdown against Bulgaria's large Turkish minority. A little known fact is that this accommodative pattern was followed not only vis-à-vis the Turkish minority, but also vis-à-vis other minorities, such as the Jews, who survived the Nazi occupation thanks to the fact that Bulgaria was the only country in Europe, besides Denmark, that refused to countenance their deportation.<sup>2</sup>

There have been plenty of critical developments in the ethnic landscape of Bulgaria that deserve more than a brief acknowledgement; they need to be conceptualized and critically assessed. To name a few, focusing only on the recent post-1989 transition period: the creation of the first ethnically-based party - the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), or the so-called Turkish party; the consolidation of its role as a skilful power broker and a party that is "*loyal to the democratic process*", a counterbalance in the bipolar post-communist political space in Bulgaria, and the current coalition of the National Liberation Movement (NLM) of Simeon Coburg Gotta and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms. All of the foregoing are hallmarks of a much more complex explanation than just the acknowledgement of a series of ethnic "paradoxes" in this country.

Perhaps any serious research should begin with the core of this case. There has been remarkable inter-ethnic stability in Bulgaria despite numerous territorial convulsions in the region and protracted periods of political instability, particularly in the first half of

---

<sup>2</sup> During WWII Bulgaria was the only occupied European country, apart from Denmark, which refused to authorize the deportation of its Jews, numbering 48,000, to extermination camps. See Ilona Tomova, "Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria," in Magda Opalski and Piotr Dutkiewicz eds., *Ethnic Minority Rights in Central Eastern Europe*, (Ottawa, 1996), pp.99-100. See also Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness: Why Bulgaria's Jews Survived the Holocaust*, (New Jersey, 2003).

the twentieth century. The most recent opportunity to analyze seriously the Bulgarian ethnic paradox surfaced in the nineties, during the extensive debate on national sentiments in Eastern Europe - a reaction to the war in the former Yugoslavia. However, surprisingly, the debate ignored the troublesome question of why, in the midst of the ethnic strife otherwise characterizing that region, Bulgaria was able to maintain a remarkable continuity of ethnic peace for a period of 125 years! <sup>3</sup>

One possible explanation for this obvious academic neglect lies in some deeply entrenched conventional assumptions regarding the nature of “ethnically exclusive East European nationalisms.” The problem however is that such a conceptualization, to put it mildly, seems to be ill suited for either explaining or providing an adequate conceptual shelter to the Bulgarian “Balkan Ghost(s).”<sup>4</sup>

There is an evident unanimity on the part of otherwise prominent scholars in assessing *en bloc* that the whole Balkan region produces only one type of nationalism: ethnically-based and exclusive. I, however, argue that this analysis seems inadequate to explain the ethnic predicament in Bulgaria. In the first place it is too limiting, and in the second it does not “fit” the Bulgarian ethnic paradox, which, certainly not problem-free, is anything but exclusive. The Bulgarian ethnic paradox simply does not correspond to the established explanations and theoretical configurations in the existing literature on nationalism, especially East European nationalism.

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<sup>3</sup> In the nineties the predominance of this “relaxed” jargon in explaining the reasons for the ethnic violence that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, based on trivial generalizations of the exclusive and xenophobic nature of nationalism in Eastern Europe, dominated most of the academic literature and had a free ride in the mass media, where new ethnic mythology was invented. See Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, (New York, 1993). See also Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts*.

The aim of my work is to *reverse the equation* hence, one possible conclusion is that during the last hundred years of numerous political crises, (short-lived civil unrest in 1923, two coup d'état and economic calamity), the political bond, based on a common citizenship of all Bulgarians, did not suffer dramatically in terms of respect for ethnic minorities. The abundant reverberations of this prevailing dominant theme of ethnic tolerance represent, in my assessment, an at least noticeable, if not fully credible, proof of the presence of an intriguing, (primarily from a theoretical point of view), phenomenon inherent in Bulgarian nationalism.

The combination of a high level of tolerance and tendencies towards inclusiveness in the Bulgarian national project allowed the country to maintain a continuity of ethnic peace for over 120 years, eradicating pronounced inter-ethnic crises leading to violent clashes. This is how one of the leading Bulgarian scholars on inter-ethnic accommodation, A. Zhelyazkova, explains this phenomenon:<sup>5</sup>

Bulgaria lies at a crossroad of peoples and civilizations, where different customs, religious beliefs, political systems, and cultural stereotypes coexist in a turbulent mixture. In that sense, it is no different from the neighbouring Balkan states.

*On the other hand, there is something unusual or special about the modes of ethnic cohabitation that have traditionally dominated Bulgarian political life. In their everyday interactions, the major ethnic and religious groups (Christians, Muslims, and Jews) were able to establish and preserve relations marked by open-mindedness and mutual respect.*<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, we are dealing with a regional (some may prefer semi-continental) paradox, given that the persistent lack of inter-ethnic violence in Bulgaria represents a sharp contrast

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<sup>5</sup> Antonina Zhelyazkova is chair of the board of directors of the International Center for Minority Studies in Sofia.

<sup>6</sup> See Antonia Zhelyazkova, "The Bulgarian Ethnic Model," *East European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4, (Fall 2001). Italics in the quotation are mine.

compared to practically all her neighbours.

The most extreme case is that of the former Yugoslavia, with its heavy burden of ethnic calamities during WWII, but also the remnants of the Yugoslav federation: in Serbia - the recent ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Croatia – the swift ethnic cleansing of Serbs by Croats in Slavonia and Kosovo (ignored by the media), Macedonia’s short but firm military response vis-à-vis the Albanian ethnic minority, and finally Bosnia and Herzegovina, where all ethnic groups - Serbs, Croats, as well as a “new” ethnic identity, the Bosniaks – fought against each other.

In the case of Bulgaria, the absence of any tradition of manifested ethnic violence is mirrored by another non-event that is, the lack of interest shown by the central government in assimilating the nation’s Turkish minority (the exception of the crisis 1985-1989 will be assessed in detail later on).<sup>7</sup> Taken together, these fundamental idiosyncrasies are in sharp contrast to neighbouring Balkan countries where state-sponsored assimilation policies were the rule rather than the exception: Romania against ethnic Hungarians, Greece against ethnic Bulgarians, Macedonians, Pomaks as well as the mass expulsion of Turks.

It would be at least misleading to present the current inter-ethnic situation in Bulgaria as idyllic, as there are some real ethnic problems. Some background here may be needed. According to the 2001 census, Bulgaria's overall population of 7 928 901 is mainly ethnic Bulgarian - 6 655 210 (83.9%) - with two sizable minorities in the form of Turks 746 664

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<sup>7</sup> Zhelyazkova argues that “the historically developed modes of acceptance and appreciation of the others, as “other,” remain embedded in the social fabric and constitute an organic part of the culture of toleration that has evolved in the ethnically mixed regions. “See Ibid.

(9.4%) and Roma 370 908 (4.7%).<sup>8</sup> The remaining 2% consist of several smaller minorities including Armenians, Russians, Romanians, Vlachs and Jews.<sup>9</sup> Roughly 84% of the Bulgarian population speak Bulgarian, the only official language. The number of Christians is 6 638 870, while the number of Muslims is 966 978, and 283 309 respondents do not associated themselves with any religion. Bulgarian Christians are ethnically heterogeneous and include such groups as Bulgarians, Russians, Armenians, Greeks, Vlachs, Karakachans, Gagauz<sup>10</sup> and others. This trend is the same for the Muslim community. It includes Bulgarian Turks, Bulgarian Muslims (Pomaks), Gypsies, Tatars, Circassians, etc.<sup>11</sup>

Although there is clearly an undeniable pattern of ethnic accommodation vis-à-vis the large ethnic minority, there is strong evidence that inter-ethnic relations between Bulgarians and one particular ethnic group – the Roma - are far from inclusive. Compared to other ethnic groups, the economic hardship of the transition period had the most severe impact on the Roma. With the collapse of collective farming (48% of the Roma live in rural areas, and in contrast to Bulgarians they do not possess land at all), the collapse of the social safety net and, most of all, with no prospect of finding jobs, the

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<sup>8</sup> Census 2001, National Statistical Institute population by districts and ethnic groups as of 1.03.2001, [http://www.nsi.bg/Census\\_e/Census\\_e.htm](http://www.nsi.bg/Census_e/Census_e.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> "The Gagauz are a small Turkic tribe with an unclear origin. One theory has it that they derive from Turkic-speaking Oguz, Uz and Kumans that migrated from the south Russian steppes by the Black Sea to the Dobrudja region in eastern Bulgaria in the Middle Ages. The Gagauz may also have been joined by groups of Slavs (Bulgars) who adopted the Turkic language but kept their religion, thus introducing the Gagauz to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. A third possibility is that the Gagauz are descended from Bulgarians who have been forcibly turkified but have managed to retain their orthodox faith." [http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk\\_b.exe?Gagauzian](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Rusland/etnisk_b.exe?Gagauzian)

<sup>11</sup> The name "Pomaks" was used by the local Christian population and by the Bulgarian State to identify the Bulgarian-speaking Islamic population. "The root of the word " Pomak" "is derived from words such as "pomamvam", "pomalil se" and "pometnal se" (all of which indicate unfaithfulness), or from "mukna se" (going along with an alien belief)". See Boriana Panaiotova and Kalina Bozeva "Balgarskite Musulmani ("Pomatsi")" in *Maltsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Choveškie Prava* [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in Human Rights Context], (Sofia,1994). p. 27.

Roma are driven to semi-legal or illegal activities. It should not be surprising that crime among the Roma is highest compared to other ethnic groups.

This is why I argue that the precarious state of inter-ethnic relations between Bulgarian and Roma is due not to populist xenophobic tendencies, and is not related to the exclusive nature of the Bulgarian nationalism, but is rather a reaction to Roma economic crime activities.

I would argue that the attitude of Bulgarian society vis-à-vis another ethnic group, the Macedonians, did not generate a particular tension, simply because they were not perceived as belonging to a distinct ethnic group differing from the Bulgarian ethnos. The same perception is supported by the population in the Pirin area ("Bulgarian Macedonia") where the results of the 1992 census concluded that only 10 800 people identified themselves as Macedonians.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, ethnic accommodation with respect to the Turkish minority is an essential part of the ethnic legacy of Bulgaria. One may argue that a combination of a lack of centralized assimilation policies and a considerable level of institutionalized cultural and religious autonomy and self-governance for the Turkish minority played an instrumental role in assuring the survival of a stable and workable ethnic equilibrium. This is a valid statement and it applies dating from the very beginning of inter-ethnic relations in

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<sup>12</sup> According to a sociological survey from 1991, in the Pirin area there are 10 000 people who identify themselves as Macedonians. According to another survey, 79.7 per cent identify as Bulgarians, 44 per cent as Macedonians, 1.2 per cent as Turks, 8.4 per cent as Pomaks (Bulgarian Mohammedans), and 3.5 per cent as Gypsies. See Ilona Tomova "Vlianieto na Makedonizma v Pirinska Makedonia", in *Aspekti na Etnokulturnata Situatsia v Balgaria*, (Sofia, 1994), p. 190, as well as Kalina Bozeva and Bobby Bobev, "The Macedonians in Bulgaria," in *Maltsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Choveshkite Prava*, [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994), p. 41.

the new kingdom of Bulgaria, created in 1878. The Tirnovo Constitution laid considerable stress on accommodative policies, granting the Turkish minority (as well as other minority groups) the right to fully preserve and develop their culture. One should notice the fact that, after five centuries of Ottoman rule, the newly emerged Bulgarian state *drew up its foundational document in the spirit of an inclusive political nation, despite the numerical vulnerability of the Bulgarian ethnic group.*<sup>13</sup>

In this way the very foundations of the future Bulgarian society were based on the premise of accepting *les différences du quotidien*, granting extensive self-rule to various religious communities. Muslims, and Jews as well, were granted full control over all the religious, economic, cultural and educational activities of their communities. This policy can be most clearly observed in respect to the nation's largest ethnic community - the Turkish minority.

One may argue that the rationale behind these non-interventionist/liberal policies was in the attempt to accommodate not only a very conservative, but also a highly sensitive, Turkish community by allowing them to preserve their way of life, language, religion, and traditions.

In contrast to the strong assimilationist policies in neighbouring countries, in the case of Bulgaria, such individual and social rights as religious freedom, an independent education system, use of Turkish language – indeed, the three levels of government – central,

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<sup>13</sup> In 1876, just before the establishment of the Bulgarian State, the number of Turks and that of Bulgarians living in the area known as the 'Land of Bulgaria' were practically equal. In 1876 some 1,130,000 Bulgarians and 1,120,000 Turkish Muslims dwelled in the six sanjaks of the Danube province. Italics are mine.

provincial and municipal – were obliged to provide substantial financial support to Turkish private schools)<sup>14</sup> and self-governing community bodies were not only accepted as given, but became an integral part of the social fabric of Bulgarian society as a whole.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence for the long tradition of tolerance is the existence of a parallel legal system, in the form of the Turkish Islamic canonical or shariat courts, which has functioned without disruption for a period of almost 70 years. Over the course of a few decades, the new Bulgarian state ensured that all Muslim communities in the country were represented by councils entrusted with responsibility for communal real estate, property and affairs. What is more, the majority of the decisions taken by these bodies were regarded as legally binding and were therefore accepted by the state bureaucracy.<sup>15</sup>

Another indication of the liberal climate that has prevailed in Bulgaria since independence is the presence of a vibrant Turkish press that is allowed to circulate freely in the country. Even in an early period, such as between 1878 and 1934, more than 80 newspapers and magazines were published in the country in Turkish, which alone points to stable inter-ethnic relations between the two communities.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the level of tolerance may also be gauged by the obligation laid upon the three levels of government to provide financial support to Turkish educational, legal and religious institutions. This undertaking

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<sup>14</sup> Provisions dealing with the curriculum offered in Turkish private schools allowed for instruction to be carried out in a language other than Bulgarian; however, courses on the Bulgarian language, history and geography were mandatory.

<sup>15</sup> Bilal N. Simsir, *The Turks of Bulgaria 1878-1985*, (London, 1988) p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> See Vera Mutavchieva, "Predstavata za "Drugia" (Iztorochesko Izsledvane)" in *Vrazki na Savmestnost i Nesvmestnost Mezdu Hristiani i Muislmani v Bulgaria*, [Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christian and Musims] (Sofia, 1955), p.23. See also *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context* (Sofia, 1994), p. 23.

was fundamental to the state's responsibility.<sup>17</sup>

The inter-ethnic situation did, however, change after the arrival of the Communist regime. The blueprint of a socialist society required a different design, and one not necessarily compatible with the Bulgarian inter-ethnic tradition.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, it was precisely the reaction to the inconsistencies of the ethnic policies of the communist regime, that, in my view, make the Bulgarian case all the more interesting and deserving of attention on the part of researchers of nationalism, particularly East European nationalism.

Needless to say, due to the ideological foundations of communism, religion was denounced in Bulgaria and as Zhelyazkova states the ruling party was eager "to spread the spirit of communism among ethnic minorities."

Children of non-Bulgarian background were subjected to communist indoctrination in their parochial schools, and minority-language newspapers were used as venues for disseminating communist ideology. Ethnic Turks, Pomaks (ethnic Bulgarians who had adopted Islam at various times in the past), Roma, Jews and Armenians *were actively recruited into the party nomenclature*. In return, these cadres carried out the policy of the Bulgarian Communist Party directed at their compatriots.<sup>19</sup>

In the mid-1980s, however, the Communist Party took a dramatic turn that culminated in the forceful renaming of ethnic Turks during the winter of 1984-85. The inconsistency of policies has led to some trivial but erroneous generalizations within the "Balkan mantra" of ethnic rivalries, but it did not prevent them from failing to capture the peculiarities of the Bulgarian case.

What is perhaps most deserving of investigation is the fact that, despite the explosive

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<sup>17</sup> Simsir, *The Turks of Bulgaria 1878-1985*, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> See Ulrih Biuksenshuti, *Maltisnstvenata Politika v Balgaria, Politikata na BKP kam Evrei, Romi, Pomatsi i Turtsi, 1944-1989* [Minority policy in Bulgaria, the Policy of BSP Towards Jews, Pomaks, Turks:1944-1989], (Sofia, 2000).

<sup>19</sup> Zhelyazkova, "The Bulgarian Ethnic Model," Italics in the quotation are mine.

situation engineered by the Communist regime, ethnic peace was quickly restored. Thus, in 1989 a Committee for National Reconciliation was created declaring that its primary objective was “to restore the tradition of toleration and to facilitate the process of ethnic reconciliation; it unequivocally supported the demands of Bulgarian Turks.”<sup>20</sup> What should be noted here is the quick and easy transition from the assimilationist élan of the early 1980s, which some may argue represents the hallmark of the post-1989 dynamics of the “Bulgarian ethnic paradox.” The absence of extreme nationalism can indeed be distinguished as a specific characteristic of the Bulgarian transition.<sup>21</sup> In order to mobilize civil society, while taking the first steps towards the democratization and reformation of their political and economic infrastructure, Central European countries came to rely on such motivating factors as: anti-Communism, a desire for breaking with the Eastern bloc and the speedy removal of Soviet troops, and a sense of national dignity. Bulgaria, however, was once again the exception.

There, the mobilization of civil society for the transition was carried out under the slogans of “democracy”, “human rights” and “equal rights for the minorities” well before the anti-Communist motivation had been realized and brought into use. Characteristic of the initial stage of the transition period in Bulgaria was the perfectly discernible effort to humanize the societal system; the moral values of democracy were what mattered most. There existed a broadly supported aspiration to atone, in practical

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>21</sup> “The small parties, which emerged in 1990 and 1991 and had nationalist, racist and anti-minority platforms, failed to achieve prominence with the public. Some of them, although they had been created in the regions of mixed population by a directive of the Communist party or its secret services in order to inspire tension between Bulgarians and Turks and maintain permanent fear of and suspicion towards the Muslims, did not find support among the local population. Being soon reduced to marginality, they have no weight whatsoever in today’s political life.” Antonina Zhelyazkova, *Mezdu Nostrtalgia i Adaptasia. Balgarskite Turtsi v Turtsia* [Between Nostalgia and Adaptation. The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey], (Sofia, 1998).

ways, for the outrages committed against Muslim Bulgarian citizens.

Arguably the most significant aspect of the political transformation in Bulgaria after the collapse of the communist regime in November 1989 is that the historically prevalent patterns of peaceful coexistence among ethnically diverse groups were swiftly restored. Of course, to describe Bulgaria as an ethnic idyll would be too simplistic and misleading. *At the same time, the relatively high level of religious toleration and open-mindedness with regard to minority issues may be considered the main characteristic of the so-called Bulgarian ethnic model, setting Bulgaria apart from its troubled neighbours.* The common sense of people living in the ethnically mixed regions, as well as the dominant traditional values embraced by Bulgarian society as a whole, rendered possible the peaceful regulation of ethnic relations during a period of excruciatingly hard economic and social change.<sup>22</sup>

Most indicative of the scope of inter-ethnic policies of the post-Zhivkov period<sup>23</sup> was the *full restoration of the individual rights* of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria, a process that did not result in any open anti-Turkish sentiment, or antagonize the Bulgarian majority.<sup>24</sup> To begin, the restoration of Muslim names had top priority, such that by the “spring of 1991, 600 000 such requests had been granted.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the Turkish minority in Bulgaria enjoyed a real religious Renaissance. Throughout the 1990s the community’s 920 mosques<sup>26</sup> had been continuously active, and their acceptance by the majority of Bulgarians was an important step in the process of “ethnic healing.” “At the same time, newspapers that specifically targeted Armenian, Jewish, Turkish and Muslim readerships began to

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<sup>22</sup> Zhelyazkova, “The Bulgarian Ethnic Model.” Italics are mine.

<sup>23</sup> Todor Zhivkov, the Chairman of the Bulgarian Communist Party, was the longest serving communist leader of any of the East-European countries.

<sup>24</sup> The Bulgarian Constitution of 1991, stipulates “that the right to one’s own culture is seen as the right of ethnic minorities; the right to profess one’s own religion as the right of members of religious minorities; and the right to use one’s own language as the right of linguistic minorities.” See Plamen Bogoev, “Bulgarskite Konstitutsii za Pravata na Maltstinstvata” [Bulgarian Constitutions and the Rights of Minorities] in *Maltstinstvata v Bulgaria v Konteksta na Chovechките Prava*, [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994), p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Zhelyazkova, “The Bulgarian Ethnic Model”

<sup>26</sup> Ilona Tomova, “Turtsite v Balgaria” [Turks in Bulgaria.] in *Maltstinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Chovechките Prava*, [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994), p. 17.

appearing on a regular basis.”<sup>27</sup> In addition, many new newspapers and magazines in the Turkish language began to be published in Bulgaria. As well, local radio stations allocated airtime for broadcast in Turkish. The national Bulgarian Radio also broadcasted daily programs in Turkish.<sup>28</sup> In the area of education, it should be noted that Bulgarian public schools began to offer “four hours of optional Turkish lessons a week for children in the 2nd to the 8<sup>th</sup> class (age of 8-14), and for children in the first Class (age7).”<sup>29</sup> A significant stimulus in the process of “ethnic healing” was the emergence of the organization of Bulgarian Turks, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) established in 1990, which consolidated its presence on the national political landscape as the “invariable balance of power” third political party.

It becomes apparent that in the case of Bulgaria we are not dealing with different outcomes of “ethnic processes” in the era of “transition.” Compared to some Balkan states, particularly to the west of Bulgaria (Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina), experiencing similar phases, i.e., launch of nationalistic project, ethnic crisis and ethnic healing, there are at least three observations requiring further attention.

The first observation is associated with the *process of generating popular, bottom-up support*, a critical element in gaining sufficient energy to open the Pandora’s box of an aggressive nationalistic project. Despite the intense, populist, anti-Turkish discourse of the propaganda spread by the Bulgarian Communist Party, which bombarded Bulgarian

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<sup>27</sup> Zhelyazkova, “The Bulgarian Ethnic Model.”

<sup>28</sup> Ilona Tomova, “Turksite v Balgaria” [Turks in Bulgaria,] in *Malkinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Choveckite Prava* [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994), p.17-18.

<sup>29</sup> Tomova, *Ibid.*, p. 17

public opinion with disastrous scenarios of the imminent partition of Bulgaria as a result of strong separatist sentiments within the Turkish minority and Turkey's aggressive foreign policy, *the hoped-for ethnic radicalization did not materialize.*

This can be explained, in the case of Bulgaria, by the fact that from the start of the 1984 ethnic crisis, manufactured as we have seen by the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the BCP, nationalism from the top faced a rather cold reception.

The second observation is with respect to the innate solidarity of the Bulgarian nation, an ability to resist the deep ethnic cleavages, that may lead to an exclusive nationalism. For while it is fair to argue that at the beginning of the crisis the Bulgarian nation as a whole was rather demoralized, and failed to adequately defend its Turkish citizenry, the reaction of Bulgarian society in 1985-1989 followed a more normal pattern reminiscent of the solidarity shown towards its Jewish minority during the Nazi occupation. The inseparability of the nation based on the acceptance of each other's differences-religious (in the case of Jews and Turks) and linguistic (in the case of some Turks) - is in my view indicative of the presence of an atypical nationalism, at least in the Balkan context.

As a third observation, in contrast to *exclusive nationalism*, *an inclusive national agenda generated by a bottom-up trend of newly emerging civic forces within Bulgarian society demonstrated that this national model is more compatible with the traditional "mental image" of community.* A variety of independent associations, with ethnic Bulgarian membership, became the prime defenders of the rights of the Turkish community. The crisis of 1989 mobilized the Bulgarian nation into evicting an unpopular regime and, as well, an unpopular assimilation campaign. Both events

signalled a deeply rooted vision of the Bulgarian nation based on political bonding. It appears that, within the Bulgarian nation, this political bond is stronger than the bond of ethnic self-identity. In the Bulgarian case we confront a society where the concept of the “Volk”, an identity based on common denominators such as language, religion and culture, is truly foreign. This observation is in sharp contrast with the “ethnic” and exclusivist projects underway elsewhere in the region.

A fourth observation may be made in connection with the dominant attitudes and perceptions expressed by the Bulgarian ethnic majority during the period of “ethnic healing.” They provide the necessary backdrop to evaluate and contextualize these attitudes from the perspective of assessing the generating centre, i.e. the nature of Bulgarian nationalism. From this perspective, we should note that the post-1989 institutional arrangements in respect to the Turkish minority (free religious practices, education in Turkish, as well as mass media in Turkish language) clearly did not antagonize the Bulgarian majority or lead to a nationalist backlash. Compared to its neighbours, the absence of extreme nationalism is among the most conspicuous features of the Bulgarian transition.

This inclusiveness also suggests the stability of an established pattern of compatibility between the two ethnic groups. Perhaps most importantly, with respect to the new political context, this may indicate that the two ethnic groups can work as fully equal partners. This would be a remarkable achievement, particularly in the difficult economic conditions, resulting from the transition period. Monitoring the mainstream press in Greece, Turkey, Romania, Serbia and Macedonia has revealed that the most influential

newspapers in these states have tended to portray ethnic minorities predominantly in a negative light. Thus, the prevailing tolerant attitudes vis-à-vis the Turkish minority expressed by the main Bulgarian newspapers stand in ever-starker contrast to the general attitudes towards ethnic/religious/linguistic minorities in other Balkan countries.<sup>30</sup>

These idiosyncratic elements present some of the main features of the Bulgarian ethnic phenomenon. The repeated instances of tolerance and inclusiveness that can be cited in the historical record of recent decades represent, in my assessment, credible evidence of the presence of an atypical ethnic phenomenon in the context of the Balkans.

I argue that the interplay of an accommodative tradition (rooted in what we may call the “national psyche” and a lack of a strong political will to engage in any assimilationist campaign, coupled with an ambition to establish a workable framework that favoured internal unity based on a common citizenry, rather than ethnic, linguistic or religious criteria, created the necessary structural predisposition for the emergence of this atypical phenomenon.

As I will explain later, this choice has turned out to be of paramount importance because the Bulgarian national project was thereby defined as a manifestation of a civic attachment. With the supremacy of common citizenship over ethnic and religious loyalties, I argue that

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<sup>30</sup> Monitoring of the mainstream press in the rest of the Balkan countries conducted in the period 1997-1999 revealed a general trend of expression of negative attitudes vis-à-vis ethnic minorities and a complete disregard for human and minority rights as stipulated in various international documents. Most newspapers have taken a stance against the official recognition of the different ethnic and religious minorities in contrast to the predominantly tolerant attitudes towards the Turkish minority by which the Bulgarian press has been characterized. See: Valery Roussanov, *Balkan Neighbors*, Vol. 8, Access, (Sofia, 1999).

the Bulgarian national vision clearly contradicts other South-eastern European nationalisms known to emphasize a population's cultural heritage and its ethnic continuity.

On the other hand, it would be at least misleading to present Bulgaria as being free of ethnically charged tensions. Although there is clearly an undeniable pattern of ethnic accommodation vis-à-vis the large Turkish minority, there is strong evidence that inter-ethnic relations between Bulgarians and one particular ethnic group, the Roma, are far from inclusive. Compared to other ethnic groups, the economic hardship of the transition period has had the most severe impact on the Roma. With an almost collapsed social security net, thousands of large Gypsy families who have traditionally relied on monthly social security payments had to bear impossible financial burdens to feed their families. With very little or no education, and no feasible prospects in the job market because of the increasingly negative stereotyping, many Gypsies find the only solution is criminal activity. Crime among Gypsies is the highest among any other ethnic group.

According to the former Presidential adviser on Ethnic Policies, Mihail Ivanov, 37% of crimes were committed by Gypsies, who represent fewer than 8% percent of the population of the country. Eighty-nine percent of Bulgarians believe that Gypsies are thieves, and are concerned that law enforcement is not in a position to halt the unprecedented rise of crime in the country. As a result, the Roma are facing an increasingly hostile environment dominated by negative stereotyping:

*Hunger, misery and the total lack of employment opportunities drive most of the Gypsies to reassess their values and the behavioral norms, which regulated their actions up to the recent past.*

*Increasingly they begin to lose their negative moral and emotional significance and theft and fraud begin to be seen as the only possible means of survival."*<sup>31</sup>

Bulgarian Roma have increasingly become a target of intense anti-negative stereotyping and frequent cases of police brutality.<sup>32</sup>

With respect to the next ethnic group, the Pomaks, it is fair to state that they have always been in the difficult position of struggling to find their appropriate place in ethnically diverse Bulgaria. Unlike other ethnic groups, Pomaks had to face the hard dilemma of sacrificing two of their most intimate "ethnic" characteristics: language or religion. Lately the fragmentation process in search for self-identity among the Pomak community has become much more pronounced, in this way affecting the perception of the Bulgarian majority vis-à-vis this particular group. Being marginalized by the two larger ethnic entities: the Bulgarians and the Turks, and having "*transitional ethnic character in a transitional period*" as one Bulgarian scholar put it, Pomaks were left to choose from three possible options: to identify themselves as Bulgarians, to identify themselves as Turks, or to identify themselves as a unique ethnic group. This is why this should not be a surprise that the general perceptions of Bulgarian society with respect to the Pomaks was rather ambiguous at identifying them as ethnic Turks or ethnic Bulgarians.

The most important is the third group where the dynamism is most pronounced, although I may argue that it has not been of concern with respect to national cohesion.<sup>33</sup> According

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<sup>31</sup> Ilona Tomova, "Romskata Etnicheska Obshnost v Balgaria" [The Roma in Bulgaria] in *Maltsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Chovechките Pprava* [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994), p.23.

<sup>32</sup> See: Bulgaria, "Recent Reports of Unlawful Use of Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials," Amnesty International, December, 1, 1998 AI. Index: EUR 15/019/1998. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGEUR150191998>

<sup>33</sup> As Panaiotova and Bozeva argue: "The "Pomaks" and their religious and cultural differences should not be seen as a threat to peace in the country - nor as a Trojan horse for Islamic fundamentalism. In fact, they are an excellent example of a

to the finding by researchers from the mass-media monitoring project, *Balkan Neighbours*, the comparatively few articles published “*devoted to this religious group have the most stable positive image in the Bulgarian main stream press.*”<sup>34</sup>

Needless to say, the most controversial of all ethnic groups is the Macedonian one. Traditionally Macedonia has been perceived as the Gordian Knot in the Balkans, where Bulgaria has fought two devastating wars. What is important to observe, however, is the political and popular media dimension of this issue, in the context of the new ethnic landscape after the end of the Zhivkov regime. It should be noted that within the post-1989 political elite there was an unequivocal consensus on this subject. In 1990, all of the main political parties in Bulgaria - the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), the Bulgarian Agrarian Union (BAU), the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) and the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party (BSDP) - stressed that there was no "Macedonian Question" and that Macedonians were Bulgarians.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, according to the sociological survey from 1991, in the Pirin area (Bulgarian Macedonia) there are only 10 800 people who identify themselves as Macedonians.<sup>36</sup> I would argue that the attitude of Bulgarian society vis-à-vis “ethnic Macedonians,” did not generate a particular tension, simply because they were not perceived as belonging to a distinct ethnic group differing from the Bulgarian ethnos. The Macedonian group UMO-Ilinden, which is made up of Bulgarian citizens who consider

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cultural intermediary between the two main religious groups in the country - the Christians and the Muslims. An improvement in the socio-economic situation in the regions they live in, and an amenable acceptance of their right to be different and to practice their religion, are the most promising ways to dismantle the tension and mistrust between them and the remainder of the Bulgarian citizenry.” See Boriana Panaiotova, & Kalina Bozeva, "Balgarskite Musulmani ("Pomatsi") in *Malinsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Chovezhkite Prava*, [Minority Groups in Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994) p. 32.

<sup>34</sup> Kamelia Anguelova, “Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Bulgarian Mainstream Press,” *Balkan Neighbors*, Vol.5, (1997), p.24.

<sup>35</sup> BTA, 22 February, 1990, in BBC; Summary of World Broadcast EE/O697, February, 24, 1990.

<sup>36</sup> Ilona Tomova, “Vlianieto na Makedonizma v Pirinska Makedonia” [The Influence of Macedonianism in Pirin Macedonia] *Ethno Kulturnata Sitiatsia v Balgaria* [Ethno-Cultural Situation in Bulgaria], Access, (Sofia, 1994) p. 190.

themselves ethnic Macedonians, was registered in 1992 and operates freely. Their "Macedonianism" is based on promoting a greater regionalism improving the cultural and economic links between the Pirin Macedonia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and in general improving the climate on a regional governmental level. The apparent lack of media coverage on the Macedonian ethnic group within the Bulgarian mainstream press is evidence of its rather low profile within the current inter-ethnic dynamic.

What is more important to note is that the existence of the emergence of a separate Macedonian ethnic identity in FYROM was not perceived with anxiety in Bulgaria - nor as a potentially explosive issue, such as opening a Macedonian Pandora's box, nor as an internal issue threatening national security. UMO "Ilinden", as a movement for Macedonian minority rights in Bulgaria, did not have a cohesive electorate behind it, as was the case with the Turkish minority. It became instead a question that should be dealt with on a local administrative level rather than in the national political arena.

To conclude: according to a 1993 report assessing the state of human rights in Bulgaria, prepared by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: *“Bulgaria has been one of the few examples in the Balkans of peace and stability, and has not been caught the web of ultra nationalism. Despite some inter-ethnic tensions, especially with respect to the treatment of Gypsies, the majority of the population of Bulgaria appears to be moderate and relatively tolerant in their views.”*<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> A Report Prepared by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Human Rights and Democratization in Bulgaria*, 102th Congress, 2nd Session, (Washington, 1993).

### *Objective of the thesis*

In the following pages I attempt to present my interpretation of the enigma behind the successful co-existence between the two largest ethnic groups in Bulgaria - the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority - by offering a new theoretical rationalization of this atypical phenomenon in the context of the Balkans.

Initially, I approached this paradigm from the perspective of analyzing the current, and quite extraordinary, inter-ethnic balance between the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority in the post-1989 political arena. My first inclination was to give credit to the moderate and skilful policy of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) led by Ahmed Dogan, who was a central figure in managing to disperse the predictable tensions associated with the legalization of the MRF in 1990.

*The real question* is why, in the midst of ethnic strife characterized as the norm rather than the exception for most of the 20th century, and in the region known as “the volatile Balkans” Bulgaria has enjoyed 124 years of ethnic peace since its creation in 1878? This nonconforming and unusual phenomenon begs for a convincing theoretical explanation, not only because of its status of *de facto* ignored paradox, seemingly unrelated to the standard explanations and theoretical configurations in the existing literature on nationalism, particularly East-European nationalism. What is even more perplexing is that, after the violent break-up of Yugoslavia, the revived debate on national sentiments in this part of Europe has failed to produce any notable academic work addressing this issue from a critical or even comparative perspective.

The objective of the thesis, therefore, is to explain the current theoretical impasse over the Bulgarian ethnic-equilibrium paradigm by offering a rather radical way out of the conventional typology of nationalism, according to which Central and EastEuropean nationalisms are by definition ethnic, and therefore intolerant and exclusive, if not xenophobic, nationalisms.

Within this perspective the thesis *offers a diametrically opposing view of the nature of Bulgarian nationalism*, placing it in the category of the Western (associated with the Anglo/North American type of civic, inclusive nationalism, based on citizenship and not on ethnic bonds. The collection of data and evidence ought not to be guided by a mono-causal logic of precisely operationalized variables, but by the belief that interpreting a phenomenon as complex and “stubborn” as Bulgarian nationalism requires equal weight to be given to economic, cultural, social and political structural factors.

### ***Methodology***

I would start with the observation that there is a tradition within the scholarly literature on nationalism to address the area, otherwise called the Balkans, as a *monolith*, where history, political developments, national projects and political culture are inseparable from the “specificity” of the “totality” of this entire regional configuration.

Within this seemingly more ideological than scholarly assumption, Bulgarian nationalism has been unquestionably “parked” in the category of “ethnically exclusive” nationalisms due to the traditional division of Europe, into West, where a civic, political type of

nationalism dominates, and East/The Balkans/Bulgaria, where an exclusive, “organic” type of nationalism was and still is the norm.

However, the fundamental problem in assessing Bulgarian nationalism is that it does not fit into the prevailing directions of the literature on nationalism. Ignoring, rather than theorizing, facts may seem to be a prudent strategy to some for the viability of the “good/bad nationalism” theory if the goal is to perpetuate and thereby consolidate a healthy essentialism. But such an approach is hardly scientific. According to this particular perspective the dominant distinction between “good” and “evil” nationalisms, separating the good from the bad, the normal from the deviant, is based on *geographical* criteria.<sup>38</sup> Thus, *geography* becomes an ideological trench whereby Eastern Europe and the Balkans are perceived to develop an “ethnic,” “illiberal,” “oppressive” and “exclusive” breed of nationalism.

According to this assumption, EastEuropean societies were “ill-prepared and unsuited, from a cultural, social and political point of view, to receive and properly use the national ideas brought home by their own intellectuals from the capitals of Western Europe.”

<sup>39</sup>This criterion not only became an analytical distinction; but also a normative one. To quote again Dungaciu: “From a hypothesis, it gradually turned into a widely accepted axiom.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.,

### *Theoretical framework of the thesis*

In this respect, I find Liah Greenfeld situational approach particularly relevant to my case. This approach offers a more complex, sophisticated, and most importantly, much more nuanced analysis, thus allowing one to critically assess different types of nationalism(s). Although in her own assessment, Greenfeld generally situates East European nationalism in the same typology of chauvinistic, ethnic, exclusive nationalism, her methodological approach seems to offer a more suitable method for dealing with the “stubborn nature” of Bulgarian nationalism.

According to Greenfeld’s theoretical approach, nationalism emerges as a response to a specific set of conditions, such as pre-existing state structures and new concepts of sovereignty based on the will of the citizenry, combined with the pursuit of legitimacy and consolidation by the elite. The critical assumption in this theoretical model, therefore, lies on the recognition that the sovereignty of the nation derives from the assumed *sovereignities* of each member in the national collectivity. Greenfeld’s core argument is uncomplicated, but convincing. For her, the nature of nationalism is largely determined by contingent factors and situational constraints.

What is worth noting here, particularly in respect to the “stubborn” nature of my research question, is Greenfeld’s analysis of the genealogical roots of nationalism. What is distinct in this analytical construct is the original model-copy framework, allowing an interpretative autonomy of “local” conceptualizations on the national identity. Greenfeld’s observation is that every nationalism is in fact an indigenous development.

Since the relevant agents participating in the creation/importation of national identity are

different in different cases, this anomie, states Greenfeld, is “expressed and experienced differently” as a result of “*specific situational constraints.*”<sup>41</sup> Due to status-inconsistency as a result of a social structural change (as we shall see in the next chapter in the case of the emerging Bulgarian bourgeoisie in the era of mercantilism), the specific nature of the change and its effects on the agents greatly influence the character of nationalism in this instance.

Influenced by indigenous traditions, the *process of reinterpretation becomes essential* in formulating the specificity of the nationalist project. This structural change results in the inadequacy of traditional definitions, or identity. The involved groups experience a crisis of identity, structurally expressed as "anomie," which creates among them an incentive to search for and, depending upon availability, adopt a new identity.<sup>42</sup> The solution to the crisis of identity, argues Greenfeld, is to be found within the national project, a result, as already pointed out above, of certain sets of political and social ideas being imported or combined by native invention.

The idea of the nation adjusted by the situational constraints of the relevant agents, argues Greenfeld, depends upon its conceptualization in terms of indigenous traditions. This “regional” or “local” conceptualization further distinguishes every national identity and shapes the matrix for either a civic or ethnic type of nationalism.

What does play a part in determining whether a particular nationalism will emerge as

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<sup>41</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism Five Roads to Modernity*, (Cambridge, 1992), p.15.

<sup>42</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p.16.

civic or as ethnic is the perception of a nation's status, whether the concept of nation has been constructed with a rational or romantic lexicon, and whether the groups implicated in the national project articulation have or have not a large social support, which will ultimately shape the notion of transcendence that sovereignty of the nation derives from the assumed *sovereignities* of each member of the national collectivity. In this analysis, the importance of the interpretation of the “sovereignty of the people” whether it is defined as individual-centred or on a broader, community-centred basis, is paramount in defining the political and social alternatives of the nationalist project.

What is important to note here is that this theoretical approach allows the researcher to reopen the question of geography-centred typology of nationalism, where, according to Greenfeld, the geographical location of a nation

*...does not tell us which type of nationalism would be characteristic. On the contrary, the type of nationalism characteristic of a given society allows one to locate it on the symbolic map as we have charted it, and define it as a part of the West or of the East, and of Western or Eastern Europe.*<sup>43</sup>

The importance of Greenfeld's approach lies in its usefulness in reassessing the partition of Europe, according to which every nationalism east of Berlin is by definition ethnic, thus “parking” Bulgarian nationalism in the category of “ethnically exclusive” nationalisms. Greenfeld's situational approach offers a more adequate, richer and nuanced methodological framework in anchoring the paradoxical character of Bulgarian nationalism.

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<sup>43</sup> Liah Greenfeld, "Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared," in Stephen E. Hanson and Willfried Spohn (eds.), *Can Europe Work? Germany & the Reconstruction of Post-Communist Societies*, (Seattle & London, 1995), p.22. Italics are mine.

### **Outline of the Argument / Hypothesis**

The long period of ethnic stability<sup>44</sup> between the Bulgarian majority and the large Turkish minority is a result of the nature of Bulgarian nationalism. I argue that Bulgarian nationalism belongs to the civic, political type of nationalism, the latter being a function of the interplay of the following independent variables: broad social support from the groups involved in articulating the national project, a high level of secularism and compatibility of pre-national beliefs (traditional moral/ethical codes) with the original civic model of nationalism.

In the second chapter, “Main factors constructing Bulgarian nationalism,” I will test the validity of my hypothesis in assessing the above four variables in respect to the conceptualization of the Bulgarian national identity project. I will critically re-evaluate the significance of the main situational constraints/factors in the process of constructing Bulgarian nationalism. First, I will assess these variables individually so that by the end of the chapter I will be able to analyze them in the dynamic context of their interplay, thus allowing for a theoretical explanation to the emergence of this rare type of nationalism in the Balkans.

I will therefore test my hypothesis and the validity of the situational constraints model from a theory-confirming and theory-infirming case studies perspective. As we know,

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<sup>44</sup> I define ethnic stability as not pronounced inter-ethnic clashes, and a lack of record of systematic efforts by the government to assimilate ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. In addition, government policies and practices allowing a considerable level of preserving the cultural tradition, way of life and values of minorities. Overall, a track record of stable/unyielding perception of tolerance by the majority in respect to minority groups.

case studies are analyses of single cases within the framework of established generalizations. In this way, the purpose of the case study is a test of the proposition, which may turn out to be confirmed or infirmed by it. If the case study is of the theory confirming-type, it validates the proposition. The situational constraints theoretical model postulates that the nature of nationalism, whether civic or ethnic depends on the following set of variables:

- 1) Presence/lack of anomie;
- 2) Marginal/significant size and influence of the groups articulating the national project;
- 3) High/low level of secular educated sentiment; and
- 4) High/low compatibility of pre-national beliefs (schools of thought, traditional ethical codes) with the original, civic model of nationalism.

In the section “Main factors constructing Bulgarian nationalism” I will test the main premises of the situational constraint theory in establishing the correlation between this theory and the Bulgarian case study.

### *Structure of the thesis*

In my first chapter entitled “Literature Review: Towards a Theoretical Framework of Nationalism” I will critically assess the main idiosyncrasies of the dominant schools of thought in theorizing nationalism, placing special emphasis on the discourse on nationalism in the context of modernity, as well as on the dichotomy between civic/ethnic nationalism and its cultural/geographic ramifications stemming from the orthodoxy of the entrenched scholarly demarcation between Eastern and Western nationalism.

The discourse on the East/West dichotomy seems to be especially pertinent in that it provides a useful conceptual framework within which to situate the explanatory model pertaining to my research question. This chapter will also deal with two inherent challenges: first, the highly contested concept of nationalism, and second, the obvious methodological “roadblock” that the Bulgarian ethnic anomaly represents in the context of the Balkans.

This chapter will allow us not only to relate patterns and reoccurring motifs of the current policy of ethnic equilibrium in Post-Communist Bulgaria vis-à-vis the Turkish minority, but also to adequately identify the very nature of this complex ethnic dynamic. The same chapter will also present the evolution of the definition of ethnicity, minority and nationalism with a particular focus on the typology *ethnic* versus *civic* nationalism and likewise the East/West dichotomy. In response to the research question, considerable attention will be paid to the situational constraints approach epitomized by Liah Greenfeld, which in my opinion constitutes the most adequate and relevant methodological framework for the nature of my research question. In addition, this chapter will provide a critical assessment of the post-modernist approach addressing the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans, in Bulgaria in particular, represented by Maria Todorova, Antonina Zhelyazkova and Halil Inalchik.

In the second chapter, entitled Main Factors in Constructing Bulgarian Nationalism, I will delineate my hypothesis and identify the main factors shaping the character of Bulgarian nationalism. In the process I will provide historical evidence of the actual process of

“constructing” the nationalist project drawn from the writings of its key architects: Vasil Levski, Georgi Rakovski, Hristo Botev, and Luiben Karavelov. In this chapter I will provide a new reading of the construction of Bulgarian nationalism by outlining the main constraints that constituted the archetypal check of Bulgarian identity.

The importance of this chapter lies not only in its attempt at demonstrating this set of conditions and constraints but also in prioritizing them with respect to the core argument of my hypothesis linking Bulgarian nationalism with civil, inclusive nationalism - an argument that has not yet surfaced so far in the scholarly literature on nationalism. Particular attention will be paid on the peculiarity of the structural constraints in determining the Bulgarian national project, such as the institutionalized “legacy” of the millet system, the secular, anti-clerical legacy of the Bogomil, and the communal praxis of multiethnic cooperation.

The third chapter, “An Overview of the Legacy of Ethnic accommodation of the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria”, will provide empirical data supporting the central argument of my hypothesis regarding the inclusive civic nature of Bulgarian nationalism. This data will allow us to address in particular the situation of the country’s Turkish minority from a historical perspective, and to assess the remarkable climate of ethnic and religious tolerance between the two large ethnic groups.

The different institutional arrangements that have existed over time vis-à-vis the Turkish minority will be outlined, with specific attention given to policies aimed at preserving the Turkish language, Islamic religion and traditional self-governing structures of the Turkish minority such as Councils and Courts. The importance of this chapter consists in its

conceptualization of the tradition of accommodation policies, a tradition that forms the case of my hypothesis of a constant climate of ethnic and religious tolerance, which has its roots in the civic make-up of Bulgarian nationalism.

In the fourth chapter, “Break of Continuity, The Bulgarian Civil Society and the Ethnic crisis of 1985-1989”, I will critically assess the most serious ethnic incident in the history of modern Bulgaria - the name changing campaign that took place in the winter months of 1984-1985. This chapter is key to my assessment of the nature of Bulgarian nationalism, for not only does it provide evidence about the “culture of secrecy” associated with the top-bottom design of this exercise in ethnic engineering, but it also, and most importantly, affords a context to the question of why the project never generated any public support.

The chapter will assess in particular the dynamics of the crisis, starting with Todor Zhivkov’s refusal to consult the Politburo before the assimilation campaign in 1984-1985 and moving on to the consequences of this decision: the mass exodus in the summer of 1989 (cited as the paramount factor in Zhivkov’s ouster in the so-called “Velvet Palace Coup” of November 1989); the passive reaction of Bulgarian society to the incident which Ilona Tomova has described as a “difficult, confusing and profoundly demoralizing experience for the entire society”; and finally, the emergence of the first dissident groups openly challenging Zhivkov’s ethnic policy.

Furthermore, this chapter represents an encounter with the fundamentals of Bulgarian nationalism that support the central argument of my hypothesis of its inclusiveness, especially since it is often in times of crises that the “real” and unmasked nature of social phenomenon are manifested. In this chapter I will also assess the reaction of Bulgarian

civil society to this acute ethnic crisis. The name-changing campaign of 1985 and the consequent mass exodus of Bulgarian Turks in 1989, in view of their detrimental nature, provoked a strong, even remarkable (taking into consideration the Old Regime's deserved reputation for brutality), reaction on the part of civil society by the younger and reformist wing of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), who were profoundly dissatisfied with the party's leadership and particularly with the name-changing operation and the current ethnic climate in the country.

This chapter will provide evidence in support of my hypothesis, which argues that the strong "bottom-up" reaction within Bulgarian society in the wake of these events can be explained primarily on the basis of the inclusive nature of Bulgarian society, which itself functions on the basis of a broad, inclusive nationalism.

In the fifth chapter, "Back to Normality – the Post-89 Dynamics", I will provide a chronological context for the gradual normalization of inter-ethnic relations between the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority after the dramatic ethnic crises of 1985-1989. One of the most noticeable characteristics of this process was the shortness of the interval required to rebuild the old tradition of inter-ethnic relations. The chapter will provide a conceptualization of the government's "Back to Normality Agenda" for the establishment of a solid basis for the "healing process", allowing us to put into perspective the re-emergence of religious (Islamic ecclesiastical) schools and the resurfacing of programs in the Turkish language broadcast by Bulgarian National Radio.

Furthermore, this chapter will critically assess the establishment of the first Turkish political party in the post-1989 Bulgarian political arena, i.e., the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). The debate surrounding the legalization of the MRF demonstrated unequivocally the high threshold of tolerance within Bulgarian society in general. What is of great interest here is the dominant perception that the MRF has not been associated with a separatist agenda, a consideration that might have otherwise led to the perception of the MRF as a potential threat to the existence of the Bulgarian state.

On the contrary, the MRF has shown a remarkable vitality in becoming the third largest and the most influential party in the post-89 political landscape, and clearly the only balance of power in the dichotomous political space dominated for most of the nineties by the UDF/ BSP rivalry - a unique case in the contemporary Balkan political life.

This chapter also provides evidence of the inclusive nature of present-day Bulgarian nationalism based on the example of the MRF's current and successful role as an influential political party. Currently, it forms part of a coalition government that came to power in 2001 and is led by the prime minister (and also king) Simeon Goburg-Gotta.

In this last demonstration of Bulgarian ethnic equilibrium, it appears that, even after 45 years of socialism, the political bond, the drive to achieve a democratic and inclusive, political environment, is stronger than the bond of ethnic self-identity. In addition, this chapter will likewise review the dominant attitudes and stereotypes vis-à-vis the Turkish minority reflected in the mainstream Bulgarian media. The quantitative data provided

are based on articles published during the 1990s in thirteen Bulgarian newspapers and magazines, including the seven largest and most influential dailies, as well as the most read weekly *168 chasa*.

These results, based on the findings by researchers who have been monitoring and studying the stereotypes and images of ethnic and national groups in the mainstream media of several Balkan countries under the auspices of the Balkan Neighbours Project since 1996, are consistent with the main assumption of my hypothesis of the inclusive civic nature of Bulgarian nationalism. The positive and inclusive character of these attitudes, in my view, is a convincing indication of the civil core of Bulgarian nationalism, which, even in the context of the acute and persistent economic crisis that reigned during the transitional period of the nineties, has preserved its essential nature.

The sixth, and final, chapter “Towards Ethnic and Religious Inclusiveness - The Bulgarian Constitution of 1991” will assess the main document of the post-1989 era - the new Constitution of 1991 - and pay particular attention to the legal provisions affecting the different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups within Bulgarian society, proving that the concept of a political nation has always been widely accepted and entrenched in the Bulgarian social fabric. This discussion will then be followed by a conclusion to the thesis.

## CHAPTER I LITERATURE REVIEW

### TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF NATIONALISM

#### **Again on Essentialism, or why has the “Bulgarian ethnic paradox” been systematically ignored?**

In 2000 the former U.S. Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, defined Bulgaria’s post-1989 inter-ethnic stability as the “*world’s best kept secret*.”<sup>45</sup> Why was it a secret and why was it kept? To answer, there are at least two observations to be made: first, the absence of any willingness in an openly reluctant Western press to admit that in the Balkans there is “an oasis of an ethnic peace” and second (which is linked to the first) - an overwhelming “*magistra silentio*”, or to put it plainly, a complete neglect in the scholarly literature on nationalism in theoretically assessing the Bulgarian “atypical” case. It would be an understatement to say that Bulgaria’s ethnic paradox has been systematically under-researched and under-analyzed.

There are a few clues as to why this situation may have arisen. The problem with this analysis is that, although it is anything but new – indeed much is owed to Kohn’s distinction between “Western” and “non-Western” nationalism – it has left a long lasting imprint on the different theoretical edifices of the most prominent students of nationalism. According to the essentialist view, the western type is a “voluntarist” type of nationalism which regards the nation as a free association of rational human beings who have voluntarily entered into it on an individual basis, while the Eastern is an

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.cies.org/country/bulgaria.htm>.

"organic" type which views the nation as an organism, as a fixed and indelible character that was "stamped" on its members at birth by "the ethnic seal. As Sugar pointed out, "While Western nationalism was, in its origin, connected with the concepts of individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism current in the eighteenth century, the later nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia tended towards a contrary development."<sup>46</sup>

In *The Idea of Nation*, where Kohn creates the essentialist dissection of good/evil nationalism, on the basis of *geographical* criteria.<sup>47</sup> Thus *geography* becomes an ideological trench whereby Eastern Europe and the Balkans develop an "ethnic," "illiberal," "oppressive" or "exclusive" breed of nationalism.<sup>48</sup> In this way, the Balkans cease to be just a geographic term, as one author puts it - it becomes a unit of analysis.<sup>49</sup> From this particular perspective there are no separate states, no separate nations, no separate political dynamics, not even nuances of different degrees – Kohn's "ethnic seal" has "conserved" the entire region.

Essentially, the Western scholarly literature dealing with Bulgarian nationalism is based primarily on authors whose areas of expertise are Balkan area studies and Eastern Europe: Barbara and Charles Jelavich<sup>50</sup>, Peter Sugar<sup>51</sup>, Ivo Lederer,<sup>52</sup> Gale Stokes,<sup>53</sup> John

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<sup>46</sup> Peter F. Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," in Peter F. Sugar and Ivo Lederer (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, (Seattle, 1969), p.10.

