MINORITY POLICIES IN BULGARIA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes Bulgaria's minority policy followed by various governments during the Principality, the Kingdom, Peoples Republic and post-Communist Bulgaria. General discussion and assessment of minority rights standards within major international organizations is followed by analysis of minorities' status and treatment in Bulgaria since 1878. The thesis seeks answers to what have been the main features of minority policies in modern Bulgarian history, what has constituted its continuity and change.

Keywords: Minority Rights, Minority, Bulgaria, Turkish Minority, Pomak Minority, Roma Minority, Macedonian Minority.

ÖZ

BULGARİSTAN AZINLIK POLİTİKASI: DEVAMLILIK VE DEĞİŞİM

Tahir, Tahir

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Bulgaristan'da Prenslik, Krallık, Komünist Parti iktidarı ve bu dönem sonrasında çeşitli hükümetlerce izlenen azınlık politikalarını analiz etmektir. Çalışmanın ilk bölümünde başlıca uluslararası organizasyonların azınlık haklarıyla ilgili standartları değerlendirilmiş ve tartışılmış, bunu takiben de Bulgaristan'da 1878'den beri süregelen dönemde azınlıkların statüleri ve azınlıklara yönelik uygulamalar incelenmiştir. Modern Bulgaristan tarihinde azınlık politikalarının özelliklerinin neler olduğu ve bu özelliklerin devamlılık ve değişim sürecini nelerin oluşturduğu bu çalışmanın cevap aradığı sorulardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Azınlık Hakları, Azınlık, Bulgaristan, Türk Azınlığı, Pomak Azınlığı, Roman Azınlığı, Makedon Azınlığı.

Anneme ve Babama

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To my parents and little sister Suzika I offer my sincere gratitude for their endless support and encouragement throughout my studies.

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: Signiture:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The history of Balkan people, from the emergence and consolidation of various "nation" states until present times, is characterized with struggles for national emancipation, realization of hegemonic and irredentist ambitions, creation and consolidation of nation states, rejection of foreign rule and solution of minority "problems" or acquisition of minority rights. Bulgaria, like many other states, is not an ethnically homogenous country. She has its minorities, treated either well or bad in different periods of Bulgarian history. Recognized or not, there exist groups who are either defined by the majority as different or are perceived as being different by themselves.

The Bulgarians established their political entity in the Balkans in the 7th century but the Bulgarian state was conquered by the Ottoman Empire in the late 14th century and remained under Ottoman rule until 1878 when it was recognized as an autonomous principality, to achieve full independence as a sovereign kingdom in 1908. After World War II, the communist party took over and remained in power until November 1989. Since then Bulgaria has moved towards political pluralism, liberal representative democracy and market economy. However, during the five centuries of Ottoman rule, the lands on which the Bulgarian state was to be established and consolidated became increasingly heterogeneous and as the 2001 census shows (out of the 7,9 million inhabitants 83,6 % were ethnic Bulgarians, 9.5

% Turks, 4,6 % Roma and 1.5 % represented the remaining smaller ethnic groups) it still remains so.

A number of treaties, including the 1878 Treaty of Berlin guaranteed the interests of the ethnic groups living in Bulgaria. The 1919 Treaty of Neuilly went further in protecting ethnicity together with religion introducing race and language as a basis for equal protection of minorities.

Until World War II there was constant eviction of non-Bulgarian ethnic communities from Bulgaria which significantly reduced the number of some minorities on Bulgarian lands. This policy is observed in the aftermath of World War II when minorities were either uprooted or substantially reduced through population transfers. Migration was one of the most visible and dramatic collective actions that reflected the moods and methods of Muslim minorities and their changing place in Bulgarian lands. Although often forcibly expelled, Muslims, at times themselves sought emigration in response to the changing political climate in Bulgaria. Within Bulgarian politics and society, minorities made choices how they could cope with the changing demands of Bulgarian national designs.

Although supportive to the promotion of ethnic identity of some minorities during its first years of establishment, an answer to why the communist party rule quickly abandoned its "internationalist" policy and since the mid-1950s started repressing minorities is to be sought. Attempts to change the names of the Pomaks started already in the 1960s and were completed by mid-1970. After that the names and the identity of the Turks living in Bulgaria were targeted. In 1984-1985 the government changed by force the names of Turks and Muslim Roma with the explicitly stated aim to "bulgarianize" them and started systematic action of

suppression of any resistance to the process. As far as the Roma minority is concerned, after encouraging Roma organizations, press and culture in the late 1940s and early 1950s, after communist party's 1956 plenum, all Roma institutions were either closed down or radically "reformed".

Policies toward the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria constitute the most controversial dimension of Bulgaria's minority approaches. In the period before the Bulgarian Communist Party's (BCP) takeover the Macedonians were considered to be an integral part of Bulgarian nation. In the 1940s and 50s, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, the Communist party did not oppose and even encouraged Macedonian self-consciousness in the Pirin region. In the mid-1950s however, this policy was dramatically reversed and the authorities refused to recognize not only the existence of Macedonian minority in Bulgaria but also the existence separate Macedonian nation in neighboring Yugoslavia. In the censuses Macedonians dropped from 170 000 in 1946 to less than 10 000 in 1965 to disappear altogether in the later censuses.

The Armenian and Jew minorities are not included in this study because they are well integrated into Bulgarian society and have not been subjected to the measures which the Turkish, Pomak, Roma and Macedonian minorities had to experience, particularly during the Bulgarian Communist Party's rule.

The aim of this study is to explore the field of minority policies applied in Bulgaria, covering the period from the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality until present times. The bulk of literature on the subject deals mainly with the treatment of the Muslim minority in general and the Turkish in particular. Taking this fact as a point of departure this work will attempt to give a general account of the minority strategies designed and employed in Bulgaria within the contexts which have led to

shifts in the perception, treatment and the legal status of different minority groups leaving in this country.

In the preliminary research undertaken for this work it became obvious that one of the main features of Bulgaria's minority policy/ies/ has been its cycle of shifts and the main argument of this study is that Bulgaria, when dealing with her minorities, has utilized different approaches to different minority groups, at different times resulting in cycles of confrontation and reconciliation.

In first chapter of this study the nature of minority rights in the post-WWI era is examined. From the studies undertaken it becomes obvious that during the League of Nations (LN) there was no claim for the universality of minority rights. Minority treaties established under the LN were clear reflection of the utilization of minority issue as a foreign policy issue. The failure of the afore mentioned treaties to prevent the abuse and manipulation of minority concerns by Hitler not only discredited the LN system of minority protection but brought into dispute the very notion of minority rights *per se*. Subsequently, the United Nations (UN) stopped short of including provisions of minority rights in its preliminary, choosing rather to focus on the principle of non-discrimination. It was not until 1966 when a modest clause recognizing minorities appears in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). In line with the post-WWII emphasis on human rights and non-discrimination the Council of Europe (CE) and its European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) had no provisions dealing directly with minorities. However, with the collapse of the communist party rule in Central and Eastern Europe, when a return of minority rights on the agenda of major international organizations is observed, the circle was completed. Whether the CE

made one of the most serious contributions to the field of international protection of minority rights, as it is argued, with the adoption of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities will be discussed. Here, the role of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE) and its contribution to the realm of minority rights protection is to be considered as well.

In the second chapter an attempt to analyze the rights, status and treatment of minorities during the Principality, the Kingdom and the Peoples Republic is made. Here it is exposed how the Bulgarian minority approach developed from a "benign neglect" to a hegemonic control and forced assimilation. As far as Bulgarian Communist Party's policies towards the minorities are concerned it is argued that BCP's integration of minorities, to the party, meant elimination of all signs of differences and particularly of Islamic practices which were seen as backward and reactionary. The recent developments in the Balkans have once more exposed the destructive potential of ethnic conflict, which, in turn, have reconfirmed the importance of successful management of diversity and ethic relations. In Chapter 3 answers to the reasons for the assimilation campaign in 1984-1985, together with the question of why the fall of Communist party rule in Bulgaria didn't lead to violent conflicts as it did in her western neighbor are sought. Moreover, the attempts to improve the record of minority rights within the context of EU accession are examined.

The social cost of the transition in Bulgaria has been one of the highest in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite the fact that the post-1989 years have been accompanied by improvements in terms of human rights and civil liberties, a large proportion of the population has experienced a decline in their general quality of life,

through mounting poverty, decreasing incomes, rising unemployment and greater inequality and insecurity. Bulgaria's ethnic minorities have particularly felt the social consequences of the changes. For example, it is not uncommon to have 80-90% unemployment among some Roma communities. The higher level of unemployment among ethnic minorities reflects, among other things, the fewer educational opportunities offered to these groups as a result of the low educational standards generally attained by ethnic minorities. Another feature has been the concentration of poverty, whereby ethnic minority communities are concentrated in specific regions. The fact that the minority issue is not only linked with free exercise of cultural and religious differences but has also its economic dimension is not skipped and in the last chapter emphasis on improving minority rights vs deteriorating economic wellbeing is put. In essence, this is a history of Bulgaria's minority policy, an account of the winding road and the roadblocks in the definition of changing Bulgarian national aspirations. Within varying contexts minorities had to negotiate the fluctuating boundaries of Bulgarian national projects and visions. The minorities examined in this work had to claim for themselves a place within Bulgarian society, be it through compliance with the Bulgarian regimes or various forms of resistance.

CHAPTER 2

CHANGING MINORITY RIGHTS APPROACHES

Minority protection originally emerged in treaties addressing religious minorities. One of the first such documents dates back to 1606: the Vienna treaty between the King of Hungary and the Prince of Transylvania, which contained a clause allowing Transylvanian Protestants to profess their faith freely. The protection of religious minorities was complemented with a number of treaties between the great powers during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.[1]

An active international concern for the protection of minorities was to appear in the beginning of the 19th. Until then the main minority treaties were designed with the aim to secure the protection of Christian denominations. As Weston notes, throughout history, "many military operations and diplomatic representations, not all of them with the purest of motives but performed nonetheless in the name of "humanitarian intervention", undertook to protect oppressed and persecuted minorities in the Ottoman Empire, Syria, Crete, and the various Balkan countries".[2]

[1] Patrick Thornberry, *International Law and the Rights of Minorities,* (Oxford University Press: 1991), pp.26-36

[2] Burns H. Weston, "International Human Rights: Prescription and Enforcement", available at: http://web.uichr.org/resources/eb/weston6.shtml, accessed on Mart 6, 2002. See also Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention", in Peter J. Katzenstein, (ed), The *Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 153-185.

In the same manner it was initially at the Congress of Vienna (1814-15)[3] and later during the League of Nations years that the protection of only certain racial, religious, and linguistic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Middle East became of a concern to a number of treaties and international declarations.[4] Muslim, Turkish, Roma, Pomak, Macedonian and other lesser minorities were totally ignored, which necessarily undermined credibility and posed questions on the real intention of the international support for minority rights.

The characteristic minority problem of the 20th century has been that of national minorities, which is the consequence of nationalism and its idea that state and national boundaries should coincide. The assumed ideal to be achieved is ethnically homogeneous state but heterogeneity has usually been the case. It is also suspected that national minorities present a problem in the fact that they have often been the once who struggle for the ideal, particularly at the existence of a kin state.

