# IDENTITY (TRANS)FORMATION AMONG BULGARIAN MUSLIMS

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This chapter analyzes identity formation among Bulgarian Muslims—Pomaks—especially since 1989, and it assesses the ways in which institutional structures in Bulgaria have mitigated *against* the rise of a politicized Pomak identity and muted ethnic conflict. In the case of the Bulgarian Muslims, political entrepeneurs who sought to use identity politics to mobilize support have had few tangible resources to offer in exchange. This is primarily because there was virtually no institutional basis for the politicization of Pomak cultural identity. In the historical process of nation-building, the marker for national identity became language rather than religion in Bulgaria. Bulgarian Muslims' religious "difference" from their Christian counterparts has proven insufficiently distinctive to permit the rise of a Pomak political identity. Nonetheless, recent events have shifted the balance of power and resources, allowing both for a potential for conflict to occur in the future and for observers to witness the process of political identity-formation in action.

The use of the term Muslim in the Bulgarian context needs precise elaboration. It is used as an ascriptive concept, comprising both religious Muslims and the large group of secular individuals recognizable as "Muslim" through names, kinship ties, rituals, etc. In terms of ethnolinguistic groups, the largest among them is the group of ethnic Turks, followed by Bulgarian-speaking Muslims and Muslim gypsies. There are also some confessional nuances between the dominant Sunni majority and a small Shi'ite (Kizilbas) minority. This paper will confine itself to the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, further referred to as Bulgarian Muslims or Pomaks.[1]

The first part of this chapter discusses the historical background of identity-formation in the larger Balkan setting and out-

lines the development of the Bulgarian Muslim population until the end of the 1980s. This background is essential for understanding the particular mechanisms of (national) identity-formation in the region, as well as the articulation of claims and interests which invariably evoke those historical precedents or arguments that politicize cultural identity. The following sections analyze internal and external factors influencing the formation of a politicized cultural identity and the factors leading to cultural conflict suggested by the propositions that comprise the analytic framework of this volume. I examine the influence of domestic political institutions—political parties and organizations—in articulating interests and charging group identities. I also look at cultural and psychological ingredients: the role of language, religion, and education in affirming or transforming identities, as well as the workings of ethnic hierarchies and stereotypes. Further, I examine the process of economic liberalization in Bulgaria after the collapse of communism. That is, I look at the direct repercussions of the cataclysmic transformations in the overall economy on different ethnic/confessional groups and the possible link between perceived economic interests and individual identity, group identity, and loyalty. The external factors comprise aspects of regional and global security, as well as foreign political and economic pressures. In particular, I explore how the prospects for regionalization (particularly in relation to Turkey) directly affect political formations and group interests and thus (indirectly) identities. This also poses the question of the economy as part of national security, as it has been increasingly interpreted today. In this general framework I explore the concrete case of the Bulgarian Muslims as an intermediate group caught halfway between and claimed by both opposing poles.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The existence of Muslim enclaves in the Balkans is the direct legacy of five centuries of Ottoman rule over the peninsula. The fundamental consequence of the establishment of the Pax Ottomana in the Balkans was the abolition of state and feudal frontiers, something which facilitated or enhanced population movements and the

interpenetration of different population groups within a vast territory. Although there are no reliable aggregate figures on population shifts before the nineteenth century, attempts have been made to assess the character and effects of these movements. The chief historiographical controversy centers on explanations for the sizable Muslim population in the Balkans: colonization versus conversion theory.[2] Whereas there were significant population transfers from Anatolia to the Balkans between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, by the sixteenth century this settler colonization process had stopped, and yet the percentage of Muslims in the region continued to grow (albeit staying in the minority). This suggests that in fact there were a great number of personal conversions to Islam among the non-Muslim populations of the Balkans. The nonenforced or so-called voluntary conversions can be viewed as the result of indirect pressure or coercion (economic and social, but not necessarily administrative), with the goal of attaining social recategorization. It is, moreover, the individual and predominantly single character of these conversions which explains the fact that integration into the new religious (and social) milieu was accompanied with a subsequent loss of the native tongue. The exceptions are the cases where these conversions occurred *en masse* in larger or smaller groups, irrespective of whether they were voluntary or enforced: Bosnia, Albania, the Rhodope Mountains region (the Pomaks), Macedonia (the Torbeshi), etc.

The outcome of the debate between the colonization and conversion theories, as well as about the mechanisms of conversion, would have been of merely academic significance were it not for the fact that practically all recent attempts at dealing with minority problems (assimilation, emigration, resistance to these policies, propaganda, etc.) are being legitimized by means of this historical experience. It also serves as a base for opposing claims advanced by different political actors at present.[3]

The most substantial changes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries occurred as a result of the secession of the Balkan nation-states from the Ottoman Empire. The massive emigrations triggered by political circumstances were atypical for the rest of Europe at the time, to be surpassed only by the events of World War II.[4] Despite these drastic population shifts, not a single one among the Balkan countries achieved the cherished ideal characteristics of

the nineteenth- and twentieth-century European nation-state: ethnic and religious homogeneity. All Balkan countries (Turkey inclusive) resorted to similar solutions in trying to solve their minority problems in the new context: (forced) emigration and assimilation. The failure of these policies and the subsequently unresolved minority issues are essentially the sources of existing and potential crisis points in the Balkans: Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Transylvania, Thrace.

Turning specifically to the case of Bulgaria, we see that in many ways the institutional legacies of Ottoman rule and the development of the modern nation-state have created conditions similar to those found throughout the Balkans—with an important exception: although relations between Bulgarian Christians and Bulgarian Muslims have at times been quite bloody, today the potential for renewed conflict seems relatively low in relation to what can be found in other parts of the region. To understand how this is so, we need to understand the particularities of the case.

The Pomaks inhabit several regions of Bulgaria but are concentrated as a compact mass almost entirely in the Rhodope Mountains, where they have practiced their traditional occupations—mostly animal husbandry, but also agriculture—for centuries.[5] The process of their conversion to Islam has been gradual and protracted and, despite some excellent research, impossible to reconstruct in all its details and historical depth. The historiography which traces the gradual process of Islamization of the local Christian inhabitants from Ottoman registers beginning in the sixteenth century is the most convincing from a scholarly point of view.[6] Its conclusions are well corroborated by the daily and active coexistence between Bulgarian Christians and Muslims, who in some cases keep memories of their kinship alive.[7] At the same time, there is a whole body of journalistic and partly academic literature which has built on folk legends and insists on the abrupt, violent mass conversion of the population in the second half of the seventeenth century. Despite the profound intellectual and ideological strain between these two explanations, they interface on one point: that the converts were part of the already consolidated Bulgarian ethnic group and that by converting to Islam, their conscious Bulgarian ethnicity was weakened or completely obliterated. Against this, Greek historiography, having to deal with a Pomak presence in its own part of the Rhodopes,

has promoted a theory that they are Slavic-speaking Muslims of Greek (or Hellenized Thracian) origins.[8] Finally, some Turkish works (clearly on the outside margins of scholarship but widely used as political propaganda) advance the thesis, already dominant in the Kurdish case, that the Pomaks are "mountain Turks."[9] Again, all these theories could be simply treated as illustrations of historiographic and ideological trends were it not for their immediate role in legitimizing identity claims.

As a whole, the literature dealing with relations between Bulgarian Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman period is unanimous on the point that there had been a remarkably well-developed modus vivendi of coexistence, something which was preserved in the subsequent period on the local level and in everyday life. It seems that beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century, with the economic advance and cultural revival of the Bulgarian Christians and the development of a national consciousness among them, the latent opposition between the two confessional groups was gradually transformed into open hostility.[10] The culmination of this antagonism came with the secession of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire, following the April uprising of 1876 and the ensuing Russo-Turkish war of 1877–78. The April 1876 uprising was ruthlessly suppressed, provoking European public opinion to deal with the Bulgarian horrors. This aspect of the Eastern crisis is well known and researched in the historical literature. What is less known, and reluctantly dealt with, is the fact that Bulgarian-speaking Muslims took an active part in the squelching of the uprising and committed unspeakable brutalities. This provoked the retaliation of the Christians in 1878 with the advance of the Russian armies, and a substantial part of the Pomaks emigrated to the confines of the Ottoman Empire, refusing to live under the rule of the *giaours* (a derogatory term for non-Muslims, particularly Christians). Many took part in the so-called "Rhodope mutiny," an organized counterattack of the Ottoman armed forces and the Muslim population of the Rhodopes (Turks and Pomaks), headed by the former British consul in Varna and Burgas and volunteer officer in the Ottoman army, Saint Clair, with the active support of the British embassy in Constantinople. With the dismemberment of the country into what came to be called San Stefano Bulgaria after the peace treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in March 1878, the Rhodope region was included

in the province of Eastern Rumelia, which was to be ruled by a Christian dignitary. About twenty Pomak villages refused to recognize this authority, forming the so-called "Pomak republic." This lasted for about eight years until 1886, when, one year after the unification of the Bulgarian principality with Eastern Rumelia, the frontier with the Ottoman Empire was finally demarcated and these villages were included in the Ottoman Empire until the Balkan wars.[11]

The alienation of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslim population was compounded by the fact that the newly created Bulgarian nation-state did not attempt to integrate it but instead treated it as indistinguishable from the larger Muslim group. Thus in all censuses of the late nineteenth century (1880, 1885, 1888) the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims were entered under the heading "Turks." It was only in the 1905 census that a separate group—"Pomaks"—appeared.[12] During the 1920s and especially during the 1930s a sustained campaign began in the press urging public opinion to discriminate between religious and ethnic allegiance and to accept the Pomaks as part of the Bulgarian nation. This idea was most intensely espoused by the small educated elite among the Pomaks (principally teachers) who strove to elevate the economic and cultural level of their group and to rescue it from its ever-growing marginalization.