<sup>47</sup> Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, (New York, 1948), p.15.

<sup>48</sup> Dan Dungaciu, "East and West and the 'Mirror of Nature' Nationalism in West and East Europe."

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>50</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States: 1804-1920*, (Seattle, 1977); *The Balkans in Transition*, (North Haven, 1974).

<sup>51</sup> Sugar and Lederer, *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Seattle & London, 1994).

Bell,<sup>54</sup> Duncan Perry,<sup>55</sup> Joseph Rothschild,<sup>56</sup> and Dimitri Obolenski.<sup>57</sup> Their works, although in many respects valuable for what they tell us of individual issues,<sup>58</sup> *fall short in assessing the Bulgarian case as an ethnic anomaly, and moreover do not provide theoretical explanation as to why this phenomenon did occur in the first place.*

A possible explanation for this failure may lie within the established theoretical tradition of essentialism in this field of research. As an example, let us take one of the recent books on East European nationalism, (written in 1997, after most of the East European and Balkan states had established their “liberal” constitutions) by one of the best-known scholars in this field, Peter Sugar. Here we confront the core argument about the character of East European nationalism, strangely reminding us of the Cold war political discussion:

No wonder that Eastern nationalism did not tend towards “a consummation in a democratic world society” but it was “tending towards exclusiveness” seeking to find a justification, a specific mission for a given group that quite often did not even include all members of the nation, or nationality.... Eastern European nationalism became messianic. Messianic cannot be egalitarian, it claims the rights for a chosen people, the Volk, not for the individual or the citizen. The Volk concept is practically totalitarian.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>53</sup> Gale Stokes, *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (Oxford 1997).

<sup>54</sup> John Bell, “Post-Communist Bulgaria,” *Current History*, Vol.16, (1989). See also *Bulgaria in Transition*, (New York, 1998).

<sup>55</sup> Duncan Perry, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria, 1870-1895* (Durham 1993). Also “New Directions for Bulgarian-Turkish Relations,” *RFE/RL, Research Report*, Vol.1, No. 41 (16 October, 1992), pp.33-39.

<sup>56</sup> Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>57</sup> Dimitri Obolenski, *The Byzantine Inheritance of Eastern Europe* (London, 1982).

<sup>58</sup> John Bell argues that the secular character of the Bulgarian national revival is one of the hallmarks of the movement, however without further theorizing the significance of this element in the overall dynamics of the Bulgarian national project.

<sup>59</sup> Peter F. Sugar, *Nationality and Society in Habsburg and Ottoman Empire*, (Valoruim, 1997), p.11.

The aim of this essentialist assumption was to present the Otherness of the Balkans, thereby excluding it from the European cultural and political tradition of the nation-state, institutional order, liberal values and respect for minorities. Understood as the mirror image of a “polite” and “cultured” Europe in the academic writing on nationalism, the Balkans (Bulgaria included) is portrayed as inherently intolerant and xenophobic, where the drive towards ethno-purity creates a domino effect of the emergence of non-figurative, miniature states, obsessed with engineering a mass-scale ethnic cleansing.

Bulgarian nationalism is presented as nothing more than a piece of this puzzle, no different than any of the other pieces making up the monolith construct of East European nationalism. There are obvious gaps within this particular approach. In assessing Bulgarian nationalism, Peter Sugar adds the adjectives “populist” and “egalitarian” to his description of the phenomenon, a result, as he says, of the levelling effect of Ottoman rule. Thus Bulgarian nationalism was, according to Sugar, essentially a peasant revolt against foreign landowners, tracing the genesis of this process to the impact of the millets system, which, he argues, furnished the ingredients for the development of popular nationalism in Bulgaria. Sugar also put Serbia in the same category, making both nationalisms identical – an assumption poorly defended by the actual ethnic dynamics in these two countries, which, others may argue, represent two opposite, extreme cases.

Although indirectly, all the “heavy cavalry” of the modernist school - Hobsbawm, Smith, Anderson, Gellner, as well as Greenfeld - classify Balkan nationalism (including

the Bulgarian variety) in the category of ethnically exclusive national projects and *all of them* seem to have a certain degree of comfort in accepting the East (ethnic) - West (civic) dichotomy. The shortcoming in this particular view, however, is that "ethnic" nationalism" in Eastern Europe, as one author puts it, has become almost an *independent variable*.

Needless to say, this way of thinking is still very much present in the works of the main names on East European nationalism. This is how the central argument of the nature of Balkan nationalism has been anchored. "*The frontiers of an existing state and of a rising nationality rarely coincided; nationalism there grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern - not primarily to transform it into a people's state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands.*"<sup>60</sup>

In other words, since there were no clearly defined state (national) borders in Bulgaria, nationalism tended towards justifying particular territorial claims in the name of membership of a group, perceived as "objectively" identifiable through its distinctive way of life, history, culture, language, etc.<sup>61</sup> However, states Sugar, this meant that the individualistic national principle, based on citizens' fundamental equality, was transformed into the collectivist principle that emphasizes the uniqueness of a people. At the end of the process, *the links between democracy and nationalism were severed.*<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism." Italics are mine.

<sup>61</sup> See Boyd Shafer, "Debated Problems in the Study of Nationalism," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, (1984), Vol. 11, No.1 p. 7 See also Dusan Kecmanovic, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism*, (New York, 1996), pp. 21-22.

<sup>62</sup> Peter F. Sugar, *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, (Santa Barbara, 1980), p. 20. Italics are mine.

Thus, distinct social and political factors operating in Western and Eastern Europe created different concepts of nationalism: one grounded in a liberal understanding of citizens' rights, the other in messianic notions of the will of a people. The first is a product of faith in the rational progress towards justice and freedom; the second an understanding of history in predominately romantic discourse envisaging *Volksstaat*.

The same assumptions are supported by many of the same members of the modernist school. For instance, in his "Two Types of Nationalism," Plamenatz argues that nationalism has taken two markedly different forms, one Western and the "other Eastern," with the latter thriving among "the Slavs as well as in Africa and Asia, and is to be found also in Latin America."<sup>63</sup> Another influential theoretician, Greenfeld, argues that the purely "anti-Western type of nationalism" (developed first in Russia and very soon after that in Germany<sup>64</sup>) became the most common type of nationalism in East Europe. As Greenfeld states: "The concept of "Eastern Europe" did not become morally and culturally significant until the eighteenth century. Then, however, the image of "Eastern Europe," which...has been *L'orient de l'Europe*...or even *L'Orient européen*," became the moral opposite of the image of the West, and a result was frequently excluded by Westerners from Europe altogether."<sup>65</sup>

A similar geographical demarcation may be traced in Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, where the author distinguishes between two types of nationalism:

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<sup>63</sup> John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism," in *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, Eugene Kamenka (ed.), (Canberra, 1975) as cited in Dusan Kecmanovic, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism*, (New York, 1996).

<sup>64</sup> Greenfeld, *Five Roads to Modernity*.

<sup>65</sup> Liah Greenfeld, "Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared," p.17.

that of "civic," a functional, political by-product of the Enlightenment project and the French Revolution; and that of "ethnolinguistic" nationalism — constructed of "more permanent cultural attributes" such as memory, value, myth and symbolism, becoming a "dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analyzed from below".<sup>66</sup> The same refrain may be traced in *Blood and Belonging* where Michael Ignatieff essentially agrees with Kohn's exclusive and illiberal definition of the Balkan nationhood concept where it is understood as: "the dream that a whole nation could be like a congregation; singing the same hymns, listening to the same gospel, sharing the same emotions, linked not only to each other but to the dead buried beneath their feet."<sup>67</sup>

Robert Kaplan, as well, is a particularly good example of the "relaxed" jargon dominating the mass media, where a new ethnic mythology was invented to account for the ethnic violence after the break-up of Yugoslavia.<sup>68</sup> Trivial generalizations and clichés on the dark nature of the Balkans - the European gunpowder cake<sup>69</sup>, irrevocable animosity and "ethnic hatred and enmities" of centuries from "a distant tribal past" - led to the impression that the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was just ethnic "business as usual", the only known way of life in the Balkans.<sup>70</sup> As a result of this essentialist

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<sup>66</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990).

<sup>67</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (Toronto, 1993).

<sup>68</sup> Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts*.

<sup>69</sup> Commenting on the vocabulary used to explain the Yugoslav war Maria Todorova asks the question: "Why does the war need to be Balkan? The Spanish civil war Spanish, not Iberian, or Southwest European, the Greek civil war was never Balkan, the problem of Northern Ireland is fittingly localized - it is called neither Irish, nor British, not even English, which it precisely is. Why is it, then the Balkan is used as a country at war, that, before the sad events, insisted it was not Balkan and was predominately not labeled as Balkan but considered to be the shining star of Eastern Europe by its Western supporters? Has "Balkan" become so much of a *Schimpfwort* that is hoped that those to whom it is applied would be horrified? Psychology should persuade politicians and journalists that bearing the brunt of collective stigma has never been a good deterrent. Studies on social policies dealing with stigma have shown that integration rather than isolation is the adequate solution." see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York, 1977) p.186.

<sup>70</sup> George Kennan, "New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict," in *The Other Balkan Wars, A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospect* (Washington, 1994), p.14-15.

discourse (being a part of gunpowder cake), the Bulgarian case of ethnic accommodation was lost to the sight of the media.

Are the Balkans still perceived as the Other, partly in justification of the “moral rightfulness” of the old Europe? And has the Bulgarian case been neglected for so long because it constitutes *an exception to the “bon ton” of dominant discourse* on the Other Europe, the end of Europe, that of the dark Balkans, where animosity and ethnic hatred are the most cherished “tribal” virtue of that region, dominated by an authoritarian and “exclusive” nationalism?<sup>71</sup>

In her very timely work, “Imagining the Balkans,” Maria Todorova has turned the mirror the other way around and questioned the objectivity and rationality of such an essentialist analysis, while presenting a completely different encounter with the Balkans.<sup>72</sup>

Humans and gods *meet and pass each other on a bridge and on a crossroads*. In the Balkans they *join* in a complex process of contact-conflict, which makes them different from the ideal types of religious or ideological doctrines. In the evolution of human civilization, the Balkans are not a transitional zone, but a space, in which *humans* overcome the contradictions of *God and Gods*. This is the high price of life paid by numerous generations, which requires to revise the ideologemes disclosed through the metaphorical labels of the bridge and the cross-roads and the strategies resulting from them.<sup>73</sup>

Maria Todorova’s contribution in challenging the very foundation of the essentialist discourse on East-European nationalism paved the road towards a much more original

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<sup>71</sup> Joseph. S. Roucek, *Balkan Politics: International Relations in No Man’s Land*, (Westport, 1971).

<sup>72</sup> “It is of course a sublime irony,” states Todorova, “to observe leaders of the cleansed societies of Western Europe fifty years after their ugliest performance raise their hands in horror and bombard (in words and in deed, and safely hidden behind the American leadership) the former Yugoslavia in preserving “ethnic diversity” for the sake of securing a Volkmuseum of multiculturalism in a corner of Europe, after having given light to precisely the opposite process.” See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 1997), p.186.

<sup>73</sup> Tzvetana Georgieva, “Hora i Bogove na Balkanite,” as cited in M. Todorova in *Imagining the Balkans*, p.59.

interpretation of the Bulgarian form of nationalism, based not on dichotomizing, but rather on assessing the Ottoman legacy as a complex symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic, and Byzantine/Balkan traditions.

Todorova's argument suggests that centuries of coexistence must have produced a *common legacy*, and that the history of the Ottoman state is the history of all its constituent populations (notwithstanding religious, social, professional and other divisions and hierarchies). "*The facts underlying this interpretation are the early syncretism in the religious, cultural and institutional spheres, as well as the remarkable absorptive capacity of the conquerors.*"<sup>74</sup>

The legacy of "*les différences du quotidien*," particularly in the turbulent nineties, when mutual compromise was the "*lingua franca*" of the mixed communities, is a focus of research by many Bulgarian scholars today. It is worth noting that a talented generation of Bulgarian scholars has contributed some fresh perspectives in assessing the atypical features of Bulgarian nationalism, with Todorova leading the way (although in the last ten years she has been teaching in the U.S.).

A few scholars have made a lasting impact on the current discourse of Bulgarian ethnic policies and nationalism, starting with the publications by Antonina Zhelyazkova,<sup>75</sup> in which she addresses the level of compatibility between the country's two largest religious

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<sup>74</sup> See Maria Todorova, "The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans", in *Imperial Legacy*, C. Brown (ed.), (New York, 1996), p.49.

<sup>75</sup> In her analysis of the salient features of the "Bulgarian ethnic model," Zhelyazkova shows that despite the ethnic crisis deliberately engineered by the communist authorities in the 1980s, ethnic peace was quickly restored and conciliatory attitudes came to dominate the political scene. Among the factors that contributed to this positive development, Zhelyazkova singles out a historical tradition of tolerance deeply embedded at the grassroots level. She also emphasizes the importance of certain aspects of Bulgarian Post-Communist politics; for example, the fact that civic forces rallied around a comprehensive program for democratization.

communities (Christian and Muslim), as well as the importance of civil society to the process of restoring ethnic peace in Bulgaria.<sup>76</sup> Anna Krasteva's contribution has focused on the triangle of discourse, power and identity, as well as on the complex and controversial synthesis of the universal and national dimensions of Bulgarian national identity both in its philosophical and humanitarian discursive layers.<sup>77</sup>

One can also point to Ilona Tomova, who focuses in her research on the level of secularism/religion within the religious communities,<sup>78</sup> and Valery Roussanov with his comprehensive publication "Aspects of the Cultural Situation in Bulgaria."<sup>79</sup> The Bulgarian ethnic paradox is the *prime foci* for indigenous researchers; the "Bulgarian ethnic model" constitutes an integral part of the post-1989 political vocabulary and represents perhaps the most important political achievement in the transitional period of the country.

Unlike in the West, there has indeed been a serious academic effort in Bulgaria to assess this atypical phenomenon. Sociological surveys of ethnic policies, various ethnological

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<sup>76</sup> Antonina Zhelyazkova works at the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, Sofia, where she is also chair of the board of directors. Some of Zhelyazkova's publications such as *Vraski na Savmestnost i Nesavmestnost Mezdū Hristiani i Miusulmani v Balgaria*, (Sofia, 1994) represent a hallmark in the Bulgarian scholarly literature on Bulgarian nationalism.

<sup>77</sup> See Anna Krasteva, *Diskurs, Vlast, Identitnosti*, (Sofia, 2000).

<sup>78</sup> Ilona Tomova, "Osobenosti na Religioznosta na Hristiani i Musulmani v Balgaria" [Specificities of Religious Sentiment of Christian and Muslims in Bulgaria], in *Vraski na Savmestnost i Nesavmestnost Mezdū Hristiani i Miusulmani v Balgaria* [Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility Between Christians and Muslims], (Sofia, 1994); Tomova, "Turtsite v Balgaria, Kulturata, Ezik i Nachin na Zivot na Balgarskite Turtsi Sled Osvobozdenieto na Balgaria ot Osmanska Vlast" [The Turks in Bulgaria, Culture, Language and Style of Life of the Bulgarian Turks] in *Malsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Chovechkite Prava* [Minorities in Bulgaria in the Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1994), pp.17-18. See also Tomova, "Etnichesките Stereotipi i Predrasadatsi u Balgarite", in *Aspekti na Etnokulturnata Situatsia v Balgaria* [Aspects of the Ethno-Cultural Situation in Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1992).

<sup>79</sup> Valery Roussanov, *Aspekti na Etnokulturnata Situatsia v Balgaria* [Aspects of the Ethno-Cultural Situation in Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1992). Valery Roussanov, *Aspekti na Etnokulturnata Situatsia v Balgaria, Osem Godini Po-Kasno* [Aspects of the Ethno-Cultural Situation in Bulgaria, Eight Years Later On], (Sofia, 2000)

researches of different ethnic groups and regions with mixed populations, and media monitoring (monitoring ethnic perceptions and stereotypes) have demonstrated the idiosyncrasies of Bulgarian nationalism, in clear contradiction to the surrounding nationalisms in the region.

In the last respect, the most significant contribution is Valery Roussanov's *Balkan Neighbours Project*, which clearly supports this claim. Monitoring of the mainstream press in the rest of the Balkan countries conducted in the period 1997-1999 reveals a general trend of expression of negative attitudes vis-à-vis ethnic minorities and of disturbing disregard for human and minority rights as stipulated in various international documents. Most newspapers have taken a stance against the official recognition of the different ethnic and religious minorities in contrast to the predominantly tolerant attitudes towards the Turkish minority by which the Bulgarian press has been characterized.<sup>80</sup>

However, what is also worth noting is that these efforts must extend beyond assessing the credibility of empirical research suggesting the presence of an atypical ethnic phenomenon. Empirical facts should be theorized if we want to explain why Bulgaria has never appeared in the headlines as being "on the brink of an ethnic civil war" or a "platzdarm" of ethnic intolerance, as some Western policy dilettantes wrongly predicted. The argument that in the case of Bulgaria, we are dealing with ethnic nationalism cannot be a satisfactory answer.

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<sup>80</sup> See *Balkan Neighbors*, Access, Sofia, No. 8, 1999.

It should also be noted that the regional Balkan contribution to the discourse has lately been reenergized, particularly by the scholarly literature revisiting the Ottoman inheritance in the Balkans. Rejecting a Western-centred approach, Turkish and Bulgarian academics have been working on the Ottoman impact on the development of Balkan nationalisms. Halil Inalcik's contribution to deconstructing Western essentialism is particularly significant,<sup>81</sup> although younger scholars such as Dusko Sekulic<sup>82</sup> and Dan Dungaciu<sup>83</sup> present a much more complex picture of Balkan ethnic policies, challenging the premises of the entrenched East/West dichotomy, and distancing their analysis from assumptions which they argue do not have factual credibility.

One possible way out, consisting in a combination of the empirical findings of the Bulgarian scholarly literature on the ethnic problématique and sound theoretical foundations, represents Greenfeld's situational constraint theory, which allows us to assess a larger and more complex choice of a critical set of variables. Greenfeld's theoretical construct allows the stagnant geographical/division to "fluctuate" depending on the particular set of constraints shaping specific nationalisms in question. Greenfeld maintains that the character of nationalism (and a nation-state) is to a great extent determined by its responses to more *contingent* factors, such as pre-existing state structures, specific political culture and the specificity of the groups involved in the articulation of the national projects, and the level of secularism.

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<sup>81</sup> Halil Inalcik, *The Middle East and the Balkans Under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society*, (Bloomington, 1993); Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, (London, 2001).

<sup>82</sup> Dusko Sekulic, "The Creation and The Dissolution of the Multinational State: The Case of Yugoslavia" in *Race and Ethnicity, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*, (Melbourne, 2003).

<sup>83</sup> Dan Dungaciu, "East and West and the 'Mirror of Nature' Nationalism in West and East Europe – Essentially Different?" *IWM Junior Fellows Conference*, (Vienna, 1999).

Different "situational constraints" prevailed in Eastern Europe, where the rise of nationalism preceded the formation of the future nation states. Since there were no clearly defined borders of these states-in-progress, nationalism served objectively to justify territorial claims in the name of group membership based on a distinct way of life, history, institutions, legal and moral codes, customs, traditions, etc.<sup>84</sup>

Although she accepts this dominant geographical demarcation Greenfeld allows for a more "flexible" division. This is why Greenfeld's methodological construct allows me to test a particular set of variables, essentially ignored by the academic literature dealing with Bulgarian nationalism. As has been already mentioned the analysis of Bulgarian nationalism at a methodological level must combine sensitivity to specific historical or cultural contexts with theoretical generalizations.

### **NATIONALISM - THE "PRIMORDIAL" ARGUMENT**

Rejecting the instrumental view,<sup>85</sup> according to which nationalism is a product of the Enlightenment project of creating collective identities that have been "invented," "constructed" or "imagined," the proponents of the ethnic/primordial camp stress that nationalism is, in fact, an essentially ancient, longstanding phenomenon. According to this perspective, collective cultural identities (*ethnies*) have deep roots within human society and history, while nations and nationalism are essentially functions of potent ethnic archetypes that are pervasive and universal in nature leading to the emergence of a "vicarious

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>85</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990); also B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, 1983).

nationalism.”<sup>86</sup> One of the most prominent scholars associated with this school of thought, Clifford Geertz, stresses that “the grouping under a common rubric” such as tribalism, parochialism, communalism or nationalism, “are in some way similar” because of the universality of the primordial ties.<sup>87</sup> Geertz argues that:

In any case, by primordial loyalties is meant (by me, anyway) an attachment that stems from the subject's, not the observer's, sense of the "givens" of social existence speaking a particular language, following a particular religion, being born into a particular family, emerging out of a particular history, living in a particular place; the basic facts, viewed again from the actor's perspective, of blood, speech, custom, faith, residence, history, physical appearance, and so on. Such attachments vary in the strength of their hold from society to society, situation to situation, person to person, and, of course, from time to time, and their mixture comes out not quite the same virtually in every case.<sup>88</sup>

For Geertz, in most emerging nations the primordial attachments are used to define political groups that are then raised to the level of national politics. Ethnic blocs thus become the functioning units of the nation, so that eventually the consciousness of kind or “primordial solidarity,” which he calls the “unreflective sense of collective statehood,” is extended into the consciousness of the unfolding political order.<sup>89</sup>

It is precisely the “static nature” of this concept that represents an insurmountable obstacle for the proponents of this camp, who perceive human beings as belonging by nature to fixed ethnic communities, much in the same way they belong to families. In this primordial version, just as nations have “natural frontiers,” so they have a specific origin and place in nature, as well as a peculiar character, mission and destiny. I would

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<sup>86</sup> Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1998), p. 151

<sup>87</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States,” in *Old Societies and New States*, C. Geertz (ed.), (New York, 1963), p.116.

<sup>88</sup> Clifford Geertz, “Primordial Loyalties and Standing Entities: Anthropological Reflections on the Politics of Identity,” Lecture delivered at Collegium Budapest, (Budapest, 1994), p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Geertz, “Primordial Sentiments,” p. 154-155.

argue that this particular perspective fails to provide a plausible interpretation of the conceptual viability of “the grouping under a common rubric,” particularly taking into consideration the multi-ethnic mosaic in the Balkans. The major problem with this interpretative model lies in the fact that no distinction is made between nations and *ethnies*. Both are seen as equally part of the natural order, and nationalism as a natural attribute of humanity.<sup>90</sup>

Another important proponent of this school of thought, Pierre Van den Berghe, applies biosocial theories in examining the nature of ethnic phenomena. According to this view, *ethnies* and nations are natural because they are extensions of kin groups, which are selected by “genetic evolution” for their “inclusive fitness.”<sup>91</sup> Van Den Berghe treats ethnicity and race as extensions of the idiom of kinship, which should be understood as an extended and attenuated form of kin selection.<sup>92</sup> In other words, tribes, ethnic groups and nations are kinship-based.<sup>93</sup> For Van den Berghe, ethnic solidarity is an extension of nepotism because it maximizes individual reproductive success, and cultural context is treated as an important means of guiding individuals in their quest for genetic reproduction through inclusive kin groups, where, to use Smith’s phrase, “ethnicity has become an end in itself.”<sup>94</sup> Van den Berghe defines a nation as a “politically conscious *ethnie*” and the state as “a collectivity headed by a group of people who exercise power

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<sup>90</sup> See Anthony Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, (Cambridge, 1995), p.32.

<sup>91</sup> According to Pierre Van Den Berghe “Behavior is the product of a simple ‘fitness calculus.’ Namely since the fundamental “interest” of genes is to replicate, that is to survive and multiply (which should be one of the basic laws in the ‘natural world’), genes *favor* all the forms of nepotism, tribalistic, and nationalist behavior,” as cited in Dusan Kecmanovic, *The Mass Psychology of Ethnonationalism*, (New York, 1996), p. 41.

<sup>92</sup> Pierre Van Den Berghe, *Man in Society: A Biosocial View*, (New York, 1975), p. 9.

<sup>86</sup> Pierre Van Den Berghe, "Race and Ethnicity: A Sociobiological Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.1, No.4 (1978), p. 403.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, “The Myth of the ‘Modern Nation’ and the Myths of Nations,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.11, No.1, (1988), p. 12.

over others."<sup>95</sup> For him, nationalism is an ideology expressed by an *ethnie* claiming the right to statehood by virtue of being an *ethnie*. However, defining *ethnie* may be an equally ambiguous proposition. Originally, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the concept of “ethnicity” was associated with “heathen superstition” or “pagan not religious communities,”<sup>96</sup> in contrast to Jewish and Christian society. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ethnicity has evolved in abandoning its pagan connotation and embracing different abiding characteristics such as race. Ethnicity came to be seen as “related to a community of physical and mental traits in races, or designating groups of races of mankind discriminated on the basis of common customs and characters.”<sup>97</sup>

The departure from religious to racial differentiation in defining ethnicity not only reinforced the general trend towards secularization, but it also made it much more difficult to theorize this category. In other words, this departure ultimately led to a much more complex and ambiguous course in the pursuit of other alternative “abiding vectors” such as language, culture and tradition, but also nation, nationhood and self-awareness. This shift occurred at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century after the Wilsonian cry for self-determination, and became particularly apparent after WWII, when the newly created United Nations (UN) had to confront the challenges of the “brave new world” of de-colonization, redrawn borders, displaced populations and recently emerged states, a truly “brave ethnic” world in which million people have lost their lives.

As was already mentioned, the initial religious and racial notions of ethnicity were

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<sup>95</sup> Van Den Berghe, *Man in Society: A Biosocial View*, p.19.

<sup>96</sup> Louis Leo Snyder, “Nationalism and the Flawed Concept of Nationality,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, Vol.10, No.2 (1983), p. 225.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*,

ignored in favour of more cultural ones. But it seems that this further aggravated the confusion surrounding the ethnic definition, allowing the conceptualization to become so flexible and “elastic” as to spark heated debates not only among political scientists, sociologists and historians, but also anthropologists and culturologists eager now to anchor the problem in their respective fields of study. Thus, according to the 1969 edition of the *Modern Dictionary of Sociology* :

(Ethnic) group (represents) a group with a common cultural tradition and a sense of identity, which exists as a subgroup of a larger society. The members of an ethnic group differ with regard to certain cultural characteristics from the other members of their society.<sup>98</sup>

The incorporation of the “cultural” matrix, surpassing the inherited biological determinism of the racial criterion, led to the semantic equivalency “ethnic = cultural = racial”, an equation which only heated the debate further over the problematic, “slippery” ground of the concept. However, one should bear in mind that, despite its political significance for the post-war international relations environment, the term “ethnicity” was primarily introduced to study a specific historical context, namely the U.S., where different racial, linguistic and religious groups were perceived as case studies of the “melting pot” theory.

In other words, as Kedourie puts it:

The word “ethnicity” and “ethnic” appear to be chosen to denote the specific and peculiar characteristics of particular groups living in so-called plural societies - groups which are different in culture, language, or physical characteristics from other, usually majority or dominant, groups in such societies.<sup>99</sup>

Here one can observe an important new element being added to the ethnic equation – the novelty of defining “ethnicity” in connection with the institutional realm of the state. As

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<sup>98</sup> *A Modern Dictionary of Sociology*, (New York, 1969), p.96.

<sup>99</sup> Elie Kedourie, “Ethnicity, Majority and Minority in the Middle East,” in *Ethnicity, Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East*, M. J. Esman et al eds., (Ithaca, 1988), p. 25.

James G. Kellas points out, the melting pot of the American nation has been quicker to “melt” the white ethnic groups than it has been to melt the blacks.<sup>100</sup> In the debate over this process a new dimension of *problématique* emerged, ethnic identity, which became a focal point of the new wave of academic literature devoted to national identities.

In his article “Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying,” Walker Connor introduces a new element, the psychological dimension of ethnic identity in the context of self-consciousness and self-awareness. For Connor, the fundamental matrix for an ethnic group lies in its self-consciousness; in other words, using his lexicon, an ethnic group represents “a basic human category” (i.e., not a subgroup, such as a minority), and it is characterized by unity of race and culture.<sup>101</sup> According to Connor, the expression self-determination gained the status of a “self-evident truth.” The critical factor that determines whether an ethnic group has the status of a nation is the extent to which it enjoys “self-awareness” or a sense of loyalty.<sup>102</sup>

Connor makes a claim similar to Clifford Geertz, insisting for his part on the ultimate supremacy of primordial ties in accentuating continuing communal awareness of a common culture, language or foundation myth as evidence of the natural evolution of ethnic communities into modern “nation-states.” In criticizing modernization/instrumentalist theories, to use his famous quote, “nationalism and

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<sup>100</sup> James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (London, 1991), p. 100-101.

<sup>101</sup> Walker Connor, “Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?” *World Politics*, Vol. 24, No.3 (April 1972), p. 354.

<sup>102</sup> Connor resolves the question of the supremacy of the two “competing” loyalties – to the state and to the ethnicity/nation - in the following way: “The great number of bloody separatist movements that have occurred in the past two decades within the first, second and third worlds bear ample testimony that when the two loyalties are seen as being in irreconcilable conflict, loyalty to the state loses out.” See Walker Connor, “Ethnonationalism,” in *Understanding Political Development*, Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., (Boston, 1987), p. 213.

Marxism are philosophically incompatible,”<sup>103</sup> Connor assesses the contemporary politics of “nation-building,” discarding the modern theoretical assumption of the civic legitimacy of the nation-state, and relates the nation to ethnicity, where “the potent fissiparous force of ethnic particularism should not be obscured by ascribing its role of prime mover to its symptoms.

For Connor, the nation is a self-conscious, or self-aware, ethnic group consisting “of a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related.”<sup>104</sup> The real national identity, he explains, is defined as “loyalty to the ethnic group.”<sup>105</sup>

### ***Conclusion - Critique of the ethnicist approach***

The primordial camp has its fundamental theoretical and empirical shortcomings, that while presenting arguments in defence of the persistence of ethnic identity over time, they are not in a position to address the issue of the emergence, revival and downfall of such an ethnic bond, leaving no room for an ethnic identity shaped outside the realm of internal (bio-sociological-cultural) factors. Mass migration, urbanization and mixed marriages have the potential to create a very small number of isolated *ethnies* lacking the cultural homogeneity and the pure “essence” posited by primordialists. Primordial theories, moreover, provide no explanation for the occurrence of loyalties to much larger communities than families, while mechanisms like nepotism, projection and identification are all open to considerable theoretical and empirical uncertainty.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Strategy*, (Princeton, NJ, 1984) p. 5.

<sup>104</sup> Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism. The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), p. xiv.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>106</sup> See Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, p. 32.

Basically, from the standpoint of this methodological direction, the *ethnie* represents an unchangeable and constant entity, operating in a complete vacuum, regardless of the pressure exercised by different economic, political, and social forces. Bearing the burden of an essentially unhistorical approach towards ethnicity and nationalism, primordialists are incapable of providing any convincing answers to such phenomena as the massive launch of the nationalist project in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the resurgence of ethnic nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The core of the argument of the ethnicist camp lies in its assertion that the *ethnie* provides the essential social bond that can amalgamate a group of people via common, shared ethno-cultural foundations, while also providing a recognizable set of conventions by which to distinguish one culture from the next. In this way the genealogical nationalist chicken-egg dilemma is solved by the ethnicist camp, which asserts that there is a natural élan towards cultural preservation and assertion that evolves into the pursuit of nationhood, manifesting itself as nationalism. In this way, the ethnicists reject the modernist claim, arguing that the nation cannot be a construct of modern socio-economic dynamics, but is rather an entity formed out of the constant evolution of society and, therefore, a natural development.

By placing “the cart before the horse,” the ethnicist camp can argue in favour of the nation-to-state process, and not vice versa. In my view, one of the main weaknesses of the ethnicist argument lies in the assertion that *ethnie* can cross “the modernity bridge”

irrespective of whether it has been politicized or not, a view that contradicts the central notion of modernity as a new social contract between the elite and the masses.

In light of the above, one possible theoretical shortcoming of the ethnicist's theory can be seen to lie in its inherently narrow determinism, which aims to generate a universal, comprehensive matrix without reference to actual ethnic nationalisms. The theory does not, however, answer the central question of why ethnic characteristics are manipulated by certain elites for purposes much more complex than just uniting and/or differentiating ethno-culture, purposes that culminate in a quest for ethnic homogeneity and supremacy. Furthermore, ethnicist's theory falls short of providing a convincing explanation of the paradox of cultural politicization associated with modernity.

The static framework of the primordial argument is of very little help in providing any explanation to my research question, not only because of the difficulties in identifying the time frame for establishing the birth of the Bulgarian *ethnie*, but more importantly, it does not answer the question: What makes the "Bulgarian *ethnie*" so different compared to the other *ethnies* in the region? Without mentioning that some of the most radical primordial views, such as Berghe's biosocial theories of "genetic evolution" using kin-based "inclusive fitness," have rather questionable scientific merit, they are clearly far from attempting to explain the Bulgarian ethnic predicament.

### **THE MODERNIST/ INSTRUMENTALIST ARGUMENT**

In contrast to the ethnocentric theory describing the nationalist phenomena as having a universal and therefore *a priori* character, the central theme of the modernist approach is

precisely to situate nationalism in the context of a specific timeframe – the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries - and to link its appearance with the profound economic and social transformations of this period.

From this theoretical standpoint, nationalism is unquestionably a modern phenomenon, a result of the Enlightenment project. The emergence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century of the nation-state, bearing all the “modern” attributes of capitalist economic relations and a secular society, created the necessary conditions for a new “cultural matrix.”

As Anthony Smith puts it, nationalism plays the critical function of “cementing” the requirements of modernity.<sup>107</sup> Marxist approaches to ethnicity differ, but their common thread is the attribution of nationalism to the capitalist era. For Wallerstein, not only ethnicity and race, but also nations and nationalism are the products of the capitalist world system, and all are major institutional constructs of historical capitalism.<sup>108</sup> In the following I will outline briefly the arguments of four authors whose works have left the most noticeable imprint on the current debate on nationalism - Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm,<sup>109</sup> Ernest Gellner and particularly Liah Greenfeld.

I will start with the influential contribution to this debate on the part of Anderson, for whom nationalism is inherently linked with the demise of two important institutional traditions: the monarchy and the church. It is only by analyzing the influence of the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>108</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Construction of Peoplehood: Racism, Nationalism, Ethnicity,” in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, I. Wallerstein and E. Balibar (eds.), (London, 1992), p. 84.

<sup>109</sup> Eric Hobsbawm’s place in this debate deserves a more careful analysis, some consider him an ambiguous Marxist.

substitutes of these pre-Enlightenment institutions, states Anderson, that we can grasp the complexity of the unconventional, “modular” nature of nationalist phenomena, which is capable of being transplanted to any “social political and ideological constellations”.<sup>110</sup> According to Anderson,

It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-oriented hierarchical dynastic realm.<sup>111</sup>

Anderson maintains that communities, i.e., nations, are imagined because they must transcend the principle of spiritual immortality; in other words, this principle sees the manifestation of any instance of the sublime bravura of patriotism as associated not with the institution of the church, but rather with the immortality of the community, “a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation.”<sup>112</sup>

Thus the search for immortality *via religion* has been substituted with the modern mythological vision of togetherness (nations), and spiritual immortality with survival of a language. For Anderson, people who do not know each other are granted the opportunity to live in conformity with a homogenous, mythological world of imagined communities through the medium of the printed word. The collapse of Latin as a universal language and the development of print-capitalism, in fact, paved the road to modernity due to the emergence of nation-states as a “kind of modern narrative,” where “sacred communities integrated by old sacred languages were gradually fragmented,

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<sup>110</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (New York, 1991), p. 4.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46

pluralized, and territorialized.”<sup>113</sup> According to Anderson,

These print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness in three distinct ways. First and foremost, they created united fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community.<sup>114</sup>

Anderson’s theory suggests that members of these “imagined nations,” “connected through print,” share common experiences, incorporated into their own personal identity. In other words, imagined communities are critical in providing the structural *link* between personal and collective identities. It is the charisma of nationalism, writes Anderson, that has turned “chance into destiny” a magic process that “for a new way linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together.”<sup>115</sup> According to him:

Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.<sup>116</sup>

The core assumption here is that people take for granted the nationalist ideas stemming from the “modern text.” This is to say that it seems axiomatic that people can be taught to identify with and, if necessary, to die for their imagined *community*. Thus, states Anderson, it was essentially the manipulative power of print-capitalism that provided the necessary impetus for the creation of nation-states.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 44

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 36

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 7

Another influential contribution to the modernist discourse comes from the controversial position maintained by Eric Hobsbawm, who interprets the nation as “an invented tradition,” and as being the fundamental ideological construct of modern states, where “nations and their associated phenomena must therefore be analysed in terms of political, technical, administrative, economic and other conditions and requirements.”<sup>117</sup> For him, the nation is a result of a process of state-nation building, a process in which the *nation is created by the state*. According to Hobsbawm, “nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round.”<sup>118</sup> He does not “regard the ‘nation’ as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity. It belongs exclusively to a particular and historically recent, period.”<sup>119</sup> According to Hobsbawm, this process took place in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The example he provides is associated with the French state of the Third Republic, where public ceremonies combined with the ambitious construction of public monuments enhanced the *material construct* of a sense of belonging to a single nation:

‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.<sup>120</sup>

Rejecting the argument that nations may in fact precede states, Hobsbawm argues that the exploitation of an already existing national consciousness is itself an ideology forced on the population in the course of the formation of a state-nation.<sup>121</sup> To quote

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<sup>117</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1870: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9

<sup>120</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, 1983)

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*,

Hobsbawm again: “for the state was the machine which had to be manipulated if a ‘nationality’ was to turn into a ‘nation’, or even if its existing status was to be safeguarded against historical erosion or assimilation.”<sup>120</sup>

The building of nations around national states and industrial economies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the anti-colonial movements of national liberation and emancipation in the mid-twentieth century were both, Hobsbawm claims, central to historical development.<sup>121</sup> In nineteenth-century Europe where, he states, it first originated, the process consisted of two phases, of which “phase A was purely cultural, literary and folkloric, and had no particular political or even national implications,”<sup>122</sup> and phase B was characterized by “a body of pioneers and militants of ‘the national idea’ and the beginnings of political campaigning for this idea.”<sup>123</sup> Hobsbawm argues that a nation-state project is not viable without achieving a high degree of cultural homogenization and standardization, essentially by means of a written “national language.” Both the direct administration of vast numbers of citizens by modern governments and the advances of technical and economic development require this, for they make universal literacy desirable and the mass development of secondary education almost mandatory.<sup>124</sup> According to Hobsbawm, “Naturally states would use the increasingly powerful machinery for communicating with their inhabitants, above all the primary schools, to spread the image and heritage of the ‘nation’ and to inculcate attachment to it and attach

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<sup>120</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 96.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>124</sup> Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, p. 96.

all to country and flag, often ‘inventing traditions’ or even nations for this purpose.”<sup>125</sup>

The third modernist author I am going to assess is Ernest Gellner who, in *Nations and Nationalism*, offers a fundamentally economic basis for the emergence of nationalism. His theory rests on the argument that industrial society, as it evolves, has to respond to the new requirements of the capitalist economic system, which is hungry for a skilled and diversified workforce.

Gellner’s theory is striking in view of its simplistic but compelling structural interrelation between the emergence of nationalism and the transformations in the economic, social and political realms. The building blocks of Gellner’s theory are “industrialization,” “high culture” and the “structure of the modern state.” For Gellner, nations and nationalism are purely modern phenomena and functions of those specific conditions linking economic development with the emergence of “industrial society,” a process that took place in certain parts of Europe at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Gellner states that pre-modern “agro-culture” societies had no place for nationalism since their elites and food-producing masses were always separated along cultural lines. This type of society, according to Gellner, was unable to overcome this divide.<sup>126</sup> The traditional education in place at the time of its emergence, based as it was on a dead language (Latin) and sponsored by landlords and churchmen, was unquestionably obsolete and unable to provide the know-how required for industrial and economic growth based on mobility and division of labour. Gellner’s famous quote is

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<sup>125</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.91-92.

<sup>126</sup> Ernst Gellner, *Culture, Identity and Politics*, (Cambridge, 1987), p.23.

“[i]n simpler words, agrarian civilizations do not engender nationalism, but industrial and industrial societies do.”<sup>127</sup> Clearly according to Gellner, nationalism is a structural by-product of modernity:

Nationalism is about entry to, participation in, identification with, a literate high culture which is co-extensive with an entire political unit and its total population, and which must be of this kind if it is to be compatible with the kind of division of labour, the type or mode of production, on which this society is based.<sup>128</sup>

In place of feudal or agrarian society, with its picturesque languages, cultures and ethnic groups, the nationalist project, as Gellner sees it, requires a totally different social environment - a homogeneous society with a comprehensive and uniform educational system open to all. This system would instil in all members of industrial society a “high culture,” constituting what Gellner describes as one of the “necessary conditions” for the emergence of nationalism.

The next “building block” in this theory reflects the changing structure of the state. For Gellner, the traditional medieval European state was unsuited to the demands of the new industrialization project. Suffering from a “power vacuum” in the wake of political fragmentation which allowed a semi-independent aristocracy to establish local spheres of influence, and due also to the autonomous status of the churches, there was little attempt to achieve uniformity in the form of a comprehensive mass culture.

The only possible way to achieve this project, according to Gellner, was for the political authority to impose from the centre, a stringent control over education, religion and law, sweeping away in the process many local cultures or ethnicities, and replacing them with

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.18.

<sup>128</sup> Erns Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Cornell, 1983), p. 95.

one large nation. In this way, “nation-states” emerged.

What distinguishes the areas within which nationalism has become the crucial principle is that some deep and permanent change has taken place in the way in which society is organized – a change which makes anonymous, internally fluid and fairly undifferentiated, large scale, and culturally homogenous communities appear as the only legitimate repositories of political authority.<sup>129</sup>

Wherever these political constructs are not formed, and the principle of “one state, one culture” is denied, there is nationalist activity, where, using another of Gellner’s famous quotes, “the awakening message was intended for *classes*, but by some terrible postal error was delivered to *nations*.”<sup>130</sup> His theory applies particularly to the historic development of nationalism in Europe, yet it has clear relevance to new states (especially in the Third World) that are not “nation-states” in the sense defined by Gellner.

### *Critique of the Modernist argument*

Here I will assess the modernist argument and its particular relevance in answering my research question while taking into consideration the core of this optique according to which nations are *political* units and social constructions, essentially by-products of modernity. I will begin my critique stating that the modernist argument is not only far superior to the primordialist/ethnicist approach but more importantly, this approach enables me to identify and critically evaluate the structural factors making possible the emergence of Bulgarian nationalism. On one hand, I would like to stress that it is the inherent reductionism of the modernist framework which carries out its own methodological weaknesses. Unlike the ethnicists, the *point de départ* of the modernist argument relies heavily on the determinant factors in nation formation and the nation-

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<sup>129</sup> Gellner, *Culture, Identity and Politics*, p. 9.

<sup>130</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 129.

state. The structural elements that comprise these “framing assumptions” include market, industry, capital and print capital. However, there is a noticeable rigidity associated with this intellectual flow.

I agree with the modernist argument granting a paramount importance to the *cultural break* between pre-modern and modern times, and this because nations (by modernist definition) are clearly political units, the products of industrialization and capitalism. Although in principle I accept the central “political” assertion of modernism, we know for a fact that not all self-conscious communities are politically bounded;<sup>131</sup> what is more, not all nations are culturally homogeneous in the strict sense of the word. In fact, industrial society has never managed to create a truly culturally homogeneous nation-state where the nation and state are completely congruent. Indeed, the modernist argument has its own theoretical shortcomings.

First, the modernist’s general economic rationale, i.e., the desire to improve materially as a social mobilization incentive, becomes an untenable argument for most of the post-89 national movements in Europe, since these, contrary to the modernist’s rationale, decided to leave economically preferential constitutional arrangements, such as Yugoslavia in the case with the sponsored republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, or Kosovo, or that of Czechoslovakia in the case of the economically much less developed Slovak republic. In each of these cases nationalism was not motivated singularly by the desire for economic progress; rather, it was also an issue of self-

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<sup>131</sup> Diaspora communities reside in other many regions of the world with strong allegiances with the homeland, without being necessarily politically bounded.

determination. It is such desires that the modernist theory over-generalizes.

According to Anthony Smith, the main proponent of the “in between approach,” there are at least three “structural” weaknesses associated with the modernist argument.<sup>132</sup>

What is important to extrapolate from this analysis is that the “general nature of these weaknesses” means they cannot be easily applied to specific areas or case-studies, including the case of Bulgarian nationalism. With respect to my research question, what is perhaps the most significant of the modernist assertion is the centrality of the “political nature” of nationalism as being a function of the newly emerging economic conditions in the late eighteenth- and, particularly, nineteenth-century Europe. In fact, all of the above mentioned modernist authors (Hobsbawm, Gellner, Anderson) have a tremendous significance in identifying those structural factors. However, it is important to note that although being able to “frame” the emergence of the nationalist projects in general, these methodological approaches provide an insufficient explanatory model for the nature of Bulgarian nationalism. I agree with the paramount significance of the structural factors of the modernist school associated with industrialization, higher culture, mass print, or state-sponsored invented traditions, but I believe that the interpretation in isolation of these factors cannot produce a convincing explanatory mechanism addressing the civic characteristics of Bulgarian nationalism.

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<sup>132</sup> These three realms according to Smith are:

- “1.Their materiality is over-emphasized and misleading.
- 2.Nationalism as a product of modernization overlooks the "persistence of ethnic ties and cultural sentiments”  
Modernists in fact disagree at the degree, if any, of connection between ethnic ties and cultural sentiments.
- 3.The latter point is perhaps the most important when criticizing modernization theory for though the modernists do present a valid exploration of nationalism, their conscious expulsion of the ethnic rationale in their theory leaves nationalism under modernization theory unfulfilled.” Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), p. 3.

The nature of my research question requires a further exploration beyond establishing the causal relation involving one or two variables (higher culture, print) in the Bulgarian predicament. Although I accept the overall validity of the modernist argument, I feel that the list of structural factors should be expanded to explain the genealogical reasons behind the Bulgarian “atypical” nationalism and, more importantly, their significance should be evaluated in a complex and dynamic context.

I already made clear that the most relevant methodological framework with respect to my research question, since it expands the range of structural factors, has been developed by Liah Greenfeld. According to the situational constraints theory, the interaction of these factors/constraints essentially determines whether the nationalism in question is going to be constructed as an inclusive, civic or exclusive ethnic project.

This richness of the methodological approach allows me to assess a larger number of identifiable independent variables while testing the validity of my hypothesis. Furthermore, this approach allows me to reassess the conventional demarcation of the geographical divide of East/Ethnic versus West/Civic typology of nationalism, being a major theoretical obstruction in explaining the atypical nature of the Bulgarian nationalism, which I am going to outline in the next section of this chapter.

### *Beyond the East/West Dichotomy*

As it was already outlined earlier, the East/West demarcation, between ethnic East European nationalism and civic (broadly) West European nationalism, is a reoccurring

theme in the writings of most proponents of the modernist camp such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, John Plamenatz, Anthony Smith and Liah Greenfeld. What is surprising is their remarkable unanimity on this, seemingly leading, theoretical schism, which has established, on the basis of a geographical divide, the current normative typology of nationalism. There is no question that obvious historical differences have played a detrimental role in the process of the emergence of nation-states in Western and Eastern Europe I, however, argue that such a division cannot always be accurate, and that this is the case of Bulgarian nationalism. The argument behind this discrimination contends that, although the end result for both sides was the modern nation-state, the routes they took differed, which would inevitably ordain the manner in which these nation-states expressed themselves as units of modernity, where new political practices were married with cultural phenomena.

Hence, the formation of a nation would determine the national manifestation of a community, based on, to use Gellner's preferred expression, "universal standardized and generic" education.<sup>133</sup> Following this reasoning, the basis of a given nationalism is largely determined by whether the national feeling within the population emerged before or after the development of "a created symbolic order" associated with the matrix of the nation-state.<sup>134</sup>

According to the central argument of the East/West dichotomy, as it is expressed in the West, Britain and France emerged as the first examples of modern nation-states in

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<sup>133</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 29.

<sup>134</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, p.18.

Europe, developing rational, civic and political units that were later followed by the development of a unique national consciousness housed within this structure.<sup>135</sup>

On the other hand, East European nations, became “the emanation of the collective will,” defined not as a composite entity but as a collective individual, - thus “national principle was collectivistic; it reflected the collective being.”<sup>136</sup> According to the same argument, the roots of East European nationalism can be found in the entrenched reaction of a “ressentiment,” a profoundly anti-Western antagonism that first emerged in Russia and later again in Germany. Following the same reasoning it can be said to be one of the main characteristics of all East European nations today.<sup>137</sup> According to Greenfeld:

It must be understood that what this implies is nothing less than a transformation of the identities of these nations. Such transformations, while possible, do not seem likely in most of the East European societies and former Soviet republics today. They are unlikely, first of all, because the respective social elites of these societies, namely their intelligentsias, have a vested interest in ethnic nationalism (to which they owe their position as social elites). By the same token, they have absolutely no interest, whatever they may say, in democratization, which implies equality and therefore leveling of their group status with that of the rest of the population.<sup>138</sup>

In this way, East European nationalism is portrayed as combining a collectivistic definition of the nation with the ethnic criteria of nationality. As Greenfeld states “one can neither acquired it, if one does not have it, nor change it if one does; it has nothing to do with individual will.”<sup>140</sup> As was mentioned above, another critical variable, accepted

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<sup>135</sup> Mary M. Nikolas, “False Opposites in Nationalism: An Examination of the Dichotomy of Civic Nationalism and Ethnic Nationalism in Modern Europe,” M.A. Thesis, (Centre for European Studies, Monash University), 2000, p. 56.

<sup>136</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*. p. 11

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16

<sup>138</sup> Greenfeld, “Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared,” p .22-23.

<sup>140</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*. p. 11. One may recall the German exclusive citizenship tradition.

by the modernist camp

[...]in determining whether a particular nationalism will be defined as civic or as ethnic, is the perception of a nation's status relative to other nations, or its symbolic place - specifically, whether it is perceived as a part of the West or not. To a certain extent, such perception is dependent on the traditional, pre-national beliefs in the society in question, which in all cases exert a significant formative influence on the nature of the developing national identity<sup>141</sup>

The critical element in this analysis lies in the assertion that, as a general rule, ethnic nationalisms were a reaction to a “national inferiority complex.” While embracing an unambiguous anti-Western ideology, these societies tended to compensate this complex, in claiming that their superiority was inherent (a function of their blood, soul, soil or unadulterated language). Based on this assumption, East European ethnic nationalism is inherited, and the bond is at its heart blood rather than law. Taking Germany as a prime example of a nation-state that defines itself ethnically, some modernists suggest that the nation-states that developed in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe looked to Germany as their primary model, and thus embraced the ethnic, exclusive type of nationalism<sup>142</sup> *“with the possible exception of the Czech republic.”*<sup>143</sup>

In the nineties an image of a xenophobic Eastern Europe, obsessed with its mythological past, resurfaced in the academic discourse on nationalism. The entire region was characterized as haunted by animosity and “centuries long ethnic hatred and enmities.” By definition Eastern Europe was hostile to the cultural and political tradition of the nation-state, institutional order, liberal values and respect for minorities. Eastern Europe and particularly South-Eastern Europe, or the Balkans, were thus portrayed as inherently

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<sup>141</sup> Greenfeld, “Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared,” p. 21.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

intolerant and xenophobic, a place where the drive towards ethno-purity created a domino effect of the emergence of non-figurative, miniature states, obsessed with engineering a mass-scale ethnic cleansing. This product of the historico/geographical divide led to rather sober forecasts about the possibility of the region ever embracing the democratic liberal values of the Western democracies. As presented, however the East/West dichotomy seems unable to address adequately the “Bulgarian paradox” of over a century’s worth of ethnic peace.

*Theoretical framework of the thesis - the situational constraint theory*

Liah Greenfeld, whose contribution to the debate on nationalism has attracted considerable scholarly interest, offers the most relevant methodological framework in respect to my research question. In her seminal work *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Greenfeld offers a systematic historical survey of the origins of nationalism by following the process of evolution of the national identity in the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany and the USA. Greenfeld’s aim is to shed light on the commonalities of the developments in the five cases and the significant particularities in each that may illuminate the nature of the phenomenon of nationalism in general.

Greenfeld challenges the whole premise of the modernist theoretical claim, according to which the nation-building process was a “functional requirement” of modernization. The author offers a truly original argument – that, in fact, it was the vehicle of nationalism that brought about, first, democracy and ultimately a modernized, secular society.

...I reverse the order of precedence, and therefore of causality, which is usually if sometimes tacitly, assumed to exist between national identity and nations and nationalism and modernity: namely that national identity is simply the identity characteristic of nations, while nationalism is a product or reflection of major

components of modernization. Rather than define nationalism by its modernity, I see modernity as defined by nationalism.<sup>144</sup>

Greenfeld claims that nationalism was inherently linked with specific contingent factors in eighteenth-century Western Europe (in England by the 16<sup>th</sup> century). For Greenfeld, nationalism emerged as a response to a specific set of conditions, such as pre-existing state structures and new concepts of sovereignty based on the will of the citizenry, combined with the pursuit of legitimacy and consolidation by the elite. Greenfeld argues that nationalism first emerged in England in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, “adopted” by Henry VIII to support his battle with Rome and then by Parliament in its battle with James I, when a significant semantic transformation did take place where *the word “nation” in its conciliar meaning of “an elite” was applied to the population of the country and made synonymous with the word “people.”*<sup>145</sup>

The inventors of nationalism were members of the new Tudor aristocracy in England in the sixteenth century. Upwardly mobile commoners who reached the top of the social ladder, they found unacceptable the traditional image of society in which social mobility was an anomaly and substituted a new image for it, that of a nation as it came to be understood in modern times. Before this happened, the word "nation" meant something entirely different; it referred to a political and cultural elite, rather than to a society as a whole. Tudor aristocrats, however, made the "nation" synonymous with the English "people," a concept which previously - in English as in other languages referred specifically to the lower orders of society, the commons (or worse: the rabble or plebs), as members of which so many of the new aristocrats were born. As a result of this redefinition, every member of the people was elevated to the dignity of the elite becoming, in principle, equal to any other member, as well as free, in vested with the right of self-government, or, in other words, sovereignty, and the people or the nation collectively was, in turn, defined as sovereign.<sup>146</sup>

Greenfeld argues that the emergence of nationalism in France, Russia, Germany and the United States predates in each the development of a modern industrialized society. In

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<sup>144</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, p.18.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 6. Italics are mine.