The League of Nations played a crucial role in developing a system for protection of (national) minorities, which was not regulated by the organization's Covenant but derived its power on this field from series of treaties concluded after WWI. One of the main outcomes of the Great War was the redrawing of the political map of Europe: the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires collapsed, a number of new and enlarged state came into being whereas some others regained their independence. Some of these countries, notably Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and Romania, included considerable number of ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities. Since the new borders failed to

[3] Jennifer Jackson- Preece, *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System*, (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.58-60. See also Baskın Oran, *Küreselleşme ve Azınlıklar*, (4. Basım), (Ankara, İmaj Kitabevi, 2001), pp.118-121.
[4] *Ibid.*

produce nationally homogeneous states, the problem remained. Similarly, the current ideological and political system did not only fail to solve problem but it helped deteriorating the problems. The current political system was based on exclusivist strategy. Thus the problem became twofold.

The principle of national self-determination, which is considered to be a successor of the political principle of nationalism that became widely recognized in 19th century Europe and related to the principle of nation state, was an important element of the war strategies of both the Allied and Central Powers. Since there existed a number of subjected ethnic groups pressing for self-determination, supporting these nationalistic demands was seen as an instrument for "sowing discord in enemy ranks"[5]. However, both sides had to take cautious steps because of the possibility of boomerang effect i.e. both sides contained disaffected groups whose nationalistic sentiment could be manipulated.

During the early days of the war, it was the Germans who acted more energically in exploiting nationalism. In Ireland, Germany helped the movement of Sinn Fein, encouraged the Flemish movement in Belgium that demanded separation of the Flanders and Walloon countries, welcomed and organized the Congress of Nationalities, which was largely composed of representatives of minorities of Imperial Russia and encouraged Finns' independence movement. According to Macartney, there were several reasons for the initial reluctance of the Allied powers to use the nationality question. Obviously, the multinational character of Austro-Hungary made her one of the most vulnerable states against which the self-determination principle could be used but fear that Germany could strengthen by

[5] Thomas D. Musgrave, *Self-determination and National Minorities* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p.15

Austro-Hungary's dismemberment was one of causes to act cautiously. Another reason was Russia's reluctance to tolerate the demands of her minorities[6] and advocacy for self-determination in Austro-Hungary was seen as a prelude to similar demands in Russia. In the early years of the war neither side was prepared to declare "itself unequivocally in favour of self-determination and appeals to self-determination were made only in self-interest". Then two developments that advantaged the Allies in the use of the national card occurred: the entry of USA into the war and the fall of the Tsarist regime in Russia[7].

In March 1917 the Provisional government of Alexander Kerennsky published a declaration where repudiated any intention on the part of "free Russia" to conquer or dominate any other nation.[8] The objective of the new governments was proclaimed to be the establishment of a "durable peace on the basis of the rights of the nations to decide their own destinies".[9] The government adopted a policy of toleration but still was reluctant to grant independence to the nations under her control. Musgrave sees the various independence and autonomy declarations (Ukraine, Finland, Northern Caucasus) as an outcome of the new more tolerant approach adopted by the Provisional government in March and April 1917, but to Macartney it rather was the weakness of the central authority, which led to these events. In October 1917, the Bolsheviks came to power and took the matter one step further by their firm stand for complete self-determination. The independence of Poland, Ukraine and Finland was backed but not all Bolsheviks agreed with the

[6] Rene Tangac, "The Soviet Response to the Minority Problem", in Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation-States*, (Pluto Press, 1989), p. 100.
[7] C.A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities*, (NY: Russell and Russell, 1968), pp.179-186.
[8] Thomas Musgrave, *op. cit*., p. 17.
[9] *Ibid.*

newly adopted approach to self-determination for nationalities. To some it was a "bourgeois concern, in which the proletariat, being essentially international, could have no interest"[10].

Lenin was one of the advocates of the principle, which he saw as a means to liberate the oppressed people, which, in turn, would contribute to the achievement of the world socialist revolution. Thus, Lenin championed self-determination in order to achieve his ideological and political objectives; the principle should be advocated as far as it furthered class struggle.[11]

While Lenin's understanding of the principle of self-determination was based on socialist political philosophy, Wilson's self-determination had its grounding in the Western democratic theory, however leading to fragmentation, establishment of small-weak nation-states and ethnic homogeneity. For the US President, self-determination meant freedom of people to choose their own government (internal self-determination). However, as the war progressed another version or understanding of the principle developed and this related to restructuring Europe according to national/ethnic lines.

2.1. The League of Nations System of Minority protection

By the end of 1919 all Central and Eastern European states had signed the minorities protection agreements. The politicians taking part at the conference forced the Central and Eastern European (CEE) states to sign minority protection agreements, which would be placed under permanent international guarantee and

[10] *Ibid*, p. 18.
[11] Rene Tangac, *op. cit*., pp. 102-103.

control after their ratification. It was believed that the agreements were an appropriate instruments to guarantee the territorial changes that took place during the First World War making peace in Europe possible and long-lasting. In Macartney's opinion what the leading politicians who favored the treaties in question had expected was the general political-national assimilation of the minorities, with the guarantees paving the way to it.[12] The idea of minorities protection agreements began to be expressed during the war as a remedy and counter-balance of the partially applied right of self-determination. It was the proposal of the American delegation, which proved to be very open in this question, that led to the establishment of the system of minority protection agreements.[13] The fate of Romania's Jewish minority before the First World War (WWI) weighed crucially in the diplomatic measures and perseverance of the American peace envoys. They were also the ones who gave backing to the proposals put forward by the Jews of Eastern Europe and the United States. These proposals focused attention on the individual and collective minority rights and on national autonomy[14]. Needless to say, one of the major suppositions behind this initiative was the assumption that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were multi-national states where the tension emanating from ethnic heterogeneity would be eased by the imposition of a mechanism safeguarding minorities. Throughout the course of the discussions there were voices of opposition which presented the advocates of the nation-state idea. They persistently challenged the idea of autonomy for the minorities on the grounds that it would lead to the

[12] C.A. Macartney,*op.cit*., pp. 275-278.
[13] *Ibid*, pp. 214-217.
[14] *Ibid*, pp. 216-218.

dangerous situation of having "a state within a state"[15]. When it comes to Wilson, he put the aims of the peace treaties as follows:

> We are trying to make a peaceful settlement and we are trying to make an equitable distribution of territories according to the race, the ethnological character of the people inhabiting those territories…Take the right of minorities. Nothing, I venture to say, is more likely to disturb the peace of the world that the treatment, which might in certain circumstances be meted out to minorities.[16]

But what or who is a minority? Any work, which addresses the issue of minorities' protection, is faced with the problem of conceptual clarity, which stems from the fact that, to date, there is no universally accepted definition of the term minority. Since the subject of this paper is to analyse the changing minority rights approaches and the treatment of minorities, discussions concerning the meaning of the concept during the term of the League of Nations may be regarded as an appropriate starting point. The term was used in the peace treaties ending WWI, concluded with the defeated, enlarged, or newly created states, however, no definition or explanation on the meaning of the concept is found. Instead, the treaties referred to "persons who belong to racial, religious, or linguistic minorities". Having in mind that later definitions of the term (e.g. Capatorti's[17]) are a combination of objective and subjective elements one may arrive at the conclusion, if the ruling of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) in the Upper Silesia Minority

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[15] Inis L. Claude, *National Minorities : An International Problem*, (Greenwood Press: Westport, 1969), p.20.
[16] C.A. Macartney, *op.cit*., p. 232.
[17] Francesco Capatorti, the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commissionon Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities defines minority as: A group numerically smaller to the rest of the population of the state, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the state – posses, ethnic, religious, linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language. UN Document E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Add.1-7 (1977) is available at: http://www.minority-rights.org/docs/defs.htm , accessed on December 20, 2001.

School case is regarded as a reflection of the general interpretation and understanding of the meaning of the term, that exclusively objective criteria were employed in the determination of a minority[18]. Some of the objective criteria used were persons association with a particular geographic region and its history. These were employed by the Brazilian representative to the League of Nations, Mello Toscano, who regarded minority to be:

> That part of the permanent population of a state, which, linked by historical tradition to a determined portion of the territory and having a culture of its own, cannot be confused with the majority of the other subjects because of the difference of race, language, or religion.[19]

It is obvious that the League of Nations experience was accompanied with confusion on the minorities' meaning caused by a report submitted to the League Council, which encompassed both objective and subjective elements. An attempt to solve this confusion was made by the PCIJ, which in an advisory opinion to the League's Council interpreted a minority to mean:

> [By] tradition….a group of persons living in a given country or locality, having race religion, language and tradition of their own and united by this identity of race, religion, language and traditions in a sentiment of solidarity, with a view to preserving their traditions, maintain their form of worship, ensuring the instructions and upbringing of their children in accordance with the spirit and tradition of their race and rendering mutual assistance to each other.[20]

This aimed at solving the confusion by incorporating both the subjective and objective criteria, however, the intended result was not achieved, on the contrary, the PCIJ's concluding remarks that minorities existence was a "question of fact…..not a

[18] According to the ruling, determining the person's belongingness to a minority was a "question of fact not will". See, Jennifer Jackson-Preece, *op.cit*., p.15.
[19] Jean Laponce, *The Protection of Minorities*, (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), p. 3, quoted in Preece, *op.cit*., p. 15.
[20] Quoted in Patrick Tornberry, *op.cit*., p.165.

question of law" was a ramification of the problematic approaches towards the concept.

Going back to Wilson's statement, it is true that minority problems may become or should be of international concern. To I. Claude, minority issues may endanger the stability of the international structure and become of an international concern under three scenarios:[21]

1. When minority's aspiration call for secession or union with a kin state
2. When a kin state's involvement in its co-nationals treatment in their host state[22] is observed, carrying the potential of deterioration of relations between the states in question.
3. When host states' treatment of her minorities leads to international action/intervention

The redrawing of borders in Europe after WWI is usually considered as the formation of a system of nation-states. In order to understand if this indeed was so, it is worth to have a look at the ethnic composition in CEE states before and after the war. Out of Europe's 450-500 million total population, 100-120 million were living in CEE. The figures show that before WWI around 50 million, or half of the population of CEE lived as minorities or subjected people. After the war this number

[21] Innis L. Claude, *op.cit*., pp. 3-5.

[22] A note on terminology here is needed. Throughout this work the meaning attributed to the term "host state" is noting more that the state on the territory of which the minorities reside. In the same manner the terms "kin state" and "mother state" should mean nothing but the existence of a state established as a result of the attainment of national political independence by the kins of the minority in question.

fell to 32 million.[23] Hence, it was accepted that the only way to deal with the problem was to establish a system for the protection of national minorities.

