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(Transversal theme ; 1)



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# To Call You a Bulgarian is the Greatest Joy for Me

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*Предложеният текст опитва да набележи основните измерения на образа на етническите и религиозни малцинства в България в периода 1878-1912 г. Основно внимание се обръща на официалната държавна политика, намерила израз в училищата и армията. Анализират се и произведения на известни български писатели, наред със стихотворения, песни и текстове, публикувани в песнопойки, алманаси и календарчета. Авторът стига до основния извод, че образът на малцинствата в общи линии е негативен, макар изключения да могат да бъдат намерени. Държавата като цяло не им обръща внимание на практическо ниво, оставя ги да живеят в своя собствен свят и не ги включва в своите модернизационни усилия.*

It may sound a little bit strange but maybe this is the first time I have ever written a text starting with the title<sup>1</sup> and only then beginning to gather the materials. The title seemed to me to be quite impressive and self explanatory. Unfortunately, the beautiful edifice of my thoughts began to crumble almost immediately.

I began my research with a pre-conceived thesis. The modern Bulgarian state was founded in 1878 after one of the recurring Russo-Turkish wars of 18th-19th century on a part of the nation's ethnic territory. At least this is what Bulgarian politicians and the Bulgarian people in general thought. From the very beginning it was a state which repeatedly declared in words and in deeds its yearning for modernization, a state which set before itself an important national goal – to bring together under one political roof all lands thought to be inhabited by Bulgarians. I felt pretty sure that I might expect the modern state to have made enormous efforts during the period and what is more those efforts should have been conscientious, purposeful and well thought out in order to unite the citizens of the young country in a single will; that it should have thought out how to turn them into a sharpened dagger of its national ambition, into an instrument for winning a leading position in the Balkans. In other words, I planned to trace part of the process of transformation of the individual who lived in a closed patriarchal society into a citizen of a modern society – as regards its philosophy and its political achievements. I was quite sure – I thought I knew – that such efforts, though different in intensity, had been made for the mass of the population. I did not want to dwell on them in so much as those problems have been discussed in length by a number of historians. Therefore, my interest lay rather with those groups that were, to a certain extent, marginal i.e. ethnic and religious minorities. I wanted to see how the Bulgarian rulers had tried to change the socium of the minorities, to make them believe that the environment they lived in was a part of a politi-

cal organization of which they were an inalienable part, that granted them rights but at the same time required the fulfilment of certain obligations.

In one of his books, not the famous *Open Society and Its Enemies*, but in a study on logics of the scientific analysis written in the 1960s, Karl Popper argues that, as a rule, in the beginning of his research the scholar diligently, in good faith and impartially picks out different pieces of information, builds up a plausible hypothesis and afterwards energetically keeps gathering specific information throwing out as of small importance what does not correspond to his thesis and declaring of utmost importance what is in accord with the already established facts. It is exceptionally rare, the philosopher says, that the researcher gives up his initial hypothesis. But this is what happened to me.

Let me start by describing the clay legs of my arguments. There was nothing original in them. It was rather a medley of universally recognized truths. The presumptions ensuing from them, however, turned out to be wrong.

The first one was based on the ethnic and religious structure of the population of the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia which united in a single country in September 1885.

According to the census of 31st December 1887 the population of united Bulgaria was 3,154,375 inhabitants. The Bulgarians, or rather those whose mother tongue was Bulgarian, were less than two thirds. Turkish speakers were over 600 thousand, Greek speakers were about 60 thousand, Gypsies over 20 thousand (they were probably grossly underestimated), Jews about 30 thousand, Wallachians (Romanians), perhaps 34 thousand.