<sup>146</sup> Greenfeld, “Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared,” p. 18-19.

each case, the idea of the “nation” served the interests of a *particular elite group* – such as the French and Russian nobility in their battle with absolutist monarchs, or the German intellectual class in its later struggle for social justice.

What is central to Greenfeld’s argument is that nationalism was not only perceived as interrelated with the ideals of liberalism and democracy, but it also became the sole “universal” model, promoting individual rights and autonomy and fostering these values as universal.

According to Greenfeld, the West’s increasing dominance over the rest of the world “made nationality the canon.”<sup>147</sup> At the same time, she argues, the concept did not connote a project that could be pursued while adapting a foreign, universal model - this is why every nationalism has its own indigenous path of development and national ideas. Contrary to the civic, individualistic model is a kind of nationalism where national identity is constructed in unitary terms, in this way fundamentally changing its very nature. Instead of a social union based on a free will, Greenfeld argues,

Ethnic nationalism sees nationality as determined genetically, entirely independent of the individual volition, and thus inherent. It can be neither acquired, if one is not born with it, nor lost, if one is. The freedom of the individual in this type of nationalism is denied consistently, or rather it is redefined as inner freedom or as recognized necessity. This denial and redefinition are predicated on the rejection of the individual as a rational being and an autonomous actor. Individuality itself is equated with the true human nature, which expresses itself in self-abnegation and submersion or dissolution in the collectivity.<sup>148</sup>

Greenfeld defines the process of “manufacturing” national identity as having for its

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<sup>147</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p.14.

<sup>148</sup> Greenfeld, “Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared,” p. 20.

starting point the presence of an “original national identity model.” The original modern idea of nation “the birth of the English nation was not the birth of a nation, it was the *birth of the nations.*”<sup>149</sup> According to Greenfeld, in France, Russia and Germany, when “nationalism started to spread during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of new national identities was no longer the result of an original creation - but rather of the importation of an *already existing idea.*”<sup>150</sup>

This does not mean that there is not conformity within the process, or that the nature of the drive to generate an identity is not a basic universal psychological necessity.<sup>151</sup> However, the process of generating national identity is essentially unique. It is always a *political* project. Agreeing with the core of the modernist argument, Greenfeld argues that political actors, the key groups involved in the formation, articulation and promulgation of a national project, “manufacture” national identity. According to Greenfeld, the dissatisfaction with the traditional identity reflects a fundamental inconsistency between the definition of social order that it expressed and the experience of the actors involved. Regardless of the cause of the identity crisis might be, states Greenfeld “its structural manifestation was in every case the same - anomie,” however it was expressed *differently.*<sup>152</sup>

The underlying ideas of nationality were shaped and modified in accordance with the situational constraints of the actors, and with aspirations, frustrations and interests, which these constraints generated.

This often involved re-interpreting them in terms of indigenous traditions which might have existed alongside the dominant system of ideas in which the now

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<sup>149</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 23.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14. Italics are mine.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

rejected traditional identity was embedded, as well as in terms of the elements of this system of ideas itself which were not rejected.

Such interpretation implied incorporation of pre-national modes of thought within the nascent national consciousness, which were then carried on in it and reinforced.<sup>153</sup>

Resembling to some extent Hroch's interpretation of the inherent evolution of nationalism, Greenfeld argues that we can observe three distinct phases in the formation of specific nationalisms: structural, cultural and psychological.<sup>154</sup> As it was outlined already, "the specific nature of the change and its effects on the agents in each case profoundly influenced the character of nationalism in it."<sup>155</sup>

In *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, I analyzed how the three types of nationalism developed and how they acquired their specific forms in England and the United States (which represent the first type of the individualistic and civic nationalism), in France (the model of the second type of collectivistic and civic nationalism), and in Russia and Germany (which represent the third, the collectivistic and ethnic type).

*Here I shall only note some general tendencies.* The initial definition of the nation in every case (whether it is defined as a composite entity or in unitary terms) depends *on the nature* of the groups actively involved in the articulation of the new ideology, and the situations they face.

The individualistic type of nationalism is likely to develop if during its formative period nationalism *appeals to and serves the interests of wide sectors of the population* (e.g., the English squires and newly literate urban masses, the American colonists, the French bourgeoisie, etc.) and new, open, upwardly mobile influential groups.

...The collectivistic type is to be expected if originally the social basis of nationalism is limited: that is, if nationalism is adopted by and serves the interests of a narrow traditional elite intent on preserving its status (such as the French or the Russian nobility), or a new group trying to attain status within the traditional social framework (German *Bildungsbürgertum*), which then transmits it to the masses by indoctrination.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>156</sup> Greenfeld, "Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared," p. 20-21. Italics are mine.

Within this conceptual framework it becomes clear that the five case studies have a particular analytical significance by demonstrating the chronological and causal primacy of structural conditions. In this context, there are still a few important observations that should be made.

First, the state of "anomie" was essential in introducing the process of identity transformation. Therefore, the emergence of nationalism was a phenomenon related to the *preoccupation with status*, "*the English new aristocracy sought to justify it, the French and the Russian nobility to protect it, and the German intellectuals to achieve it.*"<sup>157</sup>

Second, commonality is the causal relation between the nature (social, economic, political) of the political actors involved in the national project and the outcome of nationalism. As mentioned above, an individualistic (civic) type of nationalism is likely to develop if it responds to the interests of wide sectors of the *population* (newly literate urban population, upwardly mobile influential groups, etc.) The narrower the social basis of nationalism is (i.e. an elite, preserving its status), the greater the likelihood of the emergence of ethnic nationalism.

The third observation lies in what Greenfeld defines as the "general educated sentiment" as a function of the new positivist, secular education. This is a central component in Greenfeld's theoretical edifice. Taking England as the original model, "*science stood guard over national interests,*" while "*science did not only express the 'English temper', it could actually*

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<sup>157</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, p. 488. Italics are mine.

*reform minds, contribute to greater rationality, and thereby unite and strengthen the nation.*"<sup>159</sup>

In undermining religious authority, secularism obscures the importance of transcendental concerns, providing an impetus for less scholastic, less romantic discourse in moulding the concept of national identity. Therefore, secular educated sentiment in a particular society can exercise a powerful normative influence in shaping the political vocabulary, and eventually the outcome of nationalism. In a particular society, the chances for emergence of a collectivistic ethnic type of nationalism, generated by a religious discourse on the supremacy of the "undivided soul of the nation" are small if the level of the secularism is high.

A fourth observation is related to the causal linkage between pre-national modes of thought (Positivism, Liberalism, Protestantism, Pietism) and their level of compatibility with the original (civic) model of nationalism. According to Greenfeld, their normative influence is decisive in determining whether a particular nationalism will be defined as civic or as ethnic. The critical factor lies in the initial definition of the nation - whether it is defined as a composite entity or in unitary terms.

Therefore, the last variable to assess is the level of compatibility (philosophical/ethical and intellectual) between the pre-national modes of thought and civic model of nationalism. In the next chapter, I will test the validity of the situational constraints theory in assessing the four variables below with respect to the conceptualization of the Bulgarian national identity project.

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

- Presence/lack of anomie;
- Nature of the group involved in articulating the national project (small elite versus groups with social influence and support);
- Level of secular educated sentiment; and
- Compatibility of pre-national beliefs with the original civic model of nationalism.

Using Greenfeld's methodological framework, the current liberal policy of ethnic accommodation vis-à-vis the Turkish minority, as well as the recurring "liberal" motifs and patterns of ethnic inconsistency and paradox throughout the modern history of Bulgaria (after its liberation in 1878), cease to be fragmentary social phenomena begging for an explanation, but become rather valid pieces of a coherent continuity. These ideas will be further developed in the section addressing the phenomenology of constructing Bulgarian nationalism.

### **Measuring the independent variables**

#### **Indicators for presence/lack of anomie**

I believe that Greenfeld's theory cannot be simply described as an orthodox ramification of a neo-Weberian approach, since due to the inherent complexity of its original design, it goes much further. The interplay of multiple causal variables ultimately produces a superior analytical methodological tool for assessing the phenomenology of constructing different types of nationalisms. In this way, measuring these causal variables becomes an indispensable research procedure in attempting to measure the probability of emergence of different typologies of national projects.

In the next chapter, "Main factors constructing Bulgarian nationalism," I will test the validity of situational constraints theory in assessing the four independent variables with respect to the articulation of the Bulgarian national project. The first independent variable will be evaluated by testing whether or not, during the formative period of the articulation of the Bulgarian national idea, there was any evidence of anomie. As was already explained in the previous section, according to situational constraint theory, the state of "anomie" was not only essential in all five analyzed cases, but in fact played the role of an indispensable "trigger effect" in launching the national identity project. This development, states Greenfeld, was initiated by the onset of a process of identity transformation.

From Greenfeld's perspective, the adoption of national identity must have been somehow in the interest of the groups that imported the original concept. This identity transformation was preceded by a deep dissatisfaction with the traditional identity itself, reflecting a fundamental inconsistency between the definition of social order that it expressed and the experience of the actors involved. Therefore, the state of *anomie* becomes an essential ingredient in Greenfeld's theory, where it symbolizes a profound structural inconsistency, specifically an inconsistency between values and other elements of social structure.

Thus to test for the presence or lack of anomie in Bulgarian society during the formulation of the national identity concept, I will examine the following indicators: First, I will identify and analyze whether the introduction of policy reforms, by transforming the outgoing economic model, provided the impetus for the newly

emerging conflation of social roles. Key economic policy documents institutionalizing new business types/models/practices will be critically assessed. In addition, I will analyze quantitative indicators, i.e., the number of new businesses - artisan, manufacturing or commerce, to demonstrate whether there are emerging patterns of wealth accumulation indicative of tendencies of upward social mobility. Another quantitative indicator would be the ratio of mobility between these new social strata versus the old traditional social structure. This will indicate whether the society in question underwent a profound social transformation, where the old definitions and justifications of the existence of traditional social order became obsolete and thus functioned as a source of societal frustration.

### **Indicators for measuring the social support of the groups articulating the national project**

As was mentioned in the previous section, Greenfeld argues that the emergence of the idea of the “nation” is *always* linked to the interests of a particular social group that transmits the concept to the society in question. The causal linkage of this important factor/constraint with the outcome of nationalism, argues Greenfeld, depends on whether, during its formative period, nationalism appeals to and serves the interests of wide sectors of the population and new, open, upwardly mobile influential groups or is perceived as serving the interests of a narrow social group intent on preserving its status within the traditional social framework. Therefore, the extent of the social scope of the national project and the appeal of the early stages of its indoctrination become critical.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>“The redefinition of “nobility” in the literature as a status based on merit and not on birth was a simple acknowledgement of this change, the transfer of authority from one elite to another that virtually happens before one’s eyes. In a way, nationality made every Englishman a nobleman so that blue blood was no longer necessary to achieve or aspire to high position in society. The new aristocracy was natural aristocracy, an elite of intelligence and virtue, and its superior position was justified by the service it, being so endowed, could render to others.” Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, p. 47.

With respect to my research question, two sets of indicators may be useful when testing this particular variable:

- a) assessing the nature of the groups articulating the national project; and
- b) assessing the level of social support vis-à-vis the national project.

A reliable indication may be found in the groups' position within the social hierarchy scale; those groups closer to the socio/economic/political summit are by definition numerically vulnerable and are thus elitist and exclusive (the case with the French and Russian nobility). On the other hand, groups positioned lower in the social hierarchy, and associated essentially with the status of middle class, represent wider sectors of the population (growing English middle class, American colonists, etc.) These latter tend to promote, according to Greenfeld, national projects by using a wide-ranging political constructivism.

Testing whether a national project has been articulated by elitist groups (nobility/aristocracy/intellectuals) or by upwardly mobile groups (bourgeoisie, artisans, craftsmen or traders, large scale agricultural producers) will allow me to further assess Greenfeld's situational constraint approach from a theory-confirming case studies perspective.

In addition to the intellectual formulation/articulation of the national project, another important indicator demonstrating the scope of the social support won by the groups implicated in the national project is the level of their participation in the national

revolutionary movement, such as the armed revolts against Ottoman domination, as we will see in the next chapter. This may illustrate the percentage of the upwardly mobile groups as a clear sign of the extent of the social groups' active involvement in the national project.

### **Indicators measuring the level of secularism**

Secularism, as a function of the “general educated sentiment,” is one of the cornerstones of Greenfeld’s theoretical construct. Essentially it was rationality, the empirical knowledge and ultimately “*science [which] stood guard over the national interest.*”<sup>161</sup> From this perspective, the causal linkage between secularism and the emergence of the civic, national project lies within the inner intellectual and philosophical constitution of the latter, where “the pursuit of knowledge is a matter of national pride,” thus standing intrinsically opposed to religious discourse on the supremacy of the “undivided soul of the nation.”

In this way, continues Greenfeld, secularism is capable of effectively marginalizing the potential strategic union with religious authority, and in so doing, ultimately succeeds in shaping a less theological/exclusive, political vocabulary. The outcome is a form of nationalism, where the nation is conceived as a free association of rational human beings entered into voluntarily on an individual basis.

There are several indicators specifying the level of secularism, or as Greenfeld defines it, “general educated sentiment,” in a particular society. The first set is related to the

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 85. Italics are mine.

educational sphere and is a function of the number of secular educational institutions: primary schools, secondary schools, lyceums, colleges and universities, as well as widely accessible libraries and reading clubs. These indicators are based on quantitative analysis: the number of secular educational establishments in itself demonstrates how important in a particular society the general educated sentiment may be. A second set of indicators would be the ratio between secular educational institutions and educational establishments run by religious authorities. This indicator would demonstrate the extent of the religious/secular dichotomy and further reveal overall how significant and influential the institution of the church may be in a particular society.

The third set of indicators is also quantitative, and related to the overall level of literacy in a particular society, such as the number of students attending educational centers or the percentage of the population with primary, secondary and postsecondary education. The fourth set of indicators is likewise quantitative and represents the production of various print publications: books, manuals, educational publications, newspapers, magazines, specialized, journals, technical literature, various translated publications, etc.

The final set is a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators: on the one hand the number of religious groups active in articulating the national project, and on the other, the number of religious authorities embodying a different level of political and social leverage.

Additionally, I will analyze the nature of the political discourse supporting the concept of national identity, i.e. whether or not the concept is structured around transcendental

concerns such as the centrality of religious supremacy (as a key common denominator). This will demarcate the level of secular ferment in a particular society. I argue, therefore, that by analyzing the vocabulary of the political discourse in the early formative stage of the national project, we can identify whether the status of the church in a particular society is marginal or not. Thus, a political discourse justifying religious/romantic assumptions using cultural contextualization would indicate that the church is actively involved in the articulation of the national identity concept, hence liable to promote an exclusionist national project.

On the other hand, a political national project using a scholastic and rational (political) lexicon, in this way subscribing to the idea of political universalism, would indicate that the church is a less active or even marginal actor in the formulation of the national project.

#### **Indicators measuring the compatibility of pre-national beliefs with the original civic, political model of nationalism**

As was explained in the previous section, the normative influence of pre-national belief systems on the outcome of national projects represents a principal element within Greenfeld's theoretical edifice. In order to evaluate the last variable, I will contextualize the Bulgarian theological/ethical structure of the Bogomil schism with respect to the original model of nationalism, where, as we have seen earlier, community is defined in unitary terms.

In order to evaluate the level of compatibility, I will critically assess a set of key themes/values, as well as traditional concepts defining self and collectivity, in my

attempt to locate them on a scale envisaging the two extreme cases of pre-national religious movements: Pietism and Protestantism.

I decided to use this particular scale because these movements, constituting different theological/ethical matrices and based as they are on an exclusive/inclusive dichotomy, tend to facilitate the drive towards rationalization of two seemingly opposed societies: a community defined in unitary terms (individual-centred collectivism, resulting from a process of “fragmenting” the congregation) in contrast to a community defined in collective terms (where individuals are dissolved into a collective entity, “the soul of the nation”).

From this perspective, the normative influence of the dominant views associated with Protestantism essentially prepared the intellectual climate for the emergence of an imagined community, a reflection of a collectivity based on unitary terms. On the other end of the scale, a set of dominant reoccurring views associated with Pietism helped the articulation of gradual adjustment concerning the “mental image” of a national community based on collective terms. In both cases, the central role in this analysis is played by the conceptualization of religion and its societal responsibility as a generator of authority.

Protestantism and secularism, Greenfeld argues, are inherently interlinked because Protestantism was able to take an active role in stimulating literacy, as was the case in sixteenth-century England (the most lettered society), where the secular vernacular was the noticeable expression of the national identity, allowing “individual destinies to be

linked to the destiny of the nation.”<sup>162</sup> The outcome of this development resulted in “*the fact that religion gradually diminished and ultimately lost its authority over the other fields of activity; it ceased to be the source of social values, and instead of shaping them, had to adapt to social and national ideals.*”<sup>163</sup> In this way, Protestantism led to the birth of a new type of society where secularization

awakened thousands of individuals to sentiments which common people nowhere had experienced before, and gave them a position from which they were to view their social world in a new way, but it opened a new, vast terrain to the possible influence of the national idea and at once immensely broadened the population potentially susceptible to its appeal.<sup>164</sup>

What was important in this process was not only the dissociation between national and monarchical sentiment, but the accentuation of the national idea and the reinterpretation of the nation as the only source of authority. The predominant view, states Greenfeld, defined the nation in terms of individual dignity or liberties; in this way the focal point, the central “seal,” was no longer monarchy or religion. Instead, the abstract centre of the new imagined community - the nation was constructed on the free will of *rational* individuals.

What makes this assertion important is its usefulness not only in identifying and locating on the “compatibility-incompatibility” scale those dominant views with respect to articulating the concept of community, but also in assessing “the building blocks” of this construct i.e. the “mental” images of the self.

As we have seen in the case of England, the belief in individual reason produced

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 77. Italics are mine.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

assertiveness vis-à-vis authority. Scepticism, with its emphasis on the futility of speculation, made sensory, empirical knowledge the basis for the assertion of reason in support of the liberty of individual consciousness. Thus, England as a whole acquired the image of “the mansion – house of liberty” where, according to Milton, “liberty became the distinguishing characteristic of Englishness.”<sup>165</sup> On the opposite side of the compatibility–incompatibility scale lies the theological/ethical matrix associated with Pietism, where the importance of the group in general, i.e., the community of the like-minded, inevitably forces the individual to turn to the community for guidance. What should be noted is that the concept came to dominate Pietist thinking, according to which the external organization of the official Church was regarded as less important when compared to the community of the faithful, the invisible Church of the elect, whose ultimate duty was to make it visible to the rest of the world.<sup>166</sup> In this way, the congregation became a reflection of each member’s personal relationship with the Savior: indeed, Greenfeld points out, it was *impossible* to achieve true unity with God outside of the community, whose process culminated into sanctifying the state as being the ultimate incarnation of the true Church.<sup>167</sup> This amounts to an effective dissolution of the individual within a community, where the personal individuality of each member vanishes in a true unity, representing the “group of the elect.”<sup>168</sup>

This also serves as an indicator to show whether pre-national beliefs (i.e., those dominant philosophical/ethical and intellectual views expressed during the articulation

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 320.

of the national project) are closer to the fundamental Pietist definition of community as “a group of the elect,” or whether they are closer to the Protestant idea of the community as a composite entity, within a people defined as a social compact of free and equal individuals.

Taking this classification as my main frame of reference, I will critically assess the Bogomil schism by evaluating its philosophical contribution in shaping the concept of community, self, authority and source of loyalty. This will enable me to locate it on the compatibility-incompatibility scale and, ultimately, indicate its level of compatibility with the original model of a civic, inclusive nationalism.

## CHAPTER II

## REVISTING THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING BULGARIAN NATIONALISM - MAIN FACTORS/CONSTRAINTS

*Overview*

*In this chapter I will further elaborate my hypothesis in arguing that the interplay among a number of detrimental factors/constraints made the emergence of a civic, inclusive, liberal values based Bulgarian nationalism possible. From the perspective of this multi-faceted interplay, I will revisit the phenomenology of the construction of Bulgarian nationalism by providing an innovative analysis of this clear deviation from the pattern of the surrounding ethnic nationalism(s) in the region.*

In our Bulgaria it would not be like it is now in the Turkso (Turkish- i.e. Ottoman Empire). In the future Bulgaria *All peoples will live under the same Sacred and Just laws.* They would be the same for Turks, for Jews, for whomever, as all the laws would be the same.<sup>122</sup>

Vassil Levski 1839-1876

## I. ASSESSING THE STATE OF ANOMIE ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE BULGARIAN POPULATED LANDS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**Facing the West: policy adjustments as a result of the integration of the Ottoman economy into the world capitalist economy  
The anomic and the new Bulgarian bourgeoisie**

The expansion in Europe undermined not only the military, but primarily the economic might of the Ottoman Empire<sup>123</sup> and led to the integration of the Ottoman economy into the European and world trading systems. Special commercial concessions (the so-called

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<sup>122</sup> Ivan Undjiev, Nikola Kondarev, *Vasil Levski, Sviata i Chista Republika, Pisma i Dokumenti*, [Vasil Levski, Sacred and Just Republic, Letters and Documents], (Sofia, 1971). Vassil Levski is considered to have been the main revolutionary figure in the Bulgarian national liberation movement. Levski determined the future form of government in liberated Bulgaria, based on the principles of a *Sviata i Chista Republika*.

<sup>123</sup> The 1606 peace treaty with Austria penalized the High Porte with a heavy financial burden – 1 200 000 golden ducats annual reparation to Vienna. See Nikolai Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane* [The Bulgarian Revival], (Sofia, 1995), p.63.

Capitulations)<sup>124</sup> first granted to France (1535), later on to England (1581), and eventually to Holland (1600) played a significant role in this economic integration. These developments had a profound impact on the economic, and ultimately on the political processes of the Bulgarian populated territories in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>125</sup> These “capitulations” were translated into customs duties not higher than 3%, which allowed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries cheap West European products to flood the Empire’s huge internal market without giving local producers any chance to compete.<sup>126</sup>

This situation created a steady trend towards a passive commercial balance with Europe. It culminated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century having a serious impact on the economic<sup>127</sup>, as well as on the political stability of the Empire and particularly on the ability of the central power in Constantinople to exercise its control over the Ottoman provinces, of significant importance in respect to the aspirations of the newly emerging elites.

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<sup>124</sup> The concept of capitulations played a vital role in Ottoman international relations. The ruler granted capitulations to foreigners in a unilateral, non reciprocal manner. Persons with capitulatory status also enjoyed full exemption from Ottoman taxes and customs duties, which by the 18<sup>th</sup> century began to have a negative impact on the Ottoman economy as a whole. See Donald Qataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922, New Approaches to European History* (Cambridge, 2000), p.79. See also Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains* (London, 1998).

<sup>125</sup> Scholars generally agree that in the early sixteen century the Ottoman Empire was not the economic satellite of an expanding European economy. There is an equally general agreement that the opposite was true by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of this process, the adjustments undertaken by the High Porte, are structurally inherited within the evolving nature of a “world empire,” a concept used by Immanuel Wallerstein. See Suraiya Faroqhi, “Trade, Inter-regional and International”, in Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert, Sevket Pamuk, (eds), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume Two 1600-1914* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 479-480.

<sup>126</sup> These famous Capitulations were one of the factors that brought about the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The Capitulations were a system of trade agreements, which granted certain fiscal privileges to foreign importers and exporters. These advantages were denied to indigenous merchants, who were thus forced to focus exclusively on internal commerce. See Nikolai Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane* [The Bulgarian Revival], (Sofia, 1995), p. 64.

<sup>127</sup> According to one of the leading specialist on the Ottoman legacy Dennis P. Hupchick: “The Ottoman Islamic tradition did not favor large-scale government intervention in the economy, nor did it include a sophisticated sense of investment. Neither the government, nor the wealthy in the Ottoman society thought to undertake Western European style, mercantilist development. Western Europe early Industrial Revolution spelled ultimate economic disaster for the Ottoman Empire’s self-sufficient economy. Gradually the Westerners’ cheap factory-made import goods progressively displaced native handcraft items, causing unemployment, economic dependency, and commercial deterioration..” D. P. Hupchick, *The Balkans, From Constantinople to Communism* (Palgrave, 2002), p. 169.

Sweeping global changes, that brought mounting European influence, triggered a major restructuring of Ottoman institutions. The influx of European goods began in earnest – hand manufactures made in labor-intensive Western workshops, as well as the more familiar machine made cotton yarn and cloth. Nearly a half-century after the agrarian changes had begun, the Istanbul regime embarked on its famous course of political reordering (Tanzimat) with the support of the European powers. This process included the decentralization of the Westernization of the government structures and the formation of a more powerful and expanded central state apparatus. This reorganizing state eliminated or weakened its domestic rivals – urban guilds, tribes and provincial notables – while maintaining its place in the new world order. The central state apparatus paid the price for European support as Ottoman economic activities became more oriented towards furnishing the West with raw material exports and buying the products of its expanding industry.<sup>128</sup>

In order to secure its Western front<sup>129</sup> and to lighten its costly military presence – it is sufficient to mention the constant presence of 200 battleships in the Mediterranean area – the High Porte launched a policy of rapprochement with continental Christian Europe.<sup>130</sup>

As a result, a new era of extensive international commerce, mercantilism and more, new economic structural arrangements of property was launched by the Ottoman administration, which felt increasingly frustrated with external military and economic pressures.<sup>131</sup>

There was an important policy development that culminated in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century - the land reform. In fact, the process began much earlier, however, what is important to note

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<sup>128</sup> See Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert, Sevket Pamuk, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume two 1600-1914*, (Cambridge, 1994), p.762.

<sup>129</sup> A century of military defeats began at Vienna in 1683 and ended with Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798. See Donald Qataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922, [New Approaches to European History]*, (Cambridge, 2000), p.79.

<sup>130</sup> To better understand some of the major policy adjustments undertaken by the High Porte, some security matters should be taken into consideration. Primarily the emergence of Imperial Russia as being the most significant threat, led to a series of well calculated concessions vis-à-vis Europe. See S. Damianov, "Osmanska Imperia i Balgarite Sled Krimskata Voina, Mezunarodonoto Polozenie na Imperiata, Nov etap v Iztochnia vapors", [The Ottoman Empire and the Bulgarians after the Crimean War, The International situation of the Empire, New stage of the Eastern Question], in *History of Bulgaria [Istoria na Balgaria]*, (Sofia, 1987), Vol. 6, p 27-32.

<sup>131</sup> According to Donald Qataert, the most significant state interventions in favor of free trade were "the 1826 destruction of the Janissary protection of monopoly and restriction, the 1838 Anglo-Turkish Convention, and the two imperial reform decrees of 1839 and 1856. As a result, most policies that promoted barriers to Ottoman international and internal commerce disappeared or were reduced sharply. See Qataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, p. 125.

here is that the old traditional system of "Timar" was gradually replaced with a different land ownership system.

Timar public land was land under usufruct grant by the sultan to civil or military officials. Timar land was not meant to be private property and could not be inherited, but under certain legal or illegal conditions, timar land was often treated as if it was privately owned. Legal evasions might take the form of very long leases, or simply illegal grants resulting from bribery. Timar estates converted to private property were called "ciftliks."<sup>132</sup>

In the Ottoman Empire land ownership was institutionally "blurred" within a triangle: state – temporarily managing landowner – producer.<sup>133</sup> This policy should be put into perspective. It may be argued that perhaps the most important way in which the Ottoman Sultans strove to ensure control over the periphery – whether by conscious design or not – was by striving to prevent the emergence of any landed upper class in the provinces.<sup>134</sup>

### **The anomie and the new Bulgarian bourgeoisie**

In the Bulgarian populated territories, as well as elsewhere in the European part of the Empire, these new conditions allowed for the creation of much bigger agricultural units - the so-called chiftlicks, most of which gradually developed a more differentiated forms of production in order to satisfy the growing needs of the new markets in Europe.<sup>135</sup> In this

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<sup>132</sup> See Halil Inalcik, "The Emergence of Big Farms Ciftliks: State Landlord and Tenants", in Cagdar Keyder, Tabak Faruk, eds., *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Middle East* (Albany, 1991).

<sup>133</sup> The Ottoman agrarian regime was based on two main pillars - the *miri* regime and the *timar* system. This is how Gerber describes the distinction between the two types land ownership. "All agricultural or, more specifically, grain producing land in the state was declared *miri*, that is "belonging formally to the state," only vineyards and orchards in or on the outskirts of settled areas were considered *mulk*, or "privately owned." There is no question that this division was influenced by the ancient Islamic traditions, however, the connection between the basic Ottoman land law and the land law of classical Islam was complicated. Classical Islamic law distinguished between many different types of land, on the basis of a peasant's religion and according to the whether the area had been conquered forcibly or acquired peaceably. Part of the agricultural land was considered entirely private and part belonged to the ruler." See Haim Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East*. (Boulder, 1987), p. 11-12.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>135</sup> "Predgovor, Sotsialno-Ikonomictesko Razvitiie", [Introduction, Social and economic development], *Istoria na Balgaria*, [History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 1987), volume 6, p.14.

way, Bulgarian peasants became actively involved in the internal, as well as external, commerce of agricultural commodities. They became producers able to sell their production not only directly to the state, but also to the Empire's huge internal, as well as its increasingly lucrative foreign, markets. Increased production differentiation<sup>136</sup> led to the establishment of the first proto-capitalist enterprise – concentrating not only on agricultural production, but also on international commerce, and on financing. In this way the new Bulgarian rural bourgeoisie was born.<sup>137</sup>

Another important structural reform was the Imperial Edict of 1839, giving state protection to the promotion and expansion of all craftsmanship, a measure aimed at stabilizing the internal economic situation weakened by the pressure of cheap commodities produced in Central and Western Europe. The High Porte thus guaranteed full autonomy to the craftsmen organizations and guild unions operating throughout the Ottoman Empire.

The 1839 Edict became the hallmark of the Tanzimat period, which itself aimed in adapting the institutional order of the Empire according to the model of a modern European bourgeois state. The Edict promised a reform of the Ottoman administration, state apparatus and political institutions while at the same time guaranteeing the integrity of

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<sup>136</sup> The Plovdiv and Pazardjik areas specialized in producing rice, Macedonia - cotton, Dobrudja – wheat, the Balkans and the area of Belomorie - rose oil and animal stocks. See: Nikolai Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, [The Bulgarian Revival] (Sofia, 1995), p. 76.

<sup>137</sup> Significant concentration of commercial agriculture was formed in areas easily accessible by water, the Danubian basin, and some river valleys in Bulgaria. See Qataert, *Ibid.* p. 130.

all Ottoman subjects in respect to property, faith and culture. It is, however, fair to say that it was more promise than real reform.<sup>138</sup>

These policies turned out to be of paramount importance to the process of the Bulgarian Revival, as it was to urban economic development everywhere.<sup>139</sup> It is well documented that “Bulgarians were the most active ethnic element in the cities.”<sup>140</sup> In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was an explosion of different artisan companies, small firms and manufacturing plants giving work to more than 100 different artisans.<sup>141</sup> To take but one example – the town of Panaguirichte – there were 569 artisan companies covering 20 different production sectors.<sup>142</sup>

The first economic centers with numerous artisan organizations were established around the Balkan mountain chain Gabrovo, Kotel, Koprivshitsa, Panaguirishe, Elena, Kalofer, and Bansko.<sup>143</sup>

During the 1850s, in the Bulgarian populated territories there were more than 50 established artisan organizations in sectors such as textile, homespun tailoring, woollen

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<sup>138</sup> See: Nikolai Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane* [The Bulgarian Revival] (Sofia, 1995), p.77-83.

<sup>139</sup> To quote again Qataert: “Increasing international trade powerfully impacted the composition of the Ottoman merchant community. Ottoman Muslims as a major merchant group had faded in importance during the 18<sup>th</sup> century when foreigners and Ottoman non-Muslim became dominant in the mounting foreign trade. At first, the international trade was nearly exclusively in the hands of the West Europeans who brought foreign goods. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century these merchants had found partners and a helped growing numbers of non-Muslim merchants to obtain certificates (*berats*) granting them the capitulatory privileges which foreign merchants had, namely lower taxes and thus lower costs. Although foreigners still controlled the international trade of the empire, in 1800, their non-Muslim protégés replaced them over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The non Muslim merchants dominated the trade of interior towns and often between interior and the port cities on the coast.” See D. Qataert, *Ibid.* p. 129.

<sup>140</sup> Genchev, p. 76.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132

<sup>142</sup> See: *Ikonomikata na Balgaria* [The Economy of Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1969), p. 213-215.

<sup>143</sup> Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, p. 132-133.

braiding, fur production and tailoring, flour mills and mining significantly changing the socio-economic landscape of the “Bulgarian lands” within the Ottoman Empire. This economic revitalization and accumulation of wealth was accompanied by a growing frustration on the part of the newly emerging Bulgarian bourgeoisie, which could not match its gains in the economic realm with an equally comparable political status.<sup>144</sup>

Although provisions, such as granting autonomy to the religious and secular educational institutions, as well as the legalization of a “mixed” court system and the integration of non-Muslim subjects into the higher structures of the Ottoman administrations and the army were outlined and promised in the decree of 1839, they nevertheless were not implemented, which further increased the appetite for more political freedom.

Nevertheless, the “reforms” spirit had given birth to a new environment allowing recently established Bulgarian artisan organizations to function independently of the Ottoman authorities.<sup>145</sup> All questions related to their businesses, such as quality standards, technical codes, prices and market strategies were discussed within the respective councils of these organizations. In this context, the urban, middle class bourgeoisie representing these artisan organizations played a pivotal role, not only in the municipal self-governing councils, but also primarily in being among the social groups most active in laying the foundations of the Bulgarian National Revival movement.

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<sup>144</sup> Predgovor, [Introduction], *Ibid.*, p.48-51.

<sup>145</sup> However, it should be noted that the huge market of the Ottoman Empire remained the most important for these newly emerging artisan businesses.

There was another important factor, namely the establishment of an independent economic space with its own “ethnic dynamic,” outside of Ottoman administrative control. This became a trademark of the cultural, religious and political aspirations of the most active economic class in “the Bulgarian lands,” the Bulgarian middle bourgeoisie.<sup>146</sup>

During the same period of time – the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there began to emerge alongside the increasingly important urban Bulgarian artisan bourgeoisie, several large-scale textile-manufacturing companies.<sup>147</sup> Contrasted to the traditional small size companies with approximately 25-30 workers, those new large-scale enterprises employed up to 500 workers. They were found primarily in the cities of Gabrovo, Tirnovo, Sliven, Shumen, Karlovo, and Kalopher. One of them, the factory known as “Hambar” employed more than 1,000 tailors.<sup>148</sup>

The economic development and increasing importance of Bulgarian cities, as they became major centers of commerce, had a tremendous impact on the social makeup of Bulgarian society as a whole. In the 1850s there was clear evidence of the growing importance of the urban structure of the Bulgarian populated territories, which contained about 60 large, medium and smaller size cities.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> In fact, it was precisely the governing bodies of these artisan organizations that became gradually the most important agents in the national Revival process by shaping the educational and ecclesiastical policies of the municipal councils.

<sup>147</sup> On the subject of the emergence of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie during this period. See: Ivan Hadjiiski, *Bit i Dushevnost na Balgarskiat narod*, [Milieu and Spirit of the Bulgarian people], (Sofia, 2002).

<sup>148</sup> Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, p. 137. See also Predgovor, p.51.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51

At the end of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a well-developed internal market in the Bulgarian populated territories, able to compete with the West and to export its production to major European cities.

The increased commercial importance of these areas can be seen in the massive effort by the government in Constantinople to build a modern infrastructure. As a result of this new policy, more than 2, 100 km of rail lines were built, of which 1,100 km lay in the in European part of the Empire i.e. primarily in the Bulgarian populated territories. At the same time a modern road system covering 550 km, complete with 230 bridges, was also being built.<sup>150</sup>

The growing importance of these economically robust areas can be seen in the fact that in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century practically all of the large cities in the Bulgarian populated territories were connected either by roads, railways or by telegraph. Special attention was paid to the main commercial ports on the Danube River and to the Black Sea ports connecting Bulgarian populated territories with Europe.<sup>151</sup>

An illustration of the increased economic importance of the Bulgarian populated territories points to the fact that, although occupying only one twelfth of the territory of the Ottoman Empire, they were responsible for one fifth of the Empire's overall international exports.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

Major commercial firms facilitated this active international trade. Many of them were run by ethnic Bulgarians who were instrumental in commerce with France and particularly with the “newcomer” Austria. In Vienna, in 1844, they were more than 30 large commercial enterprises managed by Bulgarian traders.<sup>153</sup> A wealthy Bulgarian Diaspora of wholesale traders, as well as money-lenders lived in Istanbul, Romania, Austria, Russia, Transylvania, and Bessarabia. Despite being widely dispersed, this Diaspora played an active role in shaping the discourse on the political liberation of Bulgaria.<sup>154</sup>

### **Specificity of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie**

Before concluding this section, I believe it is worth noting some of the specific characteristics of the main political actors in the Bulgarian national project – the emerging Bulgarian bourgeoisie, which to a certain degree differed from the traditional bourgeoisie in Western Europe. Despite its remarkable development, particularly towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was a “*latecomer*” and essentially seemed ill prepared to the challenges associated with the “entire social package” as a result of the mercantilist, volatile, market-driven environment.

I believe that the ethical linkages to the *zadruga* (communal) mentality were still deeply entrenched in the national psyche, making easier the transition to an open mercantilism using cultural channels that combined various traditional local beliefs.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>154</sup>See on this subject Krumka Sharova, “Diskusia Za Roliata na Balgarsakata Burguazia v Natsionalno-Osvoboditelnoto Dvizenie (Discussion About the Role of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie in the National Liberation Movement – IP, XXXII, 1976, vol.6. p.125-126. Hristo Hristov, “Za Roliata na Balgarskata Burgoisia v Natsionalata Revolutsia, (About the role of the Bulgarian Bourgeoisie in the National Revolution) – IP, XXXIII, 1977, vol. 3, p. 91-97.

<sup>155</sup> Ivan Hadjiiski, *Bit i Duchevnost na Balgrskia Narod* [Milieu and Spirit of the Bulgarian People](Sofia, 2002).

Overall, it is safe to say that the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was primarily a petty bourgeoisie. Profits were either reinvested in the business that produced them or spent on personal needs rather than invested in other businesses or new production methods.<sup>156</sup> Prior to the 1878 period in the Bulgarian populated territories, commercial loans were rather minimal, short term and transacted among individuals rather than through banking houses, which were practically non-existent. The recycling of money that fed the transformation from mercantile to industrial capitalist economies in Western Europe was completely lacking. In a land unfamiliar with the *nouveaux-riches syndrome*, the accumulated wealth of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie consisted primarily in real estate, land and goods, but hardly ever in capital, which made it vulnerable to market fluctuations in the long-term.

A second observation may be made regarding the implications of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie remaining at the level of a petty bourgeoisie, consisting primarily of small-scale artisans and agricultural producers. Associated with the vast guild network, these small craftsmen usually employed on average anywhere from four to twelve workers.<sup>157</sup> This is to say that, on the whole, the Bulgarian economy could be described as primarily based on small-scale ownership, with small-scale agricultural and artisan production.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> The dynamic of this process is explained by Dennis Hupchick as follows: "Essentially this is true for the larger economic context; real incomes in the Ottoman Empire experienced a decline because of no-growth conditions, coupled with the impact of a rampant inflation. The low prices for goods desired by the West (primarily foodstuffs and basic raw materials) tended to suck them out of the Empire at the expense of the domestic economy. A few benefited from the situation, especially some of the *zimmi* merchants and *ciflik* owners, who evolved into a growing middle class, but the merchants were oriented towards commerce with Westerners and not production, while landowners concentrated only on their own enrichment and ignored that of others." See Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans, From Constantinople to Communism*, (Palgrave, 2002).

<sup>157</sup> Hadjiiski, *Ibid.* p. 178 -180.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

A third observation can be made regarding the ethical nature of the professional codes, of the *esnaf* craft into a social “brotherhood.”<sup>159</sup> It collectively represented its membership and the interest of the population against profiteering, fraud, and speculation according to the Sheria law. The application of this principle was an obligation of the Islamic state that the Ottoman took seriously.<sup>160</sup> All types of speculation in the area of the craft industries were punished as criminal offences. Kadis, set the “just price” for craft goods and determined the “just” profit allowed the artisan producers.”<sup>161</sup>

The last observation focus on of the personality of the *esnaf* as a main archetype of success within Bulgarian society, and also how remnants of these perceptions, transcended into normative connotations within the matrix of the Bulgarian national project. Particularly relevant, I argue, is the dichotomist perception of the self – image in relation to other fellowmen, as well as its dynamic interaction.

After the collapse of the Bulgarian medieval state and the elimination of the Bulgarian aristocracy, one of the most elegant Bulgarian sociologist, Ivan Hadjiiski, states that the “vehicle” promoting the new spirit of individualism came from the Bulgarian *esnafs*

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<sup>159</sup> What is noticeable for the Bulgarian artisan organization is the lack of the competitive drive characterized by western counterparts. The following is an excerpt from the 1864 Esnaf Code in town of Koprivtshitsa: “Brothers Esnafs, first let’s know (and accept) this code: We agree to respect and love each other; to help each other, and never to envy, but to cherish each others. We agree never to be jealous, but to live peacefully, as brothers; never to have evil thoughts, but only good thought towards (your brother, esnaf). Never to wish the elimination of these principles, and to respect each other, never to use vulgar language; to obey the law, and to be good subjects. Do not say I am powerful, I am wealthy, I have esnaf skills and talent and I am going to put out of business a brother esnaf without a “just,” good reason.” Ibid. p. 333. Translated by the author.

<sup>160</sup> See Dennis Hupchick, *The Balkans, From Constantinople to Communism* (Palgrave, 2002). p.141.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

group.<sup>162</sup> There were reasons for that. The traditional *esnaf* built his own career, his own success, from scratch. The overwhelming majority of the most successful Bulgarian businessmen were people without “history,” without family tradition, without inherited wealth from their ancestors, as *Bulgarian success was a one-man show!*<sup>163</sup> Therefore what is worth noting in this observation was in its timing; the dominant recipe for a rapid accumulation of wealth and the articulation of the national project.

This success was not only a manifestation of an exceptional effort, but also primarily a function of the quality of his personality. All his success, his wealth, his shop, production, real estate, material objects, were a result of one factor alone - his personal initiative, invention, dedication, skills and talents, ultimately his personality. The success was considered to be an intimately personal affair. This is why it is fair to say that the Bulgarian *esnaf* of the 1850s was the emanation of individualism in its extreme.

The path from being extremely poor to the high rank of material wealth – was a result not only of personality but also primarily of adopting a specific value system and philosophy being accustomed *de régler ses affaires* by themselves, without external intervention. This factor becomes particularly important in respect to the nature of the Bulgarian national project. This particular *Esnaf* philosophy could be traced in commonly known [and some may argued widely accepted] proverbs.<sup>164</sup> It is not

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<sup>162</sup> Hadjiiski, Ibid. p.231

<sup>163</sup> Italics are mine.

<sup>164</sup> “It is a personal duty to earn *his own* bread.”

“Everyone should work on *his own*, everyone has *his own* head, everyone should know *his own* work”

“Everybody should be on *his own*, even brothers cannot cooperate in running a business.”

“Wolf has a thick neck because he is doing his business *alone*.” Ibid, p.302. Translated by the author.

surprising, I argue, as to why this individualism *à l'extrême* became a significant factor in the overall dynamic during the process of articulating the Bulgarian national project. The interpretation of the “sovereignty of the people,” whether is it defined as individual-centered or on a broader, community-centered basis, is paramount in defining the political and social alternatives of the nationalistic project.

Within this context I argue that the main political actor, the petty bourgeoisie and the small scale agricultural producers, were naturally more inclined to define themselves in rather universalistic terms, leaving the vital, impenetrable space of the private sphere, an essential prerequisite of the road of success. In this way the sphere of “my own business”, the individuality perimeter was largely secured against inevitable interventions of the larger community-centered kinship.

## **II.ASSESSING THE NATURE OF THE GROUPS ARTICULATING THE BULGARIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THEIR POLITICAL VOCABULARY**

I agree with Greenfeld’s argument of the paramount importance of this particular variable (the nature of the groups involved) in the overall outcome of a national project. I would argue that, ultimately, this is the most important factor/constraint being a function of those forces behind the Bulgarian national project whose ideas, visions, frustrations have moulded the discourse on the political legitimacy providing the framework – this “mental” picture anchoring those specific “national” archetypes that would dominate the national self-determination for years to come.

We saw in the previous section, that as a result of the all-round economic, political and cultural resurgence of Bulgarian society in the 19th century, a natural conflict arose between the new Bulgarian bourgeoisie and the Turkish state. It was the Bulgarian urban bourgeoisie who shaped and ultimately determined the character of this conflict. It should be noted that unlike other economic analogues in Eastern Europe, the conflict here was not only of social, but also of national bearing.

The widely varying social make-up of these political actors – encompassing literally all-social strata of Bulgarian society - had an important impact on the emerging, “unique” characteristic that made the Bulgarian Revival a truly national project.

This factor deserves particular attention, especially considering Greenfeld’s central argument, that the outcome of nationalism is a function of the *nature* of the groups actively involved in the articulation of such a project. Within this conceptual framework, a small elitist group (usually an aristocracy) is prone to formulating of a broad nationalistic project based on a “romantic” discourse using such common denominators as religion, language, and a glorious past, thus creating an ethnically exclusive type of nationalism.<sup>165</sup>

On the other hand, states Greenfeld, a mass, socially broad participation in the articulation of a nationalist project tends to incorporate a more individual-centered discourse based on individual rights, leading to the formulation of a civic and political nationalism, with an inclusive character.

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<sup>165</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p.18-25.

The Bulgarian National Revival movement was not an elitist project: it was not about a restoration of the past status of a marginalized aristocracy (as was the case with the French and Russian nobility) fighting to preserve its status and privileges. Greenfeld argues that to gain legitimacy its projects had to be derived and revealed within the context of a broad political constructivism.

The forces behind the Bulgarian National project did not consist of a small aristocratic elite- five centuries of Ottoman domination having purged all traces of the Bulgarian medieval royalty or military aristocracy. On the contrary, Bulgarians from all walks of life, and the Bulgarian bourgeoisie in particular, were interested in restoring Bulgarian independence and building up a modern Bulgarian state. There were many alternative political projects however; the dominant one was that there would be no future for them within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire.

The final step in the process of the Bulgarian National Revival, the ultimate goal of political independence, dominated the political discourse in the years following the Crimean War (1853-1856), when it became apparent that cultural autonomy would not satisfy the growing appetite felt by all social strata for political sovereignty. Contrary to expectations, Russia's military defeat had in fact a significant impact on the political ferment by radicalizing practically "all social groups within the Bulgarian society: bourgeoisie, peasantry, artisans and craftsmen, intelligentsia."<sup>166</sup>

The Bulgarian Revival was a direct after-effect of the changes taking place in European political life. The unification of Germany, the liberation of Italy, the autonomy of

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<sup>166</sup> Genchev, *Ibid.* p. 336.

Hungary - all these events inspired hope in a settlement of the Bulgarian national question. Several centers of revolutionary activity had been set up by the 1860s to unite various groups of the Bulgarian immigrant bourgeoisie looking for the best possible way to achieve national liberation.<sup>167</sup> Two innovative concepts marked this period: first, accepting the cathartic flames of a revolution as the only assured route towards political independence; and second, the growing realization that liberation should not necessarily be executed by external political actors, but was the obligation and duty of the whole nation.

However, it should be noted that on this topic the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was not united. Different initiatives ranged from political combinations with Balkan and European powers, through printed revolutionary propaganda, to the dispatch of armed detachments to the Bulgarian lands. Some circles were of the opinion that the Bulgarians were not up to carrying out an armed revolution by themselves and thus should seek help from abroad, mainly from the neighbouring Balkan countries and Russia. Those convinced of this fact decided to organize large Bulgarian military detachments for participation in both the Russian-Ottoman wars and the liberation uprisings of other Balkan peoples.

Thus, by 1850, the emerging Bulgarian nationalist movement had split into two distinct branches.<sup>168</sup> The moderates, concentrated in Constantinople, favoured gradual

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<sup>167</sup>There were three major centers of the Bulgarian Diaspora: Bucharest, Constantinople and Odessa with very different political agendas varying from a political framework of a united (dual) Turkish-Bulgarian state to unitary, independent Bulgarian state.

<sup>168</sup> Some authors argue that after the Crimean War, when the Bulgarian liberation revolutionary movement reached its peak, there were three well distinct revolutionary streams: First the revolutionary-democratic stream seeing political freedom, as a function of popular revolt without outside support represented by Georgi Rakovski. The second represented the bourgeois liberal stream headed by the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee (BRCC) in Bucharest for whom independence should be achieved by all possible means, from dualist statehood within the Ottoman Empire to

improvement of conditions in Bulgaria through negotiations with the Turkish government. This was the approach that created a separate Bulgarian exarchate in 1870. This group believed that the protection of the Ottoman Empire was necessary because a free Bulgaria would be subject to Balkan politics and great-power manipulation. The other branch, the radicals rejected this approach seeing no hope of gradual reform.

### **Rakovski's legacy in defining the national project "A duty of the all people"**

The most radically minded segment of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie saw no other way to liberate Bulgaria except through the cathartic flames of a nation-wide armed revolution. The first leader of this ideological trend was Georgi Rakovski.<sup>169</sup> Taking his tactics from past experiences with the haidouk movement, he envisaged the creation of Bulgarian armed detachments in all of the Empire's Balkan neighbouring states whose task would be to make incursions into Bulgarian territory.<sup>170</sup> Rakovski expected these armed bodies to grow into an avalanche of discontented Bulgarians who would spontaneously and ultimately form a national army capable of winning the country's independence.<sup>171</sup>

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relying on guerilla strategies such as the creation of Hadji Dimitar and Stefan Karadja's guerilla groups in 1868. The third stream was the political conservatives, Odessa Center and the "Committee of the Elderly," as well as the Diaspora circles in Constantinople having no clear vision about the revolutionary strategy and being a function of the political or military intervention of foreign political actors such as Imperial Russia, Serbia, Romania or Great Britain. See: Genchev, *Ibid.* p. 345-347.

<sup>169</sup> In 1862, Georgi Rakovski assembled the first Bulgarian armed group of Bulgarians aimed at full independence from the Ottoman Empire. Rakovski, well-educated and experienced united the immigrant intelligentsia, and the presence of his army influenced Turkish recognition of the Bulgarian church in 1870. See V. Traikov, O. Mazdrakova-Chavdarova, Rakovski, *Ideino-politecheska programa na Balgarskoto revolutsionno dvizhenie*, [Rakovski, Ideological and political program of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement], *Istoria na Balgaria*, [History of Bulgaria], Sofia, 1987, Bulgarian Revival, Volume 6, 1856-1878, 191-199.

<sup>170</sup> Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazdane*, p.341-43.

<sup>171</sup> Traikov and Mazdrakova-Chavdarova, *Ibid.* 199-211.

Rakovski is famous for his statement that liberation would be won by 'press and sword' In 1861, Rakovski began publishing the newspaper "*Dunavski Lebed*"(Danube Swan) in Belgrade, also printed in French, which had a significant influence on the Bulgarian Diaspora in Constantinople, Romania, Russia and Austria. The newspaper was also distributed in many European countries, thus presenting to European public opinion Rakovski`s vision that Bulgarian liberation would be accomplished through the efforts of a vast national army.

Deeply familiar with the complex "couloirs" dealings of Balkan politics, especially after the Crimean War, with the conflicting interests of the Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire, Rakovski realized that the route to Bulgarian liberation by 'press and sword' would not be easy as one considering the competing nationalisms in neighbouring Balkan countries such as Greece, Romania and Serbia. These represented an additional obstacle to the Bulgarian revolutionary movement.

Rakovski came to the conclusion that national liberation should not be a function of ambiguous political machination by external political actors, all of whom had different, competing interests and strategies that did not always accord with the ultimate objective – political liberation of the Bulgarian populated lands – but that it should be based on a well-prepared revolution organized by the Bulgarian people themselves.

Rakovski`s vision of a Bulgarian revolution free of external political pressures and debts profoundly changed the nature and strategy of the revolutionary movement and, ultimately, the nature of the Bulgarian national project. Without the military might of the neighbouring independent Balkan states, the revolution could rely on only one ally – the Bulgarian people, themselves.

However, he concluded that *this support had to be wide*, and that it should come from *all social strata* within Bulgarian society. In short, Rakovski defined the national revolution thus: ‘It is the whole nation’s duty: the rich (will help) with their money, the scholars with their academic works, and all the sons of the nation – with their lives!’<sup>172</sup>

Rakovski’s vision exercised a profound normative impact on the nature of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, thus becoming a nationwide project in which Bulgarians from all walks of life had to play a role. This inclusiveness became not only a hallmark of the movement, but contributed to the formation of an inherent idiosyncrasy – the focus of the project.