Nevertheless, even if the borders, contrary to Wilson's statement, were redrawn according to the economic and strategic interests of the victorious powers, taking precedence over the ethnic principle and the doctrine of self-determination, protection of minorities was an important element of the Paris Peace Treaties. Minority provisions included in the respective peace treaties bound the defeated states, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Greece, as new or enlarged states, concluded minority treaties with the Allied and Associated Powers. Germany, being defeated state not containing minorities was only partially bound to the system by the conclusion of a bilateral treaty with Poland on the minority regime in Upper Silesia. The new states' governments had to accept the minority protection obligations under the guarantee of the allied powers in return for their recognition and membership in the League of Nations. Such a diplomatic precondition was nothing new by the early 20th century: it had already been applied in 1878, at the Congress of Berlin, when the first large-scale reconstruction of the Balkans took place.[24]

The first treaty to establish the minorities' regime was the one concluded with Poland, which served as a model for the other treaties. In these treaties, the states undertook not to discriminate against the members of the minorities and to provide the environment necessary for the enjoyment of special rights by which minorities' ethnic, linguistic or religious integrity would be preserved, including the right to

[23] Vladimir Ortakovski, *Minorities in the Balkans*, (Ardsley, NY: Transitional Publishers), p. 63.
[24] Jennifer Jackson- Preece, *op.cit*., pp. 61-63.

official use of their language, the right to maintain schools and the right to practice their religions. Here are the provisions common to all minority documents:

1. Acquisition of citizenship: this provision was emphasized considerably in order to prevent the denial of minority rights on the grounds that members of a minority were not citizens of the state in question.
2. Equal civil and political rights, equality before law.
3. Free exercise of religion, protection of life and liberty.
4. Free use of the national minority language, "equal rights to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language…therein".[25]
5. In towns and districts where there was a considerable number of nationals belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities equitable share of public funds should be provided to these minorities for educational, religious or charitable purposes.

The abovementioned common minority provisions may be grouped into two major categories:

1. There are those rights granted to all citizens i.e. the principle of non-discrimination which is limited to the demand for equal treatment, without reference to specific circumstances.
2. Rights granted to members of minorities in order to maintain their group characteristics preventing their assimilation by the majority.

[25] Art. 8 of the Polish Treaty in C.A. Macartney, *op.cit*., p. 513.

In Boris Tsilevich's opinion, the approach which incorporated in itself both non-discrimination and minority protection could be regarded as one which included two rather complementary elemets because whereas the principle of non-discrimination was to ensure equality, minority rights would preserve diversity. On the one hand non-discrimination ensured the right to equality, on the other, minority protection "safeguarded the preservation of identity, or, in other words, the right to diversity".[26] In general, however, the rights stipulated in the treaties had an individualistic character because it was the members of the minorities who would benefit from them, not the minority as a corporate body.[27]

In the opinion of the Brazilian representative to the Council, Mello-Franco, the goal of minority protection could not be the creation "within certain States [of] a group of inhabitants who would regard themselves as permanently foreign to the general organization of the country"[28], quite the contrary: the goal was to guarantee the security of the minorities from all sides, "which might prepare the way for the conditions necessary for the establishment of a complete national unity".[29] This view was supported by other well-known and influential politicians at that time like Sir Austin Chamberlain and Aristide Briand who argued that the goal of minority protection was "to secure for the minorities that measure of protection and justice which would gradually prepare them to be merged in the national community to which they belonged".[30] From that perspective, the minority protection of the League of Nations was established with the aim to ensure political stability, i.e., preserve

[26] Boris Tsilevich, "EU Enlargement and the Protection of National Minorities: Opportunities, Myths, and Prospects", available at: http://www.eumap.org/articles/content/10/101/index_html?print=1, accessed on Mart 6, 2002.
[27] Patrick Thornberry, *op.cit*., p.48.
[28] M. de Mello-Franco quoted in C.A. Macartney, *op.cit*., pp.277
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] A. Chamberlain quoted in *Ibid.* See also Jennifer Jackson-Preece, *op.cit*., pp.87-89.

peace in Europe, and in the interest of the nationally heterogeneous states placed under the obligations.

The compliance was ensured by an inclusion of an article similar to Art. 12 of the Polish treaty, which reads:

> Poland agrees that the stipulations in the foregoing Articles so far as they affect persons belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations.[31]

According to Chapter 1 of the agreements, the signatory states were to recognize these provisions as fundamental laws, not to contradict with any other laws. According to the last chapter of the agreements, the dispositions, insofar as they concerned minorities, were to be regarded as international obligations, and as such were guaranteed by the League of Nations. As far as disputes between a government and the Council or a member of the League of Nations, were concerned, such matters qualified as international disputes, which could have been passed to the Permanent International Court, the ruling of which was unappealable. As should be understood the League of Nations undertook the role of guarantor of the obligations in the minorities treaties, which was exercised by the establishment of a system for dealing with petitions of minorities' rights abuses.

Eventually, the Covenant of the League of Nations did not contain any clause which covered the issue of minority protection or human rights. In the same manner the proposal submitted by the Japanese delegation to insert within the Preamble of the Covenant wording articulating the principle of equal and just treatment in every respect, without distinction on account of race or nationality was rejected. On the

[31] *Ibid*, p.514.

other hand, those states which were subjected to the minority obligations continuously lobbied for the introduction of universal system of minority protection but with equal ineffectuality. Similarly fruitless was the Lithuanian initiative of 1925, which proposed the drafting of a general minority protection agreement within the framework of the League of Nations and the proposition to insert a clause in the text of a future universal minority protection treaty to meet the specific needs of a majority living under minority rule.[32]

Hence, the binding force of these minority obligations was only extended to some states, and there a degree of emphasis was put on guaranteeing various human rights and liberties without distinction on account of race, language or religion together with rights granted to minority members in order to maintain their group characteristics. The abovementioned developments suggest that the minority treaties were designed with the aim to secure the maintenance of peace between the sovereign states of the region which was to be achieved by regulating the minorities issue which was seen as a highly volatile source of conflict.

In the period after WWI new multi-national states were created, in which alien blocs, millions of people, in some cases living in closed geographical units were transferred or artificially separated from their mother nation with new borders. The unilateral territorial advantages based on various political motives were given only to some nations: the Poles, the Czechoslovaks, the Romanians and the Serbians. It should have been the task of minority protection to balance, or at least to alleviate, this one-sidedness which, however, turned to be a failure. To summarize, the main features of the system may be identified as:

[32] Patrick Thornberry, *op.cit*., pp. 39-42.

1. No Western/Great power was bound by a treaty or provision concerning the treatment of her minorities, even Italy was exempted from the system.
2. The system was confined to CEE. The aim was not to establish "a general jurisprudence applicable wherever racial, linguistic or religious minorities existed but to facilitate the solution of minority problems in countries where owing to special circumstances, these problems might present particular difficulties"[33]

2.2. Human vs. Minority Rights: The United Nations' Approach

The "minority treaties" system of the interwar years proved insufficient to prevent abuses and manipulation of minorities by Hitler to justify the aggressive expansionism of the Third Reich. These developments, in turn, both damaged the reputation of the League of Nations' system and discredited the notion of minority rights. What followed was the exclusion of minority rights provisions from primary the United Nations' documents. The new strategy was to focus on the principle of non-discrimination.

After the events of the Second World War (WWII), it was believed that giving human rights and fundamental freedoms due emphasis would avoid a repeat performance of the horrors of the 1930s and early 1940s.[34] In the Declaration of the

[33] Jennifer Jackson-Preece, *op.cit*., p. 17.

[34] Ayşe F. Arsava, *Azınlık Kavramı ve Azınlık Haklarının Uluslararası Belgeler ve Özellikle Medeni ve Siyasal Haklar Sözleşmesinin 24. Maddesi Işığında İncelenmesi*, (Ankara, SBF Yayınevi, 1996), p.17

United Nations, on January 1, 1942, the Allied countries declared the protection of human rights to be a war aim:

> [T]hat complete victory over their enemies is essential to defend life, liberty, independence and religious freedom, and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands.[35]

With that the emphasis was shifted from the protection of minorities to the protection of human rights: the earlier, direct methods of minority protection gave way to an indirect mode of minority protection. No longer were members of certain minorities singled out for protection; instead, the human person in itself was to be protected. Peaceful coexistence, was no longer satisfactory, and the demand for international law capable of operating a genuine peace system was put forward, which was seen as inconceivable without the universal protection of human rights.

Alongside Hitler's abuse of human rights and atrocities there was a number of factors which also contributed to making the switch to indirect minority protection. The League of Nations was regarded to be Eurocentric, mostly preoccupied in its dealings with the states affected by the minority undertakings, many states were reluctant to accept minority agreements which were seen as violation of their sovereignty and most of the minority problems in the aftermath of WWII were solved on the basis of bilateral agreement.[36] In contrast to League of Nations approach, the work of the UN, from the very beginning, was directed more to the other continents. The transition from the previous system to the new one was also reflected in the structure of the international agreements signed. The several pages long peace treaties and minority agreements of 1919-1920 were replaced by

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[35] *Australian Treaty Series*, available at: http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/bu00000_.html, accessed on Mart 5, 2002.
[36] Baskın Oran, *Türk-Yunan İlişkilerinde Batı Trakya Sorunu*, (Ankara, Bilgi Yayınevi, 1991), p. 84.

the lengthy, multilateral, open-type agreements in the UN practice. Then there are the peace treaties ending WWII, which contain no regulations about the protection of minorities, only a rather generally phrased clause on human rights[37] i.e. the UN, the legal successor of the League of Nations, did not take it on itself to protect the minorities in international agreements and to set up a direct system of minority protection, however, it could not avoid addressing problems concerning the protection of minorities. The question of whether the new international organization which was to be established in the place of the League of Nations would continue the system of minority protection was answered in the negative. During the preparation of the United Nations Charter, neither at Dumberton Oaks nor at the San Francisco Conference were any proposals favouring the protection of minorities submitted. As already stated the prevailing view was that the League of Nation's minority system was a failure and this general perception was reflected in the United Nations Charter where there is no specific mention of minorities but of individual human rights protection on the basis of non-discrimination. Art. 1/3 of Chapter 1 of the Charter defines the purpose of the UN to be the achievement of "international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".[38]

As far as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is concerned, according to the preliminary plans, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would have contained an article about minority protection which read:

[37]Jennifer Jackson- Peerce, *op.cit*., p. 21.