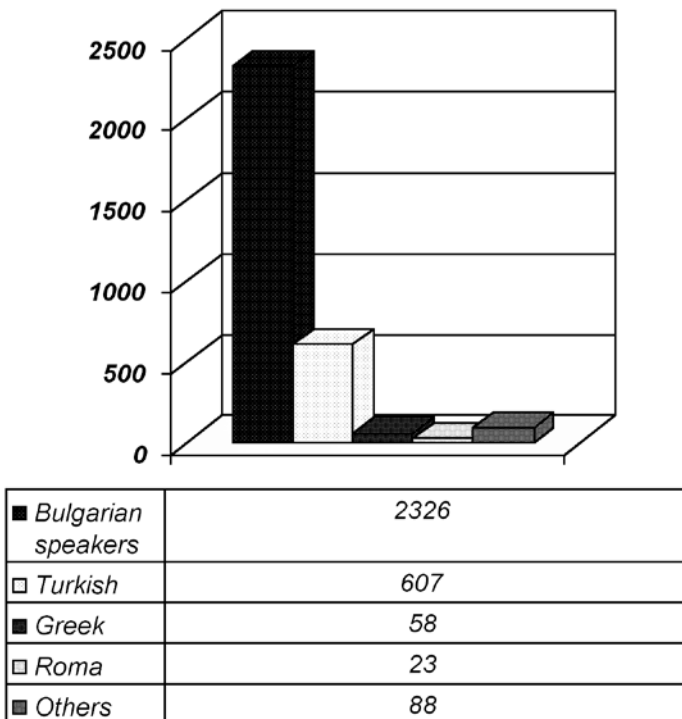


Fig. 1  
1887 Bulgarian Census (Population in thousands).

According to religion about 700 thousand or over 22% were Moslems and the vast majority of the rest of the population were Orthodox with a sprinkling of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. In other words, there were considerable ethnic and religious minority groups among the Bulgarian speaking Orthodox.

The second clay leg was the nature of the Bulgarian national program. Without going into details, it can be defined by one general and approximate formula – the boundaries of Greater San Stefano Bulgaria set by Russia in the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 and destroyed by the great Powers at the Berlin Congress several months later. San Stefano Bulgaria encompassed virtually all territories inhabited by Bulgarians on the Balkan Peninsula. In Berlin, Bulgaria was deprived of more than one third of what it thought was its due. San Stefano Bulgaria became the hue and cry of virtually all Bulgarian politicians between 1878 and the beginning of the Balkan wars of 1912-1913. It was difficult to expect and hardly anyone sober-minded politician anticipated that this goal might be attained without overcoming the persistent resistance of all Bulgaria's neighbours and, in the first place, that of Turkey. Whatever the approach to the methods for achieving this goal was – cultural propaganda in Macedonia and the Thrace Edirne area; support of the Bulgarian national church; support of the Bulgarian language education in the irredenta; relying on the policy of one or another Great Power; secret or open support for the revolutionary movement in the Turkish-held regions – behind the events, perhaps not so openly but discernibly for the careful, there was the shadow of the Bulgarian state and of its army. The state as a political organization and the army as an instrument of politics inevitably played an exceptionally important part as a basis and as means for realization of national ideals. Historical analogies, no matter how unreliable they may be in certain cases, also underlined the role of these two factors. The unification of Italy in the 1860s, as well as the unification of Germany in the 1870s, quite fresh as a historical memory (most of the Bulgarian statesmen had witnessed those event) eloquently spoke of their paramount importance.

Even for the blindest patriot however the power of the Bulgarian state and of its army paled in comparison with that of the Ottoman Empire. For more than three decades the expenses for the army were the basic item in the Bulgarian budget. The results were impressive, but could not turn the tables. Even the most sustained and rigidly done recruiting could not bring the Bulgarian army to even one half of the size of the army of its principal adversary. The only hope was to prevail not by sheer numbers or by economic power but with unity, with the complete confidence of its citizens in one ideal. Such a unifying political ideal constituted the vigor and the energy of a modern polity. It had to bring the obsolete Ottoman empire to its knees. Virtue is the child of necessity. Thus Bulgarian military theoreticians eagerly embraced the French idea of *élan* as a basic prerequisite for military victory.

The process of turning the peasant into a citizen, the transformation of the local consciousness into a national one had proved to be a difficult task in Western Europe. There was no reason to think that it would be easier in the Balkans. But it was clear – or at least that is what I optimistically thought – that the lessons of the West should have been learnt and implemented.

According to the American sociologist James Aho every society attempts to secure social order against threats; tries to erect institutional barriers against threat. In a word, uniting the entire society should have been a consistent and persistent goal for all Bulgarian governments who needed as much staunch support for the inevitable conflict with the Ottoman Empire as they could garner. This, argued I, had to encompass various ideas, instruments, initiatives in order to convince all Bulgarian citizens that they are part of an integrated or at least to a great extent integrated national state organism.