### **Karavelov’s appeal towards inclusiveness**

In 1867-1868, the Bulgarian liberation movement entered a phase of total reassessment of its revolutionary strategy and tactics. By 1869, in Bucharest young revolutionaries part of the circle of the eminent Bulgarian intellectual Ljuben Karavelov and his newspaper *Svoboda* (Freedom), formed a group that was the precursor of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee (BRCC) before the end of that year. Faithful to Rakovski’s vision, Karavelov placed reliance, first and foremost, on the Bulgarian people and only in the last resort on aid from a foreign power. According to him: ‘The Bulgarians should not count on Napoleon III, Alexander II, Pius IX or Queen Victoria: they should rely only on themselves.’<sup>173</sup> This is how Karavelov saw the route towards liberation published in his newspaper ‘Bulgarian voice’: ‘The freedom is possible only

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<sup>172</sup> Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, p. 337.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 364. Translated by the author. See also *Istoria na Bulgaria* p. 212-213.

when: Everyone would sacrifice his life by getting a rifle, a sword, a revolver, a gun, a knife, a shish, toper, sickle, club everything possible you could get to fight and rescue our freedom and fatherland!”<sup>174</sup>

A dedicated liberal, Kralavelov outlined in his newspaper the future political framework of Bulgaria, where “to set the state in order, attention should be given to the best ordinances (read 'constitutions') that had already been used by the enlightened peoples - the Americans, the Belgians and the Swiss.”<sup>175</sup>

BRCC’s political program, published in 1870 in Geneva, outlines the group’s objective not short of full political independence “where every individual will be governed by his free will.”<sup>176</sup> It also identifies the obstacles in achieving these objectives namely “the government of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Greek clergymen...”<sup>177</sup>

Our ultimate duty is to rescue our fatherland from the governmental, and bureaucratic dirt and to secure our popular, political and social freedom!...

The Bulgarian people are democratic people, they are not divided into sects. They do not possess any aristocratic classes, this so useless social element, and this is why we would like to see in our homeland a representative government being elected by the will of our people.

We would like to live in peace with all our neighbours, particularly with the Serbs and the Romanians, who are to a certain extent sympathetic to our aspirations, and we would like to create with them a Yugoslav or Danube Federation of independent states.

We would like that this land now populated with Bulgarians, to be governed by Bulgarians, according to the values, traditions and character of the Bulgarian people: with respect to those lands which are populated with Romanians, Serbs

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<sup>174</sup> Genchev, *Ibid.*, p.366. Translated by the author.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, Translated by the author.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, Translated by the author.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, Translated by the author.

or Greeks, let them be governed according to the national character of the Romanian, Serbian and Greek people.

*Let each people, as well as each individual administer his own freedom and be governed by his free will.* And at the same time we would like to establish with our close neighbours a union, similar to Switzerland. We do not want what does not belong to us, however we would like to obtain what is ours.

We do not have any historical, canonical, royal, or religious claims, and this is why we are leaving our people to decide its own faith, and to make the decision which union it may prefer to join, whether with the Serbs, whether with the Romanians, or Greeks, therefore we do not have any territorial (border) claims.

For us we would like to have a true freedom, for our people, to have an individual, religious and otherwise civic freedom, and we would like that our friends and neighbours gain the same freedom. We do not want to dominate another, and this is why we do not want to be dominated. Against the Turkish government we will use the same peaceful means that we used against the Greek clergymen, and as a last resort we will use weapons, fire and knives!"<sup>178</sup>

There are two themes deserving special attention in this document, the proto-constitution of the future legal framework of Bulgaria. The use of such political vocabulary in respect to loyalty towards this new political union is predicated on the free will of the member states, should they decide to join this federation. The second theme depicted here lies within the provision envisaging full respect for the different linguistic, religious and cultural rights of the subjects of this new political union. The lexicon of the BRCC's political program clearly suggests political discourse constructed on much more composite than unitary terms. To further support this claim one could analyze the text of Article 10 of the Program stating:

We are not against the Turkish people, but against the Turkish (Ottoman) government and those Turks who support and fight (on behalf of) this government. In other words, we believe that all peoples and groups, regardless of

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<sup>178</sup> *Istoria na Balgaria*, p. 274-276 Translated by the author. Italics are mine.

their faith, religion and ethnic background who are sympathetic to our just and holy act are our friends.<sup>179</sup>

In order to conceptualize the evolution of Rakovski's and Karavelov's vision on the initial definition of the nation, whether defined as a composite entity or in unitary terms (in this way defining the nature of Bulgarian nationalism), a critical analysis of the political program of the next and more important generation of visionaries of the Bulgarian national revolution movement is required.

### **“Sacred Laws for All!”**

#### **Levski's legacy in articulating the national project**

#### **The civic/inclusive character of the political vocabulary of the Internal Revolutionary Organization**

The legacy of Vassil Levski<sup>180</sup> can be seen in the national liberation revolution's blueprint - an armed upheaval of the “whole Bulgarian population” dwelling in the Ottoman Empire. According to Levski the revolution had to be well-prepared in advance, with all the adequate military training and proper coordination provided by an Internal Revolutionary Organization with committees in each populated area.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Zahari Stoianov, *Zapiski po Balgarskite Vastania*, [Chronicles of the Bulgarian Insurrections] (Sofia, 1962) p.119-120. Translated by the author.

<sup>180</sup> Vassil Levski, the main ideologue of the Bulgarian Revolutionary movement and considered as the greatest national hero of all times was not a prominent intellectual, but rather a people's man. A professional revolutionary between 1862-1868, Levski participated in almost all Bulgarian armed assaults against the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>181</sup> Ivan Undjiev, “Vasil Levski, Nachalo na Vatrechnata Revolutsionna Organisatsia, Balgaria, Nov Etap na Natsionalno-Osvoboditelnoto Dvizenie: Vatrechna Revolutsionna Organizatsia v Balgaria”, [Vasil Levski, The Beginning of the Internal Revolutionary Organization, New stage of the National-Liberation Movement, the Internal Revolutionary Organization in Bulgaria], *Istoria na Bulgaria*, [History of Bulgaria] (Sofia, 1987), volume 6, p. 263-265.

Levski can be said to have determined the future basis of government in liberated Bulgaria - a democratic republic “*with sacred laws for all,*”<sup>182</sup> influenced by the universalism of Enlightenment project and the principles of the Charter of Human and Citizen Rights of the French Revolution.<sup>183</sup> This document outlined individual freedoms of expression, speech and association. What is significant in this document is the framework that applies for future inter-ethnic relations, where the supremacy of “*sacred laws for all,*”<sup>184</sup> to quote Levski, provided the foundation of a future Bulgarian nation. The basic principles governing the future state were to be:

the equality of all citizens; the equality of all nationalities; civil and political rights; the rule of law; independence of all authorities<sup>185</sup>

The political vocabulary of the program was consistent with the liberal tradition of the two previous program declarations, in which the Bulgarian nation was defined primarily as a political composite entity without applying any unitary terminology.

This is how Levski explained the objectives of the Internal Revolutionary Organization.

Aim:

With one general Revolution to effect a radical transformation of the present despotic-tyrannical state system, and to replace it with a democratic republic (people's government).

On this same ground which our forefathers redeemed with the strength of their

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<sup>182</sup> Ivan Undjiev, Nikola Kondarev eds, in *Vasil Levski, Sviata i chista Republika*, [Vasil Levski, Just and Sacred Republic], (Sofia, 1971) p. 32-33. Translated by the author. Italics are mine.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid

<sup>184</sup> “Nie shte imame edno zname, na koeto shte pichge “Sviata i chista Republika”; Za vragovete na Demokratiata i Republikata – Smart; Segashnata Despotsko Titranska sistema da zamenim s demokratska republika, [We will have a flag with the slogan ‘For a Just and Sacred Republic!, To the enemies of our democracy and republic – death! The current despotic and tyrannical system will be replaced with a democratic republic] in Ivan Undjiev, Nikola Kondarev, *Vasil Levski, Sviata i Chista Republika*, [Vasil Levski, Just and Sacred Republic], (Sofia, 1971) Translated by the author. Italics are mine.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 32-33. Translated by the author.

weapons and with their sacred blood, where today the Turkish bandits and Janissaries<sup>186</sup> run amok and where the right of force prevails, there shall be raised a temple of Truth and of real Freedom and the chorbadjis<sup>187</sup> system shall give way to concord, brotherhood and *complete equality between all nationalities Bulgarians, Turks, Jews, etc., shall be equal in every respect: in faith, in race, in civil rights and everything else.*

*All shall be under one common law, which all nationalities shall choose by majority vote.*<sup>188</sup>

Vassil Levski

The proposed foundations of the legal inter-ethnic framework in a future independent state supports the argument that, in analyzing the case of Bulgarian nationalism, we are hardly confronting a nationalism constructed on ethnicity. The political vocabulary used in this document suggests, on the contrary, that the Bulgarian national project was defined as an emanation of a political attachment, a truly progressive phenomenon in the Balkans.

In our Bulgaria it would not be like it is now in the Tursko (Ottoman/Turkish Empire). In the future *Bulgaria all peoples will live under the same sacred and Just laws...* They would be the same for Turks, for Jews, for whomever, for all the laws would be the same.<sup>189</sup>

Using political loyalties as the paramount common denominator/ anchor, resulting in the supremacy of citizenship over ethnic and religious loyalties, I argue that the Bulgarian national vision deviated from that of other South-eastern European nationalisms, known to emphasize a population's cultural heritage and its ethnic continuity.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Elite corps by Christian youths of the service of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>187</sup> The Bulgarian equivalent of the English landowners were the chorbadjis (chorbadji –literally “soupmen”), Bulgarian name for landlord. They were well-off people who had the obligation to provide for strangers who might come into the village, to arrange community matters, act as judges, settle question of disagreement, etc.

<sup>188</sup> Undjiev, Kondarev, *Vassil Levski* Ibid., p. 32-33. Translated by the author. Italics are mine.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. Translated by the author. Italics are mine.

<sup>190</sup> See: “Nationalism and Religion in the Balkans since the Nineteen Century” in Peter F. Sugar, *EastEuropean Nationalism, Politics and Religion*, (Brookfield, 1999), p. 8; See also on the same subject Peter F. Sugar, “Unity and Diversity in the Lands of Southeastern Europe in the Eighteen Century,” in *Nationality and Society in Hapsburg and Ottoman Europe*, Brookfield, Variorum, 1997, Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *A History of East Europe, The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920*, (Seattle, 1977).

This attempt in defining what constitutes a Bulgarian contrasts with the nation building processes in other Balkan states, where during the initial phase of development there was a clear preference for emphasizing ethnicity and religion as criteria for establishing a person's membership in the national "imagined community." In the case of Bulgaria the national matrix was different:

We are not pursuing the Turkish people, nor are we pursuing their faith, but we are pursuing their king and its laws, in other words – we are at odds with the Turkish Government, which brutally controls not only us, but also the Turks themselves. In the future Bulgaria we would not have a king but people's government and everybody will get what he or she deserves. *Everybody will serve according his faith and will be judged according the rightful laws, regardless of whether he is Bulgarian or Turk, for a Just and Sacred Republic.*<sup>191</sup>

Hence the Bulgarian liberation movement was atypical in terms of the pattern of regional nation building, where the subordination of citizenship rights to the principle of statehood was generally the norm. Yet while this may be attributed in part to the absence of certain conditions (mass participation, religious fervour, secularism), Bulgaria's national project seems to have been the result of a conscious adoption of political universalism, taking into account Levski's famous phrase: We are opposed to the (Ottoman) king and his laws.

In this way it avoided the subordination of civic rights to rights based on membership in a given community, as was the case in most of the traditional ethnic groups, that later evolved into Balkan nations of the present day.

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<sup>191</sup> Ivan Undjiev, Nikola Kondarev Ibid., p. 37. Translated by the author. Italics are mine.

### The social character of the April 1876 uprising

After Levski's execution the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee found it increasingly difficult to exercise its control over some revolutionaries who undertook actions without coordinating them with Bucharest. This situation dramatically changed when in 1875 a group of young revolutionaries - Hristo Botev, Stefan Stambolov and others, succeed in restoring the Internal Revolutionary Organization Committee network. Influenced by the mass revolts in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the spring of 1876, Bulgarian insurgents attempted an uprising in April of that year. This, however, was crushed in the space of few days by Turkish troops, who killed some 30, 000 Bulgarians.<sup>192</sup> Although, the uprising did not spread over all Bulgarian populated areas, as planned, it did have wide support along all social strata within Bulgarian society. The wide spectrum of social groups implicated in the preparation and execution of the April uprising can be seen in the following table, based on a survey of the members of the 10 most active revolutionary committees, i.e. those in the cities of Bratigovo, Karlovo, Klisura, Koprivtchitsa, Plovdiv, Peshtera, Panaguirishte, Pazardjik, and Sopot.<sup>193</sup>

Table 1. Professions and Social Status of participants in the April insurrection 1876<sup>194</sup>

<b>Professions:</b>	
Teachers	21
Priests	1
Merchants	16
Artisan	12
Landowners	4

<sup>192</sup> Genchev, *Ibid.*, p. 404-406. Other authors however, indicated more conservative numbers in the range of 15, 000.

<sup>193</sup> What is also quite symptomatic is the fact that there was not a single illiterate member in these Committees. The following represents the Education table of this survey primary school 17; secular school 3; lycee 13; lycee/ university 11; illiterate 0. See Genchev, *Ibid.*, p. 404-406.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*,

Others	4
<b>Social status</b>	
Poor	1
Middle class	27
Rich	19
Very rich	4

Although the unrest did not occur in all Bulgarian populated areas, one could conclude that the final stage of the National Revival process – the revolutionary fight against Ottoman domination had generated mass public support. This is how the best known historian of the April uprising, Zahari Stoyanov, has analyzed this event:

...this great national excitement on the part of all Bulgarian people for independence, which preceded the April uprising and its organization, was much more important, than the revolts and the battles. ... We wanted to show that some imaginary, neutral committees in Bucharest or Belgrade did not conduct the Bulgarian revolt, as some suggest, or by Serb paid agents.... ...It was not simply a nationwide act, but primarily a historical necessity<sup>195</sup>

In this section, the importance of arguably the most significant variable within Greenfeld's theoretical framework, i.e. the nature of the groups articulating the national project, was extensively assessed. This variable, is particularly important, because according to Greenfeld, there is a causal linkage between the outcome of nationalism and the *nature* of the groups actively involved in the articulation of such a project. Within this logic, a small elitist group (usually an aristocracy, as it was the case in tsarist Russia) is prone to formulating a broad nationalistic project based on a "romantic" discourse using such common denominators as religion, language, and a glorious past, thus creating an ethnically exclusive type of nationalism. In contrast, a wider, popular, socially broad participation in the articulation of a nationalist project tends to incorporate a more

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<sup>195</sup> Zahari Stoyanov, *Zapiski po Balgarskite Vastania* [Chronicles of the Bulgarian Insurrections] (Sofia, 1962), p. 27.

individual- centered discourse based on individual rights, leading to the formulation, states Greenfeld, of a civic and political nationalism.

As we have observed, in the case of Bulgaria, the national liberation movement was supported by broad social strata, thus becoming *de facto*, unlike other liberation movement in Eastern Europe, a national endeavour. Clearly, it was the Bulgarian urban bourgeoisie, which became the most active leading social force behind the national project. However, as we have seen the broad social make-up of the political actors involved in the movement, essentially encompassing all-social strata of Bulgarian society –“*all social groups within the Bulgarian society: bourgeoisie, peasantry, artisans and craftsmen, intelligentsia*”<sup>196</sup> had a profound mark in shaping the nature of the Bulgarian national project. Answering to the interests of wide sectors of the *population*, the Bulgarian national project gained its legitimacy within the context of a broad political constructivism, thus making it a political, inclusive project, based on the premise of guaranteeing individual rights.

### III. ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF SECULARIZATION GENERAL “EDUCATION SENTIMENT”

**The secular character of the Bulgarian National Revival**  
**Mass introduction of secular schools, chitalichtes (cultural clubs)**  
**The late arrival of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church**

I will begin this section with a not very well known statement written in 1934 by Boris Iotsov, a Bulgarian scholar, who specialized in the National Revival:

Our (Bulgarian) revival movement begins with, gains its maturity with and ends

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<sup>196</sup> Italics are mine.

with one activity – mass (secular) education.<sup>197</sup>

This observation, in my view, epitomizes the third variable in the conceptual framework of factors/constraints, “general education sentiment,” as well as the level of secularity being the matrix for the peculiar nature of Bulgarian national consolidation. Sacralizing secularity, to use Greenfeld’s definition of nationalism, is one of the most potent and essential ingredients in the phenomenology of articulating “national” self-determination.

In reference to English secular culture, Greenfeld states that it

...was the conspicuous expression of the national consciousness and identity coming of age in England. It was the realization in written form of the previously formless, new sentiments of the people “intoxicated with the sound of their own voices.” *It was the first, expressive, act of national self – assertion.*<sup>198</sup>

Later in this section, when we focus on the Bulgarian case study and the relationship therein between nationalism and religion, we will compare whether they functioned as alternatives to each other or as organically tied. The Modernist camp, of which the most prominent example is Benedict Anderson, argues that the creation of monoglot mass reading publics – a result of the invention of print and capitalism - displaced the axiomatic grip of scriptural languages on men’s minds and eroded the transcontinental solidarities of Christendom, the Islamic Ummah and the rest.

The history of the Bulgarian nationalist movement follows the pattern of growth of a mass, free and accessible education system, based on the vernacular. Within a period of less than 40 years, a vast network of 2,000 secular schools was established in Bulgaria – a

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<sup>197</sup> Boris Iotsov, “Pat na Balgarskoto Vazrazdane”, (Path of the Bulgarian Revival) Rodnda Rech, VIII.1834-1935, Vol. 5 in Virzinina Paskaleva, Za Poniatiето “Natsia” i Obrazuvaneto na Balgarskata Natsia prez Vazrazdaneto (Istoriografska Studia) in Balgarskata Natsia prez Vazrazdaneto, [On the Concept of Nation and the Education of the Bulgarian Nation During the Revival], in *Bulgarian Nation During the Revival*, (Sofia, 1980), p. 100.

<sup>198</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 67. Italics are mine.

genuine educational explosion<sup>199</sup> fully supported by an increasingly independent, wealthy and influential Bulgarian bourgeoisie, functioning in an increasingly relaxed political environment.<sup>200</sup>

The initial concept of Greek-Slavic secular schools gradually evolved from their original design into purely Bulgarian schools, where all subjects were taught in the Bulgarian language. The strategy of the language becoming “*the foundation of the material and spiritual matrix for the Bulgarian revival*”<sup>201</sup> where “*education will stimulate the drive towards political freedom,*”<sup>202</sup> launched by Peter Beron, led to the introduction of the vernacular as the only language used in the growing network of new secular schools.<sup>203</sup>

A sign of the language’s strength can be seen in the fact that, along with manuals and textbooks, 264 books were published in Bulgarian in the period of 1830-1840.<sup>204</sup> The

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<sup>199</sup> A. Dimitrov, “Razvitie na Balgarskata Prosveta, Podem na Novobalgarskoto Obrazovanie, [Development of the Bulgarian Public Education, Evolution of the New Bulgarian Education], *Istoria na Balgaria*, [History of Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1987), Volume 6, p. 92-93.

<sup>200</sup> The beginning of this educational expansion could be traced to the so-called Slavic-Greek schools, starting with Emmanuil Vaskidovich’s school, which opened its doors in the city of Svishtov in 1815. In the following years Greek-Slavic schools were established in Kotel, Sliven, Karlovo, Smirna. What is important, is the secular, liberal arts centered character of their curriculum studied in Greek and Bulgarian languages. The significance of these institutions could be seen in the future preparation of the most active political intelligentsia, graduates of these schools, were to, name just some of them: Georgi Rakovski, Evlogi Georgiev, Gavril Krastevich, Botio Petkov, etc.

<sup>201</sup> As mentioned already, in 1856 an important policy development occurred in Constantinople – the declaration of the Hatt I Humayun. What is important to note here are the provisions allowing “all non Muslim communities the right to build and run schools” (Article #4); “elementary education to all Ottoman subjects should be provided” (Article #15) “full equality among students to get access to state run schools” (Article #14). This new policy had a positive impact on the development of the mass educational network in the Bulgarian populated territories.

<sup>202</sup> Italics are mine.

<sup>203</sup> There were two conflicting views about the use of language; first, those of the “conservateur” camp led by Neofit Rilsky suggested that the language should be based on the Old-Church Slavonic, an influence by the Greek educational system. The second “liberal” camp, led by Dr. Peter Beron, preferred the Eastern dialect of the vernacular, written and spoken in the economically advanced North-Eastern part of “the Bulgarian lands”, third – the brothers Miladinov’s camp promoted the introduction of Western dialects such as Macedonian.

<sup>204</sup> Some of the most noticeable are “History of Bulgarian Kings” by Hristo Pavlovich, “Bulgarian Grammar” by Ivan Bogorov, “Bulgarian and European Geography” by Konstantin Fotinov, “The Century of the Bulgarian King Simeon” by Vassil Aprilov.

introduction of the written Bulgarian language likewise had a significant impact on direction and dynamics of the National Revival movement, infiltrating liberal ideas with an increasing emphasis on scientific knowledge.

### **The “Bible” of the Bulgarian Revival**

The godfather of the Bulgarian Revival, Dr. Peter Beron (1799-1871), was a dedicated scholar of European calibre and an author of numerous scholarly publications (in total, 8,000 pages on geology, astronomy, mineralogy, chemistry and physics) published in German, French and English.<sup>205</sup> After Beron’s “Riben Bukvar,” [“Fish Primer”], (the so-called Bible of the Bulgarian Revival) was issued in 1824 (the first textbook of the Bulgarian language designated for elementary schools), textbooks in grammar, arithmetic, history, geography, physics and other school subjects began to appear in quick succession.<sup>206</sup> There are five guiding principles evident in the books: rejection and rupture with the centuries-old theocratic pedagogical system; introduction of the Bulgarian vernacular; introduction of liberal/secular education based on the development of analytical skills; introduction of the mutual pedagogical Bell-Lancaster system; and fostering respect for individual human rights through the elimination of physical discipline in the classroom.<sup>207</sup>

The next step in the growth of the “national education sentiment” was the foundation of

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<sup>205</sup> In Germany, he studied philosophy and science, and became an established medical doctor. See N. Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, p. 157.

<sup>206</sup> “Beron’s main influence was through a primary-school textbook covering the whole syllabus, which he wrote in demotic Bulgarian, and which remained in use for almost a century. Science was started in the first grade and the aim of education was a harmonious personal development, for which scientific knowledge was essential. The educational programme was essentially secular, since Beron believed that God had no concern with the details of life on Earth.” See *Bulgaria Country Studies*, Library of the Congress, (Washington, 1992).

<sup>207</sup> Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, p. 176.

the first “modern” Bulgarian school, which opened in Gabrovo in 1835 and provided a model that was extensively copied elsewhere. There was a genuine drive towards acquiring education: “If you want to measure the might of any state, look at its schools!” was the message of the newspaper *Macedonia*.<sup>208</sup> By the 1870s, there were some 2,000 schools operating in the Bulgarian-populated territory - democratic in character and secular in curriculum.<sup>209</sup> This truly amazing development of a vast educational network of secular schools did not go unnoticed. The following are the impressions recorded by the British correspondent J. MacGahan<sup>210</sup>:

I think that people in England and in Europe in general have a very inadequate idea about Bulgaria. I have always heard the Bulgarians spoken of as savages, no more civilized than the American Indians. I confess that until recently I myself was not very far from the old idea. I was surprised, however, as I believe most of my readers will also be surprised on finding out that there is hardly a Bulgarian village without a school and that these schools where the Turks have not burnt them down, are in a flourishing condition. They are maintained by a tax which the Bulgarians have voluntarily imposed on themselves, not only without having been forced by the government to do so, but also in spite of 21 kinds of hindrances put up by the capricious Turkish authorities. The education which one gets at these schools is free and the same for all - rich and poor. There is hardly a Bulgarian child unable to read and write, so that the percentage of illiterates in Bulgaria is equal to that in England and France. Are these facts known to the people who consider the Bulgarians as savages? In fact, these Bulgarians are not only no savages at all, as we thought, but are a diligent, labour-loving, honest, civilized and peaceful people.<sup>211</sup>

It should be added that most of these schools had adopted the Bell-Lancaster system of

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<sup>208</sup> A. Dimitrov, *Ibid.*, 89-91.

<sup>209</sup> It is a well known fact that this type of new Bulgarian school was in reality a popular common cause that developed independently of the control of the state and foreign church power and became a genuinely democratic institution, guided by the local communities and the school boards elected for this purpose. See *Modern Bulgaria*, (Sofia, 1989), p. 89.

<sup>210</sup> J. MacGahan, 1848-78, American newspaper correspondent. sent by the London *Daily News* to investigate the Ottoman massacres in Bulgaria, and his dispatches were collected in *The Turkish Atrocities in Bulgaria* (1876) and were an incitement to the Russo-Ottoman (Turkish) War of 1877-78. See *Bulgaria Country Studies*, Library of the Congress, (Washington, 1992.)

<sup>211</sup> As cited in *Bulgaria Country Studies*, Library of the Congress, (Washington, 1992).

instruction, whereby the best pupils were used to teach the others. Within 40 years the educational network had expanded 7.5 times, ranking the Bulgarian populated territories in the Ottoman Empire as one of the regions with the highest percentage of school per capita in Europe; one school for every 2, 000 –2, 250 people on average.<sup>212</sup>

What was even more significant was the democratic character of these institutions, run entirely without interference from the state apparatus and with less and less intrusion by the Greek Orthodox Church. The financial backbone of these schools came from the artisan organizations, i. e., from the wealthy and scientific-knowledge starved, increasingly secular Bulgarian bourgeoisie.

### **The role of the *tchitalishte*<sup>213</sup> in the National Revival**

Another important ingredient in the Bulgarian National Revival was a very well organized network of literary clubs. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of cultural and charitable organizations founded in Constantinople supported and directed Bulgarian national institutions that resisted Ottoman and Greek influence. The social institution of the *chitalishte* (literally “reading room”) played an increasingly important cultural role beginning in 1856.<sup>214</sup> Established in population centres by adult education societies, the *chitalishte* was a centre for social gatherings, lectures, performances, and debates.

Because it was available to the entire public, this institution spread national cultural and

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<sup>212</sup> A. Dimitrov, Ibid. p.93.

<sup>213</sup> The genealogical roots of the *tchitalishte* comes the verb "tcheta" (to read) became the hall mark of the National Revival and this institution functioned entirely on non-profit principles.

<sup>214</sup> Dimitrov, Ibid.

political ideals beyond the intelligentsia to the larger society. On the eve of the Liberation war all *chitalishte* numbered 131.<sup>215</sup> The literary clubs were engaged in the dissemination of literacy and education among the people, in the setting up of reading rooms for the aged (as well as for women) and in the organization of public libraries, and evening and Sunday educational courses.<sup>216</sup> Together with the schools they became the basis for the development of theatre and music, for the dissemination of Bulgarian literature and the press.

From this perspective it is clear that the process of the Bulgarian National Revival was inherently associated with the emergence of a vast network of secular schools and literary clubs, all of which had a profound and lasting impact on the future Bulgarian national psyche. It is remarkable, that in the case of Bulgaria, the drive towards secular education and knowledge enhanced the process of national awakening, for gradually these educational institutions and literary clubs became centres for patriotic and revolutionary propaganda.<sup>217</sup> The fact that there was not a single illiterate member of the main revolutionary committees is convincing evidence of the significance exercised by these institutions on the general national revolutionary ferment.

A by-product of the acceleration of modern secular education was the inception of a secular, and liberally oriented Bulgarian national intelligentsia.<sup>218</sup> By the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Women's associations emerged in the towns in connection with the needs of the education of women. They were engaged in charity activities, in the education of the women, and in elevating a woman's role in public life. Ibid

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> John D. Bell, "Modernization Through Secularization," in *Diverse Paths to Modernity in South Eastern Europe*, ed. by Geramisos Augustinos, (New York, 1991), p.17.

the Bulgarian people already had their own intelligentsia<sup>219</sup> whose members had obtained their degrees in various European universities and who had learned from the experiences of other liberation movements. Some had studied in Central Europe or even in France, but a significant group had received Russian scholarships.<sup>220</sup> It may be noted here in passing that the overwhelming number of subsequent revolutionary leaders received their degrees in foreign institutions.<sup>221</sup> This newly emerging Bulgarian intelligentsia began to disseminate not only patriotism, but also liberal values.

A future stimulus to the revolutionaries of the Bulgarian National Revival was the influence of other contemporary leading figures fighting for *national, but almost equally importantly, social injustice*: Mazzini, Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Polish revolutionaries, the revolutionary democratism of Hertzén, Chernishevski, Dobrolyubov, Nekrasov, Proudhon and Bakunin.<sup>222</sup>

### **The Power of Words – the Role of the Press**

Any conception of the ideological and socio-political atmosphere in Bulgarian lands during the revival would be incomplete without a consideration of the periodical press. This vernacular language<sup>223</sup> in effect came to prevail in all regions populated by Bulgarians who, towards the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, numbered no fewer than 4 million.

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<sup>219</sup> Genchev, *Ibid.*, 261-269.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.* p.265

<sup>221</sup> A number of Bulgarians studied in French schools and colleges. A. Ekzarch, I Bogorov, M. Balabanov, T. Shishkov and S. Chomakov all received their higher education at French universities. Genchev, *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>222</sup> *Istoria na Balgaria*, p. 270 Italics are mine.

<sup>223</sup> Because of combined Greek and Ottoman pressure, the first Bulgarian books were produced in Belgrade, Bucharest and Constantinople. A standard literary language had to be established. Bulgarian writers did not choose Church Slavonic, the majority of the authors came from eastern Bulgaria, this dialect subsequently became the literary language.

Bulgarian journalism became one of the main driving forces passionately committed to the tasks of the National Revolution. Its rapid progress was a brilliant manifestation of intensive spiritual and political life. The first newspapers and magazines began to be published prior to the Crimean War and included the magazine *Love of Knowledge*, edited by K. Fotinov (1844) in Smyrna; *World View*, edited by I. Dobrovski (1850) in Vienna; the newspaper *Bulgarian Eagle* (1846), by I. Bogorov in Leipzig, and the *Constantinople Newspaper* published in 1848 in the Ottoman capital. However, the most distinguished era of the periodical press was the decade 1860-1870 when there were as many as sixty-six newspapers and thirty-four magazines being published at one time or another. Each with a different orientation, they expressed the interests of the various ideological and political trends in the national liberation movement.

**The first Nation-wide Bulgarian Festival - the celebration of the Day of Cyril and Methodius – founders of the Slavic alphabet and Slavic literature**

The traditional celebration of the founders of the Slavic alphabet and Slavic literature became the first all national festival in 1851 on May 24 (May 11 – old calendar) held in Plovdiv. The occasion was the renaming of a school as “Cyril and Methodius” by its director Naiden Gerov who had decided to celebrate the patrons of the school. For the next 3-4 years, on every May 11 the festival was celebrated in the cities of Plovdiv, Constantinople,<sup>224</sup> Shumen and Lom.<sup>225</sup> It later came to be celebrated as an all national festival celebrated annually in every Bulgarian school in Koprivsticha, Karlovo, Kalofer, Vidin, Svishtov, Russe, Skopje, Ohrdid, Bitolia, Lozengrad, Odrin, Varna Tulcha,

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<sup>224</sup> In the mid 19th century in Constantinople there was a Bulgarian Diaspora numbering 40,000.

<sup>225</sup>A. Dimitrov, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Tirnovο, Veles, Stara Zargora and Pleven.<sup>226</sup> It also became an annual festival among the Bulgarian Diaspora in Russia, Moldova, and Bessarabia, where it represented a powerful symbol of the final stage of the process of national consolidation.

In the Bulgarian case, the school became much more than an institution: it became the hallmark of national identity. This symbolism of the school being as entrenched in the national idea can be traced in the following excerpt by Zahari Stoianov, one of the most refined observers and chronicles of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement: “At that time, the most remarkable edifice in this city of Troyan ... was the Bulgarian school, painted in yellow, proudly and gracefully overlooking all other houses. This was the idol of the Balkan civilization, an ironic contradiction to the surrounding shacks.”<sup>227</sup>

The importance of the “educative sentiment,” to use Greenfeld’s definition, was also noted by another influential ideologue of the Bulgarian national revolutionary movement, Hristo Botev who declared that “May 11 is the festival of our historical revival, which reminds us about our past and present and stimulates us with the idea of our complete spiritual and political liberation. Soon it may be the festival of our revolution and our freedom.”<sup>228</sup> To conclude, as the Bulgarian scholar Itsov expressed it in a quotation cited at the beginning of this section: “Our (Bulgarian) revival movement begins with, gains its maturity with, and ends with one activity – mass (secular) education.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Zahari Stoianov, *Zapiski po Balgarskite vastania*, [Chronicles of the Bulgarian Insurrections], Sofia, 1962, p. 523.

<sup>228</sup> Dimitrov, *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>229</sup> Itsov, *Ibid.*, p. 100.

For Greenfield, it was a precisely secular “*culture that stood guard over the national interest,*”<sup>230</sup> protecting the core of the original, civic project – the rationalist individualism in which the idea of nationalism was grounded. Religion was no longer the foundation of the national idea, argues Greenfeld: there was a shift in the *liberty of the rational individual; this was the idea, which united people*. In this way, religion states Greenfeld, “lost its secure authority over other fields of activity, and ceased to be the source of social values.”<sup>231</sup> In fact, instead of shaping them, religion had to adapt to social and national ideals. As in the case of civic and political type of nationalism the institutionalization of a secular education in Bulgaria was instrumental to a successful national project.

**A Unique Path Towards Secularity**  
**Bulgarian Orthodox Church - a missing ally in the National Revival process**  
**The Greek Patriarchy’s agenda of cultural assimilation**

The Bulgarian Revival, the “wonder of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,” as Louis Leger<sup>232</sup> has called it, was characterized by the rapid development of a progressive, liberal secular culture permeated by bourgeois-democratic ideas. Although the secular nature of the Bulgarian national movement has been noted by the best known Western scholars of East-European nationalism, such as Peter Sugar and Barbara and Charles Jelavich, it is fair to say that their estimation of its significance has been largely restrained, with the lonely exception of John Bell, for whom modernity in Bulgaria came via the vast educational network.

If we consider the argument that religious discourse was less critical in the process of constructing Bulgarian identity due, it would seem, to the lack of an institutionalized

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<sup>230</sup> Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 77. Italics are mine.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Peter F. Sugar, *EastEuropean Nationalism*, p. 8.

presence on the part of the powerful agent of the Orthodox Church, then the question of how the sense of national selfhood emerged in such a unique manner, at least, according to the regional standards, becomes legitimate. The Bulgarian national movement essentially did not benefit from its potential ally, the mighty institution of the Orthodox Church, which itself gained independence from the Patriarch in Constantinople in 1870, just 8 years before the creation of modern Bulgaria 1878, by which time the National Revival had already been significantly shaped, a development that requires particular attention in this research.

In contrast to all Balkan states, Bulgaria was the only state left without an independent Orthodox Church.<sup>233</sup> After the fall of the medieval kingdom of Bulgaria in 1396, the central Patriarchy in Tirmovo was eliminated. It regained its independence, however, only in 1870. This was not the case with Greece, Romania and Serbia, where the Patriarchies had functioned well unto the 17<sup>th</sup> century and were able to regain their independence in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the case of the Bulgarian Patriarchy we see a complete interruption for more than four centuries - 474 years, to be more precise. Facing a massive disruption of one of its most (if not the only) central institutions, which preserved the legacy of the collective “mental images” not only of Christendom, but also of the traditions of medieval Bulgarian statehood, this interference turned out to have a long-term effect on the idiosyncrasies of the political vocabulary of the national discourse, particularly during the final phases of the National Revival process. In addition to the institutional disruption

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<sup>233</sup> The Ohrid Archiepiscopate continued to exist in the time of the Ottoman rule until 1766.

there was also an important linguistic issue - all services had to be in the Greek language, thus breaking a centuries-old tradition of using the old Church Slavonic language (essentially based on the Bulgarian language). Even more significantly, it helped to alienate the Bulgarian population from the only centre left to preserve the legacy of Bulgarian medieval statehood and tradition.

Ironically, it may be argued that it was not the Ottoman political and economic domination, but the Greek cultural assimilation, which was perceived as the most significant threat to the efforts to preserve a Bulgarian consciousness. From this critical perspective, it is important to reassess the *point de départ*<sup>234</sup> of the National Revival, i.e., Paissi of Hilendar's admonition, criticizing those who embraced, what he called the "higher" Greek culture:

O, senseless people, why are you ashamed to call yourselves Bulgarians, and why don't you think and read in your own language?" Didn't the Bulgarians in former times have a great empire? Why be ashamed of your race and adopt a foreign tongue? One will say: the Greeks are a wiser and more cultivated race. The Bulgarians are stupid and have no refined language. It is therefore better for them to stay with the Greeks. But think well! There was a time when the Bulgarians were famous throughout the world; many times they have imposed tribute upon the strong Romans and the wise Greeks; they have given in marriage the daughters of our kings to the sovereigns of these people; of all the Slav peoples the Bulgarians have been the most illustrious.<sup>235</sup>

Within the Bulgarian historiography, this text has been identified as being the very first spark of the Bulgarian Revival movement. Its importance lies in the identification of

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<sup>234</sup> In 1762, Father Paisi of Hilendar wrote a history of the Bulgarian peoples in a mixture of Old Church Slavonic and vernacular languages. Paisi's follower Sofronii Vrachanski further developed the literature by using a much more vernacular language to advance secular ideas of the Enlightenment in translations of Greek myths and his original "Life and Tribulations of the Sinner Sofronii."

<sup>235</sup> Excerpt from Father Paisii's Slavic-Bulgarian History of the Bulgarian People, Kings and Saints and of all Bulgarian Deeds and Events, written in 1762, publ. in 1844; See Orlin Zagorov, "Aspects of the Bulgarian Historical Consciousness" in *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation* (Sofia, 1989) p.169.

those factors that greatly influenced the precarious state of Bulgarian ethnic identification after more than four centuries of statelessness and institutionalized traditions. In this context it is important to assess the Patriarchate's agenda in respect to Bulgarian speaking Christians. Starting with the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Greek language was introduced as the *sacral language* for the Orthodox Church. What was alien was not only the foreign language, and to a certain degree the Greek/Byzantium traditions, but first and foremost its *political objective*. In the late 18<sup>th</sup>, and especially in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Church took an active policy of assimilation antagonizing the Bulgarian Christians within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>236</sup>

Compared to the situation in Serbia, Romania and Greece, the Orthodox Church in Bulgaria was neither in a position to generate vast public support nor to be actively implicated in the national building efforts. On the contrary, due to its alien character and objectives until at least 1870, the Patriarchate was considered one of the *most feared enemies* of Bulgarian national renaissance.

Over the course of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Patriarchate in Constantinople lost its political as well as economic influence, being no longer in a position to collect taxes in the newly independent Balkan states of Greece, Serbia and Romania. A rigorous campaign to prevent the last significant Christian community (the Bulgarians) from following the path of religious as well as political independence, explains the apparent lack of flexibility and the stubborn policy adopted by the Patriarchate.<sup>237</sup> This situation

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<sup>236</sup> Kosev, *Ibid.*, p.126.

further deteriorated after the concept of “megale idea” became the main objective of the new Greek state. Greek Orthodox clergymen were seen as the best suited agents/vehicles in the delivery of this policy, particularly in the regions of Thrace, Dobrudja and Macedonia, where the Patriarchy’s (in Athens) influence and drive towards Hellenism had experienced the most pronounced setbacks. As result of the “megale idea” project, the Greek clergymen mounted a massive assimilation campaign, expelling Bulgarian priests and Bulgarian teachers and destroying old Slavonic religious books and artefacts of the Bulgarian medieval past.<sup>238</sup>

In the same period of 1830-1840 the so called “Bulgarian question” became a hot political issue in Athens, where a surprisingly unified Greek parliament demonstrated its willingness to “unite” all European lands south of the Balkan mountains, populated by so-called “Greeks speaking the Bulgarian language.” The Greek Academy of Science was called upon to elaborate the most effective methods capable of counteracting the mounting national revival movement among the Bulgarians living within the Ottoman Empire. Organizations devoted to cultivating and fostering Greek culture and language were opened in essentially all major cities: Plovdiv, Luleburgaz, Tinovo, Sliven, Edirne, Melnik.<sup>239</sup>

Furthermore, the “megale” project was warmly accepted in St. Petersburg because of its implications for Russian imperial foreign policy aimed at protecting all Orthodox Christendom, which lent moral legitimacy to Russia’s potential territorial claims in the

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<sup>238</sup> *Istoria na Balgaria* p. 126-128.

<sup>239</sup> Genchev, *Balgarskoto Vazrazhdane*, p. 105

Balkans, claiming to be the only genuine spiritual (as well as political) protector. This accounts for the silence of Russian diplomacy with respect to the anti-Bulgarian assimilation campaign waged by the Greek Orthodox clergy. In 1845, the Russian ambassador Titov openly supported the Patriarchate's proposal to exile the most prominent leaders of the independent Bulgarian Church movement: Neofit Bozveli and Ilarion Makariopolski.<sup>240</sup>

The alliance between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the new Greek state achieved one result – that of profoundly antagonizing the Bulgarian Christian community, particularly after the Crimean War of the 1860s when frustration with the Patriarchate reached its peak.<sup>241</sup> In the 1850s, when the National Revival was reaching political maturity, the “church question” continued to face a precarious stalemate. Different strategies were tested ranging from a series of compromises with the Patriarchate to angry petitions to the High Porte, including flirting with Catholic Rome. Such flirtation materialized in a very short-lived marriage when in 1868 an independent “United” Catholic church was formally declared by the High Porte.<sup>242</sup> However, none of these strategies proved satisfactory.

The analysis of the status of the Orthodox Church would be incomplete without mentioning a major factor in the late 1850s resulting from policy adjustments the after Crimean War. The Imperial Edict, the ambitious Hatt-i Humayun of 1856 (so to speak

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> The cities of Tirmovo, Elena, Drianovo, Liaskovets and Gorna Oriahovitsa no longer accepted the authority of the Patriarchate and refused to pay any more taxes. Ibid. p. 202-203

<sup>242</sup> French diplomacy was instrumental in this campaign in its efforts to counterbalance Imperial Russian policy in the Balkans. D. Kosev, Ibid., p. 126.

“human rights basket”) outlined significant reforms aimed at preserving individual human rights, in the spirit of traditional liberalism: freedom to exercise religious rights, elimination of the domination of the Patriarchate by liquidating all taxes and contributions (replaced by fixed salaries) to Orthodox clergymen, increased independence of secular education and self-government particularly in respect to legal matters, for the Christian subjects of the Empire. This document, written in the spirit of the mainstream bourgeois tradition, (in fact the document was said to have been written by the French consul Marten) had an additional impact in shaping the political lexicon of the discourse during the final stages of the Bulgarian National Revival movement. This new, relaxed political environment facilitated the creation of the new Bulgarian Exarchate, which became a *fait accompli* in 1870. However, this institution did not immediately become a trusted ally of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement. This rift became apparent, when during the April 1876 uprising the newly created Bulgarian exarchate issued a declaration to Bulgarian Christians to obey the authorities “now more than ever” and to exercise their civic duties in compliance with the rule of law.

In the process of gaining political liberty the Independent Bulgarian Church was not a credible agent; in fact it was a less than critical factor in generating popular support. It could be argued that it failed to provide either a romantic or an “ethno-theological” discourse influencing those parameters of Bulgarian nationalism, consonant with religious differentiation. The profoundly secular and anticlerical character of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement is best illustrated by the actions of the most important strategist after Levski – Hristo Botev, whose legacy I assess in the next section of the chapter.

## Anti-clerical discourse of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement

### The legacy of Hristo Botev's writings

The rift between the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the future independent Bulgaria was a dominant theme of this most influential revolutionary ideologue of the Bulgarian National Liberation movement. In his articles Botev addressed the importance of Christianity and its role in history, noting that the “main enemies of progress and liberty were and perhaps would be for a long time clergymen and religion.”<sup>243</sup>

Botev's writings address the importance and role of the newly created Bulgarian Church, which instead of being a prime supporter of the national consolidation project, preferred to remain a loyal ally to the alien and oppressive regime in Constantinople. Botev identified its prime objectives as being “to suppress the voice of the conscience.”<sup>244</sup>

For Botev the foundations of institutionalized Christianity were profoundly reactionary, the church representing a powerful tool for social manipulation and coercion.<sup>245</sup> For him, the role of the Orthodox Church was to “rob, steal, strip and fool (to the point of brain death) its flock.”<sup>246</sup> Botev is highly critical when he describes the deceitfulness and corruption of the religious “high morality,” the behaviour of the “apostles of adultery” and the values of “the sons of the darkness,” whose “aim is to suppress the voice of the conscience.”<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Ivan Undjiev, Tzveta Undjieva, *Hristo Botev, Zivot i Dela*, [Hristo Botev, Live and Deeds] (Sofia, 1969), p. 590.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid p. 590 See also Asen Kiselnichev, *Mireogledad na Botev*, [The Views of Hristo Botev], t. II. (Sofia, 1971); Alexander Burmov, *Hristo Botev Pres Pogleda Na Savremennitsite Si*, [Hristo Botev Through the Views of His Contemporaries], (Sofia, 1945), p.101; Mihail Dimitrov, *Hristo Botev, Idei, lichnost, Tvorchestvo*, [Ideas, Personality, Art], (Sofia, 1946), p. 129-132.

<sup>245</sup> *Hristo Botev, Zivot i Dela* p. 592.

<sup>246</sup> Hristo Botev, *Sabrani Sachinenia*, [Selected Works], Volume II. 1971, p. 162.

<sup>247</sup> *Hristo Botev, Zivot i Dela*, p. 590.

Botev defines religion as “the same disaster for humanity as the plague, cholera and wars and all other calamities that are sent by God to punish the infidels,”<sup>248</sup> and states that his writing talent is unable to do justice to the magnitude of this nineteen hundred year old disease for humanity.

I could not possibly describe that animal bordello, created by the well nourished Rome-Catholic “bulls,” whether in their own homes, or in that Christian place, called the monastery, which is nothing else but a harem for the followers of Papal righteousness.<sup>249</sup>

For Botev, there is no alternative and no common ground - for him, religion must be replaced by modern, scientific thinking. This is a process that he observed in his own day: “clergymen are leaving the stage to be replaced by Freedom and Equality.”

According to him, the true ally of the National Liberation movement had to be sought elsewhere, in the network of secular schools where scientific knowledge was not limited by the existing code of religious dogmas: “...the school and only the school, would rescue Europe (and future Bulgaria) from the social degradation, only the school could (we repeat) is going to prepare it for the transformation...”<sup>250</sup>

I would argue that Botev’s ideas were not simply part of a short-lived revolutionary propaganda, aimed at encouraging a rapid social mobilization, but that they represented a set values which were neither so alien, nor so controversial but (I would argue) to a certain degree perfectly in keeping with the Bulgarian society’s assertion of itself which

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid p. 590

<sup>249</sup> Ibid. p. 590

<sup>250</sup> Botev, *Sabrani satchinenia*, Ibid. p. 45.

process essentially influenced the outcome of the construction of Bulgarian nationalism and national identity.

It would be rather difficult to assume that, in a climate of open animosity vis-à-vis the newly independent Bulgarian Orthodox Church, a nationalistic discourse based on the romantic tradition could ever have been constructed. For the Bulgarian National Liberation Movement, the Orthodox Church, to put it mildly, was not a trusted ally, nor was it considered a potential candidate in contributing to the nationalistic “*causa noble*.” Furthermore, the elimination of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as a factor in nation building signalled the end of a nationalistic, exclusive discourse based on religious loyalty. What is important to stress again is that during the critical process of national building, the Orthodox Church, represented by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, had an *openly anti-Bulgarian assimilation objective and role*.

This is a particularly important observation taking into consideration the paramount significance of the “general educated sentiment” as one of the central pillars of Greenfeld’s theoretical edifice. In her analysis, it is the influence of secularism, which undermines religious authority, and obscures the importance of transcendental concerns. This development, states Greenfeld, has a profound normative influence in providing an impetus for less scholastic, less romantic discourse in moulding the concept of national identity. Therefore, secular educated sentiment in a particular society can exercise a powerful normative weight in shaping the political vocabulary, and eventually the outcome of nationalism. As we have seen in the case of Bulgaria the chances for emergence of a collectivistic ethnic type of nationalism, generated by a religious

discourse on the supremacy of the “undivided soul of the nation” are small if the level of secularism is high.

I argue that in the case of Bulgaria the level of secularism was noticeably high compared to other Balkans states, where their national projects were openly constructing their legitimacy borrowing a religious lexicon. This was definitely not the case in Bulgaria. What is unique about the Bulgarian national consolidation process is the paramount importance of secular education and the concomitant drive towards positivist science, seen as capable of answering the needs of the new era.

In conclusion, dogged by controversy, animosity, conflicting policies and a variety of (including foreign) political actors, the lack of an independently operating Bulgarian translated into incapacity on the part of this powerful institution to generate and mount a homogeneous “mental” picture, consistent with the romantic tradition of a legendary past based on the powerful, common religious denominator of faith.

#### **IV. ASSESSING THE COMPATIBILITY OF PRENATIONAL BELIEFS WITH THE CIVIC MODEL OF NATIONALISM**

##### **The legacy of the millet system**

Using Greenfeld’s theoretical approach I isolate and critically assess those situational factors/constraints determined by the pre-existing state structures, which in turn influenced the emergence of a specific political culture, value system and beliefs. According to Greenfeld, these set of constraints have a significant importance in the complex interplay of all other variables. To quote her again: “A particular nationalism will be defined as Civic or as ethnic is the perception dependent on the traditional, pre-national beliefs in the society in question, which in all cases exert a significant formative

influence on the nature of the developing national identity.<sup>251</sup>

Greenfeld essentially states that there is a common ground within the ethnicists-modernists rivalry – one where traditions, and the ethical codes of different groups with different socio-political agendas are combined. Although modernist, Greenfeld’s approach to nationalism embraces the traditional Weberian school’s importance of a value-system, particularly the interplay between traditional (pre-nation state) ethical/moral codes based on religious beliefs and legal practices. It is in this context that I would like to assess the importance of the Ottoman millet system, and to argue that this factor/constraint had a significant impact in influencing the particular nature of Bulgarian nationalism and in shaping the ethnic/religious equilibrium that prevailed after the creation of the modern state of Bulgaria. To show this it will be necessary to demystify certain assertions associated with the role and legacy of the Ottoman Empire, as well as to add some precision to the meaning of the this legacy.<sup>252</sup> To accomplish this, however, we must first answer the critical question of whether this legacy came to an end with the establishment of the nation state, or whether elements of it can be traced in the post-Ottoman era, lending it the role of a continuity matrix.

As most students of nationalism know, the Ottoman Empire was not a Turkish empire. It was a multilingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural political system that may appropriately be compared to other historical empires. The Ottoman social system corresponded to specific conditions and circumstances in history and fulfilled certain

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<sup>251</sup> Liah Greenfeld, "Nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe Compared," p. 21.

<sup>252</sup> Maria Todorova describes two diametrically opposed interpretations of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans: "One regards the Ottoman period as an alien intrusion, while the other sees this long era more as a *symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic and Byzantine / Balkan traditions*." See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York, 1997), p. 164.

functions under those conditions.<sup>253</sup> It can be argued that the Ottoman socio-political system embraced by the Ottoman Empire was key to its survival over such a long period.<sup>254</sup>

However, what is of interest to the present study, are the “guidelines” of the policies of the Ottoman Empire towards its non-Muslim subjects. In respect to this issue we immediately encounter a paradox that troubles proponents of the catastrophic theory,<sup>255</sup> who see Ottoman domination as having been an intrusion<sup>256</sup> into the natural evolution of nation states (not long ago the leading interpretive model of most Balkan historians), i.e., the level of ethnic and religious tolerance vis-à-vis the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire institutionalized by the millet system.<sup>257</sup>

The millet system, developed over the course of several hundred years<sup>258</sup>, established the separation of the religious communities. Inherently, the Ottoman Empire *did not pursue* a

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<sup>253</sup> Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *A history of East Europe, The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle, 1977).

<sup>254</sup> Halil Inalcik, “The Meaning of Legacy: The Ottoman Case, Perceptions and Parallels,” in Carl Brown, *Imperial Legacy, The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, (New York, 1996), p. 18-19.

<sup>255</sup> Georgi Yankov, eds. “Aspects of the Formation and Development of the Bulgarian Nation,” in *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation* (Sofia, 1989), p. 12-13.

<sup>256</sup> This picture of the “saddest and darkest period” in the Balkans makes the five centuries of Ottoman rule the historiographical counterpart of the Western European “Dark Ages” before the advent of historical revisionism. See Maria Todorova, “The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans,” in Carl Brown, *Imperial Legacy, The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, (New York, 1996), p. 71.

<sup>257</sup> See Halil Inalcik, “The Meaning of Legacy,” *Ibid.* p.24

<sup>258</sup> Scholars date the establishment of the millet system to the year of the conquest of Constantinople when Mehmed II, the Conqueror (b. 1432 – ruled 1444-1446 and 1451-1481) appointed Genadius Scholarius patriarch of all Orthodox. A Jewish haham basi was appointed by him soon after. Some scholars give 1461, others 1516, as the year when the first Armenian patriarch was named with jurisdiction over all monophysites. These appointments created de facto millet system. It was only during the rule of Selim III (b. 1761-rul; ed 1789-1807) that the Ottoman began to use this term and to treat their minority accordingly. See Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge, 1968). See also Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, (Baltimore, 1963).

policy of ethnic assimilation.<sup>259</sup> Until well into the nineteenth century states Todorova, “the Ottoman state was essentially a supranational (or even, better, non-national) empire with strong medieval elements, where the bureaucracy seems to have been only common institution linking, but not unifying, all the population.”<sup>260</sup> Stating that “the Ottoman Empire *did not create an integrated society* is beyond doubt, nor did it ever strive to achieve such integration,” Todorova argues that this pattern does not fit within the context of the European assimilation tradition.<sup>261</sup> This policy – conscious or unconscious - allowed different non-Muslim religious communities to achieve a significant degree of institutional self-governance in their internal matters.<sup>262</sup> In this context, the millet system was developed as a response to the need for a legal order regulating the non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan, especially because the Muslim Holy Law, or Shari'ah, did not usually apply to non-Muslims.