[38] Available at: http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/chapter1.htm , accessed on January 20, 2002

> In states inhabited by well-defined ethnic, linguistic or religious groups, who can be differentiated clearly from the rest of the population and who wish that they be given different treatment, persons belonging to such groups have the right, to an extent that is compatible with public order and safety, to form and support their own schools and cultural religious institutions, as well as to use their own language and alphabet in the press, at public meetings, in court and in other organs of the state, shoul they decide to do so themselves.[39]

This article, prepared by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, was rejected by the Commission on Human Rights and USSR's, Denmark's and Yugoslavia's proposals at the General Assembly to include minority article in the Declaration were rejected. Eleonor Roosevelt, among the members of the committee drafting the proposal, played an active role in the exclusion of the minority article. In her view, the minority problem had no general importance and "the best solution of the problem of minorities was to encourage respect for human rights".[40] However, the minority question could not and can not be limited to any one of the continents. Particularly the Latin American states, USA and Australia were reluctant to accept the above-mentioned proposals because they advocated "the assimilation of the minorities, and not their protection". Being a product of immigration, to them, "giving the minorities national rights would be the same as suicide".[41] The only exception emerging from this "confrontation" of minority approaches was the 1948 *Convention Against Genocide* which deals with the extreme mistreatment of ethnic groups. Eventually, in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, regarded as the most significant document on human rights and adopted on December, 10, 1948, no reference to minorities was made, nevertheless, in several articles of the Declaration provisions relevant to minority identity were

[39] Quoted in Vladimir Ortakovski, *op.cit*., p141-142.
[40] UN-Doc /A/C.3/SR.161,721, quoted in Patrick Thornberry, *op.cit.*, p. 136.
[41] Vladimir Ortakovski, *op.cit*., p141.

included, e.g. the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Art.18), the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Art. 19), the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Art. 20/1), the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community (Art. 27/1).[42]

The General Assembly's Resolution 217 C (III), however, was a reflection of the need to address the inevitability to remain "indifferent to the fate of minorities"[43] but also emphasized the difficulties of adopting "a uniform solution of this complex and delicate question, which has special aspects in each State in which it arises"[44] and stressed the need to "make a thorough study of the problem of minorities, in order that the United Nations may be able to take effective measures for the protective of racial, national, religious or linguistic minorities"[45] the tangible result of which was to come in 1966 with the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR).

The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* was opened for signature in 1966 and a decade later, in 1976, when the minimum number of ratifiers was reached (35), it entered into force. Alongside the list of rights and freedoms those which are of a concern to this study are the regulations dealing with the minority rights. In this respect, important part of the *ICCPR* is Art. 27 which reads:

> In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities *exist(emphasis added)*, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.[46]

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[42] The full text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is available at http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm , accessed on January 20, 2002.
[43] Un General Assembly Resolution 217 C (III), 1948 *"Fate of minorities"*, available at: http://www.riga.lv/minelres/un/res217.htm, accessed on December 10, 2001
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] The full text of the ICCPR is available at: http://www.unhchr/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm , accessed on December 10, 2001.

As already stated, the approach towards the minorities followed from the early days of the UN, was to ensure that the members of minorities are protected under the general rubric of human rights, combined with provisions on non-discrimination due to ethnic religious or linguistic differences. In this respect, Art. 27 certainly is a step forward in the realm of minorities protection, however, it too has its positive sides and shortcomings. On the one hand, the existence of the minorities as a group within the states is acknowledged, the protection of their identity is emphasized by the stipulation that they could not be denied the right to "enjoy their culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language" and the states are obliged to protect that identity but the question of how to do that remains open: are states to help minorities to preserve their identity and culture or should they only act negatively by just tolerating their activities? On the other hand, does the phrase "[i]n those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist" mean that it is left to states to determine whether minorities on their territories exist or should it be understood as a limitation to the creation of new minorities, e.g. those existing in, what is called immigration states[47], which are on the way of assimilation or assimilated? Furthermore, it is explicitly stated that the article is concerned with individual not group rights, individuals belonging to minority groups are the concern. Nevertheless, Art. 27 of the ICCPR was an important step in the field of minority rights because persons belonging to minorities acquired the right to maintain and develop their own culture, to preserve their identity, language, religion and cultural heritage.

[47] The term generally refers to USA, Latin American states and Australia.

Another major UN document on the field of minority rights is the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992. With the collapse of the Eastern block in 1989-1990 the rise of nationalist sentiments in ex-communist states brought back the issue of minorities to the UN agenda[48] and by this Declaration it was underlined that the most vulnerable part of society, namely the minorities, should be protected at these times of political uncertainty. The above mentioned document confers on "persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities....the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination"[49] (Art. 2/1), the right to "participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation".[50] (Art. 2/3), and also the right to "to establish....contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties"[51] (Art. 2/5). States, on the other hand, are expected to take appropriate measures to protect the identity of the minorities (Art. 1/1), to guarantee to persons belonging to minorities the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Art. 4/1) and to take steps and measures necessary to provide the persons belonging to minorities, "wherever possible" with education on their mother

[48] Natan Lerner, "The Evolution of Minority Rights in International Law", in Catherine Brölman, Rene Lefeber and Marjoleine Zieck, (eds.), *Peoples and Minorities in International Law*, (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1993), pp. 91-100.
[49] The full text of the Declaration is available at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_minori.htm, accessed on December 15, 2002.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*

language (Art. 4/3). The list of rights explains the degree of minority protection but still continues on the UN spirit of graning individual rights.

2.3. Council of Europe and Minority Rights

As already seen, in the aftermath of WWI binding international agreements for the protection of minorities were regarded to be the best way to guarantee their rights, whereas in the post-WWII period the emphasis was put on non-discrimination and human rights. Then, it should not be surprising that the *European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (ECHR) has no provisions dealing directly with minority rights. Nevertheless, the issue of minority protection in the Council of Europe was raised, and first was raised in 1949 by the report of the Legal Committee of the Consultative Assembly, which stated the need to extend the legal protection of minorities. But all efforts including the Consultative Assembly's, request in 1950 to "examine the problem of minorities"[52], the 1956 proposal for the establishment of a special committee to examine the "implications of the European Convention....for the status of minorities"[53] and the proposal in 1961 to establish a special minority rights protocol were rejected on the ground that would "lead to a procedure similar to that applied in the League of Nations"[54].

In October 1990 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted recommendation 1134 on the rights of minorities.[55] Gradually the organization became an important factor in the filed of protection and promotion of

[52] Jennifer Jackson- Preece, *op.cit.,* p. 114.
[53] *Ibid*, pp. 141-142.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 142.
[55] PACE Recommendation 1134 available at: http://www.riga.lv/minerals/coe/pace/rec1134.htm, accessed on November 15, 2002

minority rights to which contributed the already existing control machinery of observing compliance of ECHR commitments reinforced by the desire of CEE countries to join the CE which was perceived as a first step towards integration with Euro-Atlantic structures.

In June 1992 the Committee of Ministers of the CE adopted a *Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*[56] but what is considered to be the organizations most serious contribution to the field of minority protection came in February 1995. In 1994, the Council of Europe, with the adoption of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, which contrary to most other international instruments on minority rights that contain only political obligations, is legally binding on member states who ratify it, is said to have made one of the most serious contributions to the international protection and promotion of minority rights. The preamble lays the basis for the Convention by declaring that "a pluralist and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity".[57] Alongside the accent put on the link between democracy and minority rights and on the role of the state as provider of positive rights, the Framework Convention also emphasizes that the protection of such rights "forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights".[58] Referring to existing international instruments, the Convention elaborates on the obligations of states towards national minorities fields like public use of minority languages, the media, education,

[56] For the Charter see "European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, 1993, pp. 148-152
[57] Full text of the Framework Convention for the Protaction of National Minorities is available at: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/157.htm , accessed on December 15, 2002
[58] *Ibid.*

dealings with public authorities, and the effective participation of national minorities in public affairs, and so forth. The Convention may be criticized for not containing definition of the term "minority" and lack of a strong enforcement mechanism.[59] Moreover, of the 42 states that have signed the Convention 35 have so far ratified it but of these 35 states 15 have made declarations or put reservations concerning the application of the document.[60] These weaknesses in fact reflect the aim of the international organization: to maintain a level of minimum stability and order.[61]

2.4.Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minority Rights

The *Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (CSCE, later Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE) which was originally established with the aim to deal with security issues in Europe eventually became important forum for human and minority rights and gave a major impetus to the move towards positive rights for minorities. Established in 1975 and including USA and Canada, in its Helsinki Final Act, which is composed of four Baskets (Basket I, entitled "Questions Relating to Security in Europe", Basket II, "Cooperation in Field of Economics, of Science and Technology and of the Environment, Basket III, "Cooperation in Humanitarian and Other Fields, Basket IV, constitutes what is called the "follow-up process") minorities are mentioned in several parts of the document. Principle VII of the *Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations betwen States*

[59] Geoff Gilbert, "The Council of Europe and Minority Rights", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol.18, 1996, pp. 187-189.
[60] For the list of Declarations and Reservations see: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/DeclareList.asp?NT=157&CM=&DF, accessed on August 30, 2003.
[61] Mustafa Türkeş, "The Double process: Transition and Integration and Its Impact on the Balkans", paper presented in conference: *Non-Violence and Dialog Culture Among the Younger Generation-Pathway to Ethnic Peace in Southeastern Europe*, September 2002, Sofia, p. 10.

which was component of Basket I declares that participating states on whose territories national minorities exist, "will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before the law, will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms"[62]. This standard setting in the field of minority rights continued in the following-up meetings of the CSCE and the development of positive rights was taken a step further with the CSCE's Concluding Document adopted at the Stockholm conference in 1986 where participating states accepted a set of clearly defined obligations with regard to distinct groups, one of which states:

> They [i.e. the signatories] will ensure that persons belonging to national minorities or regional cultures on their territories can maintain and develop their own culture in all its aspects, including language, literature and religion; and that they can preserve their cultural and historical monuments and objects.[63]

The first major international instrument concerning minority rights, produced in the very early post-Cold War era, was the *Document of the Copenhagen Meeting* of the CSCE, 1990. The increasing significance of these rights in times characterized with rising ethnic nationalism and fragmentation of multi-ethnic states is revealed in the positive provisions for minority rights that were elaborated. The participating states recognized that issues relating to national minorities could "only be satisfactorily resolved in a democratic political framework based on the rule of law, with a functioning independent judiciary"[64] and also reaffirmed that "respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of universally recognized

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[62] Quoted in Jane Wright, "The OSCE and the Protection of Minority Rights", *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol.18, 1996.
[63] The Full text of the Concluding Document is available at: http://www.unesco.org/most/lnlaw15.htm , accessed on December 15, 2002. See also Thomas Burgenthau, "The Copenhagen CSCE Meeting: A New Public Order for Europe", *Human Rights Law Journal*, Vol. XI, 1990, 217-232.
[64] *Ibid.*

human rights is an essential factor for peace, justice, stability and democracy in the participating States".[65] Thus, minority rights became an issue that was not only compatible with democracy and human rights, but were again defined as a prerequisite for peace, justice and stability. In the Document it is stated that persons belonging to national minorities "have the right freely to express, preserve and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity and to maintain and develop their culture in all its aspects, free of any attempts at assimilation against their will".[66] The free use of their mother tongue in private and public, and the establishment and maintenance of their own educational, cultural and religious institutions funded from private and public sources were included among the rights that they were to enjoy. Special obligations were also placed on states. Amongst these were the one to "protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory and create conditions for the promotion of that identity"[67] and to "take the necessary measures to that effect"[68] after consulting the minority groups. The right to mother tongue instruction, the right of members of national minorities to "effective participation in public affairs"[69], including matters relating to the "protection and promotion of the identity of such minorities"[70] were all among the areas of minority rights. Another CSCE related development of the early 1990s was the creation of the office of *High Commissioner on National Minorities* which was again a reflection of the rising concern for minority issues in

[65] *Ibid.*
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *Ibid.*
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*

the post-East-West divide. Designed as "an instrument of conflict prevention"[71] with regard to national minority questions, the High Commissioner was assigned with the task of identifying problems and promoting solutions before the problems develop into armed conflicts.