The main paths for unifying the population are well known – education, army, religion and economics. The part played by national culture was paramount. The problem is that at this point of development, unlike the other above mentioned instruments, it was unpredictable. In those decades it was not guided – gently or otherwise – by the state. Such a heresy still had not dawned on anybody. Nevertheless I presumed that we could expect to find a fairly close relationship between popular culture and the stereotypes imposed by education.

It turned out that in most of my assumptions I was a mere babe in the woods.

## EDUCATION

The educational system developed rapidly after liberation. It was completely in the hands of the state and its central institutions. The private and the minority schools were subjected to strict scrutiny and were chaperoned by the Ministry of Education. At least in theory. The results were encouraging when compared with pre-war levels of literacy and education. The Bulgarians shortened the distance that separated them from Europe although they did not succeed in catching up. Literacy was on a higher level than that in neighbouring countries but lagged far behind that in developed countries. Education in the country until the Balkan Wars remained predominantly elementary, or, at best, secondary. The graduates of Sofia University founded in 1888, figuratively speaking, could be counted on the fingers of a hand. Contemporaries estimated that on the eve of the Balkan War of 1912 two thirds of the heads of offices in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had managed to attain only secondary education. Only 5 out of the 12 regional governors had university education and 3 did not even have a secondary school diploma. Not one of the 62 district chiefs had a university education and three fourths had not graduated from secondary school.

In other words, when the tens of thousands of recruits donned their khaki in September 1912 their ideas, attitudes, notions had been created and moulded by their elementary or, sometimes, secondary school. The textbooks, mostly those in history, geography and literature, shaped their basic ideas about the world in general and the place of Bulgarians in it. The lessons that children studied – mostly up to 14-15 year age when they had to leave schools to earn their bread and if they were lucky -butter - gave them basic ideas of Bulgarian literature, the past of the Bulgarians and their place in Europe. Whatever we might think of the quality of that education, it cannot be denied that it corresponded to the basic requirements of its time. This was an education for the children of Bulgaria. This education had to change them into citizens of Bulgaria, conscious of their social responsibilities and obligations. Such were the instructions of the ministries.

But which children of Bulgaria and what was meant by Bulgaria? Textbook writers had a prompt definition:

*“Fatherland is called the land in which one people lives”.*

And if more than one people lived there? Whose fatherland it was?

All methodological instructions of the ministries referred exclusively to the children of Bulgarian speaking families. In theory the children of the so called national and religious minorities (if we attempt to use modern terminology) could study and should have studied in Bulgarian schools where the teaching process, again in theory, was supposed to make them proud that they were part of the Bulgarian nation and to induce them to be ready to make every sacrifice in order to achieve its ideals. But few chose this path – sometimes for economic, sometimes for personal reasons. While one could meet at least some representatives of most ethnic and religious groups in primary schools, the percentage diminished progressively at each higher educational level. The only members of a minority among the nearly 900 students in First Sofia Girls’ Higher School were 40 Jewish girls. One might say that this was the situation in Sofia where the number of Moslems was negligible anyway. But in the Girls’ Higher School in Shumen in North East Bulgaria where there was a substantial Moslem presence, there was not a single Moslem among the students. Taking together the 5 pedagogical schools of the Principality at the beginning of last century, in a total of nearly 3000 students, there were 66 Jews, 7 Armenians, 8 Greeks and 5 Turks (the Moslems were male without exception).

We have mentioned that at least some children from the minority groups frequented primary schools. This is true. The problem was that they – or rather their parents – preferred their own minority schools whose existence was allowed by the Constitution.

With the exception of Jews and Armenians, the children of the rest of the minorities, insofar they attended school at all (among most of the minorities the percentage of elementary literacy was incomparably lower than that among Orthodox Bulgarians), they attended their own minority schools<sup>2</sup>.