From this perspective I argue that the acceptance, on the one hand, of the *fait accompli* of a substantial level of self-autonomy in the “Bulgarian lands,” combined with, on the other, a long lasting tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance<sup>263</sup> between Orthodox Bulgarians and Muslims, produced a potent identity matrix shaping ethnic dynamics in

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<sup>259</sup> See Maria Todorova, “The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans,” *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>263</sup> According to Inalcik “The Ottomans, who built their empire under special conditions, had to be particularly tolerant and conciliatory towards Christians (and Jews). With millions of Christian subjects in the Balkans, they needed to win over the Christian masses, through maintaining not only their church organizations but also their preconquest customs, taxes, and local institutions. Even members of the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian military classes who cooperated with the conquerors were incorporated as Christian timar-holders into the Ottoman military class, in most cases, with the same privileges they had enjoyed previously. Nor did they have to convert to Islam: Islamization among them came about as a social process.” See: Halil Inalcik, “The Meaning of Legacy:” *Ibid.* p.24; See also Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam as reflected in Kısve Babası petitions: An Aspect of Ottoman Social Life in the Balkans, 1670-1730*, (PhD dissertation), Department of Islamic Studies, McGill University 2000; Evgeni Radushev, “Archive on the Balkan Islamization Processes 14-19<sup>th</sup> centuries,” in Georgi Yankov (ed.), *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation*, (Sofia, 1989), p. 60-61.

Bulgaria in the subsequent 121 years of its independence. Maria Todorova, one of the leading contemporary scholars of Ottoman historiography, expresses this argument eloquently:

*...The second interpretation treats the Ottoman legacy as the complex symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic, and Byzantine/Balkan traditions. Its premise is that centuries of coexistence must have produced a common legacy, and that the history of the Ottoman state is the history of all its constituent populations (notwithstanding religious, social, professional, and other divisions and hierarchies). The facts underlying this interpretation are the early syncretism in the religious, cultural, and institutional spheres, as well as the remarkable absorptive capacity of the conquerors.*<sup>264</sup>

What is important to understand, is how this legacy was transformed into the zeal for modern nation-state. Ironically, Todorova points out, nationalism, which irrevocably destroyed the imagined community of Orthodox Christianity, had the effect of “preserving, a frozen, unchangeable and stultifying image of the Muslim community, consistently dealt with in millet terms.”<sup>265</sup> Partially this is the reason of the incorporation of the millet system in the first Constitution of the independent kingdom of Bulgaria. The new Bulgarian Constitution of 1879 simply borrowed the millet system concept of granting extensive self-rule to various religious communities - Christians, Muslims and Jews - by allowing for religious and secular schools and providing an opportunity to the leaders of these communities to exercise full control over their religious, economic and cultural activities.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> See Maria Todorova, “The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans,” *Ibid.*, p. 48-49. Italics are mine.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68

<sup>266</sup> The Constitution guaranteed the equality of all Bulgarian citizens (Article 57), outlawing all forms of religious and ethnic discrimination (Article 9 and 12) and granting minority groups the right to preserve and develop their culture. Plamen Bogoev, “The Bulgarian Constitution and the Rights of Minorities” in *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context*, Sofia, October, 1994, p. 10.

### Living “*les différences du quotidien*”

I argue that the centuries-long legacy of the millet system, with its practice of institutionalizing diversity, combined with commonly shared economic, social and security concerns, resulted in a shared experience of living “*les différences du quotidien*,” thereby having a powerful normative influence over the Bulgarian national identity. Located close to the heart of the Empire (Constantinople), the territories populated with ethnic Bulgarians were regarded as having great strategic significance, which resulted in a policy of mass settlement by Turkish speaking groups. In the Eastern part of the country (the north-east and south-east), where the concentration of mixed population was the highest, ethnic Bulgarians and Turks lived side by side, sharing food, language and cultural traditions. What is worth noting here is that in the Bulgarian historiography there exists well documented evidence of the remarkable level of cooperation at the “village/community council,” level of communities/settlements with mixed backgrounds in relation to issues of common economic, as well as, security interests, such as preservation and management of the village’s arable lands, pastures and grazing grounds, management of planning and constructions, etc. All of those issues involved a constant need to communicate and to accommodate despite the difference in language and faith in a reaching consensual exercise.<sup>267</sup> This level of effective cooperation was well manifested in the mounting of united campaigns against wrongful decisions by the Ottoman authorities in respect to taxation. A popular form of common action was to write complaint petitions against heavy taxes and illegal activities to the tax collectors, a

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<sup>267</sup> Elena Grozdanova, “Roliata na Traditsionnata Selska Obstina za Opazvane na Balgarskata Narodnost i Narodnostno Samosaznanie”, [The Role of the Traditional Village Commune in Preserving the Bulgarian Nation and National Identity], in Hristo Hristov (ed.), *Balgarskata Natsia Prez Vazrazhdaneto* [Bulgarian Nation During the Revival], (Sofia, 1980), p. 153-156.

well-documented practice.<sup>268</sup> Collective petitions by Christians and Muslims were written down in Vidin, Plovdiv, Sliven, Bitola, Lerin, Ostrov.<sup>269</sup> For example in 1866 in the town of Plovdiv district alone were submitted to the Sultan 166 collective petitions.<sup>270</sup> This level of cooperation and compatibility has not left unnoticed.<sup>271</sup>

The good relations between Muslims and Christians in the Bulgarian lands impressed foreign travelers and diplomats. In 1762, Roger Bozkovic from Dubrovnic, while passing through the village of Rish near Shumen, heard from Christian Bulgarians that they were living happily alongside Muslim villagers and that there were even mixed marriages. In the winter of 1785 the French diplomat Alexander D'Autrive passed through the Shumen villages of Divdyadovo, Kamenyak, Stanoevets and Branchivo. Their populations were half Christian and half Muslim...<sup>272</sup>

What is worth noting here is the remarkable level of religious compatibility creating, what was already mentioned above by Maria Todorova as a “common legacy.” Continuing with Alexander D'Autrive's observation with respect to the religious practices of the *quotidien*.

The population do not hate each other. They have become relatives, drink wine and do not observe Ramadan or Lent. The imams and priests are equally tolerant towards mixed marriages of people from the two religions. One can often see turbans and icons, the Koran and the Bible in the same house.”<sup>273</sup>

Perhaps the most symptomatic idiosyncrasy of this intense level of cooperation could be seen in the united defence strategy against guerrilla groups during the Karadjali period, as well as during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-1878. The following excerpt represents one encounter with such a unified response:

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<sup>268</sup> Peter Petrov, “Muslim Bulgarians against Ottoman Rule”, in Georgi Yankov, *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation* (Sofia, 1989), p. 87.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>270</sup> *Dokumenti za Balgarskata Istorija*, [Turkish documents on Bulgarian history], Vol.3, (Sofia, 1940), p.309-310; Peter Petrov, “Muslim Bulgarians against Ottoman Rule” cited in Georgi Yankov, (ed.), *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation*, (Sofia, 1989), p. 87.

<sup>271</sup> Grozdanova, Ibid. p. 158-159.

<sup>272</sup> Peter Petrov, “Muslim Bulgarians,” p. 87-88.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. p.87

In later December 1877, at the request of Muslims in Samokov, Christian Bulgarians were given weapons and people from the two religious communities together to defend the town against the bashibazouks. They even sent a two-strong delegation, a Muslim and a Christian, to ask the Russian troops for help. The Russian detachment arrived and took over defending the town in association with the mixed Christian –Muslim battalion.<sup>274</sup>

A few years earlier the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee addressed the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire in a special declaration dated August 28, 1875. It stated that that under the Sultan’s government the situation was deteriorating, leading the Bulgarians into an armed struggle beneficial for the Muslims. “Brother Muslims! Some of our aims have been adopted by many Muslims who have joined us in the same movement. It is now your duty to embrace that cause and join us.”<sup>275</sup> Another declaration in 1875 said that Bulgarian revolutionaries should defend the peaceful Muslims, “who are our fellowmen and sympathizers. They should be extended a fraternal hand; they should be rendered help and be protected if they are persecuted by the government for sympathizing with our revolutionary movement. The honour, property and lives in these people should be as dear and sacred to you as they are to themselves!”<sup>276</sup>

As the uprising began and the first Muslim peasants were taken prisoner, Georgi Benkovski freed them, saying:

...go back to your villages and tell our good intentions and of the fraternal love that we cherish for all peaceful Muslims. Tell them that we will not attack poor and oppressed peasants, be they Bulgarians or Turks. We have risen in arms not against Islam in general, but against the blood-sucking Pashas and kadis who are

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid., p. 87-88

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 89

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 89

our two peoples' common enemies.<sup>277</sup>

This clearly political differentiation, identifying the enemies of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, is a convincing indicator not only of the main political vocabulary, but more importantly, I would argue, of the nature of Bulgarian nationalism. It is in this particular context that Levski's declaration outlining the objective of the Bulgarian national program should be evaluated in: "*We are not against the Turkish people, nor are we after their faith, but we are after their king and its laws, in other words – we are after the Turkish Government, which brutally controls not only us, but also the Turks themselves.*"<sup>278</sup>

Another aspect worth investigating is the inviolability of the private sphere (clearly a vital ingredient within the foundation of individualistic, civic nationalism), this being an essential element, as we have seen earlier, in preserving the survival and the viability of those mixed communities. From this perspective, Ivan Hadjiiski notes that the idea of national identity consists not only in the links between language, religion and state sovereignty, but also in "*the links with history, that are established through the participation of all people on the basis of a common social destiny and of more or less common national interests within certain geographical and ethnic boundaries.*"<sup>279</sup>

In conclusion, the original legal framework, the millet system, combined with the common experience of everyday interaction, allowed for a continuity of mutual respect

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<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. 89 "...Many Muslim Bulgarians responded often to these appeals. For example, in 1875, during the uprising in Stara Zagora, Muslims and Christians in Plovdiv prison prepared a riot together. The following year while preparing for the April uprising the voevode Nikola Verancheto from the village of Gurkovo, Stara Zagora region, the Christian Bulgarians were given refuge and protection by their Muslim fellow villagers, after which they together drove back the bashibazouk gangs. In 1877, Christians Bulgarians in Kavarna together defended the town from the bashibazouk gangs and in the same year Christian and Muslims in Yambol fought the Circassians." Ibid, p. 90-91.

<sup>278</sup> Ivan Undjiev, Nikola Kondarev, *Vasil Levski*, Ibid., p. 42. Italics are mine.

<sup>279</sup> Ivan Hadziiski, *Optimistichna Istoria na Nashia Narod*, [An Optimistic Theory of our People], (Sofia, 2002), p. 88.

for different religious and cultural practices. This, I would argue, is an important prerequisite for the emergence of a civic type of nationalism. The legacy of commonly shared political, economic, social and even military experiences created a level of cooperation between the two large ethnic communities, rarely observed anywhere else in the Balkans. Due to its geographical location and strategic significance (which justified an intense policy of immigration of Muslim colonists, the Bulgarian lands with a mixed population have tended to produce a remarkable level of cooperation at the local community level. The supremacy of common interests overshadowed any communal religious differences, and this applies to both communities. I argue that this factor had an impact in diminishing the chances of a successful national identity project based strictly on religious affiliation.

### **Assessing the impact of the Bogomil heresy**

I would also argue that certain heretical movements contributed to the shaping of a “peculiar religious perception” in Bulgaria, thus creating a more fluid, if not relaxed, religious identification. This identification became the primary archetype allowing for the establishment of a profoundly fragmented congregation, a distinct modern prerequisite.

The path towards rejection of religious dogmas, essentially paving the road towards secularization, provided, in my view, one of the fundamental ingredients for an enduring pattern of inter-religious equilibrium. The most influential of these heresies was the Bogomil, named after a priest, by the name of Bogomil (Dear to God).<sup>280</sup> Bogomilism

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<sup>280</sup> “Bogomil doctrine was based on the conception of two principles - good and evil, i.e. dualism. The Bogomils renounced the official church, its symbols and rites, the need for its ministers. They acknowledged only the Lord's Prayer.

emerged in the tenth century, possibly in the period 927-969, i.e., shortly after the conversion of Bulgarians (863) to Christianity, and then spread throughout the entire Balkans.<sup>281</sup>

The conversion to Christianity took place under king Boris in 863, i.e., only 70 years or so prior to the massive and popular acceptance of the Bogomil movement in the Balkans. Despite sometimes-fierce persecution by the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine state, the Bogomils survived until the Ottoman Empire. In my view, the schism's beginning is particularly significant, because I would argue that in the case of Bulgaria, Christianity *may have experienced a false start*.<sup>282</sup>

In 864 Christianity was proclaimed as the official state religion and the conversion of all non-Christians was started. The enforcement of Christianity did not go without perturbations directed not so much against the religion itself, as against the Christian legislation code brought from Byzantium and introduced in Bulgaria. Part of the aristocracy in the external areas rose in a rebellion against Boris but it was quickly suppressed by the central power and without much bloodshed. As soon as the end of that same year, the Bulgarian ruler subordinated the Bulgarian church to the Roman Pope. Concerned about the future of the state, Boris saw the danger of the Bulgarian clergy, having been administratively subdued to Constantinople, to become a conductor of foreign interests. The papacy which was not backed up by any genuine military power at that time seemed to Boris inclined to allow greater independence to the Bulgarian clergy and thus, more opportunities for control on the part of the political power.<sup>283</sup>

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Their divine service was held in ordinary churches or in the open and consisted in merely reading and interpreting the New Testament." See [http://www.balkanica.org/content/doc\\_58.shtml](http://www.balkanica.org/content/doc_58.shtml).

<sup>281</sup> The Bulgarian form of the heresy combined a dualist belief system with an ascetic, world-renouncing life-style. Although there was some interaction between Paulicianism and Bogomilism remained distinct. Bogomilism spread in the Byzantine world and also in Western Europe where its adherents were called Cathars. See Dimitar Angelov, *Bogomilstvoto*, [The Bogomilism], (Sofia: 1993), p. 38.

<sup>282</sup> It is very likely that the Slavic peasantry in parts of Bulgaria was from the outset in closer contact with Bogomil beliefs than with the Orthodoxy, which was then being laboriously imposed on it from above. See Dimitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils, a Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge, 1948), p.138-140. See also Dimitar Angelov, *Bogomilstvoto*, [The Bogomilism], (Sofia, 1993) and Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Bulgarians in the Seventeen Century. Slavic Orthodox Society and Culture Under Ottoman Rule* (London, 1993). Italics are mine.

<sup>283</sup> Kristian Ismail and Gary Griffith, "Popular Faith and Practice in Bulgaria Today", *East-West Church Ministry Report*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring 1999).

The movement grew in popularity, reaching its height in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Until recently, the significance of Bogomilism to the formation of the Bulgarian national “value archetype” was essentially ignored in scholarly literature, passed over in almost complete silence. Its 400-year-old presence in the country and its legacy to the future value system of the Bulgarian national psyche has long represented the least disturbing gap in Balkan and particularly Bulgarian historiography. Very few scholars have paid attention to this phenomenon, with the lonely exception of Kiel, who makes the astonishing claim that it is questionable to refer to Bulgarians of the 13<sup>th</sup> century as Christians, because of the mass acceptance of the Bogomil schism.<sup>284</sup> I tend to agree with this view, and I argue that some of the central themes of this movement could be relatively easily traced in the dominant attitude, particularly in respect to the marginalization of the Orthodox Church in the country’s value system and national identification, which I argue represents a significant divergence from the Balkan norm.

According to Dimitri Obolensky, widely regarded as the most prominent scholar on this subject, what was unique in this schism was the adoption by Bogomils of dualistic Paulician and Manichean beliefs with a distinct Slavic flavour.<sup>285</sup> Its cosmology thus denies the dogma of the unity of God and rejects the incarnation of Christ, as well as the sanctity of his Mother, and for that matter the whole Orthodox tradition.<sup>286</sup> According to Obolensky:

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<sup>284</sup> Michel Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period. A Sketch of the Economic, Juridical and Artistic Preconditions of Bulgarian Post-Byzantine Art and its Place in the Development of the Art of the Christian Balkans. 1360/1700*, (Maastricht, 1985).

<sup>285</sup> There were several features of Bogomilism that cannot be explained by outside influence and that were most probably original. See Obolensky, *The Bogomils*, (Cambridge, 1948), *Ibid.*, p. 138-140.

<sup>286</sup> Bogomilism *rejected most of the dogmas and rites of the church as a human superstructure without the authority of Christ. Its primary institutional targets were the Palace and the Church.* See Dimitar Angelov, *Bogomilstvoto*, [The Bogomilism], (Sofia: 1993).

Bogomilism can scarcely even be called a heresy in the strict sense of the word, for it represented, not a deviation from Orthodoxy on certain particular points of ethics, but a wholesale denial of the Church as such.<sup>287</sup>

Bogomilism *rejected the official Church institution with all its characteristics* – priesthood, formal places of worship, liturgy, and rituals such as baptism, communion, confession and even symbols such as crosses and icons.<sup>288</sup> The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the heresy at its most vigorous, winning considerable number of converts and official attention.<sup>289</sup> “Under the Second Bulgarian Empire (from 1186) the heresy was sometimes persecuted, sometimes tolerated. It was formally condemned by Tsar Boril at the Synod of Turnovo (1211) but later rulers appear to have still shown some tolerance whenever it was politically expedient.”<sup>290</sup> In many ways, Bogomilism represented what the Reformation under Luther and Calvin achieved in Western Europe, with its accusation of the Orthodox Church for not possessing divine power, being essentially corrupt and being the very representation of the anti-Christ.

The legacy of the Bogomil tradition has left an important and profound imprint on the development of the Bulgarian national idea. It compromised the chances of launching a nationalistic discourse based on religious loyalty. The fact is that its influence contributed to the rise of an essentially secular Bulgarian national identity, where the vernacular remained the fundamental anchor of self-differentiation.

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<sup>287</sup> Obolensky, *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>288</sup> Angelov, *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>289</sup> From the Balkans, Bogomilism spread westward, by merchants and perhaps Crusaders, via North Italy to Southern France, where the so-called Albigensian Crusade had to be organized for its suppression.

<sup>290</sup> The same argument was valid for Tsar Samuel, who was not himself Orthodox although some members of his family were suspected of Bogomil leanings. [http://www.scrbianna.com/featurcs/cntry\\_of\\_slavs/bosnia.shtml](http://www.scrbianna.com/featurcs/cntry_of_slavs/bosnia.shtml)

This observation is particularly important, knowing that, according to Greenfeld's situational constraint theory, traditional pre-national beliefs in the society exert a significant formative influence on the nature of the developing national identity. According to Greenfeld, the casual linkage between pre-national modes of thought (as it was the case with Positivism, Liberalism, Protestantism, Pietism) and their level of compatibility with the original (civic) model of nationalism represents is a powerful constraint in determining whether a particular nationalism will be defined as civic or as ethnic. Therefore, assessing the level of compatibility (philosophical/ethical and intellectual) between the pre-national modes of thought in society in question compared to the original, civic model of nationalism would provide a credible indicator as to what type of matrix may be used with respect to locating national sovereignty.

According to Greenfeld's approach, if the pre-national modes of thought are fundamentally compatible with the original model of nationalism, then chances are for the emergence of civic nationalism where legitimacy of the nation is embodied into free association of rational human beings entered into voluntarily on an individual basis. On the contrary, in those societies where pre-national modes of thought are less compatible with the original model, the opportunity to encounter an "organic" type of nationalism is greater.

Taking this approach, I argue that, in the case of Bulgaria, the Bogomil heresy, has left a significant normative influence in moulding the core set of ethical codes, ideas and values reduced the chances for a massive religious revival. Furthermore, I believe that this constraint has played a significant role in the context of a failed partnership between

the national liberation movement and the Orthodox Church during the critical period of National Revival. In my view, the combination of the “undercurrent” influence of the Bogomil schism largely prepared the way for a secular, rational interpretation of reality, which interpretation combined with the cooperation at local level of “*les différences du quotidien*” facilitated the articulation of the Bulgarian national project to be constructed - in civic and not on ethnic/religious terms.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to revisit some of the main factors/constraints that made possible the emergence of an atypical (considering the pattern of other Balkan states) political and inclusive nationalism based on common citizenship. The interplay of those few constraints, in my view, seems to have been instrumental in preparing the conditions necessary to the emergence of this remarkable national project in the Balkans.

Greenfeld’s approach allows us to identify the set of variables that determine the type of nationalism to be constructed - in civic or ethnic terms. This approach seems to be particularly relevant in critically assessing the “peculiar” character of Bulgarian nationalism, first by identifying the set of main variables, and second in juxtaposing their interplay in a dynamic context, thus providing the missing pieces in what seems to represent a linear historical continuity.

The first variable is associated with the state of anomie, where structural change results in the inadequacy of the traditional definition of a group’s identity creating in the process

an incentive to adopt a new identity. In the case of Bulgarian community the new shift in identity dynamics was due to the remarkable economic takeoff in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century does suggest the presence of this essential prerequisite. Thus, the Bulgarian national project comes as a direct solution to the crisis of identity.

The second variable - the causal relations between the nature (social, economic, political) of the status of the political actors involved in the national project and the outcome of this nationalism - seems to fit within this logic. As we saw earlier, the individualistic (civic) type of nationalism is likely to develop if it responds to the interests of wide sectors of the *population*: hence the narrower the social basis of nationalism is, the greater is the likelihood of the emergence of ethnic nationalism. In the Bulgarian case, the predominately urban Bulgarian bourgeoisie drove the national project. However, it was also pointed out that “all social groups within the Bulgarian society: bourgeoisie, peasantry, artisans and craftsmen, intelligentsia” were actively involved in this project. Because of the wide sectors of the population being involved, it is more likely that a civic type of nationalism developed in Bulgarian lands. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that a revolution, and not the reliance of an intervention by foreign forces from the neighbouring countries, resulted in the articulation of the national project. Therefore, in the case of Bulgaria, the expected outcome was a civic, political nationalism. As result of this particular context, concepts of ethnic and religious tolerance, political universalism and citizenship became part of the dominant political vocabulary used by the main ideologues: Rakovski, Karavelov, Levski, and Botev. In this way they came to express the mental images of the self-asserting Bulgarian society.

The third variable is to assess the “general educated/secular sentiment”. In Greenfeld’s theoretical model, secularism is an important factor because of its function in undermining the religious authority and diminishing the likelihood of a theological/romantic discourse moulding the concept of national identity. Following this logic, the possibility for the emergence of a collectivistic, ethnic type of nationalism is relatively small, especially when the level of the secularism is high. As we already observed in this chapter, the massive network of secular schools, “the foundation of the material and spiritual matrix for the Bulgarian revival,” as compared to other Balkans states, was probably the most remarkable institutional hallmark of the Bulgarian National Revival.

As note earlier, Bulgarian populated territories had one of the highest ratios of schools per capita in Europe. This modern secular education system produced a liberally oriented Bulgarian national intelligentsia, disseminating not only patriotism, but also liberal values, respect for equality and individual freedom. The network of over 2,000 secular schools (as well as literary clubs) essentially gave birth to the “*abstract community*” of the future Bulgarian nation.

In the Bulgarian case the schools and the reading rooms (or literary clubs called *chitalishte*) became much more than institutions; they became insignias of national identity. As already, *the Bulgarian Revival begins with and ends with one activity – mass (secular) education*<sup>291</sup> Secular culture, states Greenfield, *has always* protected the survival of the civic project – where the idea of the nationalism was grounded within rationalism, and religion

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<sup>291</sup> Italics are mine.

no longer provided the foundation of the national idea. Secular education, and education where “the liberty of the rational individual is the idea which united people,”<sup>292</sup> are instrumental in the emergence of a political type of nationalism. Given the evidence it can be safely argued that, in this respect, the Bulgarian case conformed to this pattern.

The fourth variable is to assess the level of compatibility (philosophical/ethical and intellectual) between the pre-national modes of thought compared to the original, civic model of nationalism. I argue that it would be unwise to disregard the four-centuries-old heritage of the Bogomil heresy, which has left an important legacy in shaping a particular set of codes, ideas and values, not only vis-à-vis the development of the institution of the Orthodox church and the Christian religion, in the “Bulgarian populated lands,” but primarily in the context of a failed partnership between the national liberation movement and the Orthodox Church during the critical period of National Revival. In my view, this quite significant “undercurrent” theme of a set of codes, ideas and values stemming from the theological framework of this schism largely prepared the way for an secular, rational interpretation of reality.

This perspective, I argue, is deeply entrenched in the Bulgarian national psyche. This anti-clerical perception of the Orthodox Church as lacking any higher authority not only eroded the status of the Christian religion there in comparison to other Balkan Orthodox states, but essentially determined the direction of the national discourse. In addition, the legacy of the institutional inheritance of a four-centuries-long implementation of the millet system, an ambiguous course of action of “state non-intervention”, proved to have

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<sup>292</sup> Greenfield, p. 73

a considerable impact on the ethnic/religious equilibrium. This legal framework combined with the shared experience facing common political, economic, social and military challenges, led to the creation of a much more pragmatic and down-to-earth mental image of an “*abstract community*”, where neighbours are regarded as being as close as relatives. The coincidence of numerous factors - geography, settlement policy, common concerns and a “soft religious schism” - have contributed to the emergence of an accommodation between the two large ethnic communities rarely observed anywhere else in the Balkans.

I argue that, in the case of Bulgaria, the continuity of the tradition of mutual acceptance of different languages, religions and cultures was helped by a rather unique development path in the Balkan context: an inclusive national discourse and high level of secularism. This unique path allowed for the emergence of a civic, inclusive nationalism, compatible with the basic standards of liberal democracy, and alien to the exclusivity of nationalism. The national vision of the Bulgarian project was thus a function of political attachment, providing a superior, ultimate loyalty. The vision of the Bulgarian national project was based on the supremacy of common citizenship over ethnic and religious loyalties, a situation in stark contrast to other South-Eastern European nationalisms known to emphasize a population’s cultural heritage and its ethnic continuity.

## CHAPTER III

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEGACY OF THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA

#### *Overview*

*The primary aim of this chapter is to provide empirical data in support of the central argument of my hypothesis associated with the inclusive civic nature of Bulgarian nationalism. This is why this chapter will outline the continuity of the situation of the Turkish minority after the creation of modern Bulgaria. From an extended chronological perspective this chapter will focus on the tradition of the Bulgarian accommodation policy in respect to the Turkish minority. However, this chapter is not a historical excursion into the distant and recent history in Bulgaria. It is rather an overview of the dominant, reoccurring trends associated with the fundamental nature, of what has made Bulgarian nationalism an unique phenomena in this part of the world - its profoundly civic nature, allowing a remarkable climate of ethnic and religious tolerance between the two large ethnic groups to remain essentially intact for a period of more than a century. Different periods associated with institutional arrangements vis-à-vis the Turkish minority will be outlined: specifically policies aimed to preserve the Turkish language, Islamic religion and traditional self-governing structures of the Turkish minority such as Councils and Courts will be assessed. This legacy of this outstanding ethnic co-existence is essentially neglected in the scholarly literature on minority issues in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Furthermore the record of a long-lived accommodation legacy is a direct manifestation of the wide acceptance of ethnic and religious tolerance, which has its roots in the civic make-up of the Bulgarian national identity.*

#### ***I. Origin and numbers of the Turks of Bulgaria***

The Congress of Berlin of 1878 left the newly created Bulgaria with a population consisting of a large number of Turks as well as other ethnic groups such as Gypsies, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, most of who had been living there for centuries as citizens of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>293</sup> The Ottoman Turks had conquered the medieval kingdom of Bulgaria in 1363, and ruled until 1878, when the modern state of Bulgaria emerged. Because of its vital geo-strategic position the territory of Bulgaria was perceived as being

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<sup>293</sup> Darina Vasileva, "Izselnickeskiat Vapros v Bulgaro-Turskite otnoshenia," [Immigration Issue and the Bulgarian Turkish relations] in *Aspekti na Etnokulturnata Situatsia v Bulgaria*, [Aspects of the Ethno-Cultural Situation in Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1992), p. 62.

the very “heart of the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>294</sup> This is *one* of the reasons for the exceptionality of the Bulgarian ethnic case, with a high concentration of different ethnic and religious communities.<sup>295</sup>

When the Turks conquered the Bulgarian land, the native population retreated to the mountainous regions and the Turkish population brought over from Anatolia was settled in the land vacated by them. The fertile valleys of Thrace, Macedonia, and the Rhodopes were settled *en masse* by Yoruks, a livestock-owning people. The Turkish people also settled in the cities. Thus, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the cities in Bulgaria assumed the identity of Turkish cities where the majority of the population was Muslim.<sup>296</sup>

These compact Turkish masses made the Balkans their home for five centuries, establishing new villages and towns and contributing to a rapid growth in population. In 1876, just before the establishment of the Bulgarian state, the number of Turks (Muslims) and that of Bulgarians living in the area known as the Land of Bulgaria were practically equal.<sup>297</sup> According to Simsir, “in 1876 some 1,130,000 Bulgarians and 1,120,000 Turkish Muslims dwelled in the six sanjaks of the Danube province. While 681,000 Turks, as opposed to 483,000 Bulgarians, lived in the Plovdiv and Sliven sanjaks of the Edirne province, a region referred to by the name Eastern Roumelia by the Berlin Treaty of 1878.”<sup>298</sup> It should be noted that, despite numerous waves of emigration,<sup>299</sup> the ratio of the Turkish (and by extension the Muslim population to the total population) has generally remained unchanged. According to censuses taken over a seventy-year period beginning in 1887, the Bulgarian and Turkish populations can be seen to have

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<sup>294</sup> Bilal N. Simsir, *The Turks of Bulgaria 1878-1985* (London, 1888), p.1.

<sup>295</sup> From the very beginning of the occupation, the Ottoman administration began an ambitious policy of settlement of Turks from Anatolia in the so-called Bulgarian territories. See Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>296</sup> Dimitar Kosev, Hristo. Hristov, Dimitar Angelov, *Kratka Istoria na Bulgaria*, [Short History of Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1969), p. 83. as cited in *Turks in Bulgaria*, p. 1

<sup>297</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> Vasileva, *Ibid.* p., 62.

remained relatively stable, with the following fluctuations:

Table 2. *The Turkish and Muslim Population in Bulgaria in the Years of Census*

<i>Years of Census</i>	<i>Turkish Population</i>	<i>Muslim Population</i>
1887	602,331	676,212
1892	569,728	643,258
1900	539,656	643,300
1905	505,439	603,084
1910	504,560	603,084
1926	577,555	825,774
1934	618,628	821,298
1956	565,028	N/A <sup>300</sup>

By contrast, Bulgarian population as a whole showed the following increases in the corresponding census years: 3,000,000 in 1887, 3,300,000 in 1892, 3,700,000 in 1900, 4,300,000 in 1910, 5,400,000 in 1926, and 7,000,000 in 1956.<sup>301</sup> The large and consistent Turkish minority placed additional pressure on the new Bulgarian political elite to provide specific legal provisions guaranteeing that the rights of minorities living within the newly emerged Bulgarian state would be protected.

### *The rights of the Turkish minority according to the Constitution of 1879*

In 1879 the first constitution of an independent Bulgaria was adopted. The document guaranteed the equality of all Bulgarian citizens (Article 57), granting all forms of religious

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<sup>300</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

and ethnic discrimination (Article 5 and 44) and granted minority groups (Turkish, Greek, Romanian and others) the right to preserve and develop their culture.<sup>302</sup>

Turks constituted a completely isolated and quite conservative society not only from the viewpoints of language, religion, traditions, and customs, but also on account of patterns of work, leisure, entertainment, eating, and dress. Partly under the impact of the social consciousness that it constituted a minority with regard to the Bulgarian community, the Turkish-Muslim community was highly sensitive about preserving jealously its way of life and keeping away from the Bulgarians.<sup>303</sup>

However, the provisions of the Bulgarian Constitution in respect to the rights of minorities were essentially modeled on the Berlin agreement of July 1878, which linked the recognition of the independence of the Balkan countries with the principle of preventing discrimination based on religious grounds (Articles 5 and 44).<sup>304</sup> Article 4 in the text of the Treaty in fact states:

The rights and interests of Turkish, Greek, Romanian and other ethnic groups in areas where they are mixed with Bulgarian populations would be taken into account in the voting and drawing up the constitutional statutes.<sup>305</sup>

The Berlin Treaty had ruled that any Turks who chose to stay in Bulgaria would be free to pursue their own religious practices. This rule was of a constitutional nature for Bulgaria; it could not be transgressed. In fact, Article 5 of the Berlin Treaty made protection of minorities a precondition for the recognition of Bulgaria.<sup>306</sup> The religion, religious ceremonies, and religious institutions of the Turkish minority could not be interfered with. The first Bulgarian Constitution, drawn in 1879, reiterated these points;

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<sup>302</sup> Bogoev, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>303</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 8

<sup>304</sup> Bogoev, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup> Vladimir Ortakovski, *Minorities in the Balkans*, (New York, 2000), p. 33.

it produced the rule according to which everybody has freedom of belief and religion without regard to religion and sect (art. 40).<sup>307</sup>

In accordance with these clauses in the agreement, the Constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly in Veliko Turnovo in April 1878 forbade discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds and included special rights that allowed minorities the opportunity of preserving and developing their culture.<sup>308</sup>

The new creation of the Kingdom of Bulgaria brought some important changes in the social life of the Turks of Bulgaria. In the rural areas Turks lived in closed communities separate and remote from Bulgarians, however this was not the case in most of the large urban centres, where as it was mentioned in the previous chapters, the Bulgarians were the dominant ethnic group. It is thus remarkable that the newly emerged Bulgarian state, after five centuries of Ottoman rule, should have drawn up its foundational document in the spirit of an inclusive, and democratic political nation, regardless of the numerical vulnerability of the Bulgarian ethnic minority. It is indeed characteristic of the nature of Bulgarian nationalism in that era that the new Constitution granted extensive self-rule to various other religious communities. Hence, in the new kingdom not only Muslims, but also Jews, were granted full control over all the religious, economic, cultural and educational activities of their communities.

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<sup>307</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 292

<sup>308</sup> The Turkish minority was given equality of religious and cultural rights in addition to political and civil rights – this principle was clearly included in the first Bulgarian Constitution dated 1879 (Arts. 40-2). See: *Konstitutsia na Bulgarskoto Knajestvo*, (Tirnov, 1879).

### *Education of the Turkish minority*

Schools operating along modern lines were opened in the Bulgarian populated territories as a result of the *Islahat* or Reformation Era (1856-76), however the process was disrupted by the events of the Turco-Russian War, which had a lasting impact well beyond the end of the hostilities. To a large extent this trend was noticeable in the newly created kingdom of Bulgaria where the Turkish educational tradition eventually recovered its former strength in the mid-1980s.

In 1885 the Great National Assembly passed a law giving complete freedom to the Muslim minorities in respect to education. The following table illustrates the evolution of the education of the Turkish minority covering a period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century:

Table 3. *Turkish Language Schools, Teachers and Students in Bulgaria, 1894 – 1950*

<i>Years</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
1894-5	1,300	1,516	72,582
1895-6	1,341	1,549	75,160
1907-8	1,234	1,566	63,516
1909-10	1,222	1,522	63,033
1921-2	1,713	2,113	60,540
1923-4	1,688	2,350	77,559
1949-50	1,199	3,037	100,276 <sup>309</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

It should be mentioned that instruction in these institutions was offered entirely in Turkish. Another noticeable element was the independence of these educational institutions having a status of private schools, “administered and supported by the local Turkish communities, which also had the power to select and appoint the teachers.”<sup>310</sup>

The most significant law affecting the Bulgarian educational system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the *Law concerning Primary and Secondary School Education (Zakon Za Osnovnoto i Srednoto Obrazovaniye)*, passed in 1908. The most relevant element in this new legislature was the provision, contained in article 156, stating:

Financial help can be given to the Muslim, Jewish, and Armenian private schools by the state, provinces and municipalities. Instruction can be offered in a private school in a language other than Bulgarian. However, courses on the Bulgarian language, history and geography were made mandatory. Muslim private schools are administered by councils elected by the local communities, but were subject to inspection by the Bulgarian National Ministry of Education.<sup>311</sup>

World War I had a significant impact on the situation of the country’s Turkish minority due to the new geopolitical rapprochement between Bulgaria and Turkey, both of which fought on the side of the Axis. This process became particularly apparent after Alexander Stamboliski’s populist Peasant Party adopted an active and supportive policy in respect to the education offered to the Turkish minority.<sup>312</sup> This factor, in conjunction with the open support shown to the Kemalist revolution in Turkey by the Stamboliski government, resulted in a dramatic improvement in Bulgarian-Turkish relations. In 1921, a comprehensive reform of the school system was undertaken after the passage of a new

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid. For more on this subject please see Ivan Vankov, “Chastnite Osnovni Utchilishta v Balgaria,” [Private Elementary Schools in Bulgaria], *Utchilichsten Pregled*, [School Review] year XII, vol. 7, (Sofia, 1907).

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>312</sup> Jelavich, *The Balkans*, p. 90-91.

national education law. Among are the policies introduced in this law that particularly affected Turkish minority were the following:<sup>313</sup>

- 1) A Special chief inspector will be assigned to the Turkish schools in Bulgaria (art. 351).
- 2) A junior high school and a primary school teacher will be elected for Turkish school councils, which are responsible for more than twenty schools. Turks themselves will carry out the election (art. 102).
- 3) Instruction *in Bulgarian will not be mandatory in Turkish schools* (art. 357).
- 4) School funds' will be created for Turkish schools as well as for Bulgarian schools and the Turkish schools will also be given the right to own real estate (art. 361). Turkish schools which are equivalent to public Bulgarian schools in educational programs, rules and regulations and quality of teachers will be given financial aid like the public schools (art. 366).
- 5) Turks will also be given loans to build new school buildings and they will enjoy facilities in buying construction materials (Law on Building Schools, art.1).<sup>314</sup>

It should be noted that the existence of such democratic and ambitious legislation (strangely resembling the Canadian multicultural model: international schools, sponsored by the State, primarily for immigrant-children where they can learn their ancestral language, culture) was not a short-lived propaganda effort aimed at consolidating Alexander Stamboliskii's regime, but a surprisingly balanced policy recognizing the importance of accommodating and including the large Turkish minority within the mainstream of Bulgarian society. This was made manifest by the most important of the decisions, viz., the allocation of "school funds" for the Turkish educational establishment. Furthermore, the Bulgarian state decided that "funds" also comprised resources such as fields, meadows, and wooded acres of land, which were distributed among the Turkish community schools. As a result of these developments, the number of these schools rose to a peak of 1,715, serving a total of some 60,000 students.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> B. Simsir, *The Turks of Bulgaria*, p. 37

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

During the same period the Shumen Turkish Teacher Training School was opened. According to the driving force behind this ambitious project, Bulgaria's Education Minister Omarchevski, the Education Ministry "*was fulfilling the State's duty to a coherent mass of Bulgarian citizens who were doing their share in supporting the State like everyone else.*"<sup>316</sup>

### *The Turkish Press in Bulgaria*

The presence of a vibrant Turkish press in Bulgaria provides further, convincing evidence of the history of a profoundly liberal and tolerant climate towards the nation's Turkish minority. It is not an exaggeration to say that Turkish newspapers "mushroomed" after the creation of modern Bulgaria. From 1878 until 1934, more than 80 newspapers and magazines were published in Bulgaria in the Turkish language.<sup>317</sup> A particularly important pro-Young Turks press in fact came into being in Bulgaria between 1887 and 1908.<sup>318</sup> However, the true "Renaissance" of the Turkish press in Bulgaria occurred after the creation of the Bulgarian kingdom in 1908, a period that corresponds with quite significant developments in the Ottoman Empire – Ataturk's reforms and the emergence of the modern Turkish state. It should be noted that during this period the Turkish press in Bulgaria became more colorful and vibrant, as it engaged in a vivid debate about the revolutionary reforms in Turkey. In general, it is fair to say that that the press was divided into two opposing "ideological camps," depending on whether a positive or negative attitude was shown towards the political course taken by Ataturk. Plovdiv, the second

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> See Vera Mutavchieva, "Predstavata za "Drugia (Iztorochesko Izsledvane)" in *Vrazki na Savmestimost i Nesvmestimost Mezdu Hristiani i Muislmani v Bulgaria*, Sofia: Mezdunaroden Tsenter po problemite na Maltisnstvata i Kulturните vsamiodestvija, [International Center for Minority Research and Intercultural Relations], (Sofia, 1995), p. 23. See also *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context* (Sofia, 1994).

<sup>318</sup> The following is a list with the names of the newspapers, the cities where they were published and the name of their publishers: Ahalki (Plovdiv, Mehmed Sabri), Balkan (Ruscuk, Ahmed Zeki), Balkan (Plovdiv, Ethem Ruhî), Bederka, I Selamet (Plovdiv, Hilmi) Dikkat (Sofia, Yusuf Ali) Dogru Yol (Plovdiv, Ubeydullah) Ef.) Efkâr-I Umumiye (Sofia) M. Ragip B. Emniyet (Plovdiv, Emin Tefvik B.) (Ferya) (Sofia, Mustafa Ragip); See Simsir, Ibid., p. 240-241.

largest Bulgarian city, in fact became a new “print Mecca,” where more Turkish newspapers were published than anywhere else in the country. Moreover, in addition to playing a vital and critical role in shaping public opinion during one of the most crucial periods of Ottoman history, the Turkish press served as a vehicle for the spread of Atatürk’s revolutionary ideas among the Turks in Bulgaria, which in my view had a long lasting impact on the delicate inter-ethnic balance in the country for years to come.

### *Self-governing bodies*

#### *A. The Turkish Community Councils*

The Cemaat-i Islamiye Encumenleri (Muslim Community Councils) were essential part of the Muslims communal life and constituted by far the most widespread organization of the Turkish Muslim community in Bulgaria.<sup>319</sup> The Councils were responsible for managing funds as well as real estate by pious foundations, mosques, etc. They were responsible not only for the management but also for participating in various financial and legal transactions. “These powers were very important, and they became even more significant in communities where pious foundations had possessions of high value.”<sup>320</sup>

According to the 1909 Musilman Muessesati Diniye Idare ve Teskilati Nizamnamesi (Rules and Regulations Concerning the Organization and Administration of the Institution of Islam) the community real estate always remained the property of the Muslim Community Councils. Such as the case of mass immigration to Turkey.

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<sup>319</sup> A Community Council was formed wherever there were at least forty Muslim families in a given area. Ibid., p.53

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

...the real estate of the Turkish-Muslim community in a given village or town did not become property of the Bulgarian treasury as *abandoned real estate*, but saw its ownership transferred to the nearest Muslim Community. If the second community also disappeared, its real estate was to be placed at the disposal of the Office of the Chief Mufti. After inspecting and finalizing the accounts of these pieces of real estate, the Office of the Chief Mufti could transfer the money obtained from them to the General Fund of Muslims of Bulgaria.<sup>321</sup>

What was unique to this particular organization, however, was the comprehensive nature of its membership - every Muslim who was a resident and citizen of Bulgaria was automatically a member of the Muslim community in his area.

No Muslim can remain outside of the community, it is ruled in the rules and regulations that each Muslim is a compulsory member of the Muslim community in his area. From this view of point, Community Councils included in their organizations all the Muslims who were residents and citizens of Bulgaria. Such was the only organization, that of the Muslim Community's Councils, to include all the members of the Turkish-Muslim minority in Bulgaria.<sup>322</sup>

Thus, the established institutional framework over the course of a few decades in Bulgaria ensured that all Muslim communities in the country were represented by councils entrusted with the responsibility for communal real estate, properties and affairs. In this context the majority of their decisions were taken to be legally binding and were therefore accepted by the state bureaucracy.<sup>323</sup>

### *Turkish Islamic Courts*

Perhaps the most convincing evidence for the long tradition of tolerance vis-à-vis the large Turkish minority in Bulgaria is the existence of a parallel legal system, in the form of the Turkish Islamic canonical or shariat courts, which has functioned without

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

disruption for a period of almost 70 years. The canonical courts in Bulgaria were originally attached to the Office of the Sheikh-ul-islam in Istanbul on the one hand, and to the Bulgarian legal system on the other. The canonical courts thus had a legally recognized place in the Bulgarian judicial apparatus. Many articles of the Bulgarian Law of Civil Procedure, moreover, were applicable also to the canonical courts.<sup>324</sup> Some authors trace this “soft” dichotomy to the legacy of the millet system, which institutionally anticipated the establishment of the modern European nation-state, garnished with a Balkan flavour.<sup>325</sup> Muftis and deputy muftis were also allowed to serve as shariat judges:

...these matters were regulated by the two states through the Turkish-Bulgarian Agreement signed in Istanbul in 1909. It was ruled in the agreement that the Chief Mufti in Bulgaria would receive a letter of appointment from the Sheikh-ul-islam concerning matters related to canonical law after being elected, and that he would use this authority to empower the other muftis in Bulgaria to serve as canonical judges (Art. 1).<sup>326</sup>

The salaries of the members and personnel of the canonical courts were paid from the budget of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs.<sup>327</sup>

### *The Inter war Period*

As in most of the Balkan states, the politically tense inter-war period was a testing time for the viability of Bulgaria’s ethnic policy. Indeed, it can be characterized as a time of bipolar political extremism: on the one hand, there was the agrarian leftist agenda of Prime Minister Alexander Stamboliski, and on the other, the radical shift to the right after the

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<sup>324</sup> This gave the rulings of the canonical courts as much legal force as the decisions of the other courts..

<sup>325</sup> Mutavchieva, *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>326</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p.58

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p.60

military coup in 1934. These fluctuations in the political spectrum were reflected in the national agenda, and they had direct implications for the course of ethnic policy in the country.

However, it should be noted that, despite the deep political instability characterizing this uneasy period (the civil war in 1923, which never had any ethnic dimensions, and also the breakdown of the Macedonian organization VMRO [Vatreshno Makedono-Odrinska Revolutsionna Organizatsia] seen as a state within the state and therefore as a direct challenge to the Constitutional order) *there was no pronounced inter-ethnic tension.*<sup>328</sup> This is illustrated in part by the fact that, during this period, the election of deputies with Turkish backgrounds to the Great National Assembly was more the norm rather than the exception. Nevertheless, during the authoritarian regime of Alexander Tsankov and particularly after the subsequent military coup (Military league) in 1934, the government decided to toughen its internal - including its ethnic - policy. The suspension of Parliament and all political activities, as well as the restrictions on individual human rights under the legislation known as “Zakon za zachtita na darzavata” (ZZZ, i.e., Law Protecting the State), created an oppressive, rigid environment that was intolerant of different and mostly independent voices. In this climate many Turkish newspapers supportive of Ataturk’s liberal reform were closed down. In addition, many of the publishers of these newspapers were imprisoned and forced to take refuge in Turkey under the accusation of being Kemalists.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Italics are mine.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid, p. 243.

The new regime was likewise more eager to intervene at other levels of government, particularly in the elections for councils governing ethnic and religious communities. This resulted in a dramatic change in the curriculum of the Turkish community schools. According to the statutes for the religious organizations and institutions of Muslims in the Bulgarian Kingdom drawn up in 1919, the schools were governed by the Grand Mufti's office, subsidiary Muftis' offices and ecclesiastical courts, so that both clerical and secular schools offering instruction in Turkish could set their own curricula. Courses in the Bulgarian language, Bulgarian history and Bulgarian geography were not offered in Turkish secular schools until the second half of the 1930s. "Until then, the children of Bulgarian Turks were exposed only to the history of the Ottoman Empire and the geography of Turkey."<sup>330</sup>

The new military regime decided to change all that. The study of Bulgarian as the official language became compulsory, as well as the study of Bulgarian history and geography; however, despite the government's strong efforts to implement these new requirements, the results were not very encouraging. Notwithstanding these changes, the quality of education in the so called "Turkish "schools continued to be behind that of the educational system as a whole. "In 1946, 82 percent of Bulgarian Turks could not read and write in Bulgarian, and more than a half did not understand Bulgarian at all".<sup>331</sup> As Tomova states, more than 50 years after the creation of modern Bulgaria, there was still

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<sup>330</sup> Ilona Tomova, "Turksite v Bulgaria", [Turks in Bulgaria] in "Malsinstvata v Bulgaria v Konteksta na Choveskite Prava" [Minority Groups in a Human Rights Context] (Sofia,1994), p.15.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

no comprehensive state-sponsored program designed to integrate the Muslim community into Bulgarian society.<sup>332</sup>

The generally tolerant ethnic climate and the absence of any strong assimilationist tendencies were essentially translated into a process of exclusion of Turks from mainstream Bulgarian politics and social life. This policy was to be dramatically changed after the military coup d'état in 1934, as a request of which about 1250 Turkish primary schools and 12 Turkish Junior high schools were closed down.<sup>333</sup>

Nevertheless, the military regime's new state policy, aimed at better integrating the Turkish minority into mainstream Bulgarian society, still seems liberal when compared with the actions of neighbouring Balkan states. The contrast is especially stark when a comparison is drawn with other ethnically "pure" states in the Balkans in the 20th century, such as Greece, which only achieved ethnic homogeneity after expelling 400 000 Turks, during the inter-war period and after successfully absorbing its minorities - mainly Slavo-phone Greeks (Macedonians). Albania too became virtually homogeneous, with its largest minority group being Greeks, who represented just 2.4% of its population.<sup>334</sup>

As was already mentioned, this overall policy of "laissez-faire" led to opposite results in Bulgaria compared to other South Balkan states. Instead of assimilation efforts along the lines of "one-state, one nation, one-ethnos," Bulgaria's Turks were faced with a policy of

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<sup>332</sup> See Ilona Tomova, "Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria," in Magda Opalski, Piotr Dutkiewicz, eds., *Ethnic Minority Rights in Central Eastern Europe* (Ottawa, 1996), p. 99.

<sup>333</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>334</sup> See Hugh Poulton, *The Balkan Minorities and the States in Conflict*, (London, 1991).

neglect and exclusion from the mainstream of society. It can be said that until the mid-1930s, "Bulgarian state authorities made no attempt to teach minority children the official Bulgarian language which has impeded the integration of Turks into the country's political, economic and cultural life."<sup>335</sup>

For much of the twentieth century the ethnic Turks of Bulgaria felt like aliens in their own land, and reacted to this situation by indulging in occasional waves of emigration. Thus, with the rupture of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Turkey after the First Balkan War, there was a tendency towards emigration, which slowed to a halt later on. The new Turkish republic inherited the Ottoman Empire's substantial problem of large Turkish minorities wanting to immigrate to Turkey, a problem seen to have strategic implications:

During the first years of stabilization of Kemal Ataturk's regime and especially after 1932, drawing the area of the Dardanelles as a strategic geopolitical area, Turkey was interested in keeping a large Turkish minority contingent outside of its borders. The preferred areas are Dobroudja (North-East of Bulgaria and now in Romania), Romania, and more remote areas like Persia and USSR, but the immigration from the areas like Kardjaliisko and Ardinsko (South-East Bulgaria) were limited.<sup>336</sup>

This selective policy of allowing certain groups the right to immigrate to Turkey provided grounds for long lasting speculation about a possible Turkish revanche. The Turkish minority in Bulgaria thus came to be perceived as a "fifth column," a suspicion skilfully exploited during the name changing campaign of 1984-1985 and during the "ethnic crisis" in the winter of 1989 after the resignation of Todor Zhivkov. The contrast between this externally engendered crisis and the situation as it existed prior to the Communist take-over points to a very different ethnic/religious climate in Bulgaria. Yet, the

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<sup>335</sup> See Ilona Tomova, "Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria," p. 99.

<sup>336</sup> Vasileva, *Ibid.*, p. 64.

record for the same period was quite different from that of Romania, and particularly Yugoslavia, where ethnic conflicts took the lives of as many as one million people, according to some authors.<sup>337</sup>

*The German “presence” and Bulgaria’s refusal to comply with “ethnic” restrictions*

An independent and much more tolerant stand towards ethnic issues (compared to almost every nation in continental Europe) was taken by the Bulgarian government during WW II and the subsequent German occupation. Whereas almost every other Eastern-European (as well as many other liberal European states) openly and actively complied with the Nazis’ “ethnic” restrictions, there were no concentration camps in Bulgaria, nor deportations of Jews or Gypsies, nor any instances of ethnically motivated attacks. The general ethnic climate in the country seemed to be very uncharacteristic of that of a German ally. Indeed, *Bulgaria was the only occupied European country, apart from Denmark, which refused to authorize the deportation of its Jews (numbering forty-eight thousand) to extermination camps.*

**Conclusion**

The importance of this chapter is three folded, first to prove the existence of a continuity pattern of a stable and workable ethnic equilibrium in respect to the Turkish minority, as being a critical element correlated to the core argument of my hypothesis – confirming unequivocally that, in fact, we are assessing not only lengthy, but most importantly, a constant and stable phenomenon of inter-ethnic relations. The transcendence of this ethnic stability inevitably lead to the assumption that preserving that delicate balance is most likely

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<sup>337</sup> See Christopher Spencer, *Behind the Headlines - The Former Yugoslavia: Background to Crisis*, (Ottawa, 1993), p. 7.

a function of the most detrimental variable in the national/ethnic equation in Bulgaria i.e. the nature of Bulgarian nationalism.

Secondly, the importance of this historico-descriptive chapter is associated with my efforts to establish causal links between the two-tiers continuities: the institutional inheritance of a four centuries millet system, which arrangement has been essentially copied by the new political elite after the creation of modern Bulgaria.

The direct imprint of the millet system could be traced to the Tirmovo Constitution indoctrinating the same ethnic accommodating policies, granting the Turkish minority, (as well as other minority groups) the right to fully preserve and develop their culture.<sup>338</sup> But it is precisely the duplication of the millet system that allowed for the creation of an ambiguous, however, still legitimate course of action of “state non-intervention” tolerating a rather delicate status quo of an ethnic/religious equilibrium based on separate, almost impenetrable inter-ethnic boundaries.

Clearly, the rationale behind these policies was the attempt to accommodate not only a very conservative, but also a highly sensitive Turkish community by allowing them to preserve not only their way of life and keep their language, religion, traditions, and customs, but also patterns of work, leisure, entertainment, and dress. The easiest cliché is to state that that *was* just a mere policy of state disregard and neglect of one of the central questions of most multiethnic nation-states – the minority predicament.