To summarize, during the League of Nations there was no claim for the universal protection of minority rights. Minority treaties established under the LN were clear reflection of the utilization of minority issue as a foreign policy issue. The failure of minority treaties to prevent the outbreak of WWII and the abuse and manipulation of minority concerns by Hitler not only discredited the LN system of minority protection but brought into dispute the very notion of minority rights *per se*. Subsequently, the United Nations (UN) stopped short of including provisions of minority rights its preliminary, choosing rather to focus on the principle of non-discrimination. In line with the post-WWII emphasis on human rights and non-discrimination the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe contained no provisions dealing directly with minorities. However, with the collapse of communist party rules throughout Central and Eastern Europe a return of minority rights on the agenda of major international organizations is observed. Particularly the CE has made one of the most serious contributions to the field of international protection of minority rights with the adoption of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

[71] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

STATUS AND TREATMENT OF MINORITIES IN BULGARIA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Bulgarian Principality 1878-1908

The Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, in which the Ottoman Empire was defeated, ended with the conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano under the provisions of which Serbia, Romania and Montenegro were to become independent but the most significant provisions of the treaty, however, were concerned with Bulgarian and particularly with her territorial embrace. The San Stefano arrangement stipulated a new, autonomous Bulgarian Principality whose territory was to include not only present day Bulgaria but the geography "between the Danube in the North, the Black Sea in the East, the Aegean Sea in the South, and the Lake Ohrid and beyond in the West"[72].

San Stefano and its proposed alterations alarmed Europe's Great Powers who saw it as penetration of Russian power into the Balkans. Furthermore, Serbia and Greece perceived "Greater Bulgaria" as a threat which could endanger their independence. Thus, faced with a wide resistance to the provisions of San Stefano, Russia accepted revision of the treaty at a congress held in Berlin. The basic decisions reached by the Congress of Berlin were that Macedonia would remain

[72] Leften Stavros Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, (London : Hurst & Company, 2000), p. 406

under Ottoman rule, Bulgaria would be territorially reduced and granted autonomy only within the Ottoman *Tuna Vilayet* (Danube province) and the province of Eastern Rumelia would remain autonomous governed by a Christian governor, but would not be part of the Bulgarian Principality[73].

In late 1884 and early 1885 the reorganized Bulgarian Secret Revolutionary Community (BSRC) began to set a net of secret branches in major towns with the aim of unifying Eastern Rumelia and Macedonia with Bulgaria. Eventually, realizing the impossibility of Macedonia's annexation, the revolutionaries directed all their efforts at the merger of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, which was realized in 1885 and officially confirmed on April, 5, 1886[74]. This was the land on which Bulgarian state was to be establish and Bulgarian nation be consolidated but the five centuries long Ottoman rule of the peninsula had dramatically changed the ethnic composition of every Balkan state and the new Bulgarian state "inherited" a considerable number of minorities living on her territory.

By the ninetieth century what came to be defined as "Bulgarian lands" were populated primarily by Bulgarian speaking Orthodox Christians or "Bulgarians" and Turkish speaking Muslims or "Turks". There were also Pomaks, Roma (Gypsies), Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Vlachs and others but the Turks, the largest minority, "deserves" special attention because, to Valerie Stoyanov, its definition and characterization by the Bulgarian political leaders, as a "traditional" one i.e. ethnic, religious, cultural, linguistic and national, underlined how delicate the balance between the provision of the minority's basic rights and the state's national security interests was, because every breach in this balance, in his opinion, had the potential

[73] Richard J. Crampton, *A Conciese History of Bulgaria*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.85.
[74] *Ibid*, pp.97-100.

to endanger the minorities' socio-economic and cultural life and even, at the extreme, the sovereignty of the "host state".[75]

3.1.1. The Turks

The Turkish minority group's formation in Bulgaria follows the classical example where the dismemberment of a multiethnic empire and the redrawal of the political map of the territories where her rule formally was exercised had led to the formation of new independent state(s) as a result of which the previously politically dominant ethnic element founded itself isolated from the kin-state and had to live under new circumstances and environment, often hostile to it.

The Turks have ever since the Liberation, what Bulgarians call the end of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, been the numerous minority group in Bulgaria. According to the censuses held in Eastern Rumelia and the Bulgarian Principality in 1880 and 1881 respectively, out of a 2 813 618 total population 1 909 067 was Bulgarian speaking and the rest (32%) constituted the number of the non-Bulgarians.[76]

Education occupies a special place in Bulgaria's minority policy. From the very beginning, minority schools had the status of private educational institutions directed by the religious and professional groups.[77]

Several factors have influenced the pedagogical level and the success of the graduates of these schools. The lack of financial resources, adequately trained

[75] Valeri Stoyanov, "Turskoto naselenie na Bulgariai Oficialnata Malcinstvena Politica (1878-1944), in Khristo Khristov, (ed), *Stranitzi ot Bulgarskata Istoriya. Ocherki za Islamiziranite Bulgari v Natzionalno-Vuzroditelniya Protzess*, (Sofia:BAN, 1989), pp.193-194.
[76] Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria (1878-1908)*, (Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, Ankara, 1998), pp.98-99.
[77] Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan Turkleri (1878-1985)*, (Bilgi Yayin Evi, 1986), pp. 41-42.

teachers, emphasis on religious teachings and the low school attendance among the Muslims were all factors which reduced the quality of education there. Financially, the availability of resources was very limited and when compared with their Bulgarian counterparts, Turkish-language schools received very scarce financial aid from the state treasury. In the figures given by Şimsir during the 1894-1895 school year government's financial aid to Turkish private schools consisted 4% of their budgets whereas the funding provided to the public schools amounted to about 50% of their budgets.[78]

According to the 1905 statistics, literacy rate among the Turks was only 6%, among the Pomaks 4%, almost the same among the Roma compared to 32% among the Armenians. Only during Stamboliiski's rule (1919-1923), when there was a five fold increase in financial aid to the Muslim schools, a slide increase in literacy is observed as to rise to 12% in 1926.[79]

Furthermore, Bulgarian Education Law contained articles which were discriminatory in content and prevented Muslims' integration into Bulgarian public life and undermined their competition in the labor market, e.g. it was stipulated that the graduates of private schools would have the same rights as the graduates of public schools provided they passed an obligatory examination.[80]

By allowing the Muslim community to control its schools, encouraging religious teaching and in keeping the schools in financial hardship, Bulgarian official assured both the socio-economic backwardness of the Muslims and the political and economic supremacy of the Bulgarians.

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[78] *Ibid*, p.38.
[79] Valeri Stoyanov, *op.cit*., p. 197.
[80] *Ibid*, pp. 197-198.

In a latter to the Ministry of Education, the chief inspector of the Turkish schools openly states that the state had no interest in increasing the educational level of the minority and it would be better to encourage them to leave the country, a strategy which was in line with the state policy of reducing the number of the Muslims to figures as low as possible. A similar statement is found in another report where it is emphasized that "all legal measures necessary to keep the educational level of the Turks….at low levels should be employed…because the more educated and enlightened it is the more dangerous it would become and the easier it would comprehend the tendencies of the government".[81] This explains why in the period studied purposeful measures encouraging religious teachings and attempts to keep the Arabic alphabet were undertaken. The Muslim minority enjoyed autonomy in cultural, educational, spiritual and judicial matters, guaranteed by some of the treaties and agreements that are to be discussed later in this chapter, to which Bulgaria was a signatory. During the period examined freedom of press and dissemination of information in the native language was guaranteed and between 1878 and 1908 44 Turkish newspapers were in print.[82]

Emigration has always existed in the history of Bulgaria's Muslims. The crossing of the Danube by the Russian troops in 1877 began a tremendous reordering of the human geography of the Bulgarian lands and the Russian victory in the 1877-1878 Russo –Ottoman war was the harbinger of a new era in the development of the Bulgarian national concept and practices. There is no consensus among the scholars on the number of Turks who left Bulgaria after 1878 but the generally accepted view is that between 1879 and 1912 around 350 000 Turks left Bulgaria for good and with

[81] *Ibid*, p. 198.
[82] Bilal Şimşir, *The Turkish Minority Press in Bulgaria: Its History and Tragedy(1865-1985)*, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press, Ankara, 1986), p. 6.

the conclusion of the 1925 Treaty of Friendship until 1933 their number increased by another 100 000.[83] The Turks comprised about 20% of Bulgaria's population in 1887 but as a result of the state policies their number declined to 12% in 1905 and further to less than 10% in 1934.[84] Particularly intensive waves of migration are observed in the 1880's when the fresh memories of the "War of Independence" and April Uprising's suppression fueled anti-Turkish sentiments leading to coercion and violent acts against the Turks.

3.1.2. The Macedonians

As would be recalled, the Treaty of San Stefano included almost all of Macedonia within the borders of Bulgaria but at the Congress of Berlin it was decided that the province should remain under Ottoman rule. Having this in mind, the presence of Macedonian deputies in the assembly, which convened in Tunovo in 1879 with the tasks to devise the Principality's political system and work out its constitution[85], may be seen as a reflection of Bulgarian political leaders' perception of Macedonia and her people: an integral part of the Bulgarian national self left outside the borders of the Principality. What reinforces this is the suggestion of some deputies to dissolve the assembly with the pretext that unity under Ottoman rule would be better than the division of Bulgarian territory and nation.[86]

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[83] The two sources cited by Ali Eminov, concerning the estimates for 1878-1912 and 1923-1933 are Xristo Xristov, *Stranitzi ot Bulgarskata Istoriya. Ocherki za islamiziranite Bulgari v natzionalno-vuzroditelniya protzess*, (Sofia:BAN, 1989), p. 51. and Bilal Şimşir, *Climses on the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria*, (Ankara: Directorate General of Press and Information, 1986), p. 6., respectively. See Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, (C.Hurst and Co. Ltd, 1997), pp. 78-79.
[84] Antonina Zhelyazkova, "Bulgaria in Transition: The Muslim Minorities", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol.12, No.3, July 2001, p. 286.
[85] Richard J. Crampton, *op.cit*., p. 87.
[86] *Ibid.*

One of the most active actors working for the Bulgarian cause in Macedonia was the Bulgarian Exarchate. Established in 1870 and granted authority over a vast land of Ottoman territory, after Bulgaria gained autonomy it continued to expand its influence and activities in the Empire's European provinces, notably in Thrace and Macedonia. In addition to cultural, educational and health related institutions the Exarchate established a fund with the aim to help Bulgarians buy properties from the Muslim owners and become masters of their "Bulgarian lands", the lands that become the battlefield for Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek claims of territorial expansion since 1870's when the Macedonian issue became a field on which imagined geographies would collide and various methods for reclaiming and asserting ethno-national presence would be used.