Although in theory the schools had to follow the regulations of the Ministry of Education, the teaching in them in general left much to be desired. The administration paid them only furtive attention. It is true that it provided them with the necessary teachers in Bulgarian language and once in a while sent inspectors to visit them. This effort seemed to exhaust the Ministry’s energy. The inspectors as a rule had no knowledge of the language the students and the teachers spoke (and the Ministry doggedly refused to appoint inspectors from the relevant ethnic or religious groups). The result were justified complaints from both sides. Minority schools felt neglected and cut off from government funding. The Ministry judged the quality of teaching as abominably low. Moslem schools in particular were a thorn in the flesh. Students dropped out of them in droves. Most of the teachers were semi literate imams who could not and even at their best did not motivate students to continue their education. But complaints did not lead to effective action. It seems that the administration did not regard the students of these schools as a part and parcel of the Bulgarian cultural and educational space but rather as an appendage, a tedious obligation that could not be just swept under the carpet<sup>3</sup>.

The textbooks which could have been used in the minority schools (and it is not clear to what extent they were used), were the textbooks used all over Bulgaria. From those in history the little Turks could learn that they were descendents of a bloodthirsty people, guilty of the disasters that had befallen on the lands they lived in for the last five centuries. Already in an early and very popular textbook, the one compiled by Dragan Manchov, the Turks were defined “fanatic riff-raff of the religion of Mohamed”. In the small town of Zlatitza during the April Uprising of 1876 – the culmination of the national liberation struggle of the Bulgarians against the Ottomans – the Moslem irregulars – the bashi-bazouks – “looted everything up to the very and last needle and did not spare honor of females and children”. In the Rhodope village Batak “pomaks<sup>4</sup> converted to Mohammedanism attacked the Christian Bulgarians .... They gouged out the eyes of some victims, cut their hands and other parts of the body off and then finished them off; the wombs of pregnant women were ripped up and children were butchered in front of the eyes of their parents”.

These were the texts the Bulgarian Moslems – both Turks and Pomaks – had to study. On the other hand, children who spoke a language different from Bulgarian at home could learn nothing about themselves at school. Not a single textbook, be it on Bulgarian literature, history or geography contained a single word which could bring them responsibly and emotionally closer to the state they lived in. In the textbooks the presence of large areas populated by minority groups was usually omitted. Thus, describing Melnik area in Pirin Macedonia it was mentioned that “the region had 78 villages inhabited by Bulgarians”. That in Melnik itself there lived Greeks and Hellenised Bulgarians was not even mentioned.

In the textbooks the boundaries of the Bulgarian nation ran along the outer, broadest limits of the Bulgarian ethnos. No account was taken of the other groups that remained within these boundaries. The authors dutifully stressed that the Bulgarians were the most numerous Slav people on the peninsula – “in Macedonia – Bulgarians are mixed here and there with Greeks, Turks and Aromanians (tsintsars)...in Thrace – Bulgarians are mixed with a few Turks...”

In geography textbooks, it is true, it was mentioned that in the capital of the Principality there lived quite a number of Jews. Immediately the author added that in their residential district “the streets are quite unclean” – as if in the other neighbourhoods the cobblestones were washed with soap.

The literature taught was not much different. Nowhere in the readers on Bulgarian literature could there be found any example of the creative work of non-Bulgarians living within the boundaries of the common fatherland.

The authors of the official programs of the primary and secondary schools had mentioned that the whole population of the country and the religious groups in it had to be studied, but this remained only a good intention. Much space was allocated in textbooks to Bulgaria’s neighbours: to the Greeks perhaps in the first place, then to the Turks but as it occurred to no one that numerous groups of these two peoples lived on the territory of the Principality of Bulgaria. As one regional school inspector said: “Some teachers can-

not stir up patriotic feelings in the students when they study the historical events or the biographies of dedicated fighters for our freedom; yet others lean over backwards – they stir up chauvinistic feelings against Greeks, Turks and Serbs.”

The trend was evident in the instructions for studying Bulgarian history where the stress was put on the conflict with the neighbours, many of whom still had co nationals living in the Principality.

That language is of paramount importance for the national identification goes without saying. According to Aristotle, language constitutes a fundamental distinction between humans and non humans.

Though the chance of inspectors being well read in the works of the Greek philosopher was slim indeed, serious attention was paid to the teaching of Bulgarian language. Serious but limited to those who were part or were considered apt to be drawn into the civic nation. That is to say, language was considered to be one of the most reliable means for recovering the lost national consciousness among “marginal groups” like Hellenised Bulgarians or Bulgarian speaking Moslems.