In 1937 the organization Rodina (Motherland) was formed. Its principal aim was to foster a Bulgarian ethnic consciousness among the Bulgarian Muslims. Its activities covered mostly the Central and Western Rhodopes; it proved unsuccessful in the Eastern Rhodopes. In the course of seven years the organization introduced Bulgarian-language worship in the mosques, translated the Qur'an into Bulgarian, created a Bulgarian Muslim establishment separate from the Turkish, and promoted the creation of a local elite by enrolling Bulgarian Muslims into secondary and higher education establishments. It also attempted to reform everyday life by casting away the traditional costume, improving the lot of women, and ceasing the practice of circumcision.[13] Most important, in 1942 it embarked on a campaign to change the names of the Bulgarian Muslims to Bulgarian, although not Christian, names. It has been estimated that by September 1944, two-thirds of the Pomak population in the Central Rhodopes had changed their names.[14] Immediately after the war, Rodina was dissolved on the grounds of being a nationalistic Bul-

garian, reactionary, and racist organization. The Muslim names of the population were restored by 1945.[15]

The Rodina movement of the 1930s and 1940s was regarded as a *revival* (*vîzrazhdane*) of the lost ethnic/national consciousness of the Bulgarian Muslim converts. This very concept and the accompanying discourse, as well as the geographic span and the character of its activities, is very important to keep in mind when considering the obvious continuities with later assimilation campaigns directed at the Pomaks (in the 1960s and 1970s), and the internationally much publicized campaign directed at the Turks in the latter half of the 1980s. Although the activities of Rodina are less than controversial and its assessments even more so, ranging from limitless idealization to complete repudiation, the substance of its efforts, the evaluative element aside, can be seen as an attempt to bridge existing religious boundaries through linguistic unity and to replace or at least subordinate the heretofore dominant religious identity by ethnic/national consciousness.[16] In other words, Rodina served to usher the Bulgarian Muslims from one set of institutional norms derived from Ottoman rule stressing religious affiliation to a new set of norms more in keeping with the modern, language-based notions of identity promoted by the contemporary Bulgarian nation-state. At least in its initial conception, it was essentially a grassroots effort (despite the utilization sometimes of questionable methods and although it soon came to be used by the authorities) to blend a minority with the dominant majority and thus acquire the mechanisms of vertical mobility.

Insofar as the complex ethnic and religious diversity is a continuity from the Ottoman period, it would seem at first glance that we are faced simply with the workings of the Ottoman legacy (both in its specifics and as an imperial legacy in general). Yet the issue becomes more complex when taking into account the different and competing ways of shaping group consciousness in general and ethnic and national consciousness in particular. Nationalism in the Balkans in the nineteenth century was constructed primarily around linguistic and religious identities. Language was perceived by practically all national and cultural leaders as the mightiest agent of unification. The efforts of the new states centered on the creation of secularized, centralized, and uniform educational systems as one of the most powerful agents of nationalism, alongside the army and

other institutions. Yet this very emphasis on the unifying potential of language stressed at the same time its exclusiveness and the rigidity of the ethnic boundaries it delineated. This precluded the integration (except in the cases of assimilation) of different linguistic groups into a single nation.

Moreover, not only did groups of different linguistic background from the dominant ethnic group in the nation-state prove impossible to integrate; so also did groups of identical ethnic background and speakers of the same (or dialects of the same) language, like the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, the Slavic Bosnian Muslims, the Torbeshi in Macedonia, etc. These cases invoke the general problem of religion as a political boundary, that of the Balkan Muslims in particular. Despite the fact that language indeed had become the nucleus of different ethnic and national identities among the Balkan Christians (Orthodox for the most part), it could not raze the fundamental boundary between Muslims and Christians that had been established during the centuries of Ottoman rule. The reason for this was not, as the great bulk of Balkan and foreign historiography maintains, the fact that Orthodoxy played a major and crucial role in nation-building.[17] In fact, "religion came last in the struggle to forge new national identities" and in some cases "did not become a functional element in national definition until the nation-states had nationalized their churches."[18] It never could be a sufficient component of national self-identity, and even in the national struggles its primary contribution was to strengthen the opposition to the Muslim rulers.[19] Within the Orthodox ecumene, the process of nation-building demonstrated "the essential incompatibility between the imagined community of religion and the imagined community of the nation."[20]

This does not mean that the religious boundary between Christianity and Islam was the only divider. Clearly the different Christian denominations, and particularly the opposition between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, presented additional frontiers of tension. Yet these frontiers did not prove as insurmountable.[21] Ironically Balkan nationalism, which irrevocably destroyed the imagined community of Orthodox Christianity, managed to preserve a frozen, unchangeable and stultifyingly uniform image of the Muslim community and consistently dealt with it in *millet* terms. In other words, the Christian populations of the Balkans began speaking, among themselves, the

language of nationalism, whereas their attitudes toward the Muslims remained in the realm of the undifferentiated religious communities discourse. Here we see a case of overlapping and conflicting institutional legacies. A modern set of institutional norms is juxtaposed with an older but structurally determined set of institutional practices. A manifestation of this Christian attitude was the continuous and indiscriminate use of the name "Turk" to refer to Muslims in general, a practice still alive in many parts of the Balkans.[22]

On the other hand, it could be maintained that as a whole, the Balkan Muslims, because they could not adapt to the national mode and were practically excluded from the process of nation-formation in the Balkans, retained a fluid consciousness which for a longer time displayed the characteristics of a millet mentality, and thus the bearing of the Ottoman legacy. This does not mean that Islam—or for that matter religion—became an alternative form of national consciousness.[23] In fact, it did not. In the reality of an independent Bulgarian nation-state after 1878 with Orthodox Christianity as the official religion, it meant, however, that Muslims were marginalized in the face of a sphere which proved to be exclusionary to them.

The Turks within the Muslim sphere were the first to shed the millet identity and, to a great extent under the influence of the development of Turkish nationalism in neighboring Turkey but also favored by the significant degree of cultural autonomy in the first decades after World War II, develop an ethnic consciousness. This did not happen with the Pomaks. There had never been homogeneity within the Muslim sphere. The Bulgarian Muslims had been viewed as an inferior category not only by the Bulgarian Christians, but, because of the lack of Turkish as their language, also by the Turks. Intermarriages between the two Muslim groups have been extremely rare. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the articulation of the inferior status of the Pomaks (in the first case because they allegedly espoused an "inferior" religion, in the second because they did not master a "superior" language) is the rationalization of a social opposition, a reflection of the antagonisms between mountain and valley populations, between a mostly pastoral versus a mostly sedentary agrarian culture, and later of the isolation of a particularly confined agricultural group within a rapidly industrializing society.

In short, historically virtually all attempts to politicize Pomak cultural identity failed. Because language and not religion became the national identity marker, Pomaks became Bulgarians, stifling separatist impulses. At the same time, as we shall see in more detail below, Pomaks were marginalized in Bulgarian society and made to feel inferior, despite formal institutional attempts to integrate them into the "nation." That marginalization would later make them vulnerable to attempts by political entrepreneurs to mobilize them for political action by politicizing their group identity.

## ASCRIPTIVE IDENTITY AND SELF-IDENTITY

The current terms used in both the scholarly literature and the press to denote the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims—*pomatsi* (Pomaks) and *bîlgaromohamedani* (Bulgaro-Mohammedans—i.e., Bulgarian Muslims)—are ascriptive and as a whole are avoided by the group they designate.[24] It seems that the term Pomak was used in public discourse for one of the first times when it attracted the attention of Vassil Aprilov, a wealthy Bulgarian merchant and important figure of the Bulgarian cultural revival during the nineteenth century. In his Odessa-based newspaper *Denitsa na novobîlgarskoto obrazovanie* (The morning star of modern Bulgarian education), Aprilov wrote in 1841 about

> Bulgarians who profess the Mohammedan faith. . . . In their family circle and with other Bulgarians they speak the Bulgarian language and Turkish with the Greeks and with the Turks. Their personal names are also Turkish. . . . All of their Turkified brethren the Bulgarians call Pomaks, the meaning of which I have not found out yet.[25]

This quote is not only one of the earliest documentations of the term, but also aptly illustrates an important element which has persisted ever since: the conjunction of Turks with Muslims (the Islamized Bulgarians are Turkified; they have Turkish, not Muslim, names).

Three decades later Felix Kanitz, the famous author of "Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan," not only gave a valuable description of the "*moslemisch-bulgarishen Pomaci*," but also offered an etymology

of the term. It derived, according to him, from the verb *pomoci* (to help), as they were considered helpers of the Turks.[26] The folk etymologies of the local Christians proposed other meanings. They derived from *pomamvam, pomamil se* (being cheated, duped), *pometnal se* (betrayed, abandoned), and even *pomiya* (garbage), but all were without any exception pejorative.[27]

Pomak was not the only, and not even the main, designation. More common as an outside designation was the term *akhryani.* Its etymology is deduced from either the Greek for worthless, awkward, rough, wicked, or else a bastardized version of Agarenes, descendants of Hagar, a common pejorative for the Muslims in the Middle Ages, but reserved for the Bulgarian Muslims in the later period. In the case of the Greek etymology, an interesting attempt has been made to stress its ancient origins, pointing not at an ethnic but at a socioeconomic antagonism: the binary opposition mountain/valley paralleling the ancient opposition barbarity/civilization.[28]

The term Bulgaro-Mohammedans is a literary appellative which today is the one almost exclusively utilized by academics and journalists. Its origins can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century, when it appeared in scholarly works emphasizing the Bulgarian ethnic character of this population.[29] By the 1930s and 1940s it was accepted by many educated Pomaks as a neutral term which was to replace the existing pejoratives. As expressed in a letter from one of the leaders of Rodina, Svetoslav Dukhovnikov at that time *müfti* of Smolyan, at present müfti of Plovdiv, reporting on the activities of his organization,

> We stopped calling ourselves "Pomaks," "Akhryans," etc. and adopted the designation "Bulgaro-Mohammedans," which was accepted in the administration and in scholarship.[30]

Another young imam, Mehmet Dervishev, declared at the time:

> By religion, we are Muslims, but this does not prevent us at all from being Bulgarians. Religion should not divide nations because what distinguishes nations from one another is language and blood.[31]

Arif Beyski, another activist of the Rodina movement, thus summarized the relationship between ethnicity and religion:

> The Muslim religion which we profess does not prevent us from feeling Bulgarian in the least. . . . We are Bulgarians according to ethnicity and Muslims according to religion! . . . Being Muslim does not at all mean that we are Turks. For if we are to judge ethnicity by faith, then we would have to be called Arabs because Mohammed, our prophet and the founder of the Muslim religion, was not a Turk but an Arab. . . . However, we are not Arabs, but we are whites and of the Slavic race. It is clear to us as daylight that religion cannot determine ethnicity. One religion can comprise many ethnicities, and there can be many faiths within one nation. It is the language which determines ethnicity and divides nations into separate states. It is language which draws boundaries between nations. Examples abound. Here Greece and Romania profess the same religion as Bulgaria, but it is language which distinguishes them. . . . How can it be otherwise when there are only five main religions in the world but there are over 70 different nations and states. . . . So I ask those of my coreligionists, Bulgarian Mohammedans, who by an inexcusable delusion call themselves Turks simply because they have received their faith from the Turks, what is the reason for that?[32]