Furthermore, in the mid-1890's two rival organizations which worked for the achievement of autonomy in Macedonia were established: the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO, 1893) and the Sofia based Supreme Council (1894). While the former's objective was popular revolt that would lead to autonomy and eventually Macedonia in a would be Balkan federation/union, the later insisted on *cheti* (bands) incursion in Macedonia that would destabilize the province and attract European attention as autonomy prelude to union with Bulgaria.[87]

Another method employed by Bulgarian statesmen was the use of highly politicized ethnographic projects which aimed to produce "scientific" conclusions about the populations both within and outside Bulgarian borders. The Macedonians were one of the main targets of such undertakings in the contest of territorial claims

[87] Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (2nd ed.), (Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 129-130.

among Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek pretenders. Stoyu Shishkov[88], one of the well known Bulgarian ethnographers of the time, published works which supported the country's claims of territorial expansion. He, with his description of the nations tragedy of "Hellenized" Bulgarians in the South, "Romanized" in the North, "Serbified" in the West and "Turkified" throughout Bulgaria, viewed language as only one component in defining ethnic belongingness. Hence, as will be seen later, when language alone could not be used for national claims other ways, such as the assertion that the Turks and Pomaks living in Bulgaria were Turkicized Bulgarians, were employed.

3.1.3 The Pomaks

The Pomak, after the Turkish one, forms the second large Muslim population living in Bulgaria. Scholarly debates on their ethnic background are very tense and controversial. Some Bulgarian scholars assert that they are the descendents of Bulgarians who adopted Islam[89] to which Turks, and Greeks object by arguing that they are a component of their respective nations.[90]

However, in the early days of post-1878 Bulgaria, because of their religious affiliation, the Pomaks were seen and treated as Turks and as such had to attend Turkish minority schools where the language of instruction was Turkish and

[88] Stoyu Shishkov cited in Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p.11.
[89] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *Maltzinstvenata Politika na Bulgaria: Politikata na BKP kum Evrei, Romi, Pomatzi I Turtzi 1944-1989*, (IMIR, 2000), pp. 65-68.
[90] Shane Jacobs, "A History of Oppression **:** The Plight of the Bulgarian Pomaks", *Central Europe Review*, Vol. 3, No. 19, 2001 available at: http://www.ce-review.org/01/19/jacobs19.html, accessed on November 15, 2002

Arabic[91]. During the Principality the voices of intellectuals who insisted on Pomaks' Bulgarian origins were not so widely accepted and popular but as will be seen later in this chapter the situation was to be reversed in the early decades of the 20th century.

3.1.4. The Roma

Some of the first records of Roma presence on Bulgarian lands date back to late 14th century[92]. The history of Roma segregation is not recent and goes back to early years of Bulgarian independence. For instance, in 1882 their *mahala* (quarters) were declared illegal and in 1886 laws designed to prevent Roma's nomadic way of life were passed. In addition, same waves of emigration during the 1880's to USA and England were registered[93] but unfortunately further data and information concerning their status and treatment during the years of Bulgarian Principality is somewhat difficult to come by.

Here it should be pointed out that there exists a variety of internal group divisions within the Roma community. The ethnologists Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov draw a detailed map of these groups.[94]

The most numerous and varied Roma subgroup are the so-called "*Yerlii*". They are assumed to be the descendants of the first Roma wave of migration[95] and speak

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[91] *Ibid*, p. 76.
[92] Tsar Ivan Shisman's list of Roma (Gypsy) settlements handled to Rila Monastery is very often cited in the literature devoted to Roma, see Vesselin Popov, "The Gypsies and Traditional Bulgarian Culture", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Fifth Series, Vol.3, No.1 (February, 1993), p.21. ; Elena Marushiakova, "Ethnic Identity among Gypsy Groups in Bulgaria", *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Fifth Series, Vol.2, No.2 (August, 1992), p.110.
[93] Carol Silverman, "Bulgarian Gypsies: Adaptation in a Socialist Context", *Nomadic Peoples*, Nos.21-22 (December, 1986), p.53.
[94] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, "Ethnosocial Structure of the Roma", *The Patrin Web Journal*, available at: http://www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/bulg-chara.htm, accessed on December 5, 2001.

different dialects of the Balkan group of Romanes (the Gypsy/Roma language), which is divided into two main groups: *Erlides* and *Drandanari* dialects. Some members of this group speak Turkish or use both languages-Turkish and Romanes. Alongside these dialect groups the "*Yerlii*" community is also divided on religious grounds into two main subdivisions: *Dassikane* Roma (Bulgarian Roma, Christians) and *Horohane* Roma (Turkish Roma, Muslims).

Roma of Bulgaria have onother large subdivision which is now part of the big "*Yerlii*" community. It includes the communities of the so-called *Vlahichki* Roma who speak a separate Vlach dialect of Romanes and their settlement in Bulgaria dates back to 17th and 18th centuries. In the 1920's and 1930's some of them gradually adopted a settled lifestyle and some changed their religion (e.g. they are Muslims in eastern Bulgaria now), and in time merged with the major groups (Dassikane and Horohane).[96] Some members of these two main groups (Bulgarian and Turkish Roma) have separated themselves from the others on the bases of their prefered ethnic identity. Both *Dassikane* and *Horohane* tend to identify themselves with the Bulgarian and the Turks respectively.

The second major subgroup of the Roma community in Bulgaria, the so-called *Kardarashi*, held to be the descendants of the third wave of Roma migration into the Balkans (19^{th} – 20^{th} centuries), are clearly distinct from the rest. They were nomads until 1958 and now are mostly living in villages and small towns.

The third main subgroup is that of *Rudara*, often called *Vlasi*, who speak a dialect of Romanian and distinguish themselves from the Roma, identifying themselves as Vlachs.

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[95] David M. Crowe, *A history of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp.10-12.
[96] Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, *op.cit*.

3.1.5. The Treaty of Berlin

The legal framework for minorities' protection in Bulgaria was contained in the Treaty of Berlin, what Bilal Şimşir calls Bulgaria's "birth certificate"[97], the first legal document to recognize the ethnic heterogeneity of that state, which, actually, conditioned Bulgaria's establishment on her protection of minorities' rights. According to Article 4 of the Berlin Treaty in "districts where Bulgarians are intermixed with Turkish, Romanian, Greek, or other populations, the rights and interests of these populations shall be taken into consideration as regards the elections and the drawing up of the Organic Law". The fundamental rights and freedoms that were to be enjoyed by the minorities were contained in Art. 5 of the same treaty:

> The difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employments, functions, and honors, or the exercise of various professions and industries in any locality whatsoever. The freedom and outward exercise of all forms of worship are assured to all persons belonging to Bulgaria, as well as to foreigners, and no hindrance shall be offered either to the hierarchical organization of the different communions, or to their relations with their spiritual chiefs.[98]

Furthermore, these principles were to become an integral part of Bulgarian Public Law. In the first Constitution of Bulgaria, in force from 1879 until 1947, Eastern Orthodox Christianity was recognized as the "dominant religion" but

[97] Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan…*, p. 41.
[98] Article 5 of the Berlin Trety quoted in Ömer Turan, *op.cit*., p. 61.

minorities' freedom of religion was also recognized and they, being Bulgarian citizens, were given equal rights with the Bulgarians.[99]

3.2. Bulgarian Kingdom 1908-1944

Taking advantage of the favorable conditions created by Austro-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Young Turks revolution, Bulgaria declared her independence and become a Kingdom on October 5, 1908.[100] Initially, this act was followed by a period of acute tension with military preparations between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire because the Porte perceived the declaration as an act of defiance and an infliction of the Treaty of Berlin. After resolving all obstacles to a peaceful solution of the crisis a protocol between the Empire and Bulgaria recognizing the latter's independence was signed on April 9, 1909 and a convention to it was attached.[101]

After declaring independence, which Bulgaria's political leaders saw as an act which would increase the country's international standing and facilitate claims on Macedonia[102] Bulgaria became aggressive party in the complex of Balkan policy with territorial ambitions that were to involve the Kingdom and her neighbors in three wars in the first decade of independence.

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[99] *Ibid.*
[100] Bilal Simisr, *Bulgaristan*....., p. 48.
[101] *Ibid*, pp. 48-49
[102] Richard Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War*, (Boulder : East European Monographs , 1996), p. 7.

3.2.1. Decades of Upheaval

The war between Italy and the Ottoman Empire over Tripoli in 1911 was a factor, which intensified Balkan states' cooperation for territorial increase at Ottoman expense. Encouraged and aided by Russia, Bulgaria and Serbia concluded a treaty of alliance to which in subsequent negotiations Greece and Montenegro joined.[103]

The outbreak of the First Balkan War in October 1912 was followed by a swift victory of the allies over the Ottoman troops in the Empire's European provinces. The successful Bulgarian drive towards the gates of Istanbul diluted the power and territorial stretch of Bulgarian forces and despite its initial victories the war ended in a disaster for the country. The alliance between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece proved fragile and the Second Balkan War over the spoils Ottoman soil broke out in 1913. As a result of this war Bulgaria lost a considerable portion of the lands occupied during the First Balkan War, although she managed to expand south into Trace and part of Macedonia. The gaining of these territories and particularly the Rhodope mountains brought large number of Muslims into the new confines of Bulgaria. Eventually, loss of the occupied lands was seen as a national catastrophe in Bulgaria.[104]

Under these circumstances, the regime would look to Istanbul and the Central Powers as allies in the campaign to regain the lost territories of Dobrudja, Thrace and Macedonia, a campaign that brought Bulgarian forces back into the territorial

[103]Richard J. Crampton, *op.cit*., pp. 135-136.
[104] *Ibid*, pp. 38-40.

expanses of the imagined nation at the Greek and Serbian expense[105]. The Balkan Wars had prepared the way for World War I but since Bulgaria "backed the wrong horse" at the end of it she had to resume her pre-war territorial status: Bulgaria suffered her second "national catastrophe". The most urgent concern of the post-war regime was to maintain order and to avert the discontent and upheaval of the peasant masses which erupted into strikes and bread riots culminating in the so called "Rdomir Rebellion" of 1918. Out of desperation the monarchy looked to Alexander Stamboliiskii, the leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (BANU), as the hope of averting insurrections. He, as a member of the newly formed coalition cabinet, due to his considerable popularity lent legitimacy to the regime. Stamboliiski's popularity was confirmed by the elections of August 1919 where the agrarians got 31% of votes followed by the Bulgarian Communist Party's (BCP) 18%.[106] Stamboliiski being realistic about Bulgaria's status in the light of her war-time alliance with the Central Powers made every possible effort to alleviate the international and regional tension. He signed the treaty of Neuilly which saddled Bulgaria with heavy indemnities and reparations, accompanied with limits on military built up and territorial losses. In addition to leaving portions of Macedonia and Thrace that were occupied during WWI, Bulgaria was also forced to cede Southern Dobrudja to Romania. BANU's leader not only accepted the above mentioned territorial "losses" but openly denounced Bulgarian irredentists while advancing the idea of Balkan Federation of East European states. Because of these foreign policy initiatives, Stamboliiski had made enemies among influential Macedonian refugees and the nationalists. As a result of this discontent a coup was

[105] *Ibid*, pp. 141-143.
[106] *Ibid*, p. 149.

launched in 1923 (lead by A. Tsankov) in the aftermath of which Stamboliiski was murdered as a traitor of San Stefano Bulgaria. Radicalized refugee organizations together with nationalist forces began to take the law into their hands and assert their perceived rights to "Bulgarian lands". The 1920's and 1930's were characterized by a rise in internal and external pressure. The economic depression of late 1920's hit Bulgaria leading to deterioration of the economic status of the country's population. The formation of the Balkan Entente in 1934 with all of Bulgaria's neighbors allied in favor of the territorial status quo heightened perceived isolation[107], however, as will be discussed later in this section of the work IMRO's transformation into paramilitary formation and its terrorist activities in Bulgaria and raids into Vardar and Aegean Macedonia was one of the main motives behind the 1934 coup.