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<sup>338</sup>“Constitution of the Bulgarian Kingdom,” in M. Metodiev and L. Stoianov (eds), *Bulgarian Constitutions and Draft Constitution*, (Sofia, 1990), p. 25.

I tend to disagree. In my view, this was a combination of several factors. First, a tradition, deeply entrenched into what we may call using the fashionable but still quite enigmatic label “national psyche.” Second, the inability, or rather lack of a strong political will to engage into an assimilation campaign, coupled with the ambition to establish a workable framework towards internal unity, based on a loose social partnership of citizenry, and not ethnic, linguistic or religious criteria.

To support this way of thinking, I would like to point out that in Bulgaria the state, the provinces and municipalities were obliged to provide for decades substantial financial support to the Turkish educational, legal and religious institutions, and unquestionably this undertaking was inseparable directly from the state’s responsibility.

On the other hand, an equally important component of this chapter is to demonstrate that these institutional arrangements allowed a remarkable level of guaranteed rights for the Turkish minority, such as: separate School Board, Clerical organizations, separate Islamic Courts, combined with an active and vibrant Turkish press *have not antagonized the Bulgarian majority* and have not provoked or induced a noticeable bottom-up protest and/or a hostile reaction.

Indeed, what is interesting in this case study from a historical perspective is the continuous lack of a pronounced anti-Turkish sentiment, which consequently has not been politically articulated. The last link is particularly relevant because interpreting this remarkable inter-ethnic pattern, we may come to the inevitable conclusion that during such an extensive

period of time of numerous political crises, a short lived civil unrest in 1923 and two coup d'état and economic calamity of that period, the civic/political bond within the Bulgarian society between the two ethnic groups did not suffer dramatically.

The abundant reverberations of this prevailing, dominant theme, in my assessment, represent at least noticeable, if not fully credible, evidence of the presence of an intriguing occurrence, if only from a theoretical point of view phenomenon. In Bulgaria we are confronting a rare manifestation of a civil and inclusive nationalism.

On the other hand, this chapter does not limit itself to exhibit the necessary evidences of a long lived pattern of inter-ethnic accommodation, but rather to link this pattern with the central argument of my hypothesis allowing to “adequately” relocate Bulgarian nationalism in the opposite camp, to quote Greenfeld, of “advanced nations”- and architects of the original nation-state model.

As it was already outlined in the second chapter, one of the key arguments dividing the ethno/political geography (the East-West dichotomy) is that in the East, the very absence of institutions uniting the nation-driven communities “pushed” them to take an alternative route. They were forced to “turn to themselves,” to use Gellner’s phrase, thus identifying their own unique characteristics in order to assert their sovereignty. In this way, it is believed that ethnic nationalism became, as Gellner argues, “active on behalf of a high culture not as yet properly crystallized, a mere aspirant or in-the-making high culture.” Although, I would argue that unlike most future East European nation-states,

where it seems that the modernist argument may have worked relatively suitably, this was not the case in Bulgaria.

In that country, the shortcut towards “high culture,” necessary for modern development, did not follow the same path. If we assess one of the critical components of the modernist arguments, i.e. the assertion that because of the lack of required foundations and institutions in place, the East European societies in general, had to “construct” the Volk (the people) based on some common denominators such as language, culture, religion, etc. Therefore, the common belief is that ethnic/blood consciousness rather than the civic/civil consciousness dominated the newly emerging political culture in Eastern Europe. This is why according to the modernists the East European ethnic nationalism incorporates a more collectivistic Volk-centric, identity. What is interesting in the Bulgarian case is that despite the lack of well-defined and established “central” institutions, *the national identity was derived from the individual/citizen who in turn defined the national community.*

In fact, in my view, it was the continuity of a subtle, however continuously present, tradition of mutual recognition of accepting *les différences du quotidien* in terms of language, religion and culture, coupled with a rather unique venue, in the context of the Balkans, where the incorporation into a high culture did occur (via secular education), thus allowing the emergence of a Bulgarian civic, inclusive nationalism, compatible to the basic standards of liberal democracy, and alien to the xenophobic populism of the ethnic nationalism.

## CHAPTER IV

### BREAK OF CONTINUITY

#### THE BULGARIAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE ETHNIC CRISIS OF 1985-1989

##### *Overview*

*The purpose of this chapter is to critically assess the most significant ethnic crisis in the history of modern Bulgaria—the name changing campaign of the Turkish minority in the winter months of 1984-1985. This chapter makes a critical contribution in assessing the nature of Bulgarian nationalism by providing strong evidence about the “culture of secrecy” associated with the top-bottom design of this policy of ethnic engineering. This chapter is also significant in shedding light on the evaluation not only of the technicalities linked to the prior consultation and preparation of this project, but most importantly in answering the central question – why this project has not generated any public support within the Bulgarian society. Zhivkov's refusal to consider broader consultation prior to the assimilation campaign in 1984-1985 and consequently the mass exodus in the summer of 1989 are cited as being the paramount factors contributing to his ouster in the so-called Palace Coup of November 1989. It is quite symptomatic that even within the BCP high rank officials a debate on launching such an ethnic project was expected to provoke strong resistance and even open objection, which would have further undermined Zhivkov's position at the helm. Also quite symptomatic is the reaction of the Bulgarian society which has been described as “a difficult, confusing and profoundly demoralizing experience for the entire society.” Furthermore, this chapter represents a true encounter of the fundamentals of Bulgarian nationalism supporting the central argument of my hypothesis of its inclusiveness, due to the extraordinary significance of this event, taking into consideration that generally in time of crises the “real” and unmasked nature of social phenomenon is manifested. In this chapter the main argument put forth is that the collapse of the Zhivkov's regime in the fall of 1989 and the controversial creation of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), a political party based on ethnic background, was a manifestation by a powerful reaction by Bulgarian civil society in respect to the acute ethnic crisis which has shaken the very foundation of the Bulgarian society and psyche. The main political actor in this frontal confrontation with the political elite was the Bulgarian civil society refusing to accept an injustice done to one of its ethnic groups. The ethnic crisis of 1985 and the consequently the 89 mass exodus of the Bulgarian Turks, were detrimental in provoking a strong, even remarkable, (taking into consideration the Old Regime's remnant vestige of brutality), civil society reaction, which has been not left unnoticed by the younger and reformist wing of the BSP, profoundly dissatisfied with the BSP leadership and particularly with the name changing operation and the current ethnic status in the country. This chapter will provide a*

*solid evidence in support to my hypothesis arguing that the strong bottom-up reaction within the Bulgarian society could be explained primarily from the perspective of the manifestation of the inclusive nature of the Bulgarian society, based on the functionality of a deeply rooted culturally broad, inclusive nationalism.*

“For an entire century after the liberation, the Bulgarians displayed tolerance and magnanimity toward minorities. They sympathized profoundly with the tragedy of the Armenian nation at the begging of this century. They saved the Bulgarian Jews from Hitler's gas chambers. Now, when we are keeping silent about the real causes of the endless outflow of refugees, who are said to be "vacationers," our national dignity is dying. The way out from the crisis that is threatening our society must be sought today, while it is still at an initial stage, so that we can preserve the unity of all Bulgarian citizens, whatever their ethnic origins or consciousness, in the one political and state body.”

Excerpt from the Declaration of the Discussion club for the support of Perestroika and Glasnost, July 1989.<sup>339</sup>

### **The Communist ethnic legacy**

During the Communist regime Bulgaria experienced a new phase in its inter-ethnic equilibrium due to the new ideological rationale and geopolitical considerations as result of the Cold War era. This phase could be described as controversial and inconsistent. The atheistic Communist regime in Sofia imposed considerable religious restrictions, despite the fact that the same principles for religious freedoms from the Turnovo Constitution were also stated in the new Constitution of December 4<sup>th</sup> 1947. In Article 79 of this Constitution, the term “minorities” was expressly used in guarantees of the possibility for those belonging to them to study their mother tongue and to develop their specific culture, at the same time learning compulsory Bulgarian. However, it was clear that the previous receptive and open-minded policy vis-à-vis the Turkish minority would experience a considerable setback.

Minority schools previously run by religious communities came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. The study of Turkish and other minority languages remained part of the curriculum until the Ministry of Education started to

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<sup>339</sup> T.ed Zang, *Destroying Ethnic Identity, The Expulsion of the Bulgarian Turks*, (New York, 1989), p. 27.

gradually close down religious community schools in the early 1960s. Minority children retained the right and opportunity to study their mother tongue only in Bulgarian state schools. In 1975 the Turkish language was removed from general education programs, an indication that the authorities had adopted a new policy intended to culturally homogenize Bulgarian society.<sup>340</sup>

The ethnic policy of the Communist regime experienced some peculiar twists and turns. First, in 1946, there was a considerable rapprochement with Tito's Yugoslavia. Stalin's concept of equality between nation and ethnos in Bulgaria in the late 40s and early 50s was translated into an explosion of different "nations," some of them being so small that they existed only as a few villages. However, it should be mentioned that after Zhivkov came to power in 1956 there were fewer signs of an inconsistent ethnic policy particularly with respect to the Turkish minority. Nevertheless this policy was far from controversial:

Officially labeled as Turks, now all Muslims became victims of the atheistic policy of the regime and are forced to face the restrictions regarding their religious and cultural traditions. At the same time, in an attempt to increase the education, a huge network of Turkish schools, high schools, and pedagogical institutes, operating in the Turkish language are created. And even three Turkish faculties within the University of Sofia.<sup>1341</sup>

However, despite well publicized and manifested tolerance there were consistent efforts by the regime (see Zhivkov's Thesis from October 1958 according to which Bulgaria was described as a mono-national state) to *consolidate* the nation - which has to be translated into an open assimilation campaign. The first to experience this were the most marginalized segments of the Bulgarian Muslims - the Muslim Gypsies. Second were the Pomaks. In their case, the same scenario was used as during the name changing campaign of 1884-1985. During 1970, by "administrative means" their Arab names were replaced with Bulgarian, Slav names.

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<sup>340</sup> Tomova, "Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria", p. 100.

<sup>341</sup> Poulton, *The Balkan Minorities and the States in Conflict* (London, 1990).

An indication of a new turn in the ethnic policy of the regime to solve the Turkish problem once and forever was the new Constitution. Indeed, in the Constitution of 1971, Article 45 makes provisions for Bulgarian citizens of non-Bulgarian origin to have the right to study their own language, in addition to the compulsory study of Bulgarian, *without any mention of the existence of minorities* in the texts, which was a new element. In the Constitution, the notion - minority - was replaced with "citizens with different than Bulgarian background." Another element was the absence of other procedures guaranteeing their rights. This new legislature allowed Pomaks (ethnic Bulgarians who practice Islam) to become subject to various levels of pressure to replace their Islamic names with Slav ones. After testing the international diplomatic reaction Zhivkov's regime decided to launch the so-called "Vasroditelen protzes" (Renaissance, or Revival). "Renaissance" meant that Turks in Bulgaria "realized" that they were no longer ethnic Turks, but in fact, ethnic Bulgarians. According to the director of the Institute of Folklore in Sofia, at that time - Todor Ivanov Zhivkov (no relation to the head of the state - Todor Zhivkov):

After the Liberation Christianity was confirmed as the national faith by the new bourgeois state and this resulted in the alienation of the Muslim community, from the overall national culture, the Muslims confined themselves to reproducing their folk tradition and notably its religious elements. This alienation gave rise to an incorrect interpretation of its origin and ethnic culture as non-Bulgarian, and after the formation of the Turkish nation, as inherently Turkish. Things were much more complex than that, *but the conclusion that may be drawn is that the culture in question is Bulgarian, that its separate expressions are mere sides of an integral Bulgarian tradition.*"<sup>342</sup>

This dramatic radicalization against the Turkish minority came from the Ideological department within the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP).

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<sup>342</sup> Todor I. Zhivkov, "Ethnic and Cultural Aspects of the Revival Process" in *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation*, (Sofia, 1989), p. 134. Italics are mine.

*The “Voluntary” Revival - the name changing campaign*

The campaign occurred between December 1984 and March 1985 and is the darkest period of Bulgarian ethnic policy in this century. First, the campaign began in Southern Bulgaria in the areas heavily populated by Turks in the towns of Kirdjali, Momchilgrad, Ardino, Krumovgrad, Zlatograd and Haskovo, as well as, in all Turkish villages in these areas. The campaign targeted a population of approximately half of a million and it was largely completed during the last days of 1984 according to the Milko Balev, member of the Bulgarian Politburo and alleged to be the principal “engine” behind this ethnically engineered project.<sup>343</sup>

According to Article 2 of Order 1 People's Communal Council:

is prohibited to wear shalvari, pyjamas, veils, yashmaks (traditional Islamic veils) and other non-traditional Bulgarian clothes or to speak a non-Bulgarian language in a public place. This tradition, inherited from five harsh centuries of slavery, has been forever rejected by the whole people, including the Muslims. Therefore, we remind you that the time has come to end conservative modes of life to adopt more appropriate and pleasant clothing and the pure Bulgarian language. We hereby warn you that after the 7th of October, those who do not abide by these requirements will be sanctioned.<sup>344</sup>

In this way the late Zhivkov regime forced ethnic Turks not only to replace their names with Slavic-Bulgarian names but they were also prohibited from speaking Turkish in public places, from wearing their traditional clothes, from celebrating Muslim holidays and from performing traditional rituals such as circumcision and Muslim funerals. At some Turkish cemeteries even the old stone tombs with Arab names were removed.

According to credible reports, villages with predominately Turkish inhabitants were surrounded by police and troops, often in the early hours of the morning. The villages were sealed off and ethnic Turks were forced, in some cases at gunpoint, to

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<sup>343</sup> Ulrich Buiksenchuti, *Maltsinstvenata Politika v Balgaria, Politikata na BKP kam Evrei, Romi, Pomatsi i Turtsi 1944-1989*, [Minority Policies in Bulgaria, The Policies of the BCP Towards Jews, Roma, Pomaks, and Turks 1944-1989], (Sofia, 2000), p. 188-191.

<sup>344</sup> Poulton, *Ibid.*, p. 137.

accept identity cards bearing their new Slav names. Every Turk was required to change his or her name, even, for example, Olympic athletes, whose Turkish names were already etched into sports history. There were reports of violence against those who resisted.<sup>345</sup>

The propaganda machine of the Bulgarian Communist Party used “teams consisting of historians, specialists in Ottoman studies ethnographers, and folklorists went to enormous lengths in their dubious attempts to find conclusive evidence about the Bulgarian genesis of all Muslim communities in the Bulgarian lands.”<sup>346</sup>

The rationale behind this ethnic project had two-tier objectives: first to replace the existing traditional good relations and trust between Bulgarians and Turks with suspicion and alienation in an attempt to destabilize the system which would allow the Zhivkov regime to tighten its grip, taking a more forceful approach vis-à-vis the mounting pressure, coming not only from the emerging dissident groups in the Bulgarian society, but primarily coming from the younger generation of dissident and pro perestroika oriented apparatchiks within the BCP.

The regime declared that "Revival" process was a “spontaneous” and “voluntary” act of new socialist identity.<sup>347</sup> However, there are different opinions as to the acceptance of the BCP official lexicon.<sup>348</sup> The anticipated “mass anti-Turkish reaction” never occurred,

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<sup>345</sup> Zang, *Ibid.*, p. 5-6.

<sup>346</sup> Zhelyaskova, “The Bulgarian Ethnic Model,” *EastEuropean Constitutional Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Fall, 2001).

<sup>347</sup> Tomova, “The Turks,” *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Right Context*, (Sofia, 1992), p. 17

<sup>348</sup> According to Halil Ahmedov, who was at that time a member of the National Assembly: “The main assault began in Kardzhali in late December 1984. All the villages and cities where Turks lived were besieged by the military and the police. It was forbidden for Turks to move in or out of the region. Anyone violating this would be taken to prison or killed. Then the campaign moved to other areas. Many houses were searched during the night and many people tortured. The villages were besieged by tanks, trucks, fire trucks to ensure the completion of the name-changing campaign. Telephone conversations were interrupted and it was made impossible for those in one Turkish village to phone other villages...The schools were used as military headquarters. Anyone who asked questions or objected was taken away and tortured. The

although it should be noted that at the beginning of the crisis there was not a noticeable reaction by the Bulgarian majority to the assimilation policy of the authorities.<sup>349</sup> As Ilona Tomova, a senior adviser on ethnic issues of the Bulgarian Presidency put it "This was a difficult, confusing and profoundly demoralizing experience for the entire society."<sup>350</sup>

### *Ankara response*

This Turkish newspaper *Türk Kültürü* described these events as a "real genocide."<sup>351</sup> In January 1985, the Turkish President, Kenan Evren, sent a note to Todor Zhivkov requesting that the Bulgarian government immediately find a solution to the ethnic crisis and warning that any further escalation of the brutal crackdown on the Turkish minority would have a serious impact on the bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. In fact, the first Kenan note was to give a "warning shot" to Sofia not to launch the Revival operation in the North-East of the country, where the population is again predominantly Turkish. However, the top-level *demarches* from Istanbul and the rather "polite" diplomatic pressure did not provide the necessary halt to the process.

In the winter months of 1985 the ethnic Turks living in the North-Eastern part of Bulgaria, Deliorman, Omurtag, Tirgovishte, Shumen, Tolbuhin, Razgrad, Ruse, and Popovo, "rediscovered" their Bulgarian-Slavic roots and identity. Thus, the entire name changing

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oppression came to our district in January 1985. The village filled with soldiers and police. Then I was called to the party committee and informed: "Turkish and Arab names will be changed to Bulgarian ones. You, as a Deputy and Representative of the people, will help us. You will explain that anybody who resists will be killed like a dog." I asked who ordered this and they replied that the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee had made the decision. So on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January they began to change the names. They... banned the speaking of Turkish and stopped Turkish language radio broadcasts. Turkish tombstones were taken down. A month later or two after the campaign had been completed, circumcision was banned altogether." See Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans*, p. 144.

<sup>349</sup> Zhelyazkova, *Ibid.*,

<sup>350</sup> Ilona Tomova, "The Turks," *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Right Context*, (Sofia, 1992), p. 17

<sup>351</sup> Simsir, *Ibid.*, p. 265.

campaign was successfully completed by March 1985. The arrogance of the Zhivkov regime could be measured by the language in a speech by the Chairman of the Bulgarian Assembly and the Member of the Politburo Stanko Todorov where he stated that the process of Turks adopting Bulgarian names was complete, “that no Turks were left in Bulgaria, and that those who wanted to emigrate to Turkey were going to be deported to other parts of Bulgaria.”<sup>352</sup>

On April 10, 1985 Ankara delivered its third note to Bulgaria proposing to develop solutions to the crisis, including the conclusion of a comprehensive emigration agreement. It was stated that Turkey was insisting upon solving the problem of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria through bilateral negotiations.<sup>353</sup> On August 24, 1985 Ankara delivered its fourth note to Sofia, however, the Zhivkov government felt that this dramatic chapter of the Bulgarian nation-building exercise had been successfully achieved, without any major international penalty.<sup>354</sup>

### *The end of the “Salami ethnic policy”*

What is symptomatic for the “high success rate” of this massive ethnic purity campaign was its careful preparation on the assumption based on ethnic engineering of what some scholars defined as “Salami ethnic policy.”<sup>355</sup> The “salami ethnic policy” assimilation

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<sup>352</sup> “The claim that the Turks in Bulgaria have come to understand that they are Bulgarians is nothing but an expression of a chauvinistic, or even racist attitude. Turkey has exercised this right to invite Bulgaria to fulfill its international obligations and will continue to show the requisite interest in the affairs of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.” See *Ibid.*, p. 285-286.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>355</sup> The “salami ethnic policy” had first divided the Turkish-Muslim community into slices, such as: Turks, Gypsies, Tatars.

campaign first was tested on the Pomaks, then on the Tatars and finally on the large Turkish minority. It is true, that in the case of the Pomaks their ethnic background is not a subject to a heated political, or academic argument.<sup>356</sup> However, in respect to the Turks, things seem to be much more complex. Nevertheless, there are a few original documents, which could support the official position of the Zhivkov regime - that Turks were in fact Bulgarians. One of such document is the famous Midhat Pasha article, published in 1878 in a French journal:

These 1 000 000 Moslems did not come from Asia to establish themselves in Bulgaria, as it is widely believed. They are themselves descendants of those Bulgarians converted to Islam at the time of the conquest and during the following years. They are children of one common country, form one common race and share a common origin."<sup>357</sup>

However, it is highly arguable who were the Muslims in this text, the Pomaks, or the ethnic Turks. It was obvious that Zhivkov' regime was not concerned about the academic dimension of the problem, because it was obvious that they knew the answer quite well. It is a justifiable question why it was precisely in the mid 80s, after a relative relaxation of the political climate in Europe due to the Helsinki process, that such a blatant violation of human rights on a large scale could occur.

***The Bulgarian civil society - silence before thunder***

**As you see, the struggle has begun. Personally, I see it as a struggle between fear and conscience.**

**Konstantin Trenchev  
Chairman of the Union "Podkrepa"**

It should be mentioned that in the early 1985 the Bulgarian society as a whole was surprisingly silent. There was strong propaganda fostering of negative ethnic stereotypes towards the ethnic Turks.<sup>358</sup> However, it is fair to say that in general the Bulgarian

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<sup>356</sup> The historic evidences suggest that Pomaks are ethnic Bulgarians, who have embraced Islam.

<sup>357</sup> Poulton, Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>358</sup> Tomova, "The Turks," Ibid., p.17.

majority experienced a collective moral guilt witnessing a forced name changing campaign, which they were not be able to prevent.<sup>359</sup>

This campaign created an unexpected confusion. All the legal and administrative documentation of a million citizens was in complete disarray. Turks never got used to their new Bulgarian names, therefore all administrative applications involving salaries, pensions, mail, army conscription, heritage, divorces and the all previous records were in complete chaos. The confusion was total.

There were some incidents of resistance to this "spontaneous" campaign. There were groups who printed thousands of leaflets, which were distributed in 1986 calling on ethnic Turks to show their opposition by boycotting the forthcoming elections for the National Assembly. Many Turks were sentenced and received jail terms (among them was the present leader of the MRF - Ahmed Dogan). There were also small-scale terrorist actions in which 8 people were killed and 52 were injured. There were also hunger strikes and acts of civil disobedience.<sup>360</sup>

The protests were chaotic, desperate actions without clear guidance, a platform or leadership. However, it should be clearly underlined that the violent reaction towards the name changing campaign was marginalized. The Bulgarian authorities were prepared for

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<sup>359</sup> In 1985 when Zhivkov shifted his policy vis-a-vis the Turkish community from a gradualist to a shock-therapy assimilation strategy, starting with the forceful name-changing campaign, the "Revival" experiment seemed to be far from generating support within the Bulgarian nation, as a whole.

<sup>360</sup> Rada Nikolaev, "Mysterious Bombings," *Soviet/East European Survey, Selected Research and Analysis from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 1986, p. 186-187. See Poulton, *Ibid.*, p. 148.

much tougher protests and coordinated reaction so they were surprised to face the extreme restraint expressed by the Turkish community and Bulgarian society as a whole.

They are a few clues for the remarkably restraint by the Turkish minority and the Bulgarian majority in general. First, it should be noted that it took some time for the Bulgarian society to grasp the scope and the magnitude of this brutal assimilation campaign. The radical switch from a tradition accommodating the Turkish minority, allowing them to preserve a considerable level of identity attributes, such as language and cultural customs while actively integrating them into the ideological camp of the Bulgarian “mature socialism” has created a profound shock to the national psyche.

### *The aftermath of the name changing campaign*

In the beginning the response to the name changing campaign was a passive reaction, associated with what Peter-Emil Mitev described as a “collective moral guilt”. However, it should be noted that this initial stage of shock did not last for long time.

In 1988-1989, three independent political groups emerged. The first one was the "Independent" Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Bulgaria. The organization was officially sponsored by the BCP. The second one the Democratic League for the Defence of the Rights of Man - was an informal group, without the blessing of the regime. The third one, the Association for the Support of Vienna-1989 (ASVP-89) with Chairman Avni Veliev, a former political prisoner, was created in early 1989.<sup>361</sup> The same year, in Paris, the Conference on Human Rights under the CSCE was held. That conference was

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<sup>361</sup> Ibid.,

seen as the needed international stage to raise the issue of the perception of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. As it has been already mentioned, these three organizations quickly obtained mass support among the Turkish minority, helped by broadcasting companies abroad such as Radio Free Europe, the BBC, and Deutche Welle. In the spring of 1989, the Bulgarian Turks started mass protests against restrictions of their rights. Zhivkov's regime responded quickly expelling in June 1989 most of the leaders of the Association for the support of Vienna-1989 (ASVP-89) and the Democratic League for the Defence of the rights of man.<sup>362</sup> With this expulsion the pattern was set for the next mass immigration to Turkey.

### *The peak of the ethnic crisis - the mass exodus in 1989*

In early June, another 500 human rights activists were expelled to Turkey. By the end of the month, 60, 000 left for Turkey. Responding to the mass demonstrations, the Zhivkov regime used police and other forces against demonstrators. In the clashes, some fatalities occurred- Helsinki Watch reports between 300-1,500, Amnesty International 100, BTA mentioned about three. The largest demonstration was during the Kaolinovo riots.<sup>363</sup>

The regime launched a campaign to induce emigration of the Muslim population. By mid September 1989, that number reached over 370, 000.<sup>364</sup> By September 1989, 155, 000 had returned to Bulgaria.<sup>365</sup> Some of them suffered heavy material losses. With the emigration

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid,

<sup>363</sup> See *BTA* (in English), May 23, 1989, *FBIS*, May 24, 1989.

<sup>364</sup> Tomova, *Ibid.* p. 16–17. Poulton, *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>365</sup> Ivan Ilchev and Duncan Perry, "Bulgarian Ethnic Groups: Politics and Perceptions," *RFE/RL*, Vol. 2, No. 12,, March 19, 1993, p 36; See also Darina Vasileva "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return", in *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer 1992), p. 342-352.

campaign, around 3, 600 Bulgarian Turkish families were forced to sell their homes in order to pay off their debts to the banks. Dozen of families living in rented accommodation found on their return that their rent agreements had been unilaterally broken off.<sup>366</sup>

In 1989, Bulgaria was experiencing the outcome of the accumulated tension of the brutal assimilation campaign of some five years before. 1989 was the paramount of a protracted ethnic crisis. The Zhivkov regime seemed to be increasingly losing confidence that it could control the events. The government preferred the convenient strategy instead, to solve the problem by simply eliminating it.

The expulsions, as one author states, “were in a sense, the final stage of the assimilation campaign initiated in 1984.”<sup>367</sup> On May 29, an obviously unconvincing Todor Zhivkov gave a speech broadcasted on Bulgarian radio and television repeating the official explanation - that the protests were connected with the new passport laws.<sup>368</sup>

Although Zhivkov did not depart from the traditional Bulgarian position that the ethnic Turks are Bulgarians, whose ancestors were converted to Islam during Ottoman rule, he indicated that any ethnic Turk who desired to go to Turkey on a temporary or permanent basis was free to do so. He called upon Turkey to “open the borders for all Bulgarian Muslims who would like to go to Turkey on a temporary basis or to stay and live there.”<sup>369</sup>

Avoiding the core of the ethnic crisis, Zhivkov's speech was a direct encouragement for the Turkish community to leave if they wished. In conformity with the Vienna accords,

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<sup>366</sup> Tomova, *Ibid.*, p. 16–17.

<sup>367</sup> Zang, *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>369</sup> Bulgarian Embassy Press Release, Washington, June, 8, 1989.

Bulgaria adopted new legislation granting all citizens the right to free travel and settlement in any part of the world while preserving ownership of their property.<sup>370</sup>

Following Todor Zhivkov's speech on May 29 in which he invited the Turkish government to "open the borders for all Bulgarian Muslims," Turkey changed its policy.<sup>371</sup> On several occasions, Prime Minister Turgut Ozal and other Turkish government officials announced that "Turkey was prepared to accept all ethnic Turks who wanted to enter."<sup>372</sup> The Turkish policy of "open arms" promising as well economic prosperity as a guarantee for the violated human rights of the Bulgarians Turks. This was an additional factor in their decision making process and "the number of Turks who were leaving Bulgaria increased dramatically, numbering 2,000 to 4,000 daily."<sup>373</sup>

By mid October and early November 1989, (that means even before the end of the Zhivkov's regime) some 120, 000 – 180, 000 people - more than a half of the emigrating Turks - voluntarily returned.<sup>374</sup> There was no real strong condemnation from the international community. Ironically, one of the most pronounced was from the Moscow-Sofia axis as the most severe condemnation came from within the country itself. The most vocal was the Discussion Club for the Support of Perestroika and Glasnost.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Zang, *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29

<sup>374</sup> Iv. Ilchev and D. Perry, *Ibid.*, p. 36; See also D. Vasileva, *Ibid.*, p. 350-352.

<sup>375</sup> "In November 1988, The Discussion Club for the support of Perestroika and Glasnost (the "Discussion Club") met for the first time at the University of Sofia. The membership was composed primarily by university professors, scholars, scientist, artists, writes and filmmakers. The majority of the Discussion Club were members of the Bulgarian Communist Party." See *Bulgaria, Country Study*, Library of the Congress, Washington, D.C. 1992.

Besides the already mentioned organizations, "Independent" Association for the Defence of Human Rights in Bulgaria, the Democratic League for the Defence of the Rights of Man and The Association for the Support of Vienna-1989 (ASVP-89), there were also a few new independent organizations openly supporting the rights of the Turks.<sup>376</sup>

Such an organization was the newly created independent trade union "Podkrepa" ("support" in Bulgarian). This was the Bulgarian version of the Polish "Solidarnost" and was established by Dr. Konstantin Trenchev in February 1989 to defend the interests of intellectual labour.<sup>377</sup> The union consisted of blue-collar workers, as well as intellectuals, artists, writers and scientists. On May 26th, 1989, Trenchev was arrested and accused of inciting the Turkish demonstrations. "According to his wife, ... he helped a number of Turks who lacked a good command of Bulgarian to prepare a statement explaining the reasons for their hunger strikes."<sup>378</sup> Later he was accused under Articles 273 (spreading false allegations intending to create mistrust of the government) and Article 321/2 (membership in a group formed for the purpose of committing crimes in Bulgaria or abroad) of the Bulgarian Penal Code.

Another such organization was the Society for the Protection of Human Rights (the "Society") founded in 1988 and aiming to "heal ...the wounds sustained by the ethnic and religious minorities."<sup>379</sup> The Society was engaged in organizing hunger strikes and street

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<sup>376</sup> Zang, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>377</sup> The Independent Labor Federation, Podkrepa, was organized as a white-collar opposition group and largely inspired by the success of the Polish Union movement Solidarnost.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42-43.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

protests. "On May 26, one of its members Anton Zapryanov read a statement on Radio Free Europe supporting the Turkish minority's campaign for human rights."<sup>380</sup>

### *A Very clear message*

Most vocal of all groups was the Discussion Club for the Support of Perestroika and Glasnost. On August 1, 1989, the Discussion Club sent a very strong message to the Bulgarian National Assembly stating that "the situation endangered the country's "entire legacy" as a humane and tolerant nation."<sup>381</sup>

### **DECLARATION OF THE DISCUSSION CLUB FOR THE SUPPORT OF PERESTROIKA AND GLASNOST, JULY 1989**

Now that more than 200,000 Bulgarian citizens who feel themselves to be ethnic Turks have emigrated from our country and hundreds of thousands more are preparing to leave, the state is threatened by a general crisis.

*This crisis, which has economic, political, moral, and ideological dimensions, is the direct result of the abrupt change in policy toward citizens with Turkish ethnic consciousness that was made in 1984 and 1985.*

The crisis is economic, since we are suddenly losing a large part of the labour force in vital sectors of the national economy, such as the building industry, tobacco cultivation, mining and road maintenance, livestock breeding, and agriculture, without the state having any possibility of replacing the departed workers. The loss can only be temporarily compensated for by extraordinary measures and special task forces.

The crisis is political, since our country has fallen into a profound international isolation, which might result in further economic difficulties and will inevitably damage the international prestige of the Bulgarian nation and the Bulgarian state.

The crisis is moral, since the Bulgarian nation has been placed in the situation of being an accomplice to a fateful act that was carried out without knowledge and participation. If the changing of Moslems' names is to be argued on grounds of their blood allegiance,

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

this is simply the spurious racial theorizing of the recent past returning with all its tragic consequences.

*For an entire century after the liberation, the Bulgarians displayed tolerance and magnanimity toward minorities. They sympathized profoundly with the tragedy of the Armenian nation at the begging of this century. They saved the Bulgarian Jews from Hitler' gas chambers. Now, when we are keeping silent about the real causes of the endless outflow of refugees, who are said to be "vacationers", our national dignity is dying.*

*The way out from the crisis that is threatening our society must be sought today, while it is still at an initial stage, so that we can preserve the unity of all Bulgarian citizens, whatever their ethnic origins or consciousness, in the one political and state body.*

We must heal the atmosphere, alleviate despair and bitterness, revive hopes of a better future, and establish the prerequisite for a difficult but attainable end to our impasse. We consider it necessary:

*-to give to Bulgarian citizens who feel themselves to be ethnic Turks the possibility of choosing their names themselves, which would include the right to restore their old names.*

*-to recognize the right of preserving one's ethnic and cultural identity, together with all incumbent rights of language, religious faith, customs, and traditions. The same must apply to all ethnic minorities in our country.*

*-that those Bulgarian citizens of Turkish ethnic consciousness who wish to return to our country and are respectful of its laws must be given full guarantees that their property, civil rights and freedoms, and human identity will not be infringed upon.<sup>382</sup>*

This strong reaction being the “crème of crème” of the Bulgarian society was the decisive and crucial blow to the Zhivkov regime. Facing international isolation, (besides the constant pressure from Moscow), mass demonstrations, hunger strikes, massive popular discontent and on the top of this the anathema of the whole Bulgarian intelligentsia of best known academics, writers, scientists, and policy makers.

The intellectual elite of the nation condemned the forceful assimilation campaign and its logical result asking to restore essential civil rights to the ethnic Turks. This clear message,

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid., p. 63-65.

even though expressed in the last months of the Communist years, was an illustration that the liberal values and traditions of ethnic tolerance and compatibility were not entirely dead after 35 years of Socialism. Under the intense pressure from Bulgarian civil society groups due to the ethnic crisis in the summer of 1989, Zhivkov was forced to resign.

By mid 1989 at least thirteen independent associations and committees had been founded under the umbrella of defending human rights. The Federation of Clubs backed the National Assembly petition against Turkish assimilation by characterizing the policy as against the best traditions of the Bulgarian nation. Leaders of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, deported for defending the Turks, were welcomed at a session of the CSCE, severely damaging Zhivkov's image in Europe.

In the fall of 1989, dissident groups received further validation at the CSCE Conference on the Environment in Sofia, where they held public meetings and were received by Western delegates. The mass demonstrations that followed convinced the BCP that the Zhivkov regime could not survive.

Supported by the Kremlin, the reformist wing of the BCP led by Alexander Lilov and Andrei Lukanov and Peter Mladenov, toppled Zhivkov's regime in one of the most velvet palace coups in recent history (days before Zhivkov resigned, the Foreign Minister, Mladenov, made an unexpected stop in Moscow. Days after this event, Mladenov became the general secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party).

## CONCLUSION

In retrospect, this was the imminent and natural closure of one of the darkest period in respect to the Turkish minority in the modern history of Bulgaria. The brusque, abortive end of the longest ruling crony in Eastern Europe was toppled by an strong bottom-up reaction, the result of a top-bottom ethnic crisis, designed to antagonize, and radicalize the two large ethnic groups - those of the Bulgarians and of the Turks. However, there is one thing which all observers regardless of their perspectives on the current inter-ethnic relations in Bulgaria may be, agreed upon –the project “Nationalism From Above” failed.

I argue that this project failed due to the deeply rooted culture of inclusiveness, the inseparability of the political nation within the Bulgarian society. What is symptomatic in respect to the reaction of the Bulgarian civil society facing the brutality of the last convulsive spasms of the Zhivkov regime during the engineered crisis in 1985-1989 was that it followed the same pattern of rejecting the project of an artificial division of the Bulgarian nation. Remarkably it happened with another minority, the Jewish one, during the Nazi occupation. The Bulgarian society made clear that it was not going to be blackmailed and it was blunt enough to send the signals that it was not going to accept such division. The human chains blocking the trains ready to deport the Bulgarian Jews to the concentration camps should have proved that the inseparability of the Bulgarian nation nested in what, we call national psyche and or national identity. This inseparability based on the premise of acceptance of each others differences, religious (in the case of Jews, and Turks) and linguistic, (in the case of some Turks), in my view, does not leave a

lot of speculation in accepting an alternative explanatory model to the paradox of Bulgarian “soft” nationalism.

Once again, in the 80s during a *bleak break of continuity* the Bulgarian society showed its consistency in defending targeted minority – in this case the Turkish minority, which had to play an important role as scapegoat for launching a more “aggressive” style ending of the otherwise increasingly looking without viable options to survive Zhivkov regime. As it was mentioned already, an important indicator of a new radicalization of the Bulgarian official policy vis-à-vis the Turkish minority in the mid-80s was the emergence of a new fashion of a more aggressive "nationalism from above", led by the ideological division within the BCP.<sup>383</sup>

There were internal and external factors for such radicalization.<sup>384</sup> Zhivkov's regime found itself in an uneasy isolation from its traditional patronizing protector - the Kremlin, where a reformer took control. Instead of support there was constant pressure from Moscow after Gorbachev came to power. Zhivkov decided to react quickly to achieve the name changing campaign in a military discipline fashion within four months during the winter of 1984-1985. The time frame was well set up, knowing that 75% of the Turkish community live in the rural area where the winter conditions seem to be the most convenient.<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> Stoyan Mihailov, *V azgodilniat Protzses, v Bulgaria*, [The Renaissance Process in Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1992), p. 268.

<sup>384</sup> Ulrich Buiksenchuti, *Ibid.*, p. 188-191.

<sup>385</sup> “One document from the Interior Ministry archives shows that former Interior Minister Dimitar Stoyanov ordered a campaign in December 1984 to force ethnic Turks in Bulgaria to adopt Slavic names. The document reveals Stoyanov instructed senior security officers "to start renaming all Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in all districts where such populations exist." A Politburo meeting had preceded Stoyanov's order. But a record of that meeting could not be found in the archives of the former Communist Party, which has since renamed itself the Bulgarian Socialist Party. See Ron Synovitz, “Documentary On Assimilation Of Ethnic Turks Stirs Debate,” (Transcript), broadcast on by RFE/RL, Prague on 9 January 2001.

Political manipulation and propaganda managed to persuade many of these actions. The Turkish minority was “inspired” by a separatist agenda posing a serious threat to civil peace and the national interests of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian authorities claimed that under international agreements, minorities consisting of more than 10 per cent of the population were automatically entitled to cultural, territorial and political autonomy. This manipulation was coupled with tension due to serious economic problems. (In the mid-80s Bulgaria could be characterized with convulsions of a "stagnation-reform" policy, which was indeed opposed to the perestroika challenge, but at the same time had a modest "reform" make up.<sup>386</sup> The economic situation in the 80's was such that for first time in the more than 25 years of Zhivkov rule, living standards drastically dropped.<sup>387</sup>

However, the outcome of this ethnic/identity engineering project proved to be counterproductive due to the apparent impossibility to plant the “seeds of ethnic and religious animosity” within the Bulgarian society, which has blatantly refused to fall into the slippery sliding surface to a collective xenophobia.<sup>388</sup>

The ethnic crisis of the 85-89 has clearly proved the existence of a continuity pattern of a stable and workable ethnic equilibrium in respect to the Turkish minority, as being a critical element correlated to the core argument of my hypothesis. In this way, I argue that we are

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<sup>386</sup> Stoyan Mihailov, *Vazroditelniat Protzes*, p. 268.

<sup>387</sup> “Bulgaria after, managing huge annual growth rates during the early 1970s, found itself in the midst of a serious economic crisis by the end of the decade. Growth rates dropped to an average of 3.7% between 1981 and 1985. The lowest point for that period – 1.8% - was reached in 1985.” See Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, (London, 1991), p. 48.

<sup>388</sup> According to a sociological survey 79 percent of the Bulgarians (Christian Bulgarians) defined the Revival process i.e. the name changing campaign as a “crime.” See Peter—Emil Mitev, “Vraski na Savmestimost v Ezednevieto Mezdu Hristiani i Miusulmani v Balgaria”, [Relations of Compatibility in the Daily Life Between Christians and Moslems] in A. Zhelyaskova, *Vraski na Savmestimost i Nesavmestimost Mezdu hristiani i Miusulmani v Balgaria*, [Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims] (Sofia, 1994), p.175.

assessing not only lengthy, but most importantly, a constant and stable phenomenon of inter-ethnic relations. The transcendence of this ethnic stability inevitably lead to the assumption that preserving that delicate balance is most likely a function of the most detrimental variable in national/ethnic equation in Bulgaria i.e. the nature of Bulgarian nationalism.

During the darkest and most difficult times, as it did in the past, the Bulgarian society has shown that despite the presence of an unleashed brutal and oppressive machine its innermost nature of tolerance and inclusiveness, based on the deeply rooted belief of inseparability of the Bulgarian political nation.

## **CHAPTER V**

## BACK TO NORMALITY – THE RESTAURATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE TURKISH MINORITY –THE POST 89 DYNAMICS

### Overview

*The aim of this chapter is to present convincing empirical data on the continuity of the pattern of mutual coexistence between the two large ethnic groups being a function of the civic nature of the Bulgarian nationalism. In outlining the post-89 inter-ethnic dynamics, I will elaborate on the “back to normality” phenomenology and specifically on the lack of an explosive climate as well as lack of an articulated negative reaction to the restoration of the rights of the Turkish minority (as well as other Muslim communities) making Bulgaria a strikingly deviant case of the ethnic politics in the Balkans in the nineties. Another significant characteristics is the short period of time (less than six months), during which the new political elite was able to solve the acute ethnic crisis paving the road to a democratic and functioning political environment with a new and unexpected political rival, the Turkish (ethnic) party – MRF. In addition, this chapter is to provide quantitative and empirical data in supporting my hypothesis of the “civic” nature of Bulgarian nationalism allowing the functionality of a Bulgarian “inclusive,” political nation, by over-viewing the dominant attitudes and stereotypes vis-à-vis the Turkish minority reflected in the mainstream Bulgarian media. These results, based on the findings by researchers from the Balkan Neighbours Project, who, since 1996 have been monitoring and studying the stereotypes and images of ethnic and national groups in several Balkan countries in the mainstream media are consistent with the main assumption of my hypothesis of the inclusive civic nature of Bulgarian nationalism – indicating a high level of positive attitudes expressed by the Bulgarian majority in respect to the Turkish minority, in contrast to the dominant perceptions in respect to ethnic/religious/ linguistic minorities in the Balkans. The positive and inclusive character of these attitudes, in my view, is a convincing indication of the civil core of Bulgarian nationalism, which even in the context of an acute and persistent economic crisis, during the transition period in the 90s, preserved its essential nature.*

1990 was the year of *Full Restoration* of the rights of the Turkish ethnic community. All limitations on the application of religious and linguistic rights of the Turkish minority as well as other Muslim communities in Bulgaria were lifted. First, their Muslim Arab names were reinstated according to the new Names of the Bulgarian Citizens Act, which was adopted in March 1990. All existing limitations envisaging the religious rights of the Turkish (and other Muslim) community were lifted as well.<sup>389</sup> What is outstanding for this essentially

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<sup>389</sup> This is how one of the most diligent scholars A. Zhelyazkova assess this process: “Religious freedoms were restored almost immediately after the collapse of the Zhivkov regime. Prayer houses opened their doors to all believers. New mosques were built, and the old religious buildings were repaired. The High Islamic School in the town of Shumen was restored, and the Islamic Theological Institute was opened in Sofia. Religious literature was massively published and circulated freely. Newspapers that specifically targeted Armenian, Jewish, Turkish, and Muslim readerships began to appear on a regular basis. Some non-governmental organizations (for example, the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, established in 1992) supported these minority initiatives financially. In 1991, Bulgarian public schools began to offer classes in minority languages, and in September 1994 the Council of Ministers adopted

delicate process is the remarkable speed of implementing these reforms based on a clear consensus within the new political establishment in the turbulent Post-Zhivkov Bulgaria.

In the next chapter, I will have the opportunity to discuss in details the new Constitution adopted in 1991. However, for the purpose of contextualization of the new ethnic dynamics it would be appropriate to briefly outline some of its fundamentals. The most relevant provisions to “*the new ethnic arrangement*” are the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion regulated by the text in Article 13 and Article 37.

### *Religious rights*

According to this article, it is a fundamental, constitutional right for every Bulgarian to organize his/her life according to their adopted religion. “With resolution 5 of the 11th June 1992 on case 11 the Bulgarian Constitutional Court gave a compulsory interpretation to Article 13, paragraphs 1 and 2 and to Article 37 of the Constitution, resolving that, in accordance with the criteria set on Article 18 of the International Covenant on civil and political Rights.”<sup>390</sup>

*The right to a religion is a personal, fundamental, and incorruptible right of every institution separable from the State. State intervention and State administration in the internal organization life and public activities of*

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Decree No. 183 according to which four hours of training in the study of native languages were included in the curricula from the first to eighth grades in schools of general education. Turkish philology departments were established in the universities of Sofia and Shumen, which demonstrates the genuine effort being made to meet the educational needs of the Turkish minority.” See A. Zhelyazkova, “The Bulgarian Ethnic Model”, *East-European Constitutional Review*, Vol. 10, No 4 (Fall 2001).

<sup>390</sup> Bogoev, “Bulgarskite Konstitutsii za Pravata na Maltsinstvata”, [Bulgarian Constitutions and the Rights of Minorities] in *Maltsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Chovechките Prava, Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context*, (Sofia, 1992), p.13.

*religious communities and institutions is inadmissible.*<sup>391</sup> As result of that, the Muslim Turkish minority in Bulgaria enjoyed a real religious Renaissance. A large number of new Islamic prayer houses have been built in the last few years.

At the present time, over 920 mosques are continuously active in Bulgaria. The Grand Mufti's office distributed 10 000 copies of the Koran among Bulgarian Muslims in 1990 alone. Shortly after this, the Koran was published both in Turkish and in Bulgarian. Religious literature in both languages is freely circulated. In 1991, Sunday schools for religious instruction were opened in the mosques. The Grand Mufti's office announced that in two years, 80 000 children had learned to read the Koran in Arabic. There are currently four secondary Muslim religious schools and an Ecclesiastical Islamic College.<sup>392</sup>

However, these numbers should not lead to the generalization that the country as a whole is experiencing a fast process of Islamisation. Findings from one of the most ambitious and comprehensive sociological surveys on ethnic issues led by Dr.Peter-Emil Mitev, in 1994, proved just the contrary.<sup>393</sup> Religion is becoming less and less important for the large segment of the Turkish community. Islam is no longer perceived as a paramount leading factor in ethnic self-determination. According to the results of the survey there is an apparent secularization particularly among the young and middle-aged Turks.

For them, religion is becoming increasingly less attractive and important. Just 30 percent of the Turks responded that "Atheism is a sin," the remaining 70 percent can tolerate and

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Tomova, "The Turks in Bulgaria," *Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context*, (Sofia, 1992), p. 17-18.

<sup>393</sup> Peter-Emil Milev, "Vraski na Savmestimost i Nesavmestimost vav Vsekidnevieto mezdu Hristiani i Miusulmani" [Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility in Daily Inter-Reaction between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria], in Antonina Zhelyazkova, *Vrazki na Savmestimost i Nesavmestimost mezdu Hristiani i Miusulmani*, [Relations of Compatibility and Incompatibility between Christians and Muslims in Bulgaria], (Sofia, 1994), p. 170-175.

accept atheism in general.<sup>394</sup> These findings are also corroborated by anthropological research in the so-called “mixed” regions.<sup>395</sup>

According to findings from the same survey, religious intolerance is surprisingly low- just 3-5 percent among Muslims and (not surprisingly) larger among Bulgarians - 10 per cent. This mutual religious tolerance is evident. 70 percent of Bulgarians and 70 percent of Turks react to stimulus such as Muslim or Christian rationally with understanding. The level of compatibility between the two ethnic groups seems to be surprisingly high just years after the disturbing events in 1985, which escalated into an open ethnic crisis in 1990. This is more pronounced among the Turkish community.

Preliminary findings indicate that Turks made the same sort of distinctions concerning the group versus the individual, as do the ethnic Bulgarians. They tend to have positive views of Bulgarian Christian neighbours but mixed feelings about ethnic Bulgarians as a people. The findings also indicate that the Turks who returned to Bulgaria after 1989 and 1990 tend to associate themselves more closely with the Bulgarian State than with Turkey, but this may well reflect a desire towards reintegration into Bulgarian society. Where enmity was expressed, it was directed towards Communists and not towards the Bulgarian state.<sup>396</sup>

According to Zhelyazkova, the combination between “the common sense of people living in the ethnically mixed regions, as well as the dominant traditional values embraced by Bulgarian society as a whole, rendered possible the peaceful regulation of ethnic relations during a period of excruciatingly hard economic and social change.”<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Ibid., p.183-195.

<sup>395</sup> The level of religious tolerance in these regions is very high. For more information see *Aspects of the Ethno-Cultural Situation* (Sofia, 1994). See also, fieldwork archives of the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations in Sofia.

<sup>396</sup> Ivan Ilchev and Duncan Perry, “Bulgarian Ethnic Groups, Politics and Perceptions,” *RFE/RL, Research Report*, Vol. 12, March 19, 1993, p. 37.

<sup>397</sup> Zhelyazkova, “The Bulgarian Ethnic Model.”

### *Linguistic rights*

Besides religious, all linguistic rights of the Turks in Bulgaria were lifted. A few months after the adoption of the new Constitution on December 20th, 1991 the 36th National Assembly ratified the facultative protocol for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. According to this document, members of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups should enjoy the same areas of human rights as the majority. These principles are the focal point of guaranteeing to minorities the preservation and development of their unique characteristics and traditions.

Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights acknowledges and guarantees the right to partake in cultural life. Article 13 of the Covenant recognizes the right to education. In discussions on the question of the rights of individuals belonging to minority groups to *have their own culture and mother tongue*, it follows that the principles set out in the UNESCO Covenant against Discrimination in Education be taken into account.<sup>398</sup>

In the context of the new Bulgarian Constitution of July 1991, one may be lead to the conclusion "that the right to one's own culture is seen as the right of ethnic minorities; the right to profess one's own religion as the right of members of religious minorities; and the right to use one's own language as the right of linguistic minorities."<sup>399</sup> From 1991, four hours of Turkish lessons a week were introduced for children in the 2nd to 8th Class (age 8-14), and for children in the first Class (age 7) from 1994.<sup>400</sup> Turkish language teachers are beginning to be trained in two colleges, while Turkish philology is again being studied at the St. Kliment Ohridski University in Sofia and at Shumen University.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Bogoev, Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>400</sup> Tomova, Ibid., p. 17-18.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., p. 18

Newspapers and magazines in the Turkish language began to be published in Bulgaria. In addition, the national Bulgarian Radio also broadcasted daily programs in Turkish.<sup>402</sup>

### *The creation of the MRF*

Quite often, the exception to the rule becomes the beginning of new principal and new rules. This was the case with the creation of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms<sup>403</sup> as a party based on ethnic grounds. A priori, it was perceived that such a party would try to be inclined towards political separatism. It is clear that in the case of MRF, it is not so. MRF began as an ethnic party of a national kind and it is moving towards becoming a national party on ethnic grounds. There is no surprise, just the opposite. Here we are experiencing an important precedent in the new, modern history.

Ahmed Dogan

Chairman of MRF

It should be outlined that, according to the Post 89 legislation, there are no judicial obstacles for the formation of cultural-educational associations based on ethnicity. However, as it was clarified earlier, the same principles do not apply to the political parties based on ethnic grounds. Article 11(4) in the new Constitution prohibits the creation of political parties based on ethnicity, race and religion. These parties were seen as being no different than those who were seeking to overthrow the government by force.<sup>404</sup>

This is why the MRF (The Movement for Rights and Freedoms) was created initially as a non-profit organization. This movement was a logical reaction and an expected result after the ethnic crisis in 1990. The agenda of this movement was to encourage, protect and defend the interests primarily of the Ethnic Turks, but also of Pomaks and other Muslims

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<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup>Members of MRF are mainly Bulgarian citizens with Turkish ethnic self-awareness. MRF participated independently in the parliamentary elections in 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997 and 2001.

<sup>404</sup> Kjell Engelbrekt, "The Movement of Rights and Freedoms to Compete in Elections, and Nationalism Reviving," RFE/RL *Research Report*, Vol. 22, No.2, (May, 1991)..

in the country. The movement was successful in registering under the Law on Persons and Family. However, in 1990, when an opportunity for a multiparty election arose and it was permitted that organizations registered as non-profit organizations could participate in the elections, the MRF decided to benefit from these conditions.