This is not merely a document of the 1940s which presents the ideas of the Rodina ideologues but the quintessence of the official argument claiming the Bulgarian Muslims as part of the Bulgarian (ethnic) nation. It is also espoused today by adherents among the Bulgarian Muslims of an integration process with the mainstream Bulgarian population (i.e., Christian by religion or name). As such, it is a pertinent illustration of the attempt to redefine self-identity by appropriating the mechanism of political identity-formation of the dominant group—i.e., a national and therefore political consciousness constructed primarily around linguistic identity. As the present chairman of the Rhodope Union, Branko Davidov, put it:

> I consider myself a Bulgarian. Some circles do not want to see the Bulgaro-Mohammedans as Bulgarians and do all they can to detach them from their ethnic roots. If the Turks harbor the illusion of salvation in their fatherland, our fatherland is here. Our mother tongue is Bulgarian. . . . The boundary of a nation is its language. Why should the Bulgarian Mohammedans feel emigrant in their own fatherland?[33]

This feeling is particularly strong in the Central Rhodopes (especially the Smolyan district). According to the observations of local leaders and intellectuals, the majority of the local Pomaks in the town of Smolyan feel that they are Bulgarians. This feeling seems especially intense among Pomak women, who categorically refuse to change back to Muslim names, an opportunity provided by the reversal of assimilation politics at the end of December 1989. These women fear that a change to Muslim names will mean a concomitant encroachment on their position.[34] It is symptomatic that this position is most strongly espoused in the regions where the traditions of the Rodina movement were most powerful. Again, it is in these regions that the appellative Bulgaro-Mohammedans has been partly internalized and often appears as a self-designation, although there are no reliable quantitative sociological data.

Those who aim at a real and effective social recategorization, however, understand that this is possible only by a complete blending with the dominant group—i.e., by erasing the existing religious boundary. This may explain the success of a grassroots Christianizing campaign in the Rhodopes led by Father Boyan Sarîev, himself a professed "descendant of Bulgarian Mohammedans" and leader of the Movement for Christianity and Progress (Ioan Predtecha.)[35] According to Sarîev, the new religious identity is the only solution for the split identity of the Bulgarian Muslims, which he calls "national hermaphrodism":[36]

> There is no other difference but the religious between the Bulgarians and the descendants of the Islamized Bulgarians. Only Islam stands like a Chinese wall between them. Besides, religion is a very strong [element] in defining one's national identity. On the basis of religion this population will join the Christian brotherhood, which is its historical place.[37]

During the past three years the movement claims to have converted 50,000 Bulgarian Mohammedans, "who secretly and gradually came to yearn to feel part and parcel of the Bulgarian population."[38] Most of these people—about 37,000—live in the Central and Eastern Rhodopes and are, according to Sarîev, members of the younger and middle generation. The ambition of the movement is to convert 75 to 80 percent of the Bulgarian Muslims by the end of the century. Thus far, its main success has been in the same areas that

the Rodina movement had received support. The reaction of the rest of the Christian Bulgarian population is still unclear, although the Orthodox Church has reacted frantically to the movement's endeavors to enlist the financial and political support of the Vatican in its missionary activities, despite the assurances of Sarîev that this would not open the door to Catholic propaganda.[39]

As a whole, the name Bulgaro-Mohammedans has not fared as well as a self-designation, despite its aura of being a politically correct term, not least because of its clumsiness. At one of the local censuses during the Communist period, three options were offered: Turks, Bulgarians, and Bulgaro-Mohammedans. One of the interviewees chose to be entered as "Bulgaro-Mohammedan" but exclaimed, turning to the mayor, "Why don't you drop this Bulgarian? After all, I am a Mohammedan."[40] In fact, the most widespread cultural self-identification among the Bulgarian Muslims has been and is simply "Mohammedan," a nominal tribute to the resilience of millet consciousness.

In some cases, a genuine intellectual resistance appears against the attempts to impose a definite political (Bulgarian or Turkish) identity to the Pomaks. When inhabitants of Padina (a completely Pomak village in the Eastern Rhodopes) exclaim, "What we are, who we are, what we believe is our own destiny; don't meddle with our souls!," this is not simply exhaustion in the face of pressure.[41] It is an authentic indifference to a kind of political identity which asserts itself not only as the norm in the conditions of the nation-state, but also claims the exclusive loyalties of the population.

Very interesting in this respect is a protest letter signed by 924 inhabitants of the small frontier village of Kochan in the Satovcha municipality in southwestern Bulgaria. The letter is a declaration against the accusations of a Macedonian organization in the region that a coercive process of Turkification has been taking place. The authors of the letter refer to themselves as Muslims: "We, the Muslim believers from the village of Kochan. . . "; "We are proud that all inhabitants of the village of Kochan are Muslims, and this was confirmed by the last census"; "the industrious Muslim population of the municipality and of our village"; etc. None of the appellatives used by the outgroup are accepted as an accurate label for their identity:

> Notwithstanding what you call us—Bulgarians, Mohammedans, Bulgarian Muslims, Pomaks, even Macedonians—we declare that we are a reality which, much as you would like it not to exist, is a fact, and you have to accept us such as we are.[42]

At the same time as "Mohammedan" or "Muslim" reflects belonging to a religious group, the grip of religion on the Muslim population is quite problematic, although certainly growing. It is primarily among the generation over 50 years of age that fervent believers can be encountered. The adult generation between the ages of 20 and 50 does not possess religious habits, nor does it have clear religious ideas. Its attachment to Islam is mostly a way of demonstrating opposition to previous constraints and prohibitions. Among the very young, however, under the influence of family and the new public sphere, there is a renewed interest for the teachings of Islam. This, according to specialists, creates an important bridge between the youngest and the oldest generations, which most likely will contribute to a rise of religiosity and religious knowledge.[43]

Still, at present only 29 percent of the Muslims in a poll taken in the Eastern Rhodopes responded to the question "What do you know about Mohammed?" with answers like "Allah's prophet" or "something like Jesus Christ." The rest declared they knew nothing.[44] The knowledge of the dogma is not to be mixed up with religiosity. The question "Do you believe in God?" was answered in the affirmative by 73 percent of the Turks, 66 percent of the Pomaks, 59 percent of the gypsies, and 37 percent of the Bulgarians.[45]

In addition to the term Bulgaro-Mohammedan, there is also a host of other competing designations, practically all of them literary appellatives. Most of them are only ascriptive terms with very limited circulation. A group of them insists on the Turkish character of the Bulgarian Muslims, calling them "Pomak Turks," "Rhodope Turks," "Kuman Turks," or simply subsuming them under the title of "ethnic Turks" who had ostensibly forgotten their mother tongue and adopted Bulgarian after 1912.[46] Despite the somewhat histrionic attention this propaganda and the explosive issue of the "Turkification" of the Bulgarian Muslims have received in the Bulgarian press, success has been relatively limited and geographically confined to the region of the Southwestern Rhodopes. There is one new element in the cultural self-identification of the Bulgarian Muslims which,

despite its very restricted influence, merits attention. It asserts that the Pomaks are in fact descendants of the first Muslims in the Balkans, who arrived on the peninsula shortly after the birth of Islam and gradually adopted the language and customs of their Bulgarian neighbors. This theory of an alleged "Arabic" origin of the Bulgarian Muslims comes directly from Muslim missionaries sent from Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Pakistan.[47] It is exclusively with their financial support that the Qur'an has been published in Bulgarian in new editions and is circulating in enormous numbers.[48]

Lastly and most recently, there has been a political attempt to emancipate the designation "Pomak" from its derogatory connotations and declare the existence of a Pomak ethnic minority. In April 1993 a new party was registered, the Democratic Labor Party, which was founded at the end of 1992.[49] Its leader, a political entrepreneur by the name of Kamen Burov, is the mayor of the village Zhîltusha in the Eastern Rhodopes, himself of Bulgarian Muslim descent.[50] Despite Burov's expectations of support from the majority of the Pomaks, the status of the party is still unclear. However, it has received considerable attention from the press, not least because of the specter of (real or perceived) American involvement.

Burov was sent to the United States to attend a seminar on ethnic diversity. It is there that he was apparently converted to the idea of a Pomak ethnic minority and, according to him, received the assurances of American and UN administrators to help him with the recognition of such a minority, something considered to be an important step in the democratization of the country:[51]

> People in the United States were surprised when all of us introduced ourselves as Bulgarians. They openly asked us how Bulgaria has managed to create a country of only Bulgarians. I introduced myself as a Bulgarian citizen of Muslim descent. The Americans were interested in how our origins differ from those of the Turks, and the question of the Pomaks arose. In America nobody is irritated at somebody else's self-identification. The Bulgarian parliament should not tell me who I am. I have a soul, and it cannot be obliterated. I feel a Pomak, and nobody can frown on me for my ethnic self-identity.[52]

Upon his return to Bulgaria, Burov founded his party and immediately sought American backing:

> As a leader of the Democratic Labor Party, I have already sought the official support of the American Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, and the American Ambassador to Bulgaria, Hugh Kennet Hill, to insist that the category "Pomak" be included in the next census. . . . The West does not like to be deceived. It wants a clear message: in Bulgaria there are Turks, Bulgarians, Pomaks, gypsies, Jews, Armenians.[53]

The coverage of this event would have been much more modest were it not for the general, often close to paranoic, concern with outside pressure, coupled with the somewhat clumsy manner in which American diplomats in Bulgaria have been trying to pontificate about democracy in general and ethnic relations in particular.

Burov himself based the need for a separate party on the premise that the Pomaks were a separate ethnic group.[54] He actually proposed his own definition of ethnicity: "This population has its customs, culture, and folklore, which means that it is an independent ethnic group." When asked about the language, he conceded that the Pomaks spoke Bulgarian but that this did not hamper their recognition as a Pomak ethnic group.