According to the prominent university professor and no less prominent Minister of Education Ivan Shishmanov: “Bulgaria is inhabited by a certain number of minorities which enjoy the political and civil rights bestowed to them by the constitution. For them the doors of our primary school are wide open, but to be of benefit to them, they should at least more or less know the official language. And this can be achieved in special preparatory classes or even better, in kindergartens.”

This was, however an innovative thought that was not realized for almost a century.

## RELIGION

Religious images, and religious differences are also fundamental in the division between the ethnic groups. Mircea Eliade claims that man is a religious being – *homo religiosus*. In his view ‘we’, the representatives of the new, of our religion, are fighting against the representatives of the outgoing cosmos, in our case the Turks or the Moslems as a whole and to a certain extent the Greeks.

No doubts troubled the minds of the authors of textbooks. For them a Bulgarian was a Slav who spoke the Bulgarian language and professed the Orthodox faith. Not by chance in the textbook *Father Tongue* by D. Manchov it was underlined: “Since that time the Bulgarians hold tight to their faith Christian and Orthodox. They will never betray it.”

What about those who had betrayed it willy-nilly, who had embraced Islam? Were they Bulgarians? The answer is not clear. The right to be Bulgarians was not explicitly denied to the Bulgarian Catholics or Protestants although this was not expressed openly and the attitude towards them was rather condescending. In the geography textbooks their existence was only indicated without any comments. Bulgarian speaking Moslems constituted a knottier problem. As a rule, in the textbooks they were called Pomaks with the almost inevitable additional definition, Bulgarian Moslems. In other words in this case the linguistic element came first while the religious principle took second place. One of



the popular textbook authors emphasized that “the brighter and the braver Bulgarians were forced to turn Turk.” In other words, those who changed their religion, passed over to another ethnos. (One is tempted to make the unpleasant conclusion that the less bright and brave clung to their Bulgarian identity)

This ambiguity was quite evident in literary works. In *A Bulgarian Woman* by the patriarch of modern Bulgarian literature Ivan Vazov, the defining line was drawn either on religious basis -- “*We are Christians*”, explained the heroine of the story -- or on an ethnic basis -- “Oh, God, protect him, he is a Bulgarian, he has set off to offer himself as a scapegoat to defend Christian faith”. The pathetic pages on the Batak massacre in G. Dimitrov’s book, *The Principality of Bulgaria*, used in many places as a textbook, left little space for reconciliation: the word Pomak all but rhymed with the word ‘savage’.

Even hazier was the question of the Bulgarians in Macedonia who still clung to the Greek Patriarchy. They were considered Bulgarians, although temporarily misled, but in textbooks the methods to be used to make them return to the lawful bosom of their motherland and become part of the civic nation, were carefully avoided. The silence or rather the lack of proclaimed intentions suggested that their return would be a natural process, which could hardly be prevented by small religious differences. Not by chance, one of the first geography textbooks underlined that, “The Bulgarians profess the Eastern Christian faith; they have their own church administration whose chief is the Bulgarian Exarch”. There were no Patriarchists, according to the author and the Moslem Bulgarians were not even mentioned. Yet more significant was the statement that part of the Bulgarians in Macedonia “are still [sic] under the Greek Patriarchy”.

The conclusion was obvious – differences were temporary and would wither away. All Bulgarians had to become part of the Orthodox nation. The most genuine Bulgarians, according to the educational system, were the Orthodox, followed by the Patriarchists in Macedonia and then by the Pomaks. The levels of the Bulgarian-ness were clearly defined.

The official holiday system imposed after the Liberation played a similar role, too. It comprised of the traditional Christmas, Resurrection of Christ, the Ascension of Christ, New year, Epiphany, the Annunciation, the Assumption, St. Dimitri’s Day and St. Peter’s Day, but there were also new holidays and old holidays filled with a new content, like the Liberation of Bulgaria, St. George’s day, St. Cyril and Methodius, the Ascension to the Throne, the Independence of Bulgaria days. The state, regional and municipal institutions were closed down on the name day of Her Majesty the Queen, on Friday and on Saturdays of the Passion Week and on the days before Christmas and New Year. To remind the Moslems of what state they lived in, commercial public places in predominantly Moslem villages could stay open even during most of the holidays. The exceptions were three – for the Liberation and Independence of Bulgaria and the Ascension of H.M. the King to the Throne.