The Bulgarian High Court ruled that the organization's existence was legal within the framework of its jurisdiction. However, the emergence on the political scene of the MRF was not a smooth endeavour.<sup>405</sup> As a result of the legalization, the MRF was able to obtain considerable support in the parliamentary elections for the Great Assembly in 1990, 1991, 1994, and 1997.<sup>406</sup>

It gained 21 deputies' mandates in the 1990 elections for the great National Assembly. In the December 1991 parliamentary elections and local authority elections, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms took 24 seats in parliament (out of a total of 240), 650 mandates for mayors, 29 for community mayors, and over 1000 for local community advisers. Professor Lyuben Berov's government, which ran the country from 1992 to September 1994, was formed with the MRF mandate after the passing of a vote of non-confidence in the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF)<sup>407</sup> and the failure of the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) to form its own government.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> "On at least two occasions various nationalists affiliated with the former communist party (the Bulgarian Socialist Party, or BSP) petitioned the Constitutional Court to declare this organization unconstitutional. (Article 11.4 of the Bulgarian Constitution declares political parties "formed on [an] ethnic basis" unconstitutional. However, in 1991 the Court offered such a strict interpretation of this provision that its effect has in practice been nil. At least so far, this controversial constitutional norm has not been applied.) In their landmark decision, the justices affirmed the constitutionality of MRF. It is doubtful, however, whether the strategy of judicial challenge was propelled by genuinely nationalistic considerations. More realistically, the attacks against MRF were used-not very successfully-as a public relations device to boost the political fortunes of the former communists. Furthermore, the leaders of BSP have been more than willing to form a coalition with MRF in order to gain access to power (for example, in 1992-94, when an MRF-BSP parliamentary majority supported the anti-reformist cabinet of Ljuben Berov, and in the present parliament, where both parties are junior partners in a coalition with the National Movement Simeon II". in A. Zhelyazkova, "The Bulgarian Ethnic Model," *East-European Constitutional Review*, Vol.10, No 4 (Fall 2001).

<sup>406</sup> See Annex #VI.

<sup>407</sup> Founded in 1989 as a political coalition, initially by 11 parties and organizations in 1997 UDF was transformed into a single political party.

<sup>408</sup> Tomova, *Ibid.*, p.18.

In the Post-Communist political spectrum, the only logical and obvious choice for the MRF was to become a partner of the UDF (Union of Democratic Forces) which was the only strong political actor challenging the Bulgarian Socialist Party. During the last few years, the MRF has successfully played the role of a most skilful power balancer in the bi-polar political space of Bulgaria. However, in the dynamics of Post Communist Bulgarian politics, MRF has experienced factional tendencies leading to the emergence of sub "ethnic" parties. In 1992, during the first non-Communist government led by Prime Minister Philip Dimitrov, the internal tension within MRF became more pronounced. There were obvious collisions occurring within the UDF-MRF coalition, which, a few months later in the fall of 1992, became so fragile, even questionable. According to the leader of the party, Ahmed Dogan, "there is no partnership at any price, there are common interests". However, he was expressing cautious optimism believing, "the past misunderstanding between the UDF and the MRF has already been overcome and it will be an important reminder for our future partnership."

It should be mentioned that for some small number of MRF followers, the political stand of the party was perceived as "too little, too late," especially in its economic plan. The level of unemployment among Bulgarians is 14.4 per cent compared to 25.5 per cent of Turks.<sup>409</sup> An additional factor was the negative impact of the long protracted agrarian reform.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid p.19

<sup>410</sup> According to Tomova; "overall, Bulgarian families had more and more fertile land. The average land area owned by Bulgarian families before its nationalization was around 0.3-0.5 Ha., while Bulgarian Turkish families' land averaged 0.1-0.2 Ha. Now, with a considerably reduced industry, these lands today have to be returned to the erstwhile owners, heirs. This entails dividing up the Bulgarian Turks's property even more and threatens the livelihood of many of them." See Ibid.

The options in these economically depressed areas are not that many. The first one is to move to the main urban centres within the country. The second is to follow the tendency to immigrate to Turkey.

It should be clear that at the present time the only justifiable and reputable representer of interests of the Turkish community in Bulgaria is the MRF. Despite its iron internal party discipline, the MRF experienced factional tendencies, which have proven unable to challenge its integrity and political influence. The government's failure to provide a quick solution for the economically "depressed" areas and the general discontent of economic hardship was translated into the creation of a faction with a radical nationalist agenda, opposed to the consolidation and integration political platform of the MRF. What was truly remarkable in the post-1989 ethnic dynamics was the fact that despite the economic hardship and particularly high employment, there was no resentment towards the Turkish minority. This is how the Head of the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, Antonina Zelyazkova describes this phenomenon:

We in Bulgaria know all this well, because we have experienced our ethnic cleansing, our hatreds, and sufferings and we are proud that we did not allow political gamblers to turn us into barbarians. We remained humans – with a clear and calm identity and, according to the theory I presented to you today, in fact we are already witnessing and participating in the integration processes in Bulgaria – we are communicating with each other in a new manner, both sides being characterized by splendid maturity and wisdom. Dangerous but also doomed to failure would be any attempt to impede our future coexistence – together in Bulgaria, together on the Balkans, together in Europe.”<sup>411</sup>

This point of view is supported by MRF Chairman Ahmed Dogan, who states that there is a stable ethnic peace in Bulgaria, despite the fact that some minorities are at the bottom

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<sup>411</sup> Antonina Zhelyazkova, “Identichnost i Integratsia” [Identity and Integration] *Kultura*, Sofia, No., 21, June 11, 1999. Translation is mine.

of social inequality, linking this process with MRF transformation into a civil and multiethnic organization embracing European liberal values.

### *Stereotyping the Turkish minority*

Overall, the monitoring of the coverage of ethnic minority issues by the Bulgarian mainstream press has revealed increasing tolerance of Bulgarian attitudes towards the Turkish minority:<sup>412</sup>

When writing about areas with mixed population, the Bulgarian press in general has expressed positive attitudes emphasizing the peaceful co-existence and the mutual respect between Bulgarians and Turkish minority members. Only a small share of the monitored newspapers (mainly the *Douma* daily) has constantly aimed at drawing a negative image of the MRF. The general trend has been one of increasingly neutral coverage of issues related to the participation of the MRF in the political life of the country.

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<sup>412</sup> The scope of the research is based on a survey of the image of Bulgaria's ethnic minorities as presented in eight newspapers and one magazine (figures in brackets show approximate circulation) from October 1996 to March 1999:

1. 24 Chassa (330,000). Founded in 1991 as an independent daily "about news as such". A publication of 168 Hours Ltd, bought by the German WAZ in September 1996. With its colloquial and often provocative style, it addresses the broadest possible readership.
2. Dneven Troud (220,000). Independent daily published by Media Holding Inc., bought by WAZ in February 1997. Successor of Troud, the daily of the Bulgarian Trade Unions prior to 1989 (still showing trade unionist leanings). Addressed to the broadest possible readership.
3. Noshten Troud (30,000). Published by Media Holding Inc., the only Bulgarian evening paper. Launched in 1991. Yellow-press tabloid, sensational reporting.
4. Standart News (25,000). A daily published by Standart News Ltd. Launched in 1992. Addressed to a broad leadership.
5. Continent (8,000). Published by Megapress Inc. Launched in 1992; circulated in the Republic of Macedonia. Pays special attention to Balkan issues.
6. Douma (30,000). The daily of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, successor of the communist Rabotnichesko Delo.
7. Demokratiya (40,000). Daily of the Union of Democratic Forces. Published by the Demokratiya Agency. Launched in 1990. The official daily. Douma and Demokratiya are the dailies of the two major political forces in Bulgaria during the monitored period, targeting the supporters of the respective parties. Their foreign political (and Balkan) stands are greatly influenced by party priorities. For example, *Douma* is overtly pro-Russian, pro-Serbian, pro-Greek and anti-Turkish. Though not as outspokenly, *Demokratiya* takes the opposite stands. These editorial policies became increasingly obvious against the background of the escalating crisis in Kosovo (*especially in Douma*).
8. Sega (30,000). Daily published by Maluk Vestnik Ltd.; very close to the Euroleft party. Launched in 1997. Balanced presentation. "Balkan Neighbours"

### *Reflecting on the Revival Process*

A number of articles published in the monitored period focussed on the traumatic events related to the forcible change of the Turkic names of the Turkish minority to ethnic Bulgarian ones in 1984-1985, during the so-called “Vazroditelen protzes” (the Revival Process). These articles are critical towards the assimilation politics of the former communist regime and emphasise the present “vacuum” of legal actions<sup>413</sup> against the main perpetrators of the repression against the Turkish ethnic group.<sup>414</sup> The dominant reoccurring theme is the victimisation of the Turkish minority by the assimilation policies of the late Zhivkov regime. Most of the articles dealing with the Revival Process and its heritage have been critical towards the forceful assimilation efforts of the former communist regime and have expressed understanding towards the members of the Turkish minority who suffered as a result of those policies.

While the mainstream press coverage of issues related to the heritage of the Revival Process and the mass exodus are characterized by a pronounced trend towards the expression of positive attitudes towards the Turkish minority the participation of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in the political life of the country has been

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<sup>413</sup> “The Bulgarian state is a debtor indeed. What has been initiated by the law on the names of Bulgarian citizens must be brought to its ultimate fruition. In Bulgaria, the names of the people guilty of the 'Revival Process' have not yet been exposed to the judiciary. And while Bulgaria could have closed this disgraceful page in its history, it is the emigrants to Turkey who are suing former leader Todor Zhivkov in Strasbourg for human rights violations. (...) The page of the Revival Process has been closed long since, but the wound will never heal”. Kamelia Anguelova, “Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Bulgarian Mainstream Press,” in *Balkan Neighbours Newsletter*, No.7, 1998, p. 36.

<sup>414</sup> “The emigrants are right and they must be indemnified for their suffering in the Revival Process. And yet, they had better heed Ankara’s advice and refrain from suing Bulgaria in Strasbourg. Hasn’t President Stoyanov apologized in the Medjlis to all victims of the forcible name change? ... In moral terms, there is nothing more that Bulgaria could do. Nor does it need to: you ask for a pardon and you grant a pardon just once. The fact that Zhivkov is not behind bars and that Dimiter Velev [the main perpetrators of the communist repressions against ethnic Turks] was acquitted is a consequence of our Bulgarian laws. The court in Strasbourg will not change them. The most it can do is to satisfy the vengeance of the humiliated and the wronged....” Ibid. p. 37.

presented in a more diverse way with more frequent expression of negative attitudes. However, in most cases the negativism has been directed towards the leadership of the political party with a clear distinction being drawn between the MRF on one hand and the Turkish minority as a whole.

### *Bulgarian media - A lonely Balkan voice*

Monitoring the mainstream press in Greece, Turkey, Romania, Serbia, and Macedonia has revealed that the most influential newspapers in these states have tended to portray ethnic minorities predominantly in a negative light. Those are the main findings by the researchers of the Balkan Neighbours Project. Monitoring of the mainstream press in the rest of the Balkan countries conducted in the period 1997-1999 revealed a general trend of expression of negative attitudes vis-à-vis ethnic minorities and of complete disregard for human and minority rights as stipulated in various international documents. Most newspapers have taken a stance against the official recognition of the different ethnic and religious minorities in contrast to the predominantly tolerant attitudes towards the Turkish minority by which the Bulgarian press has been characterized. Thus, these prevalingly tolerant attitudes vis-à-vis the Turkish minority expressed by main Bulgarian newspapers are in contrast to the general attitudes towards ethnic/religious/ linguistic minorities in other Balkan countries.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Researchers of the Balkan Neighbor Project monitoring the mainstream press in Greece, Turkey, Romania, Serbia, and Macedonia revealed that contrary to the Bulgarian case the most influential newspapers in these states have tended to portray ethnic minorities predominantly in a negative light.

### *Conclusion*

I will argue that the passage to *“back to normality”* is a reliable indicator in testing not only the general popular mood based on certain dominant attitudes and perception but more importantly, it provides the necessary backdrop in critically contextualizing these attitudes from the perspective of assessing the generating centre, i.e. the nature of the Bulgarian nationalism.

In my view, it is symptomatic that the *“back to normality”* route has not only proven the compatibility between the two ethnic groups in their efforts in building the new post-socialist democratic environment, but also provided the assurances that they are equal partners, which in view is a truly remarkable achievement, particularly in the difficult economic conditions as result of the transition period.

I argue that despite the *break with continuity* – the episode of the ethnic crisis of 1985-89 from the very beginning, inspired by the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the BCP, *“nationalism from the top”* faced a rather cold reception, and the campaign proved to be abortive producing strong populist anti-Turkish sentiments.

Instead, in the pre-perestroika period of 1985 the result was the opposite from what was anticipated. The Bulgarian nation as a whole was rather demoralized, not being able to defend their Turkish fellow citizens. However, this situation changed drastically after the general relaxation of the political climate after 1988, when under the *“pro-perestroika umbrella”* a variety of independent associations emerged in Bulgaria. These associations (with ethnic

Bulgarian membership) became the prime defenders of the rights of the Turkish community.

The ethnic crisis reached its peak in the summer of 1989 due to the exodus of 370, 000 Turks. This led to rapid a radicalization of Bulgarian politics. There were serious diplomatic, political and economic impacts due to this peaceful exodus <sup>416</sup> This crisis of 1989 mobilized the Bulgarian nation helping to end an unpopular regime and as well as an unpopular assimilation campaign, proving the pre-eminence of a deeply rooted civic culture, based political bonding within the Bulgarian society.

This is why I argue that *the political bond appeared to be stronger than the bond of ethnic self-identity*, and this dynamic is a result of the civil/inclusive nature of Bulgarian nationalism. In the Bulgarian case we confront a clear deviation from the required “Volk” foundations - based on common denominators such as: language, religion, culture etc. As already mentioned, the wide spread perception among modernists was that ethnic/blood consciousness rather than civic/civil consciousness has shaped the “national identity” in South-Eastern Europe. This is why according to the same argument East European ethnic nationalism incorporates a clearly much more pronounced collectivist Volk-centric, identity.

It became apparent that in the case of Bulgaria, we are not dealing with the same processes especially during the difficult years of the ethnic crisis as well as the rapid

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<sup>416</sup> It seems that Turks instinctively followed Gandhi's principle of passive non-violent reaction. While leaving for Turkey there were no reports of any destructive acts or acts of revenge. This was quite opposite to the way Bosnian Serbs left the Sarajevo suburbs in 1996.

march to “*back to normality.*” In fact, we are encountering a different path. If we understand it as a case study of the controversial legalization of the MRF based on the assumption that after 5 years of ethnic tension and one year of a sound pronounced ethnic crisis, the country as a whole needed a restoration of the ethnic peace; the refusal of legalizing the MRF would definitely have a negative impact on the process of "ethnic healing." There was also a clear reaction of a political pragmatism in “channelling” and solving democratically, through open political dialogue any future discontents related to ethnic tensions. Furthermore, from the very beginning, MRF proved not to have a separatist agenda. Instead, the MRF proved to be loyal to the Bulgarian state and Bulgarian nation in rebuilding the new civil society.

But this reasoning represents only a part of the argument. I will argue that in fact we are assessing the idiosyncrasies of a civic, inclusive nationalism, compatible with the basic standards of liberal democracy, alien to the xenophobic populism of ethnic nationalism. My assertion is that the Bulgarian national project is a result of political attachment, providing a superior, ultimate loyalty. The inner nature of Bulgarian nationalism, in my view, is based on the supremacy of common citizenship, over ethnic and religious loyalties, which is clearly contradictory to the surrounding Balkan states. The fast track *back to normality* period is an illustration of the inclusiveness of the Bulgarian nation, used to live in the ambiguity of the *la difference de quotidien*, without being too much preoccupied and obsessed with preserving its linguistic, religious (rather secular) and cultural roots, it seems that in the Bulgarian case we are rather dealing with loyalties based on entrenched universal principles and values.

**CHAPTER VI**

**TOWARDS ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS INCLUSIVENESS  
MINORITY RIGHTS ACCORDING TO THE  
BULGARIAN CONSTITUTION OF 1991**

***Overview***

*The purpose of this chapter is to support the core idea of my hypothesis in assessing the civic, 'political' and inclusive nature of Bulgarian nationalism from the perspective of the most important document in the history of Post- Communist Bulgaria, the 1991 Constitution. In this chapter, I will pay particular attention on what I see as being the central element of the 1991 Constitution - the premise of the political nation, based on citizenship as a foundation of the Bulgarian nation. Some specific legal provisions in respect to the management of relations vis-à-vis different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups within the context of the functioning of the current constitutional framework – based on the premise of an inclusive Bulgarian political nation, will be critically delineated and assessed.*

The law maker concerned with minority problems must strike a balance and reconcile so far as he can the following values and procedures: Democracy vs. Individual Rights, Authoritarianism vs. Libertarianism; Interventionism vs. Laissez-faire; Coercion vs. Consensus; Group vs. Nation; Particularize vs. Universalism; Liberty and Free speech vs. Order; Freedom vs. Equality; Freedom vs. Justice; Affirmative Action to Compensate for Past Injustice vs. Discrimination in the Present; Bureaucracy vs. Democratic Development and Participation; Elite vs. Mass guidance; Uniformity vs. Stability and Status quo; Mobility vs. Stratification; and Future Well-being vs. Present Well being. In the context of dealing with minority problems there can be no right answers".<sup>417</sup>

Claire Palley

***Political nation - the backbone of the Bulgarian nation***

After 1989, Bulgaria pursued a consistent policy to restore essential civil rights to its citizens in its attempt to build a modern, democratic "civil society", based on the functioning of a *political nation*, where all members of the society, regardless of their ethnic, religious, and linguistic profile would feel equal and at home. As it was outlined earlier, the 1985-1989 ethnic crisis leading to the mass exodus of the Turkish minority became the main factor for finding a convincing solution preventing any future human rights infringement – the

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<sup>417</sup> Claire Palley, "Constitutional Law and Minorities," *Minority Rights Groups Report*, No.36 (London, 1987), p. 3.

inviolability of the Bulgarian political nation, based on the common citizenship – became one of the pillars of the 1991 Constitution.

This is why there was little surprise that this new legislative "human rights" framework complies with the existing international legal standards.<sup>418</sup> Nor should it be a surprise that the specific provisions accord international regulations a higher status than the internal domestic laws. Thus, managing ethnic ethno-politics is clearly a high priority for the new legislature.<sup>419</sup>

It should also be noted that there was considerable change in the new Bulgarian Constitution adopted in July 1991. The supremacy of the political nation as being the foundation of the Bulgarian nation left the new constitution without a specific text which expressly and sufficiently guaranteed the rights of individuals belonging to minorities to preserve and develop their culture, Article 6 proclaimed the principle of equality and non-discrimination. Thus, the new Constitution granted to different ethnic and religious groups in Bulgaria the same rights as those of the majority. This article is compatible with the provisions of the accepted international standards documents in respect to minority rights. A few months after the adoption of the new Constitution on December 20, 1991 the 36th National Assembly ratified the facultative protocol for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. According to this document, there are two fundamental conditions

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<sup>418</sup> Plamen Bogoev, "Bulgarskite Konstitutsii za Pravata na Maltsinstvata", [Bulgarian Constitutions and the Rights of Minorities] in *Maltsinstvata v Balgaria v Konteksta na Chovechките Prava*, [Minority Groups in Bulgaria in a Human Rights Context], (Sofia, 1992), p.13.

<sup>419</sup> However, it should be mentioned that, Bulgaria provided similar assurances in the past. Despite, the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in July 1970, during the following two decades there were serious and systematic violations. Therefore, despite this pledge, there was no commitment to make any substantial progress in the national legislature in respect to ethnic/minority issues.

necessary for the protection of minorities: the principles of equality and non-discrimination are declared. Therefore, members of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups should enjoy the same human rights as the majority. These principles are the focal point, guaranteeing to minorities the preservation and development of their unique characteristics and traditions.<sup>420</sup>

The interpretation this article and other clauses of Article 27 of the Covenant on minority rights, in the context of the new Bulgarian Constitution of July 1991 could lead to the conclusion "that the right to one's own culture is seen as the right of ethnic minorities; the right to profess one's own religion as the right of members of religious minorities; and the right to use one's own language as the right of linguistic minorities."<sup>421</sup>

This interpretation could not be separated from the fundamental provisions of the new Bulgarian Constitution of 1991, where the standards applying to the "political nation" were set forth. *Thus, every Bulgarian citizen, regardless of his or her ethnic identity, Turkish or Macedonian, (according to the census in 1992 some 800 000 identified themselves as Turks and 10 803 identified themselves as Macedonians) is subject to the Bulgarian "political nation."*<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights acknowledges and guarantees the right to partake in cultural life. Article 13 of the Covenant recognizes the rights to education. In discussions on the question of the rights of individuals belonging to minority groups to *have their own culture and mother tongue*, it follows that the principles set out in the UNESCO Covenant against Discrimination in Education be taken into account" in Bogoev, Ibid., p. 10-11; See also "Minority Rights, Problems, Parameters, and Patterns in the CSCE Context," compiled by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, (Washington, 1994), p. 8-11.

<sup>421</sup> Bogoev, Ibid., p. 10-11.

<sup>422</sup> Italics are mine.

Another significant aspect of the constitutional provision with respect to the ethnic policies is the guaranteed right to members of a given minority group to an appropriate, adequate linguistic education. As was mentioned earlier, the new Bulgarian Constitution is not sufficiently explicit in its articles guaranteeing the rights of individuals belonging to minorities to preserve and develop their culture. However, there are some clauses providing such assurances. Article 36 recognizes the rights of those citizens whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian to study and use their own language.

In 1991 an optional education in the Turkish language in State schools was implemented (primarily in the areas with large Turkish population). The programme covered children of primary school age and was entirely financed by the State with the aim of improving the literacy of individuals belonging to the Turkish ethnic minority in their mother tongue.<sup>423</sup>

In the new Constitution, the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion are regulated by the text in Article 13 and Article 37. According to this article, it is a fundamental, constitutional right for all Bulgarians to organize their lives according to their own religion. The Bulgarian Constitution Court gave a compulsory interpretation to Article 13, paragraphs 1 and 2 and to Article 37 of the Constitution, resolving that, in accordance with the criteria set on Article 18 of the International Covenant on civil and political Rights, *"The right to a religion is a personal, fundamental, and incorruptible right of every*

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<sup>423</sup> "Article 27 of the Covenant declares the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and therefore the fundamental domestic law envisaging the rights of individuals belonging to religious minorities to profess their religion should be in accordance with this particular clause of the Covenant." Ibid., p. 10.

*institutions are separable from the State. State intervention and State administration in the internal organization life and public activities of religious communities and institutions is inadmissible.*"<sup>424</sup>

Despite the fact that there was no specific text in the new Bulgarian Constitution adopted in July 1991 (in respect to minorities or national minorities), which guarantees the rights of individuals belonging to minorities to preserve and develop their culture, Article 6 proclaimed the principle of equality and non-discrimination. Thus, the new Constitution granted to different ethnic and religious groups in Bulgaria the same rights as those of the majority.

This article is compatible with the provisions of accepted international standards in respect to minority rights. The principle of equality and non-discrimination was also bound by the signing of the facultative protocol for the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, where explicitly the two fundamental conditions necessary for the protection of minorities are referred to: the principles of equality and non-discrimination are declared.

Therefore, members of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups should enjoy human rights as do the majority. These principles are the focal point, guaranteeing to minorities the preservation and development of their unique characteristics and traditions. The interpretation of this article and other clauses of Article 27 of the Covenant on minority rights, in the context of the new Bulgarian Constitution of July 1991, could lead to the conclusion "that the right to one's own culture is seen as the right of ethnic minorities;

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<sup>424</sup> Ibid, p.12

the right to profess one's own religion as the right of members of religious minorities; and the right to use one's own language as the right of linguistic minorities.”

The legal framework, which Bulgaria decided to adopt, should not be any surprise taking into consideration a century long praxis of religious, as well as linguistic tolerance. It is well known that the "political nation" is the legal concept transcending the main idiosyncrasies of the national inclusive projects in most of the European legislatures as well as in the USA and in Canada. The supremacy of citizenship upon all other self identification characteristics and the accessibility of the democratic participation was the model that Bulgaria decided to comply with. The new Constitution of 1991, based on the conceptual framework of political nation, became the vehicle for internal cohesion and stability. It could be also noted that the fast-track process of preparing the Construction and consequently its acceptance without any major or protracted debates on provisions related to “ethnic” policies was further evidence of the level of tolerance within Bulgarian society, which I argue is a result of the civic, inclusive nature of Bulgarian nationalism.

### *Conclusion*

In the post-1989 period, Bulgaria achieved significant success in restoring fundamental civil rights to the Turkish minority. Therefore, the necessary conditions for a new viable and workable ethnic contract were created ensuring that the Turkish minority had full participation in Bulgarian society. As well, they were permitted to become politically active in the multi-party arena. This was achievable due to the profoundly rooted tolerance stand vis-à-vis the Turkish minority allowing a fertile climate to resolve the country's internal issues by implementing human rights standards as outlined in the main

CSCE and UN documents. A consensus to follow these blueprints for human rights was crucial for a peaceful post-communist transition. These rights were implemented as individual rights and it represented a long pattern of the Bulgarian state in accommodating the Turkish minority. Therefore, minority rights were not collective, but rather individual.

However, the Turkish minority obtained collective political representation. The dominant reasoning behind this consensus was that it would be rather advantageous to channel and solve future discontents related to ethnic tensions through an open and democratic political dialogue than to forcibly suppress possible ethnic discontent which would allow the possibility of violent ethnic clashes. This dominant reasoning was based on the experiences of the ethnic crisis of 1985-1989 when the communist state assimilation policy put the country on the edge of a political, economic and moral crisis.

On the other hand, the party of ethnic Turks (MRF) did not express any secessionist aspirations, due to the bitter experience of the return from Turkey in 1990 of almost half of emigrated Turks who participated in the 1989 exodus. The Bulgarian ethnic Turks realized that their real homeland was not Turkey, but Bulgaria, this time with universal democratic human rights standards.

It should be mentioned that the new ethnic policy in post-89 Bulgaria was in accordance with current international legal standards such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, the Copenhagen Document and the UN Minority Rights Declaration. In Bulgaria the general shift of the “one-nation, one-ethnos” concept,

launched during the late Zhivkov regime after 1971, was replaced with the current concept of “political nation”. As it is known, this conformity gives the supremacy of citizenship upon all other self-identification characteristics and the accessibility of democratic participation.

It is even more important to put into perspective that just a year before the legalization of MRF, the Bulgarian society, as a whole demonstrated its condemnation to the last spasms of the changing campaign in providing the necessary *political ferment* for a regime change.

In this way, the remarkable ethnic contract with the Turkish minority could be explained from the perspective of a new critical assessment of the nature of Bulgarian nationalism, being in the category of the Western (associated with the Anglo/North-American) type of civic, inclusive nationalism, based on citizenship and not on ethnic bond.

## CONCLUSION

This work has assessed the nature and structural genealogical factors of Bulgarian nationalism while departing from current conventional academic assumptions, according to which it is a part of the typology of the “ethnically exclusive East European nationalisms.” As already stated, my research question has been largely ignored in the literature on nationalism. It deserves more than a simple academic acknowledgment. This phenomenon requires a thorough and careful investigation if one really tries to explain the reasons behind the remarkable 120 year continuity of ethnic peace that this country has preserved.

In my thesis, I argue that one possible explanation for the inter-ethnic stability may be linked to the nature of the Bulgarian nationalism, and I make a case that it belongs to the civic, political type of nationalism. With such an argument, I fully realize that I am proposing a rather unconventional explanation by challenging the established, commonly accepted tradition of the academic literature on nationalism, epitomized by the lengthy list of scholarly works on nationalism and East European nationalism in particular. However, I decided to take this risk.

A few words are in order concerning my decision to structure my thesis in this particular way. I felt that one of the most relevant ways to present my research question would be to employ a *continuity/break of continuity* structure. I decided to defend my argument by tracing the continuity of this distinctive ethnic equilibrium by confronting two “time frames”: First, the continuity since the creation of the kingdom of Bulgaria and secondly its break, as manifested in the ethnic crisis of 1985-1989. The transcendence of this ethnic

stability suggests that preserving that balance may be a function of the most critical variable in national/ethnic equation in Bulgaria, i.e., the specific nature of Bulgarian nationalism. For this reason it was particularly important to test my hypothesis on the fact of presence (or lack thereof) of a negative reaction emanating from Bulgarian (*civil*) society during this crucial period, because this reaction would at least indicate the “inner” nature of the Bulgarian nationalism. By juxtaposing *continuity with the break of continuity*, the text provides a richer conceptualisation while assessing the dominant, re-occurring idiosyncrasies of these two different ethnic dynamics. Again, it was particularly integral to my research to analyse the reaction of Bulgarian society. The main chapter of my thesis focuses on the phenomenology of the process of constructing Bulgarian nationalism—identifying the structural factors (constraints) enabling this national project to assume its particular trajectory. This is the reason why my thesis had two objectives: first, to depict the long-lasting inter-ethnic stability pattern between the two major ethnic groups (the Bulgarian majority and the Turkish minority, paying attention particularly to the institutional policy arrangements) - and second, to identify the main variables in constructing the inclusive, civic nature of Bulgarian nationalism. I have structured my thesis specifically to meet these two objectives.

In my first chapter, “*Towards a theoretical framework of nationalism*”, I reviewed the contemporary literature on nationalism, assessing the main schools of thought and their relevance to my research question. At the beginning of this chapter, I critically assessed the ethnicist school of thought, suggesting that this approach could not provide an adequate theoretical framework that would enable me to explain the peculiarities of the Bulgarian case. I also conducted a systematic review of the modernist literature on

nationalism, arguing that although accurate in their general assessment about the phenomenology of the genealogy of nationalism, all these works essentially embrace the East-West ethnic dichotomy. According to this particular point of view, nation-states that developed in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe (Bulgaria included) embraced an ethnically determined, exclusive, and radical type of nationalism, hostile both to liberal values and to respect for minorities. I rejected this historic/geographical dichotomy, as it was clearly unable to address and explain the Bulgarian ethnic predicament. I based my choice for an adequate conceptual framework on the situational constraint theory, because it allowed me to locate the peculiar nature of Bulgarian nationalism without being restricted by the entrenched East-West civic-ethnic demarcation line. In addition, it permitted me to incorporate more factors, and to assess their internal interplay in constructing Bulgarian nationalism. This enabled me to present a more complex and accurate examination of the specific process whereby Bulgarian nationalism was constructed. According to the situational constraint theory, the outcome of the national project is essentially a function of the following independent variables: the presence or lack of *anomie*, the nature of the groups articulating the national projects, the level of secularism and the compatibility of traditional theological-ethical codes with respect to the civic model of nationalism.

In chapter II, "*Revisiting the process of constructing Bulgarian nationalism - main factors/constraints*", I independently assessed these variables, demonstrating that their interplay has provided the specific conditions for the emergence of a particular molding of the Bulgarian national project. Assessing the Bulgarian ethnic paradox using the situational/constraint approach to identify the main factors allowed me to determine

why an unusual appearance of a “wrong” type of civic, inclusive nationalism appeared in a region associated with an ethnic exclusion. I believe the interplay of those few constraints has been instrumental in preparing the conditions necessary for the emergence of this remarkable national project in the Balkans. As outlined above, the first variable was associated with the state of *anomie*, where structural change proved the traditional definition of a group’s identity inadequate, creating in the process an incentive to adopt a new identity. Early in the chapter I provided economic data demonstrating that the Bulgarian national project comes as a direct response to the crisis of identity with this new shift in the dynamics of identity of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie.

In the same chapter, I paid particular attention to the causal relation between the nature (social, economic, political) of the political actors’ status in the national project and the outcome of nationalism. Following the logic of the situational approach, an individualistic (civic) type of nationalism is likely to develop if it corresponds to the interests of wide sectors of the *population*. The Bulgarian national project was driven by “all social groups with the Bulgarian society: bourgeoisie, peasantry, artisans and craftsmen, intelligentsia.” In addition, in the same chapter, I argue that the geo-political context in the Balkans in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century provided a complementary influence in further shaping the Bulgarian national project. The dominant logic of rejection of possible intervention by foreign forces, transformed the national revolution *by necessity* to a broad and inclusive political agenda encompassing, de facto, all ethnic groups. From this perspective, I argued that the theme of inclusiveness – a vision of a Bulgarian society of people of different religious/ethnic backgrounds and based on citizenship - was promoted by the central architects of Bulgarian nationalism. In support,

I provided excerpts from original policy documents of the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee as well as personal correspondence of the main architects of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement: Rakovski, Karavelov, Levski and Botev. The overwhelming message of these narratives clearly demonstrates that they based their concept of the Bulgarian nation on a political model.

Later on in the chapter, I assessed the “general educated/secular sentiment” where, according to the situational constraint theory, secularism is a critical factor. (The emergence of a collectivistic, ethnic type of nationalism is relatively small when the level of the secularism is high). In this section of the chapter, I also provided detailed data on the level of secularism, based on numbers of secular schools, reading rooms, the ratio of schools per capita, and different printed media: text books and translated literature. I argued that it was secular education that in fact impelled the birth to the “*abstract community*” of the future Bulgarian nation.

In the next section of the chapter, I assessed the level of compatibility between the pre-national modes of thought (theological-ethical codes and ideas) and the civic model of nationalism. I argue that the specificity of the Bulgarian collective identity matrix was essentially alien to *Balkandom*, due to the fact that in Bulgaria the religious factor was significantly less important vis-à-vis the process of “constructing identity” than in other Balkan countries. The legacy of the Bogomil tradition has had an important and profound impact on the development of the Bulgarian national psyche. The four-centuries-old legacy of the Bogomil heresy cannot be ignored. It left an important legacy in shaping a particular set of codes, ideas and values, not only vis-à-vis the development

of the institution of the Orthodox church and the Christian religion in the “Bulgarian lands”, but also in the context of the failed partnership between the national liberation movement and the Orthodox Church during the critical period of National Revival.

I also argue that this quite significant “undercurrent” theme of a set of codes, ideas and values, stemming from the theological framework of this schism, largely prepared the way for a rational interpretation of reality. It would be rather difficult to assume that in a climate of open animosity vis-à-vis the Orthodox Church, a nationalistic discourse based on the romantic theological tradition could have been constructed. In this section I stressed the relationship between the Bulgarian National Liberation Movement and the Orthodox Church. I hold that the marginal role of the Orthodox Church reduced substantially any chances for constructing a nationalistic and exclusive discourse, based on religious loyalty. This turned out to be of paramount importance because the Bulgarian national project was defined as a manifestation of a political attachment. With this element, as the common denominator/anchor, resulting in the supremacy of common citizenship over ethnic and religious loyalties, I argue that the Bulgarian national vision contradicted other South-eastern European nationalisms known to emphasize a population's cultural heritage and its ethnic continuity. What is important in this analysis is the assumption that this phenomenon essentially became the “watershed” of Bulgarian nationalism, paving the road for the arrival of two of modernity’s significant ingredients: universalism and liberalism.

The continuity of a stable inter-ethnic praxis evidence was assessed in chapter III “*An overview of the legacy of the Turkish minority*”. In this chapter, based on official policy

documents, I established evidence for the stability of the ethnic equilibrium with respect to the Turkish minority. The overwhelming number of institutional provisions allowing a noticeable level of civil rights of the Turkish minority, such as: a separate School Board, clerical organizations, separate Islamic Courts, combined with an active and vibrant Turkish press, endorses the main argument of this thesis. The transcendence of this ethnic stability leads to the assumption that this was made possible due to the “soft” nature of Bulgarian nationalism. I also stressed the fact that these provisions *have not antagonized the Bulgarian majority* and have not provoked a reaction leading to inter-communal frictions and hostilities. I also stressed the lack of a pronounced politically-articulated anti-Turkish sentiment, arguing that, despite numerous political crises during that long period, the civic/political bond within Bulgarian society between the two remaining ethnic groups did not suffer dramatically.

In chapter IV, *Break of Continuity The Bulgarian Civil Society and the ethnic crisis of 1985-1989*, I explained that Zhivkov’s engineered ethnic crisis, contrary to its original design, failed to antagonize Bulgarian society. The failure of the “*Nationalism From Above*” project is convincing evidence that supports my hypothesis. The project proved to be counterproductive due to the apparent impossibility of sowing the “seeds of ethnic and religious animosity” within Bulgarian society, which has refused to embrace a xenophobic public discourse, imposed from the top. In this context, I demonstrated the importance of Bulgarian *civil society as a powerful actor*, functioning as the guarantor of the inseparability of the political nation. What is symptomatic with respect to the reaction of Bulgarian civil society in 1985-1989 is the fact that it followed the same pattern as during the Nazi occupation, when the Bulgarian people bluntly rejected the segregation of the

Jewish minority. In my view, this inseparability was based on the acceptance of each other's religious and linguistic differences and underlines the presence of Bulgarian political nationalism. Bulgarian civil society has demonstrated that despite an oppressive political regime, it did not compromise its traditional liberal values. They refused to replace the character of the Bulgarian political nation with one based on ethnic/religious identification.

In the next chapter, "*Back to normality- the Post-89 dynamics*", I contextualise the restoration of civil rights to the Turkish minority. Another objective of this chapter was to test the dominant attitudes and perceptions of the Bulgarian majority with respect to the following new policy provisions: religious rights, language rights and particularly collective political rights (i.e. the legalization of the "Turkish" ethnic party - the MRF). Data collected by monitoring the mainstream Bulgarian press provides sufficient evidence of a high level of tolerance with respect to these new post-1989 ethnic policies. In this chapter, I also argue that the speedy *back to normality* period further illustrates the inclusive nature of Bulgarian nationalism, where *les differences du quotidien* could co-exist pragmatically in the context of a nation identifying itself as a political, and not ethnic, construct.

In the last chapter, "*Towards ethnic and religious inclusiveness – the Bulgarian Constitution of 1991*", I argued that in the post-1989 period the main vehicle to achieve internal cohesion and stability was based on the foundation of the Bulgarian political nation, where *every Bulgarian citizen, regardless of his or her ethnic identity, is subject to the Bulgarian "political nation"*. This was the last building block of my modest inter-ethnic chronicle, which

started by outlining those structural factors in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which ultimately led to the creation of a civic, political nationalism in Bulgaria.

A few final words are in order. I believe that we should not over-exercise reductionism in determining the nature of Bulgarian nationalism. In my view it would be a rather difficult task to defend the “purity” of the two types of nationalisms, because in both cases there is a certain level of interplay of civic and ethnic characteristics. At the same time it would be an understatement to claim that Civic-West, and Ethnic-East are inherently in/ex/clusive. I agree with Greenfeld who states that this typology provides certain “traffic restrictions” on the abstract map towards national identity. Although it is common knowledge that there is more than one road and that the map could be looked from different angles, the *point de départ* seems to be essential. The *point de départ* of this “narrative” route determines the *initial concept* of the nation, that is, what elements are most emphasized as important to the fabric of the design of the nation. It is clear that the *point de départ* of the Bulgarian nationalistic project was defined as a manifestation of a political attachment, its common denominator. The result has been the supremacy of common citizenship over ethnic and religious loyalties, where “*Everybody will serve according his faith and will be judged according the rightful laws, regardless if he is Bulgarian or Turk, for the sake of a Just and Sacred Republic.*”<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Vassil Levski, Excerpt from the draft-regulation for the workers for the liberation of the Bulgarian people in Ivan Undjiev, in Nikola Kondarev, “Segachnata Despotsko Titranska Sistema da Zamenim s Demokratska Republika,” [The Contemporary Despotic, Tyrannical System We Will Change With a Democratic Republic] in *Vassil Levski, Sviata i Chista Republika*, [Vassil Levski, For a Just and Sacred Republic], (Sofia, 1971), p. 42.

## ANNEX I

### ПРОГРАМНА ДЕКЛАРАЦИЯ НА ДВИЖЕНИЕ ЗА ПРАВА И СВОБОДИ

От самото си създаване преди десет години ДПС възприе правата и свободите на човека и на малцинствата като основополагащ приоритет на цялостната си дейност.

Благодарение на нашата безусловна ориентация към либералната ценностна система, основана върху свободата, отговорността и толерантността, в България заработи уникален за Балканите модел за решаване на малцинствените проблеми.

Същността на Българския модел е балансирането на принципите за интеграция на малцинствата в гражданското общество с принципите за запазване и развитие на тяхната етнорелигиозна идентичност.

Българският модел е историческо постижение на ДПС и е на път да получи признание и легитимност в Европейското ценностно пространство.

Приложимостта на Българския модел в съседните страни означава създаване на реална алтернатива за прекрояване на Балканите според етнорелигиозните граници на региона.

В условията на Европейската и Евроатлантическа интеграция на Балканите Българският модел се превръща в Евроатлантическа стратегия за разрешаване на основната проблемна ситуация в региона: това е противоречието между мултиетническата картина на Балканите и етнонационалните държави в региона, които създават условия за хегемонизиране на една етнонация и водят до ограничаване и нарушаване на основните права и свободи на националните малцинства в съответните страни.

Освен основополагащия приоритет за правата и свободите на малцинствата, основни приоритети на ДПС винаги са били и си остават:

- Европейската интеграция на страната и
- стремеж към пълноправно членство в НАТО.

Тези основни приоритети ни задължават да се развиваме изпреварващо спрямо другите политически сили по отношение на европеизирането на нормите и идеалите на гражданското общество.

ДПС е за създаване на **нова стартова програма за Европейската и Евроатлантическа интеграция на България**. Това изисква национално съгласие по външнополитическите приоритети на България за предстоящите преговори с Европейския съюз.

ДПС ще отстоява принципите на възможно по-скорошно унифициране на националното законодателство с това на развитите европейски страни.

#### **В областта на Балканската политика на ДПС ще следва принципите на:**

- Утвърждаване на обединителните принципи между всички страни в региона и преосмисляне на разделителните принципи.
- Формиране на мултикултурна диалогична среда в отношенията.
- Преодоляване на кризата в толерантността в междуетническите отношения.
- Европеизирането на Балканите и култивирането на Евроатлантическата ценностна система.

През последните десет години ДПС неизменно е третата политическа сила в страната.

Като либералнодемократична партия Движението винаги е било ориентирано към политическия център, като алтернатива на двуполусния модел за управление на България. Преговорите за Евроинтеграция предполагат разширяване на социалната база на управлението и превръщат диалога, съгласието и партньорството в основни политически "инструменти" в Евроатлантическата стратегия на България.

Очакванията са, следващото 39-то Народно събрание да излъчи коалиционен кабинет, с участието на политически сили от социаллибералния спектър на политическото пространство.

**От тази позиция ДПС приема за приоритети във вътрешната политика на страната:**

- Формиране на силен стабилен политически център, който да поеме основната тежест в управлението на страната. Това изисква силни либерални и социалдемократически партии, без които да е немислимо бъдещето управление на България.
- Да се създаде широка коалиция, която да съумее да превърне Евроинтеграцията в стабилна и неизменна политическа ориентация на страната. Това на свой ред изисква основна промяна в ценностната система на хората и изграждане на силно гражданско общество, което да контролира властта.
- Да се прилага безусловно конституционният принцип за разделението на властите - законодателна, изпълнителна, съдебна власт. Като контролът между тях бъде достатъчно стриктен, прозрачен и постоянен.
- Засилване правомощията на местното самоуправление, като алтернатива на централната изпълнителна власт. Гражданите сами да определят характера и приоритетите в регионалната политика на местната власт. Засилване на икономическата и финансова независимост на общините.
- Засилване на принципа на изборност - на всички нива, включително и чрез изграждане на второ ниво на местно самоуправление в областта.
- Формиране на цялостната концепция за децентрализация на властта - включително и чрез засилване на правата и свободите на гражданското общество и неговите членове.  
Декапсулиране на ДПС и издигането на млади и способни кадри, които са по-подготвени за новото време на Евроинтеграцията. Декапсулирането означава и разширяване на социалната база на партията, чрез привличане на симпатизанти, привърженици на нашите идеи, които по една или друга причина са обидени или отблъснати.

**В междупартийните отношения ДПС ще следва линията на:**

- Засилване на интеграцията на либерално ориентираните партии в страната.
- Взаимодействие с всички ляво и дясно центристски формации.
- Преодоляване на кризата на доверието между СДС и ДПС чрез равноправен диалог и строго регламентирани отношения.

- Подпомагане формирането на стабилна социалдемократическа насоченост в левите политически сили, включително и БСП.
- Противопоставяне на създаването на условия за съществуването на партии, основани на етническа, расова и религиозна нетърпимост към другите.

**Икономическите приоритети на Движението за права и свободи ще продължат да бъдат:**

- Либерализация и децентрализация на икономиката на страната.
- Формиране на реален пазар на недвижима собственост, стоките, услугите и труда.
- Освобождаване на икономическата инициативност на личността чрез намаляване на данъчните тежести върху средните и малките фирми - производители и търговци.
- Формиране на национална стратегия за подпомагане на изоставащите в икономическо отношение региони на страната чрез привличането на наши и чужди инвестиции.
- Защита на националното селскостопанско стопанство чрез внимателен протекционализъм на местното производство и разширяване на външните и вътрешните пазари на страната.
- Създаване на механизми за осъвременяване на производството и търговията на селскостопански продукти. На борси, тържища и икономически сдружения на частни селски стопанства.

**В областта на социалната политика ДПС ще работи за:**

- Създаване на стабилна средна класа, като основна база за развитието на страната.
- Реална социална закрила чрез натрупване на средства в социалните фондове
- Освобождаване на частната инициатива. · Изравняване на шансовете за реализация на личността.
- Създаване на независими от държавата осигурителни и здравни фондове.
- Изграждане на система от граждански сдружения за социално подпомагане на хора в бедствено положение.
- Търсене на взаимодействие със създадените вече и новосформираните женски дружества.

**В областта на образованието и културата Движението за права и свободи ще отстоява:**

- Запазване и развитие на интелектуалния потенциал на България, съобразно изискванията на Евроинтеграцията.
- Привеждане на образованието в съответствие с новите потребности на пазара и Евроинтеграцията.

- Преодоляване на историческите предрасъдци и формирането на общоевропейско мислене върху основата на толерантността.
- Засилване автономията на висшите училища и културните институции.
- Законово подсигуриране на частното образование и частните културни институти.

**За ДПС е изключително важно навлизането на младите в политическия, икономическия и културния живот на страната.** Трябва приоритетно да се решават проблемите, които са пречка за участието на младежта в живота на обществото.

- Нови форми за решаване на проблема с младежката безработица.
- Търсене на решения на проблема с демографската криза - кредити с отложено плащане за младежки инициативи, изплащане на достатъчно високи поощрения за всяко новородено дете, осигуряване на рента на жените с три и повече деца.
- Целенасочено подпомагане от страна на ДПС на всички форми на сдружаване на младежите, на всички техни граждански сдружения.
- Права и свободи на личността и на националните малцинства

ДПС приема аксиоматично, че България не е и не може да бъде хомогенна в етническо и религиозно отношение държава. В този смисъл отношенията между мнозинството и малцинствата е критерий за степента на свободата и за зрелостта на демокрацията в България

- Свободата е върховна ценност на либерализма и правата на малцинствата са от стратегическо значение за всеки либерал. Нито едно общество и държава, които не зачитат и уважават правата на малцинствата, не могат да се считат за демократични.

#### **Етнокултурната идентичност за ДПС предполага:**

- право на изучаване на малцинствения език · право на публично използване на своя език
- право на използване на собствени имена според версията на малцинствения език и тези версии да са задължителни за официални случаи
- абсолютно отсъствие на ограничения за обнародване в печатните или електронни медии на материали на малцинствения език
- неограничен достъп до тези медии
- при необходимост използване на малцинствения език от административното производство и обществените служби при обслужване на гражданите.
- обществените медии да са задължени за предоставяне възможност за предавания на малцинствените езици
- равен достъп до образование и развитие на собствена култура
- националните малцинства да имат собствени училища

- ненамеса от страна на централното правителство в културните традиции и религията като области на културната идентичност на гражданина и малцинствата. Това не изключва задължението на държавата да подпомага културните и религиозни институции на малцинствата, в степента, в която подпомага тези на мнозинството.

България е изправена пред три ключови проблема:

**Първият** - за евроинтеграцията ни във всички области-политика , култура , образование, икономика, социален живот.

**Вторият** - включването ни в системата на колективната сигурност на НАТО и утвърждаване на Евроатлантическата ценностна система.

**Третият** - доразвиване и утвърждаване на Българския модел, наложен от ДПС за реално решаване на проблемите с правата и свободите на малцинствата в условията на Новия световен ред.

## ANNEX II

### **CHART OF THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES AS A EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**

In the past years, the Union of democratic Forces (UDF) gained political experience, broke off with the oppositional way of thinking and got established as a modern people's party, learned to bear real responsibility about the management of the country.

The Union of Democratic Forces grew up from a broad coalition movement into a party with a clear action program - a member of the European People's Party. A party that assumed the responsibility for the management of Bulgaria, started the reforms and won just Euroatlantic positions for the country. Today, the UDF offers a draft of principles and values to Bulgarian society, believing in the ability of the latter to come up to the requirements of the future. Based on the treaded way and the lessons of the past, on the moral and political values confirmed throughout the years and professed by the UDF, today the Union is able to offer its vision of a better future for the people. The UDF knows how to get ahead. To motivate the society, to unlock its energy using the power of the basic values - freedom, solidarity, justice. That is why the UDF looks ahead with confidence and formulates its "*Chart of values*".

The Union of Democratic Forces defends and expands its position as a modern European party. Its faith rests on universal human values, its ideas turn our visions into action. The UDF pursues the way of its neighboring

European parties whose ideas, experience and will healed the post-war wounds of the continent and made it an area of peace, creativity and development. Following the chosen course, the UDF will always move with the changes and the topical requirements of the times for pursuing a decent, transparent and efficient policy. By this Chart the UDF addresses:

1. UDF members, inviting them to adhere to the values and principles determining the UDF's identity as a European People's Party.
2. The society and the media, providing them with a criterion for valuation of the UDF's actions and policy.
3. The political powers, calling upon them to state before Bulgarian society their principles and positions.
4. Entrepreneurs and workers, stating that the UDF will coordinate their interests with a view to build a developed society.

### *UDF's VALUES*

The Union of Democratic Forces is a people's party based on universal values as upheld by the European People's Party. The individual and his social responsibility are at the center of our policy. UDF's political moral is based on religious morality.

The UDF's values are a balanced and efficient combination of conservative, liberal and social ideas.

Conservatism,

- because it puts the family first,

- because the UDF is a firm opponent to utopias, unification and

egalitarianism,

- because it relies on traditions that unite people rather than set variances between them.

the UDF regards the cultural and historic heritage of Bulgaria as the spiritual resource for social progress.

· Liberalism,

- because the UDF follows the tradition of rationalism, enlightenment, liberal economy spirit, freedom of entrepreneurship, the supreme law of freedom and property.

- because it accepts that the right to property is a basic human right that determines the freedom of the individual.

· Social dimension related to justice and meeting social needs, as well as to solidarity, both among citizens and between the citizens and the state.

Solidarity that makes market economy a social market economy.

Freedom, justice and solidarity are the three pillars of the UDF's identity that underlie European integration.

## 1. Freedom

Man is born free.

Freedom is a basic individual human right that is realized in combination with responsibility and duty. The condition of individual freedom is the willingness to accept restrictions and duties, to learn to live under a given order. Human society development is oriented towards further expansion of freedom.

- Every man is dependable on his communication with other people. Being a

free individual, man takes part in the building of society.

- Freedom generates responsibility. Responsibility is not a duty, it is a moral category, meaning that we must know and exercise our rights, not infringing other people's rights, however.

- Freedom motivates the right and duty of every man to be fully responsible for his acts and decisions, as well as to assume responsibility for the other.

- The complete truth is not wholly realizable by the individual man, it is however realizable by the society; that is why man is not able to design and build a perfect society.

- The UDF's idea of freedom makes it respect the family, which is the strongest stimulator of personal development.

- The freedom of the nation is guaranteed by the national security system.

- The freedom of citizens, associations, and communities is guaranteed by the democratic organization of society. No one may, basing his arguments on the sovereignty of the state, infringe the basic rights and freedoms of citizens.

- Freedom of entrepreneurs is guaranteed by diminishing the redistribution role of the state.

- Freedom is inseparable from pluralism.

- Communism and other political utopias are the greatest violation of freedom.

- Man's basic human dignity bred by his free choice of intellectual development and way of life makes him the titular holder of the basic rights.

We are firm defendants of the right of freedom and security, freedom of

thought, conscience, speech and religion.

- We accept the value of democracy as the only political system that acknowledges and guarantees through the social compact and the law the rights and freedoms of citizens. A free society is the basis of a developed society.

- The social compact is a political engagement to society for establishment of order and clear perspective of development. The political power is an inseparable part of the social compact and may not be used in violation of the law.

## 2. Solidarity

Solidarity cannot be demanded or imposed by force and from above. It is related to all kinds of mutual aid, to the support of the needy, to the harmonic relations not only among adherents, but also between minorities and majorities, between strong and weak, healthy and ill, young and old - thus consequences of inevitable inequalities are alleviated.

- Solidarity brings people closer. It is a prerequisite for building the community. It manifests itself in the form of rights and duties. Everyone must contribute to the family and the society according to his power, thus enabling society to guarantee the rights and freedoms of the individual.

- Solidarity finds expression in support of the needy, in harmonic relations not only among adherents, but also between minorities and majorities, between strong and weak, healthy and ill, young and old. Thus consequences of inevitable inequalities are alleviated.

- Solidarity means that we are to work for increased social integration.

Taking care of the needy is our ethical and political duty, a duty shared among central power, municipal authorities and civil society structures.

- Cooperation is mandatory for the welfare of state and society. Unity increases our opportunities as a people.

- UDF regards solidarity both as a relation of human individuals of all generations and countries, and as a care for the interests of future generations and respect towards creativity.

### 3. Justice

All people have equal rights and freedoms. People are equal in respect of honor and dignity.

Justice means that equal rules are valid for everyone and the state guarantees these rules. It means equality of opportunity when the individual is unable to display them. Justice means constantly guaranteed conditions under which individuals and communities exercise their freedom.

- Society is just when it offers equal opportunities.

- There is no justice beyond law.

- Society is just when it offers more opportunities to its citizens.

- Education and employment are the keys to the establishment of a developing and just society.

- Society is just when it offers women broader opportunities to get employed and to assume greater social responsibilities.

- All people have equal rights because human nature and freedom are inextricably bound up, and our equality is determined by the equal dignity we are born with.

- Acknowledging the basic rights of every man, the UDF accepts that duties must be fairly distributed among all according to abilities.
- The right of self-determination is a supreme mark of justice. It is an expression of the feeling of appurtenance and the desire to live together in freely chosen political and social structures.
- Irrespective of the differences in terms of talent and abilities, with respect to origin, sex, race, age, religion, beliefs, social status and health every one must have the opportunity to express himself in his field.
- All people must be recognized equal rights, and duties must be fairly distributed according to abilities.