Opposing interpretations of what defines an ethnic group lie at the basis of different approaches to the Pomak problem by different political actors. Practically all Bulgarian parties stress "objective" characterstics. In this the approach is not different from Burov's, except the logical conclusion is that a separate Pomak ethnic group cannot exist because ethnically these people are part and parcel of the Bulgarian ethnic community. Often a decision of the Constitutional Court in 1992 is cited:

> The categories race, nationality, ethnic belonging, gender, and origin are determined from the time of birth and cannot be acquired or changed in the process of the social realization of the citizen in society.[55]

Against this treatment, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (the so-called Turkish party) advocates an essentially voluntaristic approach, putting an exclusive theoretical premise on self-determination:

> Most certainly the ethnic problem can be the object of scholarly research, but to look for a direct link between ethnic conscious-

> ness and ethnic origins is an ethnobiological treatment of the question. . . . Let everyone be considered as they feel themselves.[56]

At the same time, in a slip, the same leader of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms who made the above statement responded to a question concerning the rejection of the historically formed status of the Bulgarian Muslims and the adoption of an ethnic Turkish consciousness in the following way:

> We do not care about the genetic origins of people. Let this be the domain of historians and other scholars. We approach this question *politically*.[57]

In short, the Pomak population in the current period has been struggling with the definition of its own cultural identity, while at the same time political entrepreneurs like Burov have attempted to infuse Pomak cultural identity with political relevance. Burov has been less than successful, not only because Pomak cultural identity is so fluid and contested, but also because past efforts to politicize Pomak identity met with resistance and were never institutionalized. In the following section, I discuss the motivations for and the implications of these efforts to "Christianize," "Bulgarianize," "Turkicize," "Arabize," and "Pomakify" this complex cultural group.

## INTERESTS AND IDENTITY

In December 1992, seven years after the last national census of 1985, which did not supply data on the ethnic composition of the population, a new census was conducted. This census reestablished criteria which it was hoped would provide relatively reliable information about the ethnic breakdown of the Bulgarian population. Three measures were used to denote ethnodemographic characteristics: ethnicity, mother tongue, and religion.[58] The results in the first category showed 7,272,000 (85.8 percent) declaring Bulgarian ethnicity, 822,000 (9.7 percent) claiming Turkish ethnicity, 288,000 (3.4 percent) describing themselves as gypsies, and 91,000 (1.1 percent) comprising all other ethnic groups. The second criterion pro-

vided the following results: 7,311,000 (86.3 percent) speakers of Bulgarian; 829,000 (9.8 percent) speakers of Turkish; 257,000 (3.0 percent) speakers of gypsy (*sic!* in the census). The third criterion showed 7,373,000 (87.0 percent) as Christian (7,303,000 Orthodox, 51,000 Catholics, and 19,000 Protestants) and 1,078,000 (12.7 percent) as Muslim (1,002,000 Sunni and 76,000 Shi'a).[59]

The accuracy of these results was contested by a number of specialists on the grounds (among others) of having prompted considerable numbers of Pomaks to declare themselves Turks (and some even Arabs) by failing to provide a separate category for the Bulgarian Muslims.[60] It was also clear that a considerable number of Muslim gypsies had declared themselves Turks, according to both ethnicity and mother tongue.[61]

All together about 143,000 Muslims declared themselves part of the Bulgarian ethnic group. It is difficult to establish the number of Pomaks among the group with Turkish self-identification, but preliminary research conducted in June 1992 showed that about 18–20 percent of the Bulgarian Muslims in the Southwestern Rhodopes preferred Turkish identity.[62] It is impossible to come up with reliable aggregate figures about the numbers of persons of Pomak origin who have identified themselves completely as either Turks or Bulgarians according to all three criteria, but in unofficial sources the total number of Pomaks is reckoned to be around 250,000.[63]

The census thus serves as a way to channel the formation of identity. By polarizing responses as it does, respondents are forced to choose between a given set of criteria which ignore or deny other criteria to which they might respond. Already at the time of the census-taking, but especially following the publication of the census results, one particular issue inflamed public opinion and served as a rallying point for opposing opinions. It concerned the ethnic self-determination of the population in some of the ethnically mixed municipalities in southwestern Bulgaria, and more concretely the results coming out of two of them: Gotse Delchev and Yakoruda. Details of the latter case virtually flooded the daily press and exacerbated political passions to the extent that a parliamentary commission was set up to investigate the alleged accusations of manipulation and pressure on the population and to establish whether there had been violations of the principle of voluntary self-determination.

Of the total population of the Yakoruda municipality of 12,000 (all together 7 villages), only about 2,500 declared themselves to be Bulgarians, a symmetrical reversal of the results of two decades ago, when Muslims constituted about the same minority.[64] The rest declared themselves to be ethnic Turks. In this particular municipality the Muslims are Pomaks who have no practical knowledge of Turkish; therefore, their self-identification as Turks gave rise to bitter accusations of Turkification. For the same reason, the question of the optional study of Turkish in schools, which kindled a flaming discussion all over the country, was especially bitter in this region. Of the 1,721 students in the municipality, 1,174 were entered as Turks. As a reaction to that, many Bulgarian parents recorded their children under the age of 16 as Americans, Japanese, Germans, and even Eskimos, arguing that their children were parts of these ethnic groups as much as their Muslim counterparts were Turks.[65] The "Japanese" and the "Eskimos" in particular indicated Chinese as their mother tongue. This 400-strong "Chinese"-speaking group pointed out that it would look for the defense of its human rights in the Chinese embassy in Sofia.[66]

That the Pomaks' Muslim identity is rendered politically invisible by the language-based institutions of modern Bulgaria does not preclude the potential for other forces to politicize Pomak cultural identity. Cultural conflict reached a high degree of intensity by the middle of 1992, when local imams refused to bury the deceased who had not changed their names back to Muslim ones after 1989.[67] At the same time, this region was the object of active attention on the part of emissaries of the World Islamic League. A number of mosques have been built in the region with the financial support of the league.[68] The theory of the Turkish ethnic origins of the Pomaks, who had allegedly forgotten their language under the stressful events of 1912, has gained ground precisely in this region. This theory is espoused by the Movement of Rights and Freedoms, whose representatives are at present leaders of the municipality.[69] It has to be kept in mind that these are the regions where the forceful change of names in the 1970s campaign was particularly gruesome, where the Rodina movement of the 1940s had no success, and where followers of the reconstituted, extremely nationalist Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) are especially active.[70]

The parliamentary commission finished its report at the end of January 1993. It was signed by four of the five deputies of the commission, members of the feuding Bulgarian Socialist Party, and the Union of Democratic Forces—one of their rare moments of consensus. The only deputy who did not sign was a member of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms. The commission stated that the principle of voluntariness had apparently not been violated and that there were no cases of direct physical violence (section 7).[71] Still it concluded the following:

> With the active participation of representatives of the local authorities and administration, a turkification of the Bulgarian Muslims is taking place. At the same time, the Bulgarian Christians are the objects of pressure and are feeling insecure (section 13).[72]

The report was discussed in parliament in May 1993 and a declaration was sent over to the Legislative Commission.[73] Finally, after another round of heated exchanges, on 17 September 1993 a parliamentary majority voted to annul the census results on ethnic criteria for the two municipalities.[74]

Although the issue of the Turkification of the Bulgarian Muslims is undoubtedly exaggerated, there obviously is in place a process attracting members of the Pomak community in particular geographic areas to the Turkish ethnic group in order to bolster the political power of this ethnic minority. The mechanism of this attraction is complicated: it involves economic, social, political, cultural, and psychological issues which I analyze below.

Parallel to the national census, the National Statistical Institute ran a research program to establish the number of unemployed in the country at the time of the census (4 December 1992).[75] Although the data on unemployment are not ethnically specific, there is no question that the economic crisis accompanying the social and economic transformation after 1989 has severely hit areas of high Muslim concentration. In general, the economic reform has resulted in higher unemployment rates in the agricultural sector (18.0 percent, compared to 13 percent in the cities).[76] The rural population is disproportionately exposed to a higher risk of unemployment resulting from both problems accompanying the reorganization of agriculture and the fact that some villagers are completely devoid of a means of

livelihood. (The latter include former tobacco growers and workers in small industrial enterprises located in villages.) A considerable part of the rural population was employed in nearby towns (daily labor migration) and has been left unemployed following cuts in the urban industrial sector (especially the mining industry).[77] The laws voted by parliament about the restitution of land to former owners, although not yet implemented on a large scale, will leave considerable portions of the Muslim population in the plains practically landless. This is not the case in the mountain areas, but there it is the collapse of the tobacco industry, especially in southwestern Bulgaria and the Central Rhodopes, which has affected Bulgarian Muslims and Turks disproportionately since this hard and time-consuming occupation was almost entirely in their hands.[78] Likewise, the mining industry in the far southeast, with a heavy concentration of Turks and Bulgarian Muslims, is in total disarray. Finally, there was a special state policy of economic incentives—the so-called "border benefits"—which were poured into the border regions of the Rhodopes and thanks to which "the border population attained a standard of living during the years of totalitarian rule which by far surpassed the traditional standards of the region."[79]

The great demographic shifts accompanying the industrial revolution in Bulgaria after World War II, and particularly the drastic urbanization, left the Muslim population behind. The figures from the last census of 1993 show a mere 17 percent of members of the Turkish ethnic group living in cities.[80] Although there are no comparable data for the Bulgarian Muslims (since they were not identified as a separate group), it can be safely maintained that the share of urban dwellers among them is statistically insignificant.

Taking into account the reasons for unemployment, the National Statistical Institute has differentiated between two groups of unemployed: those who were previously employed (about 75 percent) and those who had never before entered the workforce (about 25 percent; these are school and college graduates and released military recruits). Further, municipalities have been divided into three groups, according to the nature of unemployment. The two districts with the highest percentage of unemployed who had been laid off were Blagoevgrad (63.7 percent) and Smolyan (66.1 percent)—well over the national average of about 50 percent.[81] These are the two

districts where the Bulgarian Muslims almost exclusively reside. Within these districts the figure rises to 85 percent for some localities.