The Army was the institution which during these decades played an enormous and in many respects incomparable socializing role. In the army many recruits got their first lessons in literacy. Classes were provided in what nowadays we might call patriotic educa-

tion. It seems that the army command did not realize that according to the Constitution representatives of different nationalities were supposed to do their military service shoulder to shoulder. Henceforth the paradox -- both Bulgarians and Turks had to admire heroism of the leaders of the national revolution and to abhor the Pomaks, the destroyers of Batak in the eloquent patriotic interpretation of zealous junior commanders or master sergeants. It is true that half of the Moslems avoided military service by money payments, but it is also true that half of them served as soldiers.

Even one of the best historians of the time, Nikola Stanev in his *Short Bulgarian History*, prepared on purpose for soldiers, depicted the tragedy and the triumph of the April uprising in words that plainly show that he never thought that in the Bulgarian army Moslems served side by side with Bulgarians: "The Turks and the Pomaks assaulted the Bulgarian population, plundered its property, burnt down its villages and in Batak the Pomaks slaughtered the miserable Bulgarians on a stump in the middle of the village".

Mass culture. We shall not debate here on what is mass culture and what is a traditional one. At any event, many of the works written by the best Bulgarian writers turned into a part of the mass culture.

In the traditional culture the image of the non-Bulgarian neighbour comprised traditional negative elements but as a whole they were not very strong. The attitude towards both ethnic and religious minorities usually was slighting and hostile, although perhaps not at a concrete level.

The Wallachians were absent even in most of the stories written by Mihalaki Georgiev, born in the Vidin region<sup>5</sup>. Variations of the theme "dirty and thievish Wallachian" were words politicians used to vilify their political opponents in Northern Bulgarian newspapers.

In one of the folk songs from Liaskovo, in North Bulgaria, created around the Liberation and titled *A Brother in the Dungeon*, a Jewish maiden from Constantinople "a yellow kike sitting on a high veranda with pretty plank fences" begged Radka, a "white Bulgarian girl" to convince her brother Stoian, lying in prison, to take her as a wife. In return she promised to give him money. The brother refused; he preferred to lie in prison nine more years.... Radka urging him:

I told you to marry her not to live with her!  
Take her, my brother, take her,  
We'll go to the seaside.... to wash her  
And into the sea we'll push her.

The derogative ethnonym 'kike' gained wide currency in the political squabbles. On the other hand, a young Jew who turned down a public office in order to study a trade was a positive example in a story by Ivan Vazov.

The attitude towards Greeks was always negative. Inherited from the religious conflicts of the National revival and influenced by the struggles in Macedonia, it never became civilized. This is proven by the wide-spread anti-Greek pogroms in 1906. Vazov defined one of his female characters as "a girl...half Bulgarian, half Greek with a Byzantine cunning". He pushed his readers towards the idea that the anti-Greek feelings were rooted in his-

tory: “The Greek crimes in Macedonia had stirred up violent instincts... a hot atmosphere of hatred and rage that were both sincere and unquenchable... We were going through the passions of the era of Kaloian, the Greeks were burning with the brutal hatred of Vassilii the Bulgarian Slayer”

Newspapers and journals held the flag of anti Greek feelings high, but this is a separate and very relevant topic.

The attitude towards the Turks was ambiguous. It was not straightforwardly negative. Turks were duly blamed for their imperial past and its bloody crimes. In a popular story a mother from Macedonia was singing a lullaby: “Sleep, go to sleep, my baby! Your mother is an orphan. Your father is rebel. Evil Turks attacked the village, put the house on fire, murdered everyone”. In the play *Rouska* by Vazov, the Turk is not even human.

Ivan (scared) – *Whom did you kill! You have killed a man?*

Rouska – *I did not kill a man.*

Ivan – *But?...*

R. (imploringly and slowly) – *I’ve killed a Turk! Uncle, do not betray me.*

I. – *A Turk? ... Ah! You have killed a Turk.*

R. – *The worst one! A damned brute!*

On the other hand, the Turks were given credit for certain noble qualities: “Ah, the Turks, damn it, are given both the splendour and the lordship...No, there was kindness in the Turks. They beat us but they cared for us, too...Merciful people they were. We are brutes, God forgive me!”