### *UDF'S PRINCIPLES*

#### 1. Subsidiarity

Power must be exercised on a level corresponding to the requirements of solidarity, efficiency, and citizens' participation. Tasks that can be fulfilled on a lower level must not be transferred to the higher one. The subsidiarity principle means that higher levels must assist the lower ones in the fulfillment of their tasks.

- All activities must be decided first by the individual and his immediate environment by virtue of the freedom he is assigned and the responsibility he has assumed. If that is not possible, the problems not solved should be transferred to the higher level by virtue of the acting solidarity.
- The state as a whole is the last link in the whole chain of responsibilities, and guarantees justice.

#### 2. Social balance

Being a people's party, the UDF professes centrism and moderateness, its aim is to approach all social strata, not to protect the material and spiritual interests of a single social group.

Social balance is achieved on the basis of a balance of interests.

- The state undertakes jointly with municipalities the burden of supporting the needy and the implementation of the reforms that municipalities cannot cope with by themselves.

- Reducing the redistribution role of the state in the economy, abolishing the administrative holdbacks and the non-market restrictions of the business.

Mechanisms of government responsibility for damages and a guarantee for transparency of administrative procedures.

- A balance of market success and fiscal obligations underlie the business environment.

- A social security system for those who actually need it – those, the improvement of whose condition is beyond their abilities.

### 3. Efficiency

- Economic development requires judicious use of economic resources and a search of an efficiency that can guarantee satisfactory living conditions for a maximum number of people.

- Reforms in the social sphere are implemented on the basis of solidarity, justice, and efficient use of financial resources. Solidarity between old and young, wealthy and poor, based on increased individual responsibility.

Freedom to choose an active form of social support, creating opportunities for self-employment. Major social risks are undertaken jointly by society and

remain a collective responsibility.

- Clearing new territories for private initiative. The state must completely free itself from activities that can become more efficient if given to private initiative.

#### 4. Social market economy

- The belief that well functioning markets, free competition, and equal access to information are the backbone of steadfast development and rich societies underlies social market economy.

- The state guarantees equal opportunities for independent economic activity and free competition by making precise the system of rules and increasing the control over their observation.

- Freedom of the entrepreneur and responsibility for social usefulness are the basis of the motivation of Bulgarian entrepreneurs.

- The social market economy principle means that we are to overcome poverty, increase the standard of living, create conditions for stable economic growth, high employment, confidence in the future and opportunities for realization of young people in their own country.

- Environment protection is an understanding of the mutual involvement of man and nature, as well as the moral understanding that nature belongs to future generations, as well. That is why we are for stable utilization of natural resources and for combining the technological and ecological principles in view of creating an economic effect and new jobs.

Our concept is that we, Bulgarians, need a new incentive, a policy that will overcome the atmosphere of stagnation and resignation, faith and strength to

take our fate in hand. We need enhanced dialogue, more ambitious goals that are worth working for. The ideas and values offered by the UDF are a result of democratic development, of the efforts and the intellect of society as a whole. That is why the UDF regards as a field for political discussion not the immutable democratic values professed in this Chart, but the ways of achieving them. Being a people's party, the Union of Democratic Forces will continue to maintain a policy of integrating more people into this project. implementation of the necessary reforms for our country requires the efforts of all Bulgarians. Moderateness in everything and dialogue are the basic mechanisms we will rely on. Resting on these values and on our ability to make efforts, we believe in the future of a Bulgaria of opportunities

## ANNEX III

**Government of the Republic of Bulgaria (25 July 2001)**

The Cabinet is a coalition Government between the ***National Movement Simeon II*** and the ***Movement for Rights and Freedoms***, with two ministers supported by the ***Bulgarian Socialist Party*** (part of the Alliance for Bulgaria Coalition).

<b>Prime Minister</b>	Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha
<b><i>Deputy Prime Minister and minister of Economy</i></b>	Nikolai Vassilev
<b><i>Deputy Prime Minister and minister of Regional Development and Public Works</i></b>	Vassilev
<b><i>Deputy Prime Minister and minister of Labor and Social Policy</i></b>	Kostadin Stoyanov
	Paskalev
	Lidia Santova
	Shouleva

**Ministers of:**

<b><i>Defense</i></b>	Nikolai Avramov
	Svinarov
<b><i>Finance</i></b>	Milen Emilov
	Veltchev
<b><i>Foreign Affairs</i></b>	Solomon Isak Passy
<b><i>Interior</i></b>	Georgi Petrov
	Petkanov
<b><i>Justice</i></b>	Anton Iliev Stankov
<b><i>Education and Science</i></b>	Vladimir Atanassov
	Atanasov
<b><i>Agriculture and Forestry</i></b>	Mehmed Mehmed
	Dikme
<b><i>Transport and Communications</i></b>	Plasmen Vassilev
	Petrov
<b><i>Health</i></b>	Bozhidar Todorov
	Finkov
<b><i>Culture</i></b>	Bozhidar Zafirov
	Abrashev
<b><i>Environment and Waters</i></b>	Dolores Borissova
	Arsenova
<b><i>State Administration</i></b>	Dimiter Georgiev
	Kalchev
<b><i>Minister without portfolio</i></b>	Nezhdet Ismail
	Mollov

**39-th National Assembly structure , elected on 17-th of June 2001:**

**Seats: Simeon II National Movement 120**

United Democratic Forces **51**

Alliance for Bulgaria (Bulgarian Socialist Party dominated) **48**

Movement for Rights and Freedoms **21**

## ANNEX IV

**Отчетен доклад на Председателя на Движение за права и свободи г-н Ахмед Доган**

29-30 януари 2000г. НДК - София

Уважаеми делегати  
на IV-та Национална конференция на ДПС,  
Уважаеми гости от страната и чужбина,  
Ваши Превъзходителства !

Днес ДПС провежда IV-та си редовна Национална конференция, която представлява политическата воля на повече от 32 хиляди партийни членове, разпределени в 25 областни, 160 общински и повече от 1200 местни организации.

На този наш национален партиен форум ни предстои да направим политическия анализ на периода от края на 1996г. до началото на 2000-та година.

На базата на този анализ на основните политически тенденции през последните три години IV-та Национална конференция на Движението ще определи целта и стратегията си за следващите три години.

Искушенията и предизвикателствата на настоящата национална конференция са доста по - различни от предишните ни национални форуми. Защото IV-та национална конференция трябва да направи отчет на политическите реалности на границата на две столетия и да приеме програма за продуциране на политически реалности в началото на третото хилядолетие. Това е рядък шанс за всеки политик. Но особено много е завидна участта на тези няколко поколения политици в тази зала, които ще определят политическия старт на следващото хилядолетие. С тези думи ми позволете да ви поздравя всички поотделно по случай десетгодишнината от учредяването на ДПС и да ви пожелае такива успехи, които да респектират следващите поколения политици !

Не е по-маловажен и фактът, че както **политическия анализ** на последните три години, така и приемането на програма и стратегия за следващите три години ще минат **под знака на предстоящата Евроинтеграция на страната.**

Поканата за започване на преговори за присъединяване на страната ни към Европейския съюз е забележителен успех и на управляващото мнозинство, и на опозицията. Нещо повече: "поканата за преговори" е най-добрата оценка за необратимата демократизация на България от страна на Евросъюза през последните десет години. Разбира се, основните политически сили и гражданското общество като цяло нямат равни дялове от заслуги за Евроинтеграцията на страната. Нормално е едни да са повече "в час" по европейска политика от други. Но важното е, че **България постигна вътрешнополитически консенсус по въпроса за Евроинтеграцията.**

Тепърва ще има спорове кой колко е дал и кой колко ще допринесе за реалната Евроинтеграция на страната. Тези два въпроса няма да визират само "историята" и "перспективата" на Евроинтеграцията. Около тях ще гравитират парламентарни дебати, политически декларации и конгресни решения. С тези два въпроса ще се "образуват" и ще "паднат" правителства и партийни ръководства. С тях ще "приемаме" европейски делегации и ще "изпращаме" вестноосци за Европа. От "тяхна гледна точка" ще правим "оценки" и "самооценки" на политическия елит на страната и ще "напишем" най-новата история на България.

Двехилядната година ще започне с преосмисляне на партийните програми на всички политически сили за развитието на страната от гледна точка на предстоящата Евроинтеграция. Обстоятелството, че този процес започва с нашия национален форум, има особено знаково значение. В края на месец февруари такъв форум предстои на СДС, а в началото на месец май и на БСП.

**Особеният смисъл на нашата национална конференция се определя от три основни причини:**

**Първата причина** е свързана с характера на ДПС, като етнополитическа организация, като национална партия от етнически тип, която от самото си създаване преди десет години възприе основните либерални ценности за правата и свободите на човека и на малцинствата за свои стратегически приоритети. Благодарение на нашата безусловна ориентация към базовата либерална ценностна система на Европа, в България заработи уникален за Балканите модел за разрешаването на малцинствените проблеми **по пътя на балансирането на принципите на интеграцията на малцинствата в гражданското общество с принципите на етнорелигиозната им идентичност в страната.**

След десет години на бавен, труден и изстрадан процес днес **Българският модел** се превърна в **ключова дума** за зрелостта на демокрацията в страната. Българският модел безспорно е **най-важният политически продукт** от началото на прехода към отворено общество в страната.

**Втората причина** е свързана с другия ни приоритет за Евроатлантическата ни ориентация. ДПС е единствената политическа сила през последните десет години, която последователно съчетаваше и отстояваше **правата на малцинствата**, ориентацията към **НАТО** и **Евроинтеграцията** по ясен и категоричен начин. Мотивацията ни за това наше политическо поведение беше силна, защото е много ясна. Защото само включването ни в НАТО и присъединяването ни към Евросъюза може да гарантира **защитния механизъм на правата и свободите на малцинствата в България.**

Ратификацията на "Рамковата конвенция за защита на националните малцинствата" от 38-ото НС стана възможна благодарение на взаимодействието на тези три приоритета - правата на малцинствата, НАТО и Евроинтеграцията. А позицията ни във връзка с даването на въздушен коридор на НАТО за разрешаване на конфликта в Косово беше силна, ясна и цялостна, **защото основните приоритети на ДПС съвпадаха с интересите на международната общност и с националния интерес на България** в контекста на Евроатлантическата ни интеграция.

На всеки му е ясно, че нашата позиция имаше изключително важно значение както за позицията на България по отношение на Югокризата, така и за получаване на "покана" за започване на преговори за присъединяването ни в Евросъюза.

**Третата причина** е свързана с мястото и ролята на **ДПС в структурата на политическото пространство на България.** През последните десет години в страната ни се проведеха четири парламентарни, два местни и два президентски избора. ДПС неизменно от 1990г. до 2000г. се утвърди като трета политическа сила в страната. А на президентските избори избирателите на Движението определят изхода от предизборната надпревара.

При нормални политически условия ДПС се очертава да бъде един от основните политически балансатори в България. Индикация за тази роля дават последните избори за представители на местната власт. В национален мащаб общинските кметове на СДС и БСП поотделно нямат самостоятелно мнозинство, такова те придобиват благодарение на нашата подкрепа. Същото е положението и с общинските съветници: от 29 областни центрове ДПС има представители в 25 области, и то често с решаващо значение.

Уважаеми дами и господа!

Какво следва от казаното?

На първо място, предимно това, че на ДПС няма да му се наложи драстично да променя програмата си за развитието на страната. Тъй като **правата на малцинствата, НАТО, Евроинтеграцията**, и всичко, което е свързано с тези приоритети, стават приоритети и на страната.

За Евроатлантическата общност **отношението към ДПС се превърна в мярка за зрелостта на демокрацията в страната.** А както ви е известно, "мерните единици" в живота се променят най-трудно и бавно. Защото коренно трябва да се промени самата система за измерване и това, което се измерва. По-скоро **промяна ще претърпят характерът на политическите сили, техните приоритети и политическо**

**поведение.**

Разбира се, би било твърде наивно, ако си внушим, че **"мерните единици" в политиката** са константни величини, които не подлежат на изменение. Нещо повече. Ако нашите приоритети съвпадат с базовата ценностна система на Европа, **за да сме в час, ние трябва да се развиваме изпреварващо спрямо другите основни политически сили на страната** по отношение на европеизирането на нормите и на идеалите на гражданското общество, както и на структурите и функциите на основните държавни институции. Точно в контекста на Новото политическо време гражданското общество и държавата ни имат политическа потребност от съгласувана между основните политически сили **Стартова програма за Европейската и Евроатлантическа интеграция на България.**

Конфигурацията на политическите сили в страната е такава, че нито една политическа сила не може сама да започне и сама да приключи преговорите за присъединяването ни към Европейската общност. Това може и трябва да се постигне само по пътя на **диалога, съгласието и партньорството** не само между управляващи и опозиция, а в рамките на целия политически елит на страната. Защото постигането на **национално съгласие** по основните приоритети за предстоящата Евроинтеграция на страната се превръща в **основен критерий за осъзнатата политическа отговорност на цялата политическа класа на България.**

Обективно погледнато, процесът на "преговорите" предполага относително деполитизиране и департизиране на диалога с Европа и НАТО, защото защитата на преосмисления **национален интерес и консенсусния подход** стават доминиращи.

Трябва да ни е ясно в самото начало на преговорите, че Евроинтеграцията и присъединяването ни към НАТО съществено ще променят не само **националните приоритети**, но и самото съдържание на **националните ни интереси**. Въпреки нашата воля, тази промяна ще провокира и преосмисляне на **националния идеал** и на **националната доктрина**. Ще се промени разбирането за **националната държава** от етнонационална държава в мултиетническа държава. А **национализмът** ще се преобразува от етнонационализъм в гражданско-политически национализъм. Подлежи на изменение и разбирането ни за **суверенитета на държавата**. В процеса на интеграцията и включването ни в обща система за сигурност държавата и основните й институции ще намаляват суверенитета си за сметка на международната общност и суверенитета на гражданското общество и неговите членове.

Уважаеми дами и господа !

Наблягам на тези моменти, защото все още не ни е съвсем ясно какво ни очаква във връзка с реалното ни интегриране с ценностите, нормите, идеалите и стандарта на западния свят.

На всички ни е ясно , че поканата на Европейския съюз не е нито заради черните или сините ни очи, нито пък от загриженост да ни хранят на вересия. Защо разликата в стандарта на живота е 1:20 пъти.

**Цената на поканата** е свързана с геополитическото място на България за стабилността и сигурността на Евроатлантическата общност. Тъкмо за това **партийният подход** в преговорите трябва да отстъпи на **консенсусния подход, а политическият интерес** на партиите - на **националния интерес**. С каква скорост ще се движим към Европа зависи от съчетаването на националния с общия европейски интерес. **Интертериоризирането** на европейския интерес в страната трябва да създаде условия за **материализиране** на националния интерес в европейското жизнено пространство. Тъкмо поради това политическата класа на страната трябва да има готовност да заработи **"екипно"**, а не като представители на националните интереси в патерица за задържане във властта.

Дали сме узрели или не да носим "кръста" на политическата си отговорност за това, което ни предстои, ще си проличи от **Стартовата програма за Европейска и Евроатлантическа интеграция на България.**

Ако още на този етап няма консенсусен подход за **експертните групи** по темите за преговорите, както и за **структурата и състава на комисиите**, които ще водят

преговорите от българска страна, това означава, че правим първата си фатална грешка по пътя за Европа.

След приемане на условията и механизмите на преговорите за интеграция, следва с консенсусен подход да определим **приоритетите във вътрешната и външната политика** на България от позициите на преосмислените национални интереси в контекста на Евроинтеграцията.

Никога през целия XX в. Съдбата на страната не е била толкова тясно обвързана с консенсусния подход.

В началото на 2000г. съдбата на реформите вътре в страната и на интеграцията на България с международната общност е директно следствие от диалога, националното съгласие и партньорството между основните политически сили. Защото **Европа за първи път промени стратегията си към Балканите**: от зони на влияние на Великите сили тя започна да ни възприема като " част от себе си " и като условие за собствената ѝ стабилност и сигурност.

Друг е въпросът, че преди Европа реално да започне да ни възприема като " част от себе си ", Балканите трябва да имат самосъзнанието за "едно цяло".

Най-характерната особеност на Балканите е тази, че всяка балканска страна възприема съседа си като потенциална заплаха. Освен това, от гледна точка на балканските мозаечни реалности, **различията** между балканските народи се оказват повече от техните **реални обединителни принципи**. Но от позициите на европейското мислене Балканите се възприемат като едно относително цяло. Новото в случая е свързано с това, че Евроинтеграцията задава **мултикултурна диалогична среда на Балканите**, която превръща "съседа" от потенциален враг в значимата "другост", чрез която се легитимира собствената национална идентичност в процеса на реалната Европейска и Евроатлантическа интеграция.

С други думи, точно **различията**, като най-големия недостатък на Балканите от гледна точка на културно-историческата среда, с Евроинтеграцията имат шанса да се превърнат **в предимство на балканските народи**. Именно затова са налице сериозни основания Балканите от "заден двор" и "санитарна зона" на Европа да се превърнат в съществена нейна част и да продуцират нови принципи в Европейското ценностно пространство.

**Общото балканско самосъзнание** ще бъде ново положително предизвикателство към класическото европейско самосъзнание. Хомо балканикус от нарицателно има възможност да се преобразува не само в ценностния резерв на Европа, но и в проверен инструмент за универсализирането на Евроатлантическата ценностна система в условия на Новия световен ред. Защото **Евроинтеграцията ще актуализира различията** между универсализираната ценностна система в Европа и общата идентичност на Балканите, която първоначално ще породи **криза в толерантността**. И точно тук **мултикултурният диалог на Балканите има историческия шанс да се превърне в основен принцип на европейската ценностна система**. Защото **европеизирането на мултикултурния диалог на Балканите ще бъде изпитаният модел** за универсализирането на европейската ценностна система в други региони на света, които са различни от западната култура. В определен смисъл отговорът на въпроса **"Как Европа ще се справи с мултиетническата картина на Балканите?"** ще **предопредели и отговора на въпроса за съдбата на Новия световен ред**.

Уважаеми дами и господа !

Правя това отклонение за Балканите, защото на нашия национален форум присъстват представители на пет балкански страни, наши съседни. Правя го с убеждението за взаимното проникване на културите в този регион. И въпреки това се е получило така, че принципите, които ни разделят, преобладават над тези, които ни обединяват. Но точно **тази мултикултурна даденост от недостатък се превръща в наше общо стратегическо предимство в условията на Новия световен ред**. Защото традиционно деструктивно използване на **малцинствата** в региона като **"пети колони"** в условията на Евроинтеграцията се превръща в изграждане на **мостове на**

**добротъседството и в основа за общия балкански патриотизъм.** А отношението към малцинствата в балканските страни се превръща в мярка за зрелостта на демокрацията в съответната страна и точно затова - и в генератори на Евроинтеграция.

**На Балканите "всичко е във всичко".** Затова самото формулиране на общите проблеми на региона е първата крачка за тяхното преосмисляне и преодоляване. И най-вече, правя това отклонение за Балканите, за да подчертая важната геополитическа значимост на нашия регион за самата Европейска общност.

Уважаеми делегати и гости на нашата конференция !

Убеден съм, че основният въпрос, който витае в тази зала, е: **"Кой ще управлява България през следващите два мандата?"**.

Въпросът за властта е **основният проблем на всяка партия.** Всяка партия е дотолкова политическа организация на своите избиратели, доколкото има ясна представа за отговора на въпроса: **"Кога, как и с кои ще участва в управлението на страната?"**.

Този въпрос за **субекта на властта** е основен не само за развитието на вътрешнополитическите процеси в страната. Въпросът "Кой ще управлява България през следващите два мандата?" е равносilen на **въпроса за идентичността на субекта на интеграцията на страната** в Европа и присъединяването ни към НАТО.

Но отговорът на въпроса "Кои политически сили ще управляват страната по време на преговорите за Евроинтеграцията?" в превод означава **"Каква е структурата на политическото пространство и политическите сили, които го идентифицират в контекста на тяхното развитие?"**. Тъкмо затова е наложително да внесем определена яснота за **структурата на българското политическо пространство.** Защото **"Кой кой е в политиката?"** предполага отговора на въпроса **"Кой къде се намира в структурата на политическото ни пространство?"**, респективно- **"Кой от какви позиции защитава интересите на избирателите и на страната като цяло?"**.

От гледна точка на продължаващите процеси на ферментация в лявото политическо пространство, и най-вече от позициите на това - дали ще се социалдемократизира в съвременния европейски смисъл на това понятие или ще си остане левица за домашна употреба, зависи каква ще бъде политиката на ДПС за диалог, взаимодействие и партниране с левицата като цяло.

**Взаимодействието на ДПС с лявоцентристките политически сили** се диктува от външни и вътрешни политически фактори. Европа на този етап е предимно социалдемократическа. А във вътрешнополитически план социалните сътресения, като резултат от структурната реформа на икономиката, обективно предвещаващ стабилизиране и разширяване на лявото пространство. Но заедно със **стабилизирането и разширяването** лявото пространство се **структурира и деференцира**. Ако левицата се обедини около социалдемократизма и се стигне до споразумение за коалиционно участие в предстоящите след една година парламентарни избори, могат да се очакват и изненади за парламентарното мнозинство на следващото Народно събрание.

Основният проблем на лявото политическо пространство е аморфният критерий за идентичността на политическите сили, които го представляват.

В сравнение с ферментиращото все още ляво пространство, **процесите в дясното политическо пространство изглеждат относително завършени.** Вдясно от центъра е ДПС, както либерално-демократическа партия. С дясноцентристка ориентация са и земеделските формации. По-надясно е СДС, който се идентифицира като партия с християндемократическа насоченост, и Демократическа партия.

Основният проблем в дясното политическо пространство е кризата на политическото доверие.

Тук изрично искам да отбележа, че при нормални политически условия на началния старт на прехода, т.е. ако нямаше "възродителен процес", ДПС вероятно щеше да бъде лявоцентристка политическа организация. Защото социалният статус и очакванията на нашите избиратели биха се преместили в тази част на политическия

спектър.

В определен смисъл живият спомен за "възродителния процес" разпъва ДПС между предимно ляв електорат и дясна политическа стратегия като антикомунистическа ориентация. Тъкмо затова Движението е в дясноцентристкото политическо пространство. Защото либерализъм по естествен начин превръща в приоритет основните права и свободи на малцинствата. От тези позиции можем да покрием очакванията на нашите избиратели и от социалния вектор в политиката.

**Проблемът за идентичността в лявото пространство и кризата на доверието в дясното пространство** поставят ДПС в много изгодна ситуация по време на Евроинтеграционните процеси.

Не случайно и двете големи политически сили почти едновременно пуснаха послания, че сме техни потенциални стратегически партньори. И то само няколко седмици след като сега управляващото мнозинство ни обяви за "проклетие за страната" по време на "местни избори-99"! Вероятно и двете политически сили едновременно осъзнаха, че ДПС е проклетие, но не за България, а за всякакъв вид авторитаризъм и тоталитаризъм в страната. И това сме го доказали не само по време на Демокрацията през последните десет години, а и преди това - по време на тоталитарния режим.

Защо ДПС се очерта като стратегически партньор в българското политическо пространство?

Защото през последните десет години Движението се утвърди като **знакова политическа сила** и вътре, и вън от страната.

**За по-малките партии** Движението е ракета-носител за включването им в орбитите на властта по правилата на демокрацията.

БСП чрез ДПС би получила директна европейска легитимност, която е изключително важна за нейната идентичност и за реалните ѝ претенции да бъде част от колективния субект за управлението на страната в началото на това столетие.

**СДС с ДПС** би гарантирал властта си за още два мандата с намерение да бъде основният политически субект на Евроинтеграцията. Възстановяването на ОДС с участието на ДПС изглежда примамливо, но на този етап е нереалистично.

**Преодоляването на кризата на доверието между СДС и ДПС предполага две прости условия:**

- **Първото** е свързано с приемането на европейските правила за партньорство: в политиката нищо даром не се дава и не се прави; партньорството е взаимозависимо отношение, което се развива дотолкова, доколкото произвежда съгласие по въпросите на властта.
- **Второто** условие е свързано с преодоляването на дълбоко вкоренената им представа, че, щем-не щем, трябва да им пристанем, защото в противен случай е трябвало да подкрепим БСП. Тази порочна политическа практика започна преди десет години и без промяна продължава и досега. Убеден съм, че историята на България в преходния етап щеше да бъде доста по различна, ако взаимоотношенията между СДС и ДПС почиваха върху европейски правила за политика и партньорство!

Разбира се, въпросите за структурата на политическото пространство не биха получили точен аналитичен отговор, ако не се разгледат и **основните тенденции в политическия център на страната.**

**Политическия център на България** се представлява от лявоцентристки и дясноцентристки политически сили. А като политическа идентичност-от **социалдемократи и либералдемократи**, които имат възможност да очертаят социал-либералната част в политическото пространство на страната.

За съжаление взаимодействието както сред самите социалдемократи и либералдемократи, така и между социалдемократите и либералдемократите остана далеч от равнището на първоначалните взаимни очаквания.

Политическия център продължава да съществува като евентуален балансър или партньор на една от двете политически сили, без да дава индикация, че може да бъде равнопоставен субект на левицата или десницата.

Основният резултат от "местни избори-99" е **намаляването на прага на двуполусния модел до степента на елиминиране на условията за крайното възпроизвеждане**. Избирателят за първи път от десет години потърси **алтернатива за неудачите на левицата и десницата в политическия център**. Но се оказва, че в центъра няма достатъчно силен политически субект с ясна и обещаваща политическа идентичност.

Въпреки това ДПС трябва да продължи да работи за култивирането на либералната ниша в политическия живот на страната. Само за една година **"либералнодемократическият съюз"** стана асоцииран член на **Либералния интернационал** и на **Европейската либерална партия**. Този факт освен европейско легитимиране означава и партийно-политическа отговорност за утвърждаване и разширяване на либерализма в България.

Използвам случая специално да благодаря на фондация "Фридрих Науман" за съдействието в утвърждаването на либералните ценности в България.

В контекста на гореизложеното трябва да отбележим, че преговорите за Евроинтеграцията ще вървят не само по официална правителствена линия, но и чрез трите основни програми и политически субекти на Европа - **социалдемократи, либералдемократи и християндемократи**, които изразяват традиционната структура на европейското политическо пространство.

Взаимодействието на тези три основни политически сили в почти всяка европейска страна, с техните политически аналози в България, понякога ще се движи изпреварващо спрямо официалните преговори за предстоящата ни Евроинтеграция.

В този смисъл въпросът "Кой ще управлява България през следващите два мандата?" трудно може да получи категоричен отговор. Но във всички случаи може да очертаем полето на **основните критерии и изисквания към политическия субект на преговорите за Евроинтеграция:**

- **На първо място** това ще бъдат онези политически сили, които са превърнали консенсусния подход в политическа стратегия за Евроинтеграция.
- **На второ място** това ще бъде онази политическа сила, която е готова максимално да разшири социалния периметър на съгласието в **социално-либералния спектър на политическото пространство**.
- **Трето**, това ще бъде онази широка коалиция, която съумее да превърне Евроинтеграцията в "работни проекти" за вътрешни и външни инвестиции в страната.

Едно е сигурно: без участието на ДПС България няма да има необходимата външна **тежест** и вътрешна **стабилност** за отваряне вратите на Европа през първите десет години на XXI-я век.

Основният проблем за ДПС, като трета политическа сила, на която ѝ предстои да участва в управлението на държавата, е: **"Готовили сме да поемем част от отговорността за управлението на България?"**

Този въпрос поражда редица други въпроси, оценки и позиции, които биха потвърдили или поставили под съмнение участието ни в централната власт.

**Най-големият недостатък на преходния етап** през последните десетина години е, че в твърде редки случаи политическите сили бяха подготвени да поемат отговорността за съдбата на страната. По правило, за всички политически сили поемането на властта беше **изненада** и се налагаше като изход от непредвидени обстоятелства, като социално недоволство, национални стачки или от политически катаклизми. Казвам това не като предположение, а като политик, който през последните 10 години е бил постоянно в националната политическа кухня.

Разбира се, при добронамереност могат да се намерят и подходящи обясняващи и

оправдаващи обстоятелства. Защото това беше време, когато се оформяше новият политически елит на България и при новите условия всички трябваше да учим в движение. Но фактът си е факт и той говори много повече от всяко оправдаващо обяснение.

Въпросът дали имаме готовност да участваме в управлението на държавата при днешните условия задължително включва съизмерване не само с вътрешни, но и с **европейски критерии за воля, компетентност, опит и адекватност**.

Във връзка с "готовността" ни за участие в управлението бих искал да засегна два типа проблеми, които, ако не се преодолеят, могат да породят криза във вертикалната и хоризонталната структура на Движението.

**Първата група проблеми** са свързани предимно с взаимодействието между нашите партийни структури и представителите на общинското самоуправление.

Още в началото на 90-те години на XX век бяхме приели един основен принцип, че изпълнителната власт на местно, общинско, областно и национално равнище е **функция на партийната власт** на съответното равнище. Този принцип допреди няколко години по завиден начин регулираше взаимоотношенията между партийната структура и представителите на местното самоуправление. Но вече са налице много фактори и обстоятелства, които дават индикация за нови политически реалности в това взаимоотношение. Всички знаем, че за представители на общинското самоуправление издигаме относително най-подготвените ни кадри на местно равнище. След това ги превръщаме до такава степен със "функция" на партийната структура, че дори и за назначаване на една секретарка кметът на общината трябва да иска мнението на партийния председател на общинската организация. Освен това местният бизнес даде допълнителна свобода и самочувствие на представителите на местното самоуправление. Обслужването на малкия и среден бизнес в общината, управлението на общинските обекти и фирми и възприемането на общинския бюджет като "дойна крава" започна да създава опасна конфликтна ситуация в т.нар. **триъгълник на местното самоуправление** и партийната структура: кмета и неговия екип, общинския съвет и общинската партийна структура.

За да се избегне задълбочаването на конфликта в този "триъгълник на властта", предлагам в устава да се направят съответните корекции, чрез които да се даде по-голяма свобода на представителите на местното самоуправление и се поставят в равнопоставено положение с партийната структура на общинско равнище.

Въпреки предложението ми за промяна на партийния статут на общински кмет, основната политическа отговорност си остава на общинската структура на ДПС. По Закона за местното самоуправление субектът на отговорност е кметът на общината и местният парламент. Но в процеса на Евроинтеграцията мястото и ролята на общинското самоуправление ще нараства във времето. Тъкмо затова е необходимо да се конституира по-голяма степен на свобода на общинския кмет, която да съответства на неговата реална отговорност. Тайната на властта в процеса на Евроинтеграцията ще бъде **в балансирането и координацията, а не в налагането и субординацията**.

Втората група проблеми са свързани със състоянието на партийните ни структури в работен режим.

На предишната ни национална конференция бяхме поели курс за **"декапсулиране"** на партийните ни структури. За голямо съжаление партийната ни "капсула" не само, че не се отвори, но и укрепил позициите си. Ако преди четири-пет години **структурата на партийната капсула** се образуваше от два компонента в лицето на **партийната структура** и представителите на **местната власт**, на този етап има и трети компонент с включването в този порочен кръг на представители на **местния бизнес**. В този си вид местната капсула, която като персонализиран състав не представлява повече от пет-шест души в дадена община, определя цялата политика на общината - и в добрия, и в лошия смисъл на тази дума. Това в никакъв случай не е "приятелски кръг", а по-скоро е **кръг на съгласуваните лични интереси на група хора**, които по принцип безнаказано и в рамките на закона и на партийния ни устав могат да постигнат всичко.

За "непросветените" делегати и гости по тази тема бих искал да добавя и това, че

този "кръг на интересите" по естествен начин включва и **фамилно-родовия принцип**, който в завършен вид наподобява на грижливо изградена пирамида на властта, която образува статуквото в цели региони.

Надявам се националната ни конфедерация да има специално отношение към този болезнен въпрос на нашата партия.

Използвам случая, за да се обърна специално към ветераните и към най-младите членове на Движението. Само във ваше лице виждам факторите и енергията за разбиването на тази опасна за ДПС капсула.

За да ви стане ясно точно за какво говоря, обзалагам се, че още сега мога да ви кажа приблизително кои ще бъдат номинирани за кметове и съветници през следващите избори след четири години.

При наличие на тази капсула Движението ще има негативи, а избирателят основателно ще ни наказва, защото "няма да бъдем в час" за неговите очаквания и проблеми. **Декапсулирането** означава да дадем зелена светлина за младите и способните, които в редица отношения са по - подготвени от нас за новото време на Евроинтеграцията.

**Декапсулирането** ни задължава внимателно да изграждаме имиджа и авторитета на младите ни кадри, а не да ги спъваме и разочароваме с "родовите реалности", още преди да са проходили в терена на реалната политика.

**Декапсулирането** означава и отваряне на вратите ни за онези наши активисти и симпатизанти, особено сред представителите на интелигенцията, които сме обидили и отблъснали.

**Евроинтеграцията задава обединителна стратегия на малцинствата и техните политически организации и представителства.** Защото единният политически субект консолидира електората и поставя с по-голяма тежест въпросите си за идентичността и на социалните проблеми на избирателите.

Но отварянето на вратите на онези наши съмишленици, които сме отблъснали временно от Движението, трябва да се съчетае с **твърд курс и повишаване градуса на партийната дисциплина.** Така, както Евроинтеграцията и интеграцията на малцинствата в гражданското общество задължително предполага актуализиране на ценностите и принципите на етнорелигиозната ни идентичност.

Уважаеми дами и господа !

Опитът през последните десет години показва, че всеки, който е тръгнал да разцепва и унищожи ДПС, изпада в губеща позиция. Очевидно нашите противници не можаха да разберат, че **Движението през последните десет години се превърна в "религия" за нашите избиратели.** Затова апелирам към всички обидени и разсърдени да преодолеят себе си и да се върнат при нас. ДПС се легитимира като колективна политическа личност и в този смисъл е изпитаният защитен механизъм на всеки от нас поотделно.

В тази връзка искам да направя **две предложения** към делегатите на националната конференция.

**Първото** е свързано с 10 годишния юбилей на Движението. Предлагам националната конференция да реабилитира изключените по чл.6 от Устава на ДПС членове на организацията.

**Второто** ми предложение е свързано с вливането на други алтернативни организации в структурите на Движението. В залата се намират 30 наши гости от "Партията на демократичните промени". Тяхното желание е да закрият партията си и да се върнат при нас. За целта е необходимо националната конференция да приеме решение, с което да им даде делегатски права на нашата национална конференция.

Разбира се, **реабилитацията** е индивидуален акт, вливането на една организация към структурите на ДПС - колективен акт. Надявам се, че новият Централен съвет на ДПС своевременно ще приеме и необходимите процедурни правила за едното и другото.

Уважаеми делегати и гости !

След около една година България ще бъде изправена пред решаващи парламентарни избори. А след още една година ни предстоят и президентски избори.

На **парламентарните избори** вотът на избирателите окончателно ще реши въпроса за двуполюсният модел за управление на страната: България както никога до сега има нужда от коалиционен, а не от едноцветен кабинет. Евроатлантическата интеграция задава диалога, съгласието и партньорството като задължителни условия при определяне на приоритетите и евростратегията на България.

**Националният интерес в контекста на евростратегията** предлага максимално национално съгласие и минимално конфронтиране на политическите сили. По тази логика партия, която на всяка цена иска самостоятелно да управлява, поставя под въпрос националните интереси на България.

Но в тази връзка бих искал да бъде много ясен и правилно разбран. За ДПС няма такава ценност, в името на която да жертва правата и свободите на малцинствата, а следователно - и собствената си идентичност като партия. Идентичността на малцинствата не трябва и не може да се жертва заради интеграцията им в обществото.

Фундаменталният въпрос "**Кой съм аз?**" положи началото на Новото политическо време след периода на студената война. Върху този въпрос за идентичността е изградена и основата на западната мултикултурност. Интеграцията започва там и тогава, където е очертан и осъзнат **общият интерес от заедността** на различните народи в условията на съвременния свят. Подчертавам това, защото все още голяма част от политиците възприемат **интеграцията** на малцинствата в гражданското общество като синоним за тяхната асимилация. Това не само се разминава с европейските ценности, но винаги е била опасна идея за такъв регион като Балканите.

Уважаеми дами и господа !

В контекста на **Пакта за стабилност** на Балканите на ДПС му предстои да се утвърди като знакова политическа сила с **наднационално значение за региона**. Защото **Българският модел** за решаване на малцинствените проблеми е **алтернатива** на етническото прекрояване на границата на Балканите. Но условието за приложимостта на Българският модел на Балканите задължително предполага превръщането му в работещ модел вътре в страната. **Българският модел си има цена и това е инвестиции в смесените в етническо отношение региони**. Всички знаем, че безработицата в нашите региони е 4-5 пъти по-висока от средната безработица в страната. Тъкмо затова назря времето **инвестициите в смесените региони** да бъдат **най-важният приоритет на ДПС** за следващите години. За Движението, като либерално-демократична формация, Евроинтеграцията и вписването на България в Евроатлантическата ценностна система на практика означава насърчаване на личната бизнес инициатива; създаване на условия за малкия и средния бизнес в смесените региони и издигане на социалния статус на нашите избиратели.

От тази гледна точка **инвестициите се превръщат в реалния критерий кой колко оценява Българския модел** като праобраз на Новия модел на Балканите. А създаването на условия за външни и вътрешни инвестиции трябва да бъде реалния аршин за измерване на цялостната дейност на местното самоуправление в нашите региони.

Уважаеми делегати на националната конференция !

На края ми позволете да Ви благодаря за доброто представяне на "Местни избори-99".

Загубата на Кърджали е факт. Разбира се, и по наша вина. Но всички трябва да знаят, че Кърджали и Кърджалийски регион без наше участие трудно могат да се управляват. В Кърджали спечели формулата "Ние - Вие", която разделя и противопоставя хората един срещу друг. Въпреки това на "Местни избори-99" ДПС удвои реалното си присъствие в общинското самоуправление на равнище общински кметове, зам. -кметове и председатели на общински съвети.

Позволете ми от името на националната конференция специално да благодаря на нашата младеж и на младежката ни организация за авангардното ѝ участие в "Местни избори-99".

И в това , по случай 10 - годишнината на Движението, има нещо много дълбоко и символично.

Пожелавам на националната конференция ползотворна работа и добронамерена критичност и самокритичност.

Движението оцеля, защото през последните 10 години правеше политика не върху реалностите на вчерашния, дори и на днешния ден. А върху основата на онова, което ни предстои в утрешния ден. Само по този начин можем да се впишем по най-добрия начин в Новото политическо време и да приличаме на себе си.

В тази връзка виждам тръпката на новото очакване във вашите очи. Това е добре. Защото говори за жизненост и подготвеност към предизвикателствата в началото на третото хилядолетие.

Благодаря Ви за вниманието.

29.01.2000г.  
гр. София

АХМЕД ДОГАН

## ANNEX V

**Поздравление от Експрезидента на Р. България  
и Почетен председател на Либерална Демократична Алтернатива  
д-р Желю Желев.**

**Приветствие - IV Конференция на ДПС.**

Уважаеми Господин Председател,

Уважаеми приятели, делегати и гости на Националната конференция на Движението за права и свободи.

За мен е особена чест и удоволствие да приветствам участниците в IV Конференция на ДПС.

Сегашната Национална конференция на Движението за права и свободи съвпада с десетгодишнината от основаването на Движението и този юбилей представлява един добър повод да се каже за мястото и ролята на тази политическа партия в живота на нова демократична България. ДПС е парламентарно представена политическа сила, която достойно е присъствала във всички парламенти, като се започне от Великото Народно събрание и се свърши със сегашното 38 Обикновено Народно събрание. През изминалите десет години не по-малко респектиращо беше присъствието и участието на Движението за права и свободи в органите на местната власт. Имаше периоди, когато ДПС излизаше на втора позиция и се налагаше като втора политическа сила в местната власт. В края на 1992 г. с мандата на ДПС беше съставено правителството на Република България. Но при оценката на една политическа партия, може би много по-важна е съдържателната политика, която тя провежда, отколкото формалните показатели за нейното присъствие в различните държавни власти или в различните области на страната. През целия период на промените ДПС беше една умерена и балансирана политическа сила, която не се подаде на изкушенията на екстремизма и сепаратизма, макар че не липсваха измамни сирени, които припяваха подобни мотиви. И ако днес мнозина от нашите политици се хвалят с българския модел за решаване на междуетническите проблеми или го дават за пример из Европа, трябва да признаем, че ние до голяма степен го дължим на ДПС, на неговата съвременна европейска политика.

Движението за права и свободи още от началото на своето създаване се самоопредели като неолиберална партия. Затова нейният представител в парламентарната асамблея на съвета на Европа винаги сядаше в парламентарната група на Европейските либерални партии. Затова ДПС стана и един от инициаторите за учредяването на Либерално-демократичния съюз, заедно с други три либерални

партии - Нов избор на Димитър Луджев, либерално-демократична алтернатива - партия на свободата и свободната радикал-демократическа партия. Чрез този либерален съюз ДПС заедно с другите партии, успя да стане асоцииран член на Либералния интернационал и на Европейската либерална партия.

Мисля, че за десет години, за десетгодишен период, това е славна и динамична история за една партия, която е работила през периода на прехода. За съжаление местните избори показаха, че Либерално-демократичния съюз, като политическа коалиция на практика не се състоя. Коалициите, която всяка от партиите на Либерално-демократичния съюз беше сключила с други партии, се оказаха повече отколкото коалициите между самите либерални партии вътре в ЛДС.

От това смятаме, че всички загубихме. Временните тактически изгоди на много места осуетиха по-голямата цел. Но ние смятаме, че изграждането на реален Либерално-демократичен съюз е ключа и първата абсолютно необходима стъпка към изграждането на политическия център в България. И на страната такъв център е необходим. Не става дума за балансър, който в рамките на двуполюсният модел да накланя везните на едната или на другата страна, а за истински политически център - трети център за взимане на политически решения и генериране на политически идеи и провеждане на инициативи. Трети център, който да преодолее, да разчупи компрометираната вече двуполюсен модел на нашето политическо пространство. Изследванията показват, че идеята за такъв пълноценен център с дясна либерална и лява социалдемократическа част е много популярен, не само сред лидерите на центристките партии. Хората търсят нещо ново, нещо трето, и мнозина виждат това трето именно в центристкия политически център. Местните избори също го подсказаха по един много убедителен начин. Там където беше изграден центъра - успехите бяха налице. Разбира се, дали този център ще стане реалност до парламентарните избори ще зависи от интелигентността на центристките лидери, от тяхното чувство за отговорност, защото става дума не за тясно партийни интереси и домогвания, а за нещо много по-голямо, много по-важно - става дума за българските национални интереси. Този детайл придобива особена важност и значимост в периода, когато България трябва да направи големи усилия за приемането на страната в Европейския съюз, а това не може да бъде постигнато без политически и граждански консенсус. Ние вярваме, че в осъществяването на това голямо дело ще бъдем заедно с нашите приятели от Движението за права и свободи. Прочее, желая на вашата Национална конференция успешна и ползотворна работа за благо на Република България.

Table 4. MRF participation in the 1990 Elections to the Grand National Assembly

**Date:** first round: 10 June; Second round: 17 June

**Number of Registered voters:** 6,976,620

**Turnout:** 90.79% (first round single-member constituencies); 90.78% (first round-list); 84.14% (second round - held only in 81 constituencies)

**Votes:** total cast: 6,334,415 (single-member); 6,333,334 (list); valid: 6,090,119 (first round single-member); 6,124,501 (first round- list); 2,349,284 (second round).

BSP - Bulgarian Socialist Party (Balgarska Socialisticheska Partiya)	2,887,766	47.15	97	N/A	114	211
UDF- Union of Democratic Forces (Sajuz na Demokratichnite Sili)	2,217,798	36.21	75	N/A	69	144
MRF - Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Dvijenie za Prava i Svobodi)	491,596	8.03	12	N/A	11	23
BANU - Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (Balgarski Zemedelski Naroden Sajuz)	368,929	6.02	16	N/A	0	16
Fatherland Front (Otechestven Front)	N/A	0	0	N/A	2	2
Fatherland Party of Labour (Otechestvena Partiya na Truda)	36,668	0.60	0	N/A	1	1
Social Democratic Party (Social-democratcheska Partiya)	N/A	0.72	0	N/A	1	1
Alternative Socialist Party (Alternativna Sotsialisticheska Partiya)	22,064	0.36	0	N/A	0	0
Alternative Socialist Association (Alternativna Sotsialisticheska Sajuz)	16,061	0.26	0	N/A	0	0

Liberal Party - Pernik	15,034	0.25	0	N/A	0	0
Union of Disabled (Sajuz na Invalidite)	N/A	0.17	0	N/A	0	0
Union of Non-Party Members Independent	N/A	0.16	0	N/A	0	0
	-	0	0	N/A	2	2
Other 29 parties and associations	68,584	1.12	0	N/A	0	0
TOTAL	6,124,501	100	200	N/A	200	400

**Table 5. 1991 Parliamentary Elections**

**Date:** 13 October

**Number of registered voters:** 6,790,006

**Turnout:** 83.87%

**Votes:** total cast: 5,694,842; valid: 5,540,837

UDF - Union of Democratic Forces (Sajuz na Demokratichnite Sili)	1,903,567	34.36	110	45.83
Pre-election Union of BSP - Bulgarian Socialist Party (Balgarska Socialisticheska Partiya)	1,836,050	33.14	106	44.17
MRF - Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Dvijenie za Prava i Svobodi)	418,168	7.55	24	10
Bulgarian National Agrarian Union-United (Balgarski Zemedelski Narodni Sajuz - Obedineni)	214,052	3.86	0	0
Bulgarian National Agrarian Union "Nikola Petkov" (Balgarski Zemedelski Narodni Sajuz "Nikola Petkov")	190,454	3.44	0	0
Union of Democratic Forces-Centre (Sajuz na Demokratichnite Sili - Tzentar)	177,295	3.20	0	0
Union of Democratic Forces-Liberals (Sajuz na Demokratichnite Sili - Liberali)	155,902	2.81	0	0
Kingdom of Bulgaria	100,883	1.82	0	0

Federation (Federatsia Tzarstvo Balgaria)				
Bulgarian Business Bloc (Balgarski Biznes Blok)	73,379	1.32	0	0
Bulgarian National Radical Party (Balgarska Natsionalna Radikalna Partiya)	62,462	1.13	0	0
Bulgarian Business Party (Balgarski Biznes Partiya)	51,497	0.93	0	0
"Freedom" Coalition for the Tarnovo Constitution ("Svoboda" Koalitsija za Tarnovskata Konstitutsija)	39,719	0.72	0	0
BCP - Bulgarian Communist Party (Balgarska Komunisticheska Partiya)	39,386	0.71	0	0
25 other parties and 17 independents	278,023	5.02	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,540,837</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6. 1994 (pre-term) Parliamentary Elections**

**Date:** 18 December

**Number of registered voters:** 6,997,954

**Turnout:** 75.23%

**Votes:** total cast: 5,264,448; valid: 5,202,065

Coalition BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party (Balgarska Socialisticheska Partiya) - BZNS - BAPU - Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union - Alexander Stanboliski (Balgarski Zemedelski Narodni Sajuz - Aleksander Stanbolijnski) - PC "Ecoglasnost")	2,262,943	43.50	125	52.08
UDF - Union of Democratic Forces (Sajuz na	1,260,374	24.23	69	28.75

Demokraticnite Sili)				
(BZNS-DP) - People's Union - Coalition of Bulgarian Agrarian National Union and Democratic Party (Naroden Sajuz - Balgarski Zemedelski Naroden Sajuz + Demokraticheska Partiya)	338,478	6.51	18	7.50
MRF - Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Dvijenie za Prava i Svobodi)	283,094	5.44	15	6.25
BBB - Bulgarian Business Bloc (Balgarski Biznes Blok)	245,849	4.73	13	5.42
Democratic Alternative for the Republic (Demokraticzna Alternativa za Republikata)	197,057	3.79	0	0
BCP - Bulgarian Communist Party (Balgarska Komunisticheska Partiya)	78,606	1.51	0	0
NCU - "New Choice" Union (Sajuz Nov Izbor)	77,641	1.49	0	0
PU Patriotic Union (Patriotichen Sajuz)	74,350	1.43	0	0
Kingdom of Bulgaria Federation (Federatsija Tzarstvo Balgarija)	73,205	1.41	0	0
Kingdom of Bulgaria National Movement for Monarchical Democracy (Tzarstvo Balgarija - Dvijenie za Koronovana Demokratsija)	40,642	0.78	0	0
Kingdom of Bulgaria Union of	31,884	0.61	0	0

Royalist Forces (Tzarstvo Balgarija - Sajuz na Rojalistkite Sili)				
Bulgarian National Radical Party (Balgarska Natsionalna Radicalna Partiya)	27,853	0.54	0	0
35 other parties and coalitions + 8 independent candidates	210,089	4.04	0	0
TOTAL	5,202,065	100	240	100

**Table 7. 1997 Parliamentary Elections**

**Date:** 19 April

**Number of registered voters:** 7,289,956

**Turnout:** 58.87%

**Votes:** total cast: 4,291,258; valid: 4,256,928

ODS* - United Democratic Forces (Obedineni Demokraticni Sili)	2,223,714	52.02	137	57.08
DL** - Democratic Left (Demokraticna Levitsa)	939,308	21.97	58	24.16
ONS*** - Alliance for National Salvation (Obedinenie za Natsionalno Spasenie)	323,429	7.57	19	7.91
EL - Euro-Left Coalition (Koalitsija Evrolevitsa)	234,058	5.48	14	5.83
BBB - Bulgarian Business Bloc (Balgarski Biznes Blok)	209,796	4.91	12	5
BKP - Bulgarian Communist Party (Balgarska Komunisticheska Partiya)	50,864	1.19	0	0
OC - Alliance for the King (Obedinenie za Tzarja)	46,765	1.09	0	0
Bulgarian Christian Coalition (Balgarska Hristijanska Koalitsija)	26,614	0.62	0	0
Democratic Justice	20,433	0.48	0	0

Party (Partiya za Demokraticzna Spavedlivost)				
Bulgarian Party of Women (Balgarska Partiya za Jenite)	16,061	0.38	0	0
LF - Liberal Forum (Liberalen Forum)	13,638	0.32	0	0
28 other parties	150,639	3.52	0	0
10 independent candidates	19,335	0.45	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,274,654</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>100</b>

\* (UDF Obedineni Demokratichni Sili - United Democratic Forces) = UDF (Sajuz na Demokratichni Sili - Union of Democratic Forces) + BZNS (Balgarski Zemedelski Naroden Sajuz - Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union) + DP (Demokraticheska Partiya - Democratic Party) + BSDP (Balgarska Sotsialna Demokraticheska Partiya - Bulgarian Social Democratic Party)

\*\* DL (Democratichnata Levitsa - Democratic Left) = BSP (Balgarska Socialisticheska Partiya - Bulgarian Socialist Party) + DE (Dvijenie Ekoglasnost - Ecoglasnost Movement) + BZNS-AS (Balgarski Zemedelski Naroden Sajuz - Aleksander Stambolijnski - Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union - Alexander Stambolijnski)

\*\*\* ONS (Obedinenie za Nacionalno Spasenie - Union for National Salvation) = UDF (Dvijenie za Pravata i Svobodie - Movement for Rights and Freedoms) + ZP (Zelena Partiya - Green Party) + SNI (Sajuz Nov Izbor - Union New Choice)

#### **SOURCES:**

- Democracy Traditions Foundation <http://www.math.bas.bg/dt/>;
- Georgi Karasimeonov (1998) "Bulgaria" in *The handbook of political change in Eastern Europe*, ed. Sten Berglund, Tomas Hellén, Frank H. Aarebrot, Cheltenham: Elgar.
- Bulgaria Online <http://www.online.bg/main/politics.htm>

## ANNEX VI

It should be noted that the monitoring of the coverage of the Turkish minority in the main Bulgarian newspapers during the monitoring period 1996-1999 has clearly indicated Based on quantitative analysis a decrease of the share of negative articles in favour of an increase of positive and neutral publications. For example during the period April – September 1997 that share of negative articles was 32% of all publications focusing on the Turkish ethnic group. However, during the October 1997- March 1998 period it dropped to 27% and in the period April – September 1998 it registered a further decrease to 21%.<sup>426</sup> Thus, during the monitored period from October 1996 to September 1998 the number of negative publications has shrank with approximately one third. On the other hand, during the monitored period the number of articles in the category of positive or neutral has increased. In the period October 1996 – March 1997 it was 65%, in the period April – September 1997 it increased to 67%, and in the period April – September 1998 a substantial jump to approximately 80% was registered. These trend could seen in the following table.

**Table 8. Turkish minority in the main stream media**

	Negative	positive + neutral	Sensational	Total No.
Oct 1996 – March 1997	n.a.	n.a.,		140
April – September 1997	32%	65%	3%	140
October 1997- March 1998	27%	67%	6%	176
April – September 1998	21%	79% (including sensational in this case)		139

**Table 9. Bulgarian Muslims in the main stream media**

	Negative	positive + neutral	sensational	Total No.
Oct 1996 – March 1997	n.a.	n.a.,		140
April – September 1997	27%	56%	17%	142
October 1997- March 1998	33%	55%	12%	139
April – September 1998	33%	67% (including sensational in this case)		54

<sup>426</sup> Roumen Yanovski, "Balkan Neighbours in the Bulgarian Press", *Balkan Neighbours Newsletter*, No. 6 and No 9, ACCESS Association, Sofia, 1999.

**Map 1. Geographic Distribution of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria<sup>427</sup>**



The largest numbers of Turkish minority members have been concentrated in two geographic areas. One is situated in Southern Bulgaria, where Turkish minority members have been concentrated mainly in Blagoevgrad, Pazardzjik, and Bourgas district. In the northern parts of the country Turkish minority members have been concentrated mainly in Razgrad, Shoumen, and Silistra regions.

<sup>427</sup> Source: *Godishen Obzor za ranno signalizirane*, (ed. Atanas Gochev, Sofia, PROON, 1998), p.85.

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