Defeated and humiliated in WWI, in the period between the two world wars Bulgaria sought revisionist policy and by the late interwar period it had become clear that only the Axis Powers would support the radical territorial revanchism that Bulgaria nurtured against her neighbors. This situation was farther solidified by the territorial advance achieved by German pressure-Romania ceded Southern Dobrudja region to Bulgaria in 1940, even before the country had officially joined the Axis Powers in 1941. This event made many Bulgarians think that German victory in WWII would mean territorial unification and materialization of San Stefano Bulgaria. But Bulgaria again fought on the losing side and following the advance of the Red Army into Bulgarian lands in September 1944 the Bulgarian communists as a part of the coalition called the Fatherlan Front (FF) siezed power on September 9, 1944.[108]

[107] *Ibid*, p. 185.
[108] *Ibid*, p. 185.

3.2.2. The National Frontiers

During the Kingdom there were several treaties concluded by Bulgaria, which contained provisions for the protection of the rights of the minorities living there. As already mentioned, when Bulgaria proclaimed her independence and became a Kingdom in 1908, a protocol between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom was signed on April, 19, 1909 with a convention attached to it.[109] In Article 2 of the Protocol, the rights given to the minorities by the Treaty of Berlin were restated. The Kingdom undertook to provide religious freedom and equal rights for the Muslims of Bulgaria. They were to benefit from "all civil and political rights enjoyed by the other ethnic groups and be equal to the Bulgarians before the law"[110] But the passionate chauvinism and patriotic feelings prevalent during the years of the Balkan Wars, no doubt, increased the anti-Turkish stand in Bulgaria and the newly occupied territories. As would be remembered, at the end of 1912-1913 Balkan Wars Bulgaria lost heavily Muslim populated Southern Dobrudja to Romania but acquired the Rodope region from the Ottoman Empire (Kircali, Mestanli, Daridere, Kosukavak, were places where the entire population was Turkish). In 1913 the Treaty and Convention to Muslims was signed between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Article 7 of this treaty contained provisions which were to be applied to the inhabitants of the newly acquired land by Bulgaria. Aricle 8 of the same treaty regulated the rights of the Muslims who were to have religious freedom and enjoy the same civil and political rights enjoyed by all Bulgarian citizens. The Convention

[109] İbrahim Kamil, *Bulgaristan'daki Türkler'in Statüsü*, (Pamuk Ofset, 1989), pp.27-30.
[110] Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan…*, p. 368.

on Muftis, on the other hand, contained articles which regulated the religious affairs of Bulgaria's Muslims. It stipulated that there would be a Chief Mufti in Sofia who would coordinate the interaction between the Muftis and the Bulgarian Ministry of Religious Affairs, on the one hand, and between the Ministry and *Seih ul Islam* in Istanbul, on the other. Furthermore, the Bulgarian government was to provide the Muslim society with new primary and secondary schools, finance their establishment, and pay teachers salaries from the state treasury.[111] All these regulations, however, could not prevent the fierce repression and all sorts of maltreatment by the military authorities to which the Turkish population of the newly acquired lands was subjected. In a time span of two years (1912-1914), it is estimated that around 440 000 Turks from Thrace and Macedonia migrated to Anatolia.[112] Some relaxation in the treatment of the Turkish minority is observed during the rule of BANU (1919-1923). Many historians tend to agree that Stamboliiski's tenure in office was a period of complete toleration for the Muslims. There are several factors which explain this. Firstly, he was the main political beneficiary of the Turkish/Muslim vote. Secondly, concerned about the fate of "Bulgarians" in Thrace, Southern Dobridja and Macedonia, BANU, saw the toleration of minorities and their rights in Bulgaria as a way to pressure her neighbors to tolerate minority (read Bulgarian) rights as well. Stamboliiski signed the Neulliy Peace Treaty by which Bulgaria undertook obligations towards the minorities. According to the stipulations of section IV Bulgaria agreed to "assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants…without distinction of

[111] A. Mete Tuncoku, "The Rights of Minorities in International Law and Treaties: The Case of the Turkish Minority in the People's Republic of Bulgaria", in Kemal Karpat (ed), *The Turks of Bulgaria: The History, Culture and Political Fate of a Minority*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990), pp. 225.
[112] Ali Eminov, *op.cit*., p. 78.; Valeri Stoyanov, *op.cit*., p.199.

birth, nationality, language, race or religion". Furthermore, all citizens were entitled to "free exercise…of any creed, religion or belief".[113] The significance of these provisions lies in Bulgaria's agreement to recognize them as fundamental laws to which no law, decree or official action would conflict or interfere with. Moreover, according to the numbers given by Simisr between 1919-1923 some 1250 acres of land were allocated in support of private Muslim schools from the state treasury and the *Medrese Nuvvap* where teachers and clergy were trained was allowed to be open in Shumen.[114] These positive developments ended with the coup of 1923: the financial aid for the improvement of the Turkish schools was abolished, their autonomy was limited, many teachers who were seen as awkward were fired and many Turkish newspapers and periodicals were closed down.[115] The proclamation of the Republic of Turkey and its reforms added a new momentum in the development of the Turkish minority. In 1925 treaty of friendship was signed between the newly found Republic of Turkey and Bulgaria and it basically reiterate the minority pledges of both states as the minority provisions of Neuilly would be applied to all Muslims living in Bulgaria and the provisions of Lausanne Peace Treaty on non-Muslims would apply to Bulgarians living in Turkey. By the Convention of Establishment Bulgarian citizens could immigrate to Turkey and settle there and vise versa. According to Article 2 Bulgarian authorities would not create any obstacles to Turks' emigration to Turkey and would facilitate the liquidation of their non-movable property in Bulgaria.[116] Between 1928-1930 the new Latin script adopted in Turkey was also introduced to the Turkish schools and press in Bulgaria which was to be

[113] A. Mete Tuncoku, *op.cit*., p. 251.
[114] Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan…..,* pp. 62-63.
[115] Bilal Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria: 1878-1985*, (London: Rustem and Bro., 1988), p. 112.
[116] A. Mete Tuncoku, *op.cit*., pp. 245-246.

reversed with the coup of 1934 when the state directed all efforts to curtail the rights of the Muslim minorities and Bulgarianize the margins of Bulgarian territory.[117]

Despite all, during the period in question (1908-1944) the situation of the Turks was favorable in general when compared to that of the Pomak minority. Changes in the definition of the Bulgarian nation corresponded and justified strategies adopted by the authorities in dealing with the minorities. Contrary to the Turks, the Pomaks were increasingly considered part of the Bulgarian nation. Particularly during the Balkan wars when the Bulgarian authorities were faced with the difficulty of integrating a region (Rhodopes) which was ethnically and religiously heterogeneous they turned to new definition of the Pomaks, namely that they were Slavs who converted to Islam to be reclaimed back, which, in turn, led to campaign of name and religion change.[118] But even after WWI when considerable relaxation in Bulgaria's minority policy is observed the Pomaks did not enjoy specific minority rights and the wave of emigrations in 1927, 1933 and 1935 attest the deterioration of the Pomak's situation.[119] Dramatic campaigns for changing of Pomak names and clothes, akin to the crusades during the Balkan wars were orchestrate by *Rodina*, an organization found by a small segment of the Pomak community with the encouragement and financial support of the government. With the hand of *Rodina* the state reached the confines of the Pomak heart to rename and redress it. It was in this realm that the most dramatic program of "liberation" from foreign occupation took place in the circumstances of war. *Rodina* assistance, the regime, when compared with the experience during the Balkan Wars, went much deeper for a much longer,

[117] Valeri Stoyanov, *op.cit*., p. 199.
[118] The campaign was reversed soon after it began due to Ottoman pressure and the rapprochement between both states in the eve of WWI when they joined the camp of the Central Powers.
[119] Valeri Stoyanov, *op.cit*., pp. 204-205.

into a prolonged project of attempting to erase the border between the Bulgarian and the Pomak. *Rodina* openly supported all of the regime's wartime legislation including the "Law for the Purity of the Nation" which prohibited mixed marriages between Bulgarians and "foreigners". Thus, mixed marriages between Pomaks and Turks were made illegal. *Rodina* lorded over the constellation of reform measures that sought to reorder Pomak life. The focus of these efforts, as in the years of Balkan wars, were again Pomak names, clothes and even the arrangement of Pomak household[120]. Only through the uprooting of "foreign" names, clothes and household habits could the Pomaks be reclaimed to the Bulgarian nation. Since 1940, *Rodina* had appealed to the Pomak population to shed their Muslim names, vestiges of a foreign past. Pomaks were presented with a list of Bulgarian names and asked choose one but even the voluntary name changes by *Rodina* leaders did not produce the desired effect on the Pomak masses. By the summer of 1942, the limited successes in the name changing process provoked the decision to make the changes mandatory. The law of July 1942 for the "Bulgarianization of Mohammedan names of Bulgaro-Mohammedans" led to rapid forced name changes of about 60.000 Pomaks.[121] In the chaos of war, the Bulgarian regime expanded its sphere of nation-building activities into the furthest stretches of the imagined expanses of the nation as Pomak elites were employed in a campaign to fully "integrate" the Pomak population into the Bulgarian nation. These state sponsored efforts to reclaim the Pomaks to the Bulgarian nation, in the long run, proved unsuccessful because Bulgaria's unstable

[120] For *Rodina* activities see Ulf Brunnbauer, "The Perception of Muslims in Greece and Bulgaria: Between the Self and the Other", available at: www.cas.umn.edu/webpapers/brunnbau.html, accessed on December 15, 2000.
[121] Huseyin Memisoglu, *Pages of the History of Pomak Turks*, (Ankara: Şafak, 1991), pp. 34-35.

domestic politics and foreign relations made it difficult to pursue consistent minority policy.

In the interwar period, economic and political uncertainties in Bulgaria provoked a search for social order and national meaning by the various Bulgarian regimes, their political opponents and the minorities themselves. The loss of territory and the influx of refugees from Macedonia and Thrace into Bulgaria contributed to the increased favor of irredentism, which dominated Bulgaria's political arena. Bulgarian national projects reached deep into the Pomak cultural life in their attempts to "integrate" the Pomak population into the Bulgarian nation. In the period between the two world wars, the Turkish minority was slated for expulsion as a foreign and dangerous occupying presence. In contrast to them, Pomaks were increasingly becoming a part of new landscape of national purpose. They were "exonerated" from their guilt as perceived remnants of foreign occupiers; instead, they were considered occupied victims worthy of "liberation". As the Pomaks were pulled into the rising tide of Turkish consciousness, Bulgarian nationalists sought to ground them in the Bulgarian essence and reclaim them from Muslim "occupation". Although Bulgarian policy encouraged the emigration of Turks from Bulgarian lands, Pomak emigration seen as a national problem.