More subtle was the attitude towards the Bulgarian Mohammedans. In his travel notes *In the Womb of the Rhodope Mountains* Vazov alleged that their “eye looks towards Asia despite the government’s concerns to nail them to the land of their fathers and grandfathers... They do not cherish the fatherland where the green prophet’s flag is not flying, dominant over all others”

A certain desire to include them in the Bulgarian civic nation existed but it went together with a deep lack of confidence in its success. Vazov asked his guide, a Bulgarian Mohammedan, ‘as if innocently’: “Alyu, you are a Bulgarian, aren’t you?” He answered to me in the affirmative with one muffled ‘oh’ and his face changed. And at once he began to speak of other things... After that short, dry ‘oh’ which resembled a growl I did not take the risk of asking my guide such questions ... This good Alyu is a wonderful man, calls the language of the Turks ‘swine’s language’, his imam a ‘priest’, drinks brandy and wine, maybe he would eat bacon, too; he admits in his mind that he is a Bulgarian, but will never allow himself to be told that – a contradiction meaningless in a dark soul, caught in the strangling arm of fanaticism...”

Gypsies were absent except maybe as an Oriental though quite a shabby element of colour in the canvases of painters like I. Murkvichka, A. Mitov and J. Oberbauer. In a popular school reader compiled by Ivan Vazov and K. Velichkov and in the school aids of D. Manchov, gypsies were given a major role in a short story which tried to explain why they lied, begged and drank so much. On the other hand, in public discourse they were considered to be pliable enough to be an invariable element of political machinations and fraudulent elections.

## THE SONGBOOKS

But the literary works listed so far have been traditionally considered an important instrument for shaping the mind of the public. On the other hand, collections of songbooks and almanacs, printed sometimes in tens of thousands of copies, up to now have been slighted by historians. Their role in shaping public ideology has been neglected.

The selection of the songs in a song book as a rule was patriotic. Along with standard texts of patriotic ballads like *Hadji Dimitar* and *The Hanging of Vassil Levski*, songs of the Macedonia insurgents ending with the appeal “Long live freedom!” were a must. They all breathed hatred towards ‘the other’ – be he a Serb, a Turk or a Greek – “the Greek-Turkish centuries-old yoke”.

Often the verses were quite naïve but such as to influence a virgin mind: “But the angry Bulgarian chases with hair sweating and knife in hand the Serb to catch him... The Serb had robbed his brother. The Bulgarian rose up to smash the Serbian obstinacy”.

The patriotic works were larded with fearful stories that decried the atrocities of the Turks. This is how the death of three Bulgarian shepherds in Macedonia was described in an almanac: “They are tied to one another... First they cut off their ears, then their noses and then the tortures become serious, Barbarian in cruelty. The Turks began their serious work. ‘Let’ skin their hands, their leader said...” And so on and so on.

And while it is hardly correct to mix the policy of the state with relations described in literature, art and folklore, we have to note that the authors and compilers were spokesmen of the prejudices of the society.

And in the end what was the image of the neighbour developed in those years? Some historians would say that it was the image of the enemy. In my opinion the conflict was not so sharp.

The enemy as a rule is connected with the fight between good and evil -- we can hardly use such categories in our situation – it is rather a difference between the ‘enemy’ and the ‘friend’ – the minority groups in Bulgaria gravitate between these two notions, with a definite unbalance toward the negative.

The image of the minorities, created in those years was more cognitive than affective. Usually it was distorted. The image of the minorities gives creates many opportunities for psychological, social-psychological and sociological research on the majority. I agree with the assertion of Karl Schmidt that the state is the institution which pinpoints the enemy and the friend. The easiest way to define the enemy is to show that he is fundamentally different from us. At the same time the differences were not always realized – in one and the same textbook the Bulgarian Mohammedans who slaughter the Bulgarians on a stump are enemies, and are alien and bad, while the Bulgarian ruler Khan Krum who cuts the heads of the Byzantines and drinks red wine in their skulls is good and is ours.