If one uses the aggregate data for both types of unemployed (laid off and having never worked), several municipalities (all in the Blagoevgrad and Smolyan districts) come out as hard hit economically, with an unemployment rate of over 90.0 percent: Borino (96.4 percent), Gîrmen (95.4 percent), Satovcha (95.1 percent), Dospat (95.0 percent), Bregovo (94.2 percent), Strumyani (94.2 percent), Khadzhidimovo (94.2 percent), Razlog (94.0 percent), Yakoruda (93.7 percent), Sandanski (92.1 percent), Gotse Delchev (91.9 percent), Kirkovo (91.9 percent), Devin (91.7 percent), Kresna (91.0 percent), and Nedelino (90.3 percent).[82]

It should come as no surprise that it is precisely in these ethnically mixed regions that tensions have become exacerbated and that different types of politicized ethnic and religious propaganda have had the greatest success. In Yakoruda unemployment has reached nearly 94 percent. Sabriye Sapundzhieva, the former director of the youth center and one of the 140 college graduates in this municipality of 12,000, summarizes as follows:

> The problem does not consist in whether we are going to have Bulgarian family names or not, but in the fact that the municipality is in a total economic and managerial impasse. Here a host of incompetent people were removed from power by another host of incompetent people. . . . And in order to divert attention from their own ineptitude, they constantly invent ethnic conflicts and religious wars. It sounds as if here everyone goes around with an axe, a rifle, or a knife. If our municipality were flourishing and each of us was getting a salary of 5,000 to 6,000 levs, if the enterprises were not deliberately ruined, if our forests were not exported to Greece and to Turkey for pennies—would anyone have made an international problem out of Yakoruda? It seems that only the United Nations, the Security Council, and NATO have not dealt with us.[83]

The municipality of Dzhebel in the district of Kîrdzhali (another heavily affected district in southeast Bulgaria) has responded to the severe economic pressure by mass emigration. About two-thirds of its population (almost exclusively ethnic Turks) have left for Turkey since 1989.[84] Emigration to Turkey is also the response of some Bul-

garian Muslims. Their exact numbers cannot be established because the ones among them who emigrate officially are claiming ethnic Turkish identity so that they could fall within the provisions of the emigration convention with Turkey. Still others attempt to cross the border illegally, facing the risk of extradition.[85] While the Bulgarian press of all political colorings unanimously accuses the Movement for Rights and Freedoms of an intentional and forcible campaign to Turkicize the Bulgarian Muslims, it cannot conceal the fact that the movement bases its appeal on the economic argument. The movement has clearly set its priorities. Its leader, Ahmed Dogan, states, "Our party is faced with a fundamental problem which is social in principle: unemployment."[86] Its emissaries assure the population that Turkey as their fatherland will look out for them and will save them from the economic crisis.[87] It is quite symptomatic that economic emigration to Turkey was practiced by the Bulgarian Muslims before the war also. According to a poll taken by local Christians in 1934 and kept in police archives, Pomaks were being driven out of the country by the utmost misery of their situation. This was the primary reason for their Turkification and their alienation from Bulgaria.[88]

It is not coincidental that one of the primary motives for the creation of the Pomak party (the Democratic Labor Party) is articulated in terms of economic needs: "to defend the people from these regions from unemployment and to assist private businessmen."[89] "These regions" are the mountainous and semimountainous areas. In fact, the party's leader, Kamen Burov specifically emphasized the primarily social and economic rather than ethnic aspect of his party, despite his insistence on the recognition of a Pomak ethnic minority to bolster its (and his) political power. Asked how he would handle the active presence and aspirations of the Movement of Rights and Freedoms in these same mountain areas, Burov responded in an undisguised discourse of interests:

> We do not make claims against any political power, and we consider it natural that there should be political struggle. If the MRF manages to improve the life of our people, it might be able to win them over. Whoever helps the population in the mountainous and semimountainous regions economically will hold the winning card because people will know who has provided for them.[90]

Here interests have been articulated not simply through economic concerns. As already mentioned above, members of the Bulgarian Muslim community who react against the subordinated status of their group in the existing ethnic/religious hierarchies and who strive to achieve a genuine social recategorization consider that the only way to attain this goal is by a complete merger with one of the opposing groups which lay claims on them while looking down on them: Turks and Bulgarians.

In a revealing interview, Father Sarîev recalls his days as a student in the police academy and his subsequent service in the Ministry of the Interior before he was fired as politically unreliable in 1987:

> At school, in the academy, and especially at work my fellow workers would set me apart; they would put me down simply because I was . . . a Pomak. Circumcised! I was haunted by a morbid feeling; I was accumulating dissatisfaction. . . . What I was bearing before as anguish was channeled into an idea, and the idea urged me to action. . . . By language, by origins and mentality, by customs, we are Bulgarians. It is unnatural to feel like foreigners in our own fatherland. Only Christianity will return us to the Bulgarian roots.[91]

Others are even more outspoken about their motives. According to a Bulgarian Muslim veterinarian, "We are ready to convert to Christianity on the condition that we are not going to be treated as second-class Christians, just as we were treated as second-class Bulgarians."[92]

Similar motives apply to some of those who look to the Muslim sphere as an acceptable assimilative alternative. Khadzhi Arif Karaibrahimov, at present district müfti for Smolyan, rejects the notion that there is a process of Turkification:

> This is not correct. There is no Turkification; there is attraction. If a family terrorizes its children but the neighbor embraces them, it is only natural that they would be attracted to him. If our country, which all Muslims consider their fatherland, treated everyone equally as a fair mother, believe me, I would strongly contend that nobody would look at the neighbor.[93]

Likewise, the mayor of Gotse Delchev, Khenrikh Mikhailov, comments on the ambiguous position of the Bulgarian Muslims:

> This population occupies an intermediate position between the Bulgarians and the Turks. Neither fish nor meat. And now it prefers to join the Turks because the Bulgarians devastated it, they battered it, didn't give it a chance to exist.[94]

These same motives have given some acceptance to the message of the Arab missionaries mentioned above. Laughable as it may seem, their arguments have received some attention for at least two reasons. First, they confer to the exponents of this belief a proper identity in the face of both Bulgarians and Turks, who look down upon them even when they try to blend into their communities; second, they furnish them with "their own" cultural and political protectors from the Muslim world.[95]

This last element—a strong outside protector—is a very important component, present in practically all efforts to articulate a collective cultural or political identity. The Bulgarian Muslims who wish to enter the Turkish ethnic group look to Turkey for economic and social salvation; Burov's Pomak party very definitely wants to enlist American patronage; even Sarîev's endeavor to bring the Pomaks back to their "Bulgarian roots" looks to the Vatican for support. Although his religious movement converts Bulgarian Muslims to Orthodoxy, it recognizes the supremacy of the Pope, not the Bulgarian Patriarch. The reason, according to Sarîev, is that this is the only way to alert foreign public opinion about the problems of the Bulgarian Muslims, which, over the course of a century, no one in Bulgaria has either managed or really wished to solve. The authority of the Vatican would stand as a strong guarantee that this process of grassroots conversion to Christianity would remain irreversible.[96]

The involvement of the foreign policy factor serves as an especially aggravating influence on the ethnic question. As a small and weak country which reappeared on the European scene only during the past century, Bulgaria has always felt extremely vulnerable to outside pressures. Particularly strong has been the "by-now stereotyped sense of threat from Turkey from the outside, and that of the Islamic minorities on the inside."[97] This is exacerbated at present by a multitude of additional causes: first and foremost, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact as a guarantee for Bulgarian security and attempts by the country to find its place in the European security system free from the status of a Soviet/Russian client state; an increased tendency

to marginalize Southeastern Europe within the European framework following a double standard approach to East Central Europe and the Balkans; the simultaneous increased armament of Greece and Turkey after 1989 in the face of a total collapse of the Bulgarian military industry and military potential; the central role Turkey has set itself to play in the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union and its ambitions as protector of Muslim minorities in the Balkans (even more aggravating in this respect is the obvious backing Turkey is receiving from the United States and the perception that it is one of the favored client states of the only global superpower); the chaos in the former Yugoslavia and the very conflictual and controversial messages that the international community is sending.[98]

Some publications display close to paranoic overtones:

> The loss of these 200,000 Bulgarians [i.e., Pomaks] is not only yet another amputation on the body of the nation—a body already drained of its blood—but is also turning the Rhodopes, where they predominantly live, into a true Turkish fortress. This creates favorable conditions for the emergence of a new Cyprus and for Turkey's securing a bridgehead for an advance into Europe and . . . into the Mohammedan regions of the disintegrating Yugoslavia: into the Sandzhak, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina.[99]

The publication of a map with the geographic distribution of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria in a 1990 issue of the *International Herald Tribune* had room for apocalyptic comments. The map showed the whole Black Sea coast as a region inhabited by ethnic Turks, and it was seen as proof that "the ethno-religious problems will be linked to territorial and separatist claims."[100] Leaving aside the debate on whether the threat to Bulgarian security is a real or perceived one, it is at least possible to argue that "to a certain extent, the removal of that feeling of threat lies beyond the competence of the Bulgarian state."[101] Indeed, as Henry Kissinger well realizes, the global approach to security issues gives ample ground for anxiety:

> The Partnership for Peace runs the risk of creating two sets of borders in Europe—those that are protected by security guarantees, and others where such guarantees have been refused—a state of affairs bound to prove tempting to potential aggressors and demoralizing to potential victims.[102]

This feeling of threat is further aggravated by the uncertainty of what constitutes a national minority by international standards and what would be the precise implications of its legal recognition.[103] Among a variety of different and controversial opinions, the main difficulty in reaching a common interpretation seems to lie in the opposing approach to minority rights as collective or as individual. The fears expressed by the Bulgarian side about the recognition of national minorities are based on the danger of secessionism. Far-fetched as these fears might seem at first sight, the ambiguous and controversial approach of the international organizations to the questions of self-determination versus territorial integrity in general (and in the Yugoslav case in particular) compounds these concerns.[104] Even the developments in the former Yugoslavia of creating a federation in Bosnia between Croats and Muslims set precedents which are elsewhere observed with apprehension.[105]

The issue is conceptually unclear also among exponents of the idea of increased rights for ethnic minorities. While some members of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms request the recognition of national minorities as the only guarantee for their survival the leader of the party, Dogan, warned that Europe was delaying the decision on the issue of ethnic minorities because of its explosiveness.[106] At a municipal conference, he offered an award of 1,000 levs to any of the deputies who would define the preconditions for a national minority.[107]

It is naive to attribute the denial of minority existence to a typically Balkan syndrome. Rather, given the extremely complex demographic and geopolitical picture of the region, it would be utopian to expect that Bulgaria, the other Balkan states, and for that matter all other East European countries would support the recognition of national minorities before international criteria were agreed upon.

## CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, in dealing with the intermediate position of the Bulgarian Muslims in the framework of the history and institutions of the Bulgarian nation-state, and especially with an eye to the process of formation and political transformation of their group identi-

ties, it is imperative to recall both the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire with its millet system and the mechanisms of ethnic/nation formation in the Balkans and specifically in Bulgaria, with its linguistic and religious centrality. This process effectively excluded members of the majority of different confessional and linguistic groups from the process of national integration (except in the cases of assimilation). For a long time after independence, the Muslim community was consistently dealt with in millet terms. With the gradual exception of the Turks, the Balkan Muslims did not adapt to the national mode and retained a fluid cultural consciousness which for a longer time displayed the characteristics of a millet mentality. While the Turks were the first to shed the millet identity within the Muslim sphere, they did so to a great extent influenced by the development of Turkish nationalism in neighboring Turkey.

The Pomaks, for their part, persevered in their refusal to conform to a definite type of ethnic/national or politicized identity. Indeed they have in general refused numerous attempts on the part of political entrepreneurs—both those in pursuit of national integration and those in pursuit of political separatism—to politicize their cultural identity. It must be noted that throughout this century the several drastic attempts to forcefully and sometimes violently assimilate them into the Bulgarian community have been effective. There were no Pomak separatist movements and little effort until recently to obtain group rights in the political arena. It is important to emphasize, however, that as a group, the Bulgarian Muslims remained almost completely politically, socially, and economically isolated. Only during the Communist period were some efforts initiated for the economic development of the regions in which they lived, but they remained sporadic, inconsistent, and insufficient. Communist institutions in the centralized Bulgarian state attempted to integrate them into the national community but suppressed any impulse to politicize their cultural identity.

After 1989 the areas inhabited by the Bulgarian Muslims have been the ones most severely hit by the economic crisis, with all the ensuing repercussions on social, ethnic, and political actions and mobilization. Among the many variables described or mentioned in this chapter, the economy has played a crucial role in contributing to the politicization of their cultural identity. The end of the centralized economy and the liberalization of economic efforts have re-

sulted in a further marginalization of the Pomaks' territories. There political mobilizers attempt to exploit economic grievances in an effort to transform cultural cohesiveness into political identity. Economists and policymakers are well aware of this effort, and a variety of views has been advanced to handle the problem and thus weaken those political mobilization efforts.[108] Yet even if some economic improvement is achieved (and this is unlikely), other factors are at work in transforming Pomak cultural identity into political identity and thus increasing politicized cultural tensions in Bulgaria.

Indeed it is true that "at all times, and not only at moments of economic crisis, collective political actors emerge who may help to determine political outcomes."[109] Political parties and other groups exert strong pressure on the Pomak population to make its cultural identity politically relevant. Their success in acquiring loyalties and in shaping identities obviously depends on how far they are able to meet a variety of group interests, not only economic ones. In their intricate maneuvering between what they wish to offer and what they are able to deliver, they are caught up in a complex game within the state political sphere, which imposes limitations on them. Among these factors, international constraints and incentives are of prime importance. As already indicated, the precarious geopolitical situation of the country, the new interpretations of national security which include the economy, and the explosive issue of ethnic minorities in the new international context further compound the struggle between political groups amd the search for efficient solutions to their economic and political problems.

The issue of a political identity in the pursuit of group interests is a defining feature in the development of the Bulgarian Muslim population. As one researcher has put it, they are "well aware of their group distinction and are now looking for ways to explain it."[110] This statement, however, needs some elaboration. Despite the fact that the Pomaks are usually seen and described as a compact entity by the out groups, their presumed uniformity is far from real. Precisely because they were not fully caught in the homogenizing efforts of the nation-state, regionalism among them is even more pronounced than among other groups. Therefore, their response to the challenges of the new economic and political climate after 1989 takes the form of a variety of group identities, rather than of a single one. Nonetheless, although there still is a part of the Pomak community which

displays characteristics of cultural and political identity diffusion (uncertainty as to who they are), we are witnessing in the current period that the majority is increasingly adopting cultural identity foreclosure (commitment to one cultural identity at the expense of all others).[111] What this means is that given international pressures, Pomaks are being forced to identify along the lines of the divide between Bulgarians and Turks. Economic factors, geopolitical pressures, international definitions of group vs. individual rights, and political institutions that define who can be represented in the political arena will determine the success of attempts to create a distinct politicized group self-identity among the Pomaks.

## NOTES

An abbreviated version of this article appeared in

1. On Balkan Muslims, see H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993).
2. On this historiographical dispute, see Ömer Lûtfi Barkan: "Osmanli imparatorlugunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak sürgünler," Istanbul Üniversitesi, *Iktisat Fakültesi Mecmuasi* 11, 13, 15 (1949–1951), and "Rumeli'nin iskâni için yapilan sürgünler," Istanbul Üniversitesi, *Iktisat Fakültesi Mecmuasi* 13 (1950); Elena Grozdanova, *Bîlgarskata narodnost prez XVII vek: Demografsko izsledvane* (Sofia, 1989); Antonina Zhelyazkova, *Razprostranenie na islyama v zapadnobîlgarskite zemi pod osmanska vlast, XV–XVIII vek* (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1990); Sami Pulaha, *Aspects de démographie historique des contrées albanaises pendant les XV*$^{ème}$–XVI$^{ème}$ siècles (Tirana, 1984); M. Sokoloski, "Islamizatsija u Makedonija u XV i XVI veku," *Istorijski casopis,* 1975, p. 22.
3. This is not the case only with obvious converts from Islam like the Pomaks. During a 1984–89 campaign aimed at changing the names of the Turks in Bulgaria, the legitimation behind it was the belief that the Turks too had been converts who had additionally forgotten their mother tongue. A more subtle, and for some regions plausible, version of this theory claimed that today's Turks, particularly the compact mass in northeastern Bulgaria, were ethnically linked to the proto-Bulgars, a Turkic tribe which, after the demise of the Great Volga Bulgaria in the steppes north of the Black Sea, founded the Bulgarian state in the Balkan peninsula in the seventh century A.D. The

dominant account in Bulgarian historiography has it that the comparatively few, if ruling, proto-Bulgars were completely Slavicized by the ninth century, especially with the conversion of the state to Christianity, and that the population of the two medieval Bulgarian empires, having acquired the Bulgarian self-designation, was espousing a consolidated Slavic Christian identity and using the Slavic language. Against this opinion a theory was advanced, based mostly on linguistic, archaeological, and ethnographic data, that a substantial group of the proto-Bulgars was never linguistically assimilated into the Slavic majority. With the arrival of the Ottoman Turks in the fourteenth century, these groups either retained their status as Turkic-speaking Christians (the Gagauz) or converted to Islam, the religion brought by the (maybe) linguistically related Ottomans. As already noted, this is merely one in the line of many theories, but it problematizes the uncritical use of the term *ethnic* Turks (unless one sticks to the generic use of the term as espoused by pan-Turkism).

4. Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Dimitrije Djordjević, "Migrations during the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars and World War One," *Migrations in Balkan History* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1989), pp. 115–29.

5. For general studies on the Pomaks, see Stoyu Shishkov: *Bîlgaromohamedanite (Pomatsi): Istoriko-zemepisen i narodonauchen pregled v obrazi* (Plovdiv, 1936), and *Pomatsite v trite bîlgarski oblasti: Trakiya, Makedoniya i Miziya,* vol. 1 (Plovdiv, 1914); A. Primovski, *Bîlgarite-mohamedani v nashata narodnostna obshtnost* (Sofia, 1940); R. Solakov, *Bîlgarite-mohamedani v minaloto i dnes* (Sofia, 1940); N. Vranchev, *Bîlgari-mohamedani (pomaci)* (Sofia, 1948); Lyubomir Miletich, *Lovchanskite pomatsi* (Sofia, 1889); Kiril Vasilev, *Rodopskite bîlgari-mohamedani* (Plovdiv, 1961); *Kompleksna nauchna rodopska ekspeditsiya prez 1953 godina: Dokladi i materiali* (Sofia, 1955); Tsvetana Romanska et al., eds., *Narodnostna i bitova obshtnost na rodopskite bîlgari* (Sofia, 1969); *Rodopite v bîlgarskata istoriya* (Sofia, 1974).

6. See, for example, Strashimir Dimitrov: "Demografski otnosheniya i pronikvane na islyama v Zapadnite Rodopi i dolinata na Mesta prez XV–XVII v.," *Rodopski sbornik* 1 (Sofia, 1965), and "Pronikvane na mohamedanstrvoto sred bîlgarite v Zapadnite Rodopi prez XV–XVII vek," *Rodopi,* nos. 6–7 (1972); Grozdanova; Zhelyazkova.

7. Boryana Panayotova, "Bîlgari-mohamedani i khristiyani v Tsentralnite Rodopi: Pogled vîrkhu tekhnite vzaimootnosheniya," *Aspekti na etnokulturnata situatsiya v Bîlgariya i na Balkanite* (Sofia: Tsentîr za Izsledvane na Demokratsiyata, Fondatsiya Friedrich Naumann 1991–92), vol. 2, p. 36; for a recent illustration of the relations between Bulgarian Muslims and Christians in Yakoruda and the tradition of keeping up kinship ties between them, see Bozhidar Kardalev, "Zabîrkva se porednata gorchiva chasha za bîlgarite mohamedani," *Duma*, 9 June 1993.

8. This complicated theory clearly tries to disregard religious and linguistic boundaries by emphasizing blood/kinship ties. Interestingly enough, it was not exploited so as to integrate the Pomaks living in the Greek Rho-

dopes to the Greek majority community. Having noted the "Bulgarian danger" during the cold war period, Greek authorities were principally concerned with obliterating the potential Slavic—i.e., Bulgarian—allegiance of the Pomaks. Instead they treated them as Turks, a decision they bitterly regret nowadays when facing problems with their Turkish/Muslim minority. On the Pomaks in Greece, see Emmanuel Sarides, *Ethnische Minderheit und zwischenstaatliches Streit-object: Die Pomaken in Nordgriechenland* (Berlin, 1987). See also a critique of the Greek theses in Tatjana Seypell, "Das Interesse an der muslimischen Minderheit in Westthrakien (Griechenland) 1945–1990," in *Minderheitenfragen in Südosteuropa,* ed. Gerhard Schwamm (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), pp. 377–92.

9. See, for example, Hüseyin Memisoglu, *Pages from the History of Pomak Turks* (Ankara, 1991). This work was published in both Turkish and Bulgarian and presents the thesis that the Pomaks were descendants of Kuman Turks of the eleventh century, that their language is a Turkic dialect, that Christians entered the Rhodopes for the first time after 1912, etc. The author, a graduate of the Sofia Communist Academy of Political Science (AONSU), subsequently taught the history of the Bulgarian Communist Party to engineers under his previous name, Memishev. In 1988 he left for Turkey (Ilcho Dimitrov, "Disertant na AONSU izdava divotii v Ankara," *Duma*, 15 April 1993). A brochure published in Istanbul in 1976 under the title "The Essence of the Tragedy of the Rhodope Turks in Bulgaria" offers similar theories and is still distributed in large quantities among the Bulgarian Muslims in the Rhodopes (see Paunka Gocheva, "Koi vkara vîlka v Balkanskata koshara," *Duma,* 12 May 1993). As a whole, the 1980s saw a proliferation of propaganda literature on both sides of the Bulgarian-Turkish border, and quite often the Turkish works managed to outdo their Bulgarian counterparts in their zealous and phantasmagorical claims.
10. Panayotova, p. 37.
11. On the Rhodope mutiny and the Pomak republic, see Khristo Popkonstantinov, *Nepokornite sela v Rodopskite planini,* vol. 1 (1878–1879) (Tîrnovo, 1887), vol. 2 (1878–1886) (Sofia, 1886); Vassil Dechov, *Minaloto na Chepelare,* vol. 1 (Sofia, 1928); Khristo Khristov, "Polozhenieto na rodopskoto naseleniye sled Osvobozhdenieto i za t.nar. 'nepokorni' bîlgaromokhamedanski sela," *Is minaloto na bîlgarskite mohamedani v Rodopite* (Sofia, 1958). It is symptomatic that with the exception of the previously cited works, practically no scholarly research was undertaken on this interesting problem. The multivolume *History of Bulgaria,* whose 559-page vol. 7 covers the period 1878–1903, has two pages on the mutiny, no allusion to the republic, and only mentions the Pomak villages as referred to in the clauses of the 1886 treaty (*Istoriya na Bîlgariya,* vol.7 [Sofia, 1991], pp. 39–40, 193).
12. Panayotova, p. 38.
13. Tinka Alexandrova, "Rodopskite bîlgari i islyamskiyat 'dzhihad,'" *Vecherni novini,* no. 37 (21/23 February 1992): 6.

14. This had not been the first time the names of the Bulgarian Muslims had been changed. During the Balkan wars in 1912–13, there was a coercive campaign which was reversed in 1914 but at the price of the further alienation of the Pomaks. For a survey of the consecutive renaming campaigns among the Pomaks throughout the twentieth century, see Yulian Konstantinov, "An Account of Pomak Conversions in Bulgaria (1912–1990)," in Schwamm, ed., pp. 343–57.
15. Panayotova, pp. 39–40. For a detailed account of the activities and goals of Rodina, see the contemporary periodicals *Rodina* and *Rodopa.* For a recent analysis of the organization, see Alexander Karamandzhukov: "Dokumenti po vîznikvane i deynostta na druzhbite 'Rodina,'" *Rodopski sbornik* 5 (Sofia, 1983), and "Dokumenti za rodinskoto vîzrozhdensko dvizhenie sred bîlgarite mohamedani v Zapadnite Rodopi," *Rodopski sbornik* 6 (Sofia, 1987).
16. For an idea about the highly emotional degree of discussion on Rodina, see (among others) the discussion in *Aspekti na etnokulturnata situatsiya v Bîlgariya,* pp. 42–46; also Vladimir Ardenski, "Koi vkara vîlka v kosharata?," *Trud,* 26 December 1991.
17. For a general exposition defending this view and based mostly on the Greek case, see George G. Arnakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism," in *The Balkans in Transition. Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century,* ed. Charles and Barbara Jelavich (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 115–44.
18. Paschalis Kitromilides, "Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans," *European History Quarterly* 19, 2 (April 1989): 184.
19. The exception is the Albanian case, possibly because nationalist ideas developed simultaneously among its different religious components, of which the Muslims were the majority, and because the perceived danger from without came from Christian quarters (Greeks and Serbs) rather than from the Muslim center.
20. Kitromilides, p. 177.
21. See, for example, the coexistence and cooperation between the Romanian Uniate and Orthodox churches, where Romanianness became the dominant link. Despite the anti-Catholic prejudice in Bulgaria, the small Bulgarian Catholic community, as well as the even smaller group of Bulgarian Protestants, were considered and perceived themselves an organic part of the Bulgarian nation. The unbridgeable division between Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs can be explained not only by irreconcilable religious differences, but also by the fact that the two communities had for a long period developed within different historical traditions, the Croats essentially outside the Ottoman sphere. During the nineteenth century the notion of separateness, although not irreversible, had become internalized by significant groups of the respective populations who were cherishing separate state-

building ideals, despite and alongside the substantial appeal and support for the Yugoslav idea.

22. Eran Fraenkel, "Urban Muslim Identity in Macedonia: The Interplay of Ottomanism and Multilingual Nationalism," in *Language Contact—Language Conflict,* ed. Eran Fraenkel and Christina Kramer (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 29–44.
23. The only case where, at least theoretically, a "Muslim nation" has emerged is among the highly secularized group of Bosnian Muslims, under the specific administrative arrangement of Tito. The type of political nationalism which they seem (at least officially) to espouse is of a distinctly different variety from the organic nationalism of other groups in the region.
24. As a self-designation, Pomak has been internalized only by small groups in the Lovech area and in some regions of the Rhodopes and Macedonia (Alexei Kalionski, "The Pomak Dilemma," *La Transmission du savoir dans le monde musulman périphérique* (Paris: Programme de Recherches Interdisciplinaires sur le Monde Musulman Périphérique, March 1993), p. 122; Lettre d'Information, no. 13.
25. Cited in Stoyan Raychevski, "Bîlgarite mohamedani," *Rodopi,* no. 7 (July 1993): 5.
26. F. Kanitz, "Die moslemisch-bulgarischen Pomaci und Zigeuner im Nördlichen Balkangebiete," *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien,* vol. 6 (Vienna, 1876), p. 75.
27. Recently in an interview a Bulgarian Muslim teacher from Krumovgrad exclaimed, "Pomak means *pomîchen* [tortured] Bulgarian" (see "Bîlgaromohamedani priemat khristiyanstvoto ot . . . papata," *Bîlgarski dnevnik,* no. 1, 14 June 1991, p. 18).
28. Bozhidar Alexiev, "Ekologichna sreda: Istoricheska traditsiya (myusulmanskite obshtnosti v Iztochnite Rodopi)," *Aspekti na etnokulturnata situatsiya v Bîlgariya,* vol. 1, pp. 161–62.
29. Kalionski, p. 122.
30. Alexandrova, p. 6.
31. *Sbornik Rodina,* vol. 1 (1937–1938) (Plovdiv: Izdanie na Bîlgaro-Mohamedanskata Kulturno-Posvetna i Blagotvoritelna Druzhba Rodina v gr. Smolyan, 1939).
32. Cited in Tinka Alexandrova, "Rodopskite bîlgari i islyamskiyat 'dzhihad,'" *Vecherni novini,* no. 22 (31 January/1 February 1992). The term used in the original for "ethnicity" is *narodnost,* usually translated as "nationality."
33. "Bîlgarite mohamedani sa otvorenata rana na Bîlgariya," *Duma*, no. 131, 9 June 1993.
34. Oral interviews in Smolyan, Chepelare, and Mogilitsa in August 1993.
35. This movement was officially established on 18 April 1990 in Kîrdzhali. See "Bîlgaromohamedani priemat khristiyanstvoto," pp. 17–18.

36. Radka Petrova, "Svetoto krîshtenie sa prieli okolo 50 khilyadi mohamedani," *Duma*, 12 June 1993.
37. Interview with Boyan Sarîev, "Vizhdam Rodopite kato ogromen khram na Khristos," *Standart*, 21 July 1993.
38. Filipa Serafimova, "Dukhovniyat monopolizîm v Iztochnite Rodopi e razrushen," *Demokratsiya,* 12 June 1993; Petrova, "Svetoto krshtenie."
39. Sarîev's movement, if successful, will in fact establish a church in Bulgaria: an Orthodox church which recognizes the supremacy of the Pope. For more on his motives, see the section on identity and interest.
40. Oral interview with Stoyan Raychevski (August 1993), deputy from the Union of Democratic Forces, whose father had been the mayor of a village in the Rhodopes.
41. Cited in Radka Petrova, "Gryakh li e da se otîrvesh ot Allaha, se pitat v selo Padina," *Duma*, 9 July 1992. When a few people of the village converted to Christianity, this was viewed by the rest of the villagers as an unpardonable act of apostasy. The Christian pastor who visits the village weekly is met by open hostility. At the same time, the attempts of the Movement of Rights and Freedoms to win the political support of the village are a total failure. The claims of the movement that the population consists of Rhodope Turks are considered unserious and laughable.
42. The whole text of the letter was published in the newspaper of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, *Prava i svobodi,* no. 16 (16 April 1993).
43. Goran Blagoev, "Sîvremennite religiozni izmereniya b zhivota na myusulmanskoto naselenie ot Iztochnite i Zapadnite Rodopi," *Etnicheskata kartina v Bîlgariya* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo Klub '90, 1993), pp. 85–86. See also Iordan Peev, "L'Islam et les musulmans en Bulgarie"; lecture series delivered at the Académie Française in Paris, 1993, p. 44; cited with the permission of the author.
44. *Ibid.*
45. These results come from a poll conducted among a representative sample of 3,227 people in the municipalities of Gotse Delchev, Yakoruda, Satovcha, Velingrad, Gîrmen, and Madan (Yasen Borislavov, "Gergyovden i Trifon Zarezan sblizhavat khristiyani i myusulmani," *Duma*, 12 May 1993).
46. See note 8.
47. For details, see Tsvetana B. Georgieva, "Struktura na vlastta v traditsionnata obshtnost na pomatsite v rayona na Chech (Zapadni Rodopi)," *Etnicheskata kartina v Bîlgariya* (Sofia: Izdatelstvo Klub '90, 1993), pp. 73–74.
48. Peev, pp. 47–48. One translation was published in London with the support of the Ahmadiyah sect; the other is the work of the former Bulgarian Grand Müfti and is published in Saudi Arabia. Its first edition numbered 4,000 copies. The second edition of 200,000 copies was expected to arrive in Bulgaria by the end of 1993 (*Trud,* 3 September 1993).
49. *Kontinent,* 28 April 1993; *Duma*, 29 April 1993.