If we come back again to the arguments of Aristotle we will see that the members of the minority are not members of the *polis* or of the political society based on conscious and shared activity. They stand outside of it. Those who do not belong to political society are either beasts or gods – for explainable reasons ethnic and religious minorities could

become gods and the other alternative continued to exist no matter how much it was softened by civilization. Those who do not partake in the conscious and shared activity are not part of the society. They are a lawful prey, along with beasts.

The situation in Bulgaria correlates closely to the research of Michel Foucault who shows how the role of the other is to be excluded in the process of comparing his behaviour to that of the majority. The goal is to isolate the otherness, to limit it to where it can be monitored and controlled.

We should always remember that strict dichotomies are not always part of society. It prefers more neutral tones, chiaroscuro and shade effects.

As a rule the Bulgarian state and Bulgarian culture did not pay attention and did not show curiosity towards the ethnic and religious minorities. They were abandoned both by the Bulgarian state and society to live in a world of their own, moving slowly according to the traditional canons, a world in which modernity was always a novelty. From the Liberation to the Balkan Wars hundreds of towns and villages, pure Bulgarian or mixed, were renamed. Their Turkish names were exchanged for Bulgarian ones. The names of villages where the majority of inhabitants were Turks were left untouched as if to symbolize that they lived in their own world.

It is true that the minorities could develop a kind of a cultural life but it was only within the framework of their own community with almost with no meaningful contact with the dominant nation.

The official policy left a strong alien nucleus within the state. In other words, the modernization processes in Bulgaria, the ambition to create a modern citizen were not directed to the entire population but only to a part of it. Decades would pass before reaching the understanding that all citizens of the country should be equal participants in development of society.

On the other side, the situation was not much different in the other European countries at that time. We could hardly expect that the Bulgarians who wanted to fulfil their cherished national program would show the way in treating the minorities. As a contemporary poet says:

I sentence you to death through indifference.....  
 I sentence to death through distrust....  
 I sentence you to death in order for me to live<sup>6</sup>.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The title of this chapter is a paraphrase of two lines of one of the most popular poems of the 'national' poet, the 'patriarch' of Bulgarian literature Ivan Vazov (1850-1921). The lines in question in reality are: "To call Myself a Bulgarian is the Greatest Joy for me". Written in the 1880s and extolling the virtues of being a Bulgarian the poem has been included ever since in virtually every textbook for the small children.
- <sup>2</sup> In 1897 the ratio of literate recruits was 53% - among Jews the literate were 84%, among Armenians 80%, Bulgarians and Greeks 56%, Turks 5%, Roma 4%.
- <sup>3</sup> Minority schools:

Bulgarian catholic	5
Bulgarian protestant	7
Bulgarian Moslem	20
Turkish	1297
Greek	40
Jewish	33
Armenian	12
French	4
Tartar	54
German	1
Romanian	2
Lipovan	1
Catholic	6
Roma	1

<sup>4</sup> The Bulgarian-speaking Moslems, living in general in the Rhodope mountains and North central Bulgaria, were known as Pomaks.

<sup>5</sup> Many Romanians or Wallachians lived in this area.

<sup>6</sup> V. Hanchev, *Sentence*.

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Bulgaria is a country with rich culture and unique traditions, including these five astounding Bulgarian festivals you have to add to your bucket list. Arguably the most unusual of all major Bulgarian festivals is the International Bagpipe Festival, which takes place in the village of Gela in August. This is a traditional festival preserved by the Rhodope Mountains people and clans, aimed to promote their folklore and culture. While many people associate bagpipes with Scotland, Bulgaria also has its very own version. Playing the Rhodope Mountains bagpipe (locally known as the Kaba Gaida), one of Bulgaria's most significant folk music instruments, is a prerequisite for Bulgarian participants. Whether it be the men and women called up to serve, families separated from each other or people asked to take up new roles and skills to support the war effort, all had a part to play. At the start, the outlook seemed bleak; the end, distant; the outcome, uncertain, but we kept faith that the cause was right. And this belief, as my father noted in his broadcast, carried us through. Never give up, never despair, that was the message of V-E Day. I vividly remember the jubilant scenes my sister and I witnessed with our parents and Winston Churchill from the balcony of Buckingham Palace. The sens