50. The village is part of the Ardino municipality, Kîrzhali district.
51. In *Standart,* 29 April 1993, Burov mentions that he has received the support of Ahmed Sandikcioglu, chairman of a UN organization for the defense of human rights in Eastern Europe; see also *Duma*, 29 April 1993.
52. An extensive interview with Kamen Burov was published in *Standart,* 25 May 1993.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Burov maintains that the Pomaks number half a million people. Asked about his sources, he responded, "I know the Rhodopes thoroughly and I have an idea about the population" (*Standart,* 25 May 1993).
55. Decision no. 14 of the Constitutional Court, published in *Dîrzhaven vestnik*, no. 93 (1992). Cited in *Duma*, 16 June 1993. The category "origin" has usually been used to indicate social background.
56. Ibrahim Tatarli in "Pravoto na samoopredelenie e beleg za zrelostta na demokratsiyata," *Prava i svobodi,* no. 22 (28 May 1993): 4.
57. Cited in Slavcho Vodenicharov, "Istinskoto litse na DPS v Rodopite," *Duma*, 25 November 1991 (my emphasis).
58. Religion, according to the instructions for the census, was defined as "a historically determined affiliation of the person or his parents or predecessors to a group with a defined religious outlook." This was an obvious attempt to account for the sizable number of the population which were indicating that they were nonbelievers, atheists, etc., particularly among the strongly secularized and urban Bulgarian majority.
59. Petko Bozhkov, "Etnodemografska kharakteristika na naselenieto v Bîlgariya," *Demokratsiya*, no. 977 (21 April 1993). For the detailed data, see *Demografska kharakteristika na Bîlgariya (rezultati ot 2% izvadka*) (Sofia: Natsionalen Statisticheski Institut, 1993).
60. See, for example, the critique by Rumyana Modeva, "Natsionalna stabilnost ili etnicheska konfrontatsiya ni ochakva," *Duma*, no. 180 (5 August 1993). This article, as well as another by Milko Boyadzhiev in *Standart,* 29 April 1993, attacked the organizers of the census for having included the criteria on ethnicity and religion as especially disintegrating and destabilizing.
61. Among the contingent of emigrating Bulgarian Turks to Turkey, gypsies are consistently turned back by the Turkish authorities. The latest claim to Turkish ethnic and linguistic allegiance, besides common religion, is probably an attempt to overcome this differentiation.
62. Ilona Tomova, press conference on the ethnocultural situation in Bulgaria, *Duma*, 6 May 1993. See also more detailed results published in Borislavov.
63. In *Duma* on 27 April 1993, Paunka Gocheva disclosed that in 1970–72, at the time of the name-changing campaign against the Bulgarian Muslims, they numbered about 220,000. Taking into account their growth rate, she puts their present number at 280,000. According to an article in another daily, of the 822,000 self-defined members of the Turkish ethnic group,

100,000 are Pomaks and 200,000 gypsies (see Elena Trifonova, "Yakoruda—Golyamoto chakane za edna istins," *Standart*, 20 April 1993). Konstantinov ("An Account of Pomak Conversions," p. 344, n. 3) cites 270,000 Pomaks as an official figure of the Ministry of Interior by May 1989 but does not disclose his exact source.

64. Yanora Grigorova and Yasen Borislavov, "Bîlgarite v Yakoruda styagat neshto kato vîstanie," *Duma*, 15 May 1993.
65. Boika Asiova, "Yakoruda se poturchva spokoino," *Duma*, 27 November 1992. According to the census rules, children over 16 determine their ethnic characteristics themselves; under this age, it is the prerogative of their parents.
66. Grigorova and Borislavov; Trifonova.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Grigorova and Borislavov.
69. Trifonova.
70. The IMRO, which had enjoyed a state-within-a-state status in Bulgaria following World War I and had terrorized the political life of the country in the interwar period, was banned after the military coup of 1934. It was revived after the fall of communism in 1989. Despite its shrill and vociferous nationalism and its great wealth, the organization has not thus far engaged in any extralegal activities. The mayor of Yakoruda, Naile Salikh, blames the inflated reports of ethnic tensions in the municipality and the whole inflamed public debate exclusively on the leaders of the local branch of the IMRO (*Nov Pirinskli vestnik,* no. 60 [8–14 December 1992]).
71. *Prava i svobodi,* no. 22 (28 May 1993), p. 3.
72. *Prava i svobodi*, no. 24 (11 June 1993), p. 3.
73. Mariana Kirova, "Turtsizirat se Yakoruda i gr. Gotse Delchev," *Demokratsiya*, 22 May 1993. A protest against the report of the parliamentary commission was filed by Naila Salikh and was published in *Prava i svobodi,* no. 26 (25 June 1993).
74. For different reactions to the parliamentary decision, see *Zora,* 30 September 1993; *168 chasa,* 26 September 1993; *Duma*, 29 September 1993.
75. The information was gathered on a special card at the same time as the census data. The pollsters interviewed all males between the ages of 16 and 59 and all females between 16 and 54. The results were published in *Bezrabotni v republika Bîlgariya kîm 4.12.1992 godina (predvaritelni danni)* (Sofia: National Statistical Institute, 1993).
76. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.
78. After 1989 Bulgaria lost its traditional tobacco markets in Eastern Europe, especially the large market of the former Soviet Union, but also the markets of Poland and Hungary. At the same time, the local consumer market for Bulgarian cigarettes has shrunk fourfold because of the low tariffs imposed

on imported cigarettes ("OSD komentira tjutjunevata promishlenost," *INFB BIP,* no. 13 [29 September 1993]).

79. Yulian Konstantinov, "'Nation-State' and 'Minority' Types of Discourse: Problems of Communication between the Majority and the Islamic Minorities in Contemporary Bulgaria," *Innovation in Social Sciences Research* 5, 3 (1992): 85–86.
80. Bozhkov.
81. *Bezrabotni v republika Bîlgariya,* p. 12.
82. *Ibid.,* p. 13. For a particularly moving narrative of the plight of one concrete Bulgarian Muslim village—Barutin, with its central square nicknamed "Parliament of the Unemployed"—see lengthy information in *Demokratsiya,* 5 June 1993. Michael L. Wyzan has noted that the definition of unemployed has been especially inclusive in this census. It was therefore the subject of official criticism that anyone who was not paid was considered to be unemployed (see "Economic Transformation and Regional Inequality in Bulgaria: In Search of a Meaningful Unit of Analysis"; paper presented at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Honolulu, November 1993).
83. Interview with Sabrie Sapundzhieva in *Nedelen Standart,* 6 June 1993, p.6.
84. Radka Petrova, "V Dzhebel he si shtat kmeta, toi se pravi na glukh," *Duma*, 23 January 1991.
85. *Demokratsiya,* 19 July 1993.
86. *Otechestven vestnik,* 14 October 1993.
87. "Za bîlgarskiya koren turskiyat ezik ne e maichin," *Duma*, 9 October 1991.
88. *Aspekti na etnokulturnata situatsiya v Bîlgariya,* vol. 1, p. 274.
89. Interview with Kamen Burov, *Standart,* 25 May 1993.
90. *Ibid.*
91. "Bîlgaromohamedani priemat khristiyanstvoto," p. 18.
92. *Ibid*.
93. "Unizhava ne tova, koeto vliza v ushite, a koeto izliza ot ustata," *Pogled,* 13 September 1992.
94. Boyka Asiova and Kipra Dobreva, "Gorchivi plodove po lîkatushnata pîteka," *Duma*, 14 December 1991.
95. Peev, pp. 47–48.
96. "Bîlgaromohamedani priemat khristiyanstvoto," p. 17.
97. Konstantinov, "'Nation-State' and 'Minority' Types of Discourse," p. 81.
98. For a very strong statement on the position of Bulgaria, its military potential, and its security, see the interview with Defense Minister Valentin Alexandrov in *168 chasa,* no. 48 (29 November 1993), p. 21.

99. The quote is from one of the ultranationalist newspapers, *Zora,* 28 January 1992. Cited in Konstantinov, "'Nation-State' and 'Minority' Types of Discourse, p. 77.
100. Modeva.
101. Konstantinov, "'Nation-State' and 'Minority' Types of Discourse," p. 81.
102. Excerpt from Henry Kissinger's book, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994); published in *Time,* 14 March 1994, p. 76.
103. For an account of the work of European institutions in the postwar period on the problem of ethnic minorities, see Rudolf Kern, "Europäische Institutionen und Minderheiten," in Schwamm, ed., pp. 61–77.
104. In this respect, see the ill-begotten initiative of French Prime Minister Edouard Baladur for signing a pact on European stability. This project, initiated in June 1993, although pro forma pan-European with the participation of the United States and Canada, was actually supposed to deal only with East Central and Eastern Europe, "the countries whose relations are not yet stabilized by their association with one of the great European political formations." While verbally committed to the inviolability of frontiers, the plan in fact envisaged the possibility of border changes. It also clearly showed a switch to the collective interpretation of minority rights. Preliminary discussions with all East European representatives who objected vehemently to the double standard virtually have invalidated the initiative. It is significant, however, that while France advocates collective rights of minorities as applied to Central and Eastern Europe, it has opposed this approach for the whole continent (see France's stand at the Copenhagen conference of 1990, described in Kern, p. 68).
105. Questions arise about the future of the Serbs in Bosnia. Are they going to be allowed to step into a confederation (even if not seen as a possible step for unification) with Serbia proper, as the latest information from the White House seems to indicate? What will the attitude toward the Kosovo Albanians be were they to demand a confederative status with Tirana at a later date? And the Albanians in Macedonia? And if the same happens to the Hungarians in Slovakia or in Romania? And all the Russians living in the former republics of the USSR?
106. *168 chasa*, 26 September 1993.
107. *Standart*, 18 October 1993.
108. In this respect, see the articles in the section on "Ethnic Relations and the Economy" in *Aspekti na etnokulturnata situatsiya v Bîlgariya,* vol. 1, pp. 197–279.
109. John Rex, "Ethnic Mobilization in a Multicultural Society," *Innovation in Social Sciences Research* 5, 3 (1992): 72.
110. Georgieva, p. 74.
111. On identity diffusion and foreclosure, see Rex, p. 66.