The economic troubles during and after the Balkan Wars and the First World War (WWI) affected the Roma more than the Bulgarian population on average, but the worst consequence was the forced Christianization of Muslim Roma after the Second Balkan War.[122] Nevertheless, after the end of WWI and the establishment of the BANU, the government allowed Roma to demand restoration of their rights and

[122]David M. Crowe, "Muslim Roma in the Balkans", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 28, No.1 (Mart 2000), pp.100-101.

more importantly to benefit from the social reforms of the government.[123] The 1923 coup and the subsequent legislation, however, put and end to BANU's rule and to the activism of the Roma organizations in the country. The following decade saw the gradual radicalization of the Bulgarian political life, as the country fell increasingly under Germany's influence. The 1934 coup again outlawed the Roma organizations that were re-established after 1929.[124] During the WWII, as an ally of Germany, Bulgaria introduced restrictive laws against the Roma. They were denied access to the central parts of Sofia, forbiden to use public transportation and were given smaller food rations than the rest of the population.[125]

As far as the "Macedonian Question" is concerned, it should be noted that the issue became especially prominent after the Balkan wars in 1912-1913 and the subsequent division of Macedonia between Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, which, in turn, had impacts on the Macedonians, and the development of their identity. After the Balkan wars, Bulgaria, being the loser over Macedonia, became rather irredentist and revisionist. The large number of refugees from "the lost territories" aggravated the situation even more. It is estimated that by 1934, more than 10 per cent of Sofia's population was made up of Macedonian refugees who "caused much instability by continuing their feud and violence within Bulgaria"[126] In Bulgaria, IMRO effectively controlled the Petrich region from where it launched numerous armed raids into the territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) and

[123] *Ibid.*
[124] *Egypt Society* and *Future* were the two Roma organizations, which were outlawed by the Law for the Defence of the State. Helsinki Watch, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Gypsies of Bulgaria*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1991; David M Crowe, *A History of*..., p.17.
[125] Helsinki Watch, *op.cit*., p. 7.
[126] Hugh Poulton, *Who are*..., p. 80.

Greece.[127] It was during Stamboliiski's tenure in office when a campaign against IMRO started. In spite of his popularity among the peasant masses, BANU's leader made enemies among influential Macedonian refugees and IMRO because of his policy of rapprochement with Bulgaria's neighbors. He refused to support their revanchist thrust in Macedonia and signed in March 1923 the Treaty of Nish with Yugoslavia, which denounced IMRO and undertook obligations to dismember the organization.[128] IMRO considered this act a treachery, and responded with violence that culminated in the assassination of the Prime Minister. These terrorist activities in Bulgaria were stopped only after the coup of May 19, 1934. The victims of IMRO violence only for the ten years until 1934 was believed to be about 884 lives.[129] Contrary to Danforth argument that between the two world wars, "Macedonians in all three regions of Macedonia were subject to violent campaigns of assimilation and denationalization whose goals were to deprive them of their true Macedonian identity and convince them that they were actually Serbs, Bulgarians, or Greeks"[130], it appears as if the Macedonians were terrorizing the Bulgarians leading to instabilities in the state's internal and foreign affairs.

3.3. Communist Party Rule 1944-1984

In the realm of minorities question in the post-WWII period, the Communist party rule in Bulgaria was faced with several major problems: the Macedonian issue, the Turkish issue and that of the Pomak (Bulgarian Muslims) and Roma minorities.

[127] *Ibid.*
[128] Crampton, *op.cit.*, p. 155.
[129] Hugh Poulton, *Who are…*, p. 85.
[130] Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian..*,p. 32.

In this chapter the regime's approach to each of the above-mentioned minorities is to be analyzed.

3.3.1. The Turks

During BCP's rule the Turkish question required a delicate balancing act of theory and practice, of long term versus short term goals. It may be argued that from the very beginning of this period, the "national integration" or the building of a unified "socialist nation" was of primary importance for long term BCP goals. However, the fact that socialist nation, in reality, meant a Bulgarian nation became clear only over time. It was neither politically correct nor expedient to launch an immediate full-scale assimilation campaign against the minorities, particularly in the uncertainties of the post-war period. Furthermore, Turks in particular were perceived as a potential vanguard for spreading communism to neighboring Turkey[131], hence needed to be nurtured and trained in the socialist spirit. Yet, how could the party tolerate the presence of cultural practices that were the epitome of "backwardness" and "foreignness" that were anathema to socialism?

It appears as if the electoral success of FF in the 1946 parliamentary elections was followed by positive developments as far as the minorities are concerned. In the first Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bulgaria (December 4, 1947, also know as the Dimitrov Constitution) stated that "national minorities have a right to be educated in their vernacular, and to develop their vernacular, and to develop their

[131] Antonina Zzhelyazkova, *op.cit*., p. 287.

national culture".[132] Turkish language department at the University of Sofia was opened and there were a number of Turkish language publications. But after few years of tolerance the BCP changed its minority policy because of Turkish reluctance to join the wave of "modernization". A number of internal and external factors led Bulgarian governments to the idea of solving the Turkish problem by mass exodus.[133] As in past periods, for Bulgarian officials, the Turkish question was tied to the issue of emigration, which after 1944 run in three faces: 1950-1951; 1968-1978 and 1989. The first two waves of emigration will be discussed in this chapter. There is a number of events which may have been decisive in Party's decision on the 1950-1 exodus. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in 1949 and although Turkey didn't join until 1952, the Marshall Plan and the displacement of a Turkish brigade in 1950 to participate in the Koran War, in fact, were events which showed the commitment of the Turkish government to the "capitalist" Western block's foreign policy goals. Under these circumstances in August 1950, the Bulgarian government announced that 250.000 would be crossing the border to Turkey in the next few months. The policy was justified by referring to the treaty signed in 1925 for the voluntary exchange of populations[134]. However, the sudden opening of the border to such a volume of people was an indicator of policy reversal because since Bulgaria's entry into WWII and throughout immediate post-war period there was a sort of curtailment of Turkish emigration from Bulgaria.

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[132]Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*, (London: Minoritiy Rights Publications, 1994), p. 120.

[133] Already in 1948 Dimitrov speaks of the minority "ulcer" on the southern border. For G. Dimitrov's security concerns see Stayko Trifonov, "Musulmanite v Politikata na Bulgarskata Durjava (1944-1989)" Khristo Khristov, (ed), *Stranitzi ot Bulgarskata Istoriya. Ocherki za Islamiziranite Bulgari v Natzionalno-Vuzroditelniya Protzess*, (Sofia:BAN, 1989), pp. 210-224.

[134] Bilal Şimşir, *Bulgaristan…*, pp. 212-213.

A new view of Turks in Bulgaria was laid down in the statement of the Party's Central Committee plenary session in April, 1956. It claimed that "Bulgarian Turks are an inseparable part of the Bulgarian people". This nation, of course, would speak only Bulgarian. The April 1956 plenary session was to become a watershed in Bulgaria's minority policies because from then on, Bulgaria's policy towards her minorities was aimed at eliminating all signs of their "foreigness". As a result, one minority group after other was claimed to be "Bulgarian" by nationality and ethnicity. Those ethnic markers which came under the fiercest attacks were religion, names, dress codes and finally language.[135]

Here should be noted that until 1970's the Turk's minority status was recognized. As Ali Eminov writes, the mainstream view was that "[u]ntil the late 1970s Bulgarian historians not only acknowledged the existence of a sizable Turkish minority in Bulgaria but also located the origins of this minority outside the Balkan peninsula".[136] But by the late 1970s, even ethnic Turks were increasingly considered Islamicized and Turkicized Bulgarians and by the early 1980s, Turks had increasingly disappeared from official Bulgarian history. The most important events in this process were the Bulgarian constitution of 1971, which did not mention "minorities", but only "Bulgarian citizens of non-Bulgarian origin", and the elimination of Turkish as the language of instruction in minority schools[137]. Moreover, in 1975 the section in the identity cards where the nationality of the holder had been recorded was removed.[138] The gradual change in course was also reflected in the official terminology used: from 1944 until late 1950's-"Turkish minority in

[135] Huseyin Memisoglu, *op.cit.,* pp.36-37.
[136] Ali Eminov, *op.cit*., p.8.
[137] Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans*…., p. 119.
[138] Milena Mahon, "The Turkish Minority under Communist Bulgaria-Politics of Ethnicity and Power", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol.1, No.2, 1999, p. 155.

Bulgaria"; in the 1960's-"Turkish population in Bulgaria"; in the 1980's-"Bulgarian Muslims", "Turkish speaking Bulgarians", "Bulgarians with recovered names". A parallel development is observed in the field of Turkish schools. Eminov distinguishes three periods in the education of Turks of Bulgaria: the first lasted until 1958-9 school year and was "marked by substantial freedom in educational and cultural matters"; the second, "characterized by drastic limitations of this freedom" began in 1959 with the consolidation of Turkish schools with Bulgarian ones culminating in the elimination of Turkish instruction in early 1970's; in the third period which covered 1970's and 1980's, the Turkish identity was repressed entirely and particularly after 1985, since there were no Turks, as Eminov points, "there could be no…Turkish language and culture".[139]

The "revival process", which is to be discussed in details in the next chapter, officially declared Turks of Bulgaria to be Bulgarians and was the most radical attempt of "solving" the Turkish question: they were no longer perceived as a different ethnic group, but as ethnic Bulgarians who had been forced to adopt Islam and Turkish as their mother tongue.

One of the "special measures" that came to characterize the BCP approach to the Turkish question is clearly exemplified by the dramatic waves of mass emigrations. The first mass exodus of approximately 155.000 Turks dates back to 1950-1. This party inspired mass emigration of Turks was indicative of the wavering BCP trust in the commitment of local Muslim communities to fulfill "socialist tasks", which had brought the mass emigration of Turks to the fore as a proposed solution to both domestic and developing international dilemmas. In fact, by allowing the

[139] Eminov, *op.cit.,* p. 128.

"voluntary" emigration of Turks, the BCP could solve multiple domestic and international problems that faced the regime in 1949-1951. The party could expel from the "socialist nation" political and socio-cultural anomalies, i.e. "backwards elements" who were most under the influence of "foreign reactionary propaganda". These Turks, it was assumed, were the most likely to apply for emigration from Bulgaria. Furthermore, the BCP move to allow emigration was the result of the need for economic restructuring of Turkish districts in the Dobrudja region in particular which were slow to collectivize. Finally, the rapid movement of a large number of refugees across the Turkish border could destabilize Turkey, whose "imperialist" ties had become firmly established by this period. In spite of certain success in fulfilling BCP aims, the displacement and the residual tension of the hurried exodus of 1950-1 ran counter to many objectives of the regime and ultimately deepened inter-ethnic tensions in Bulgarian society. The loss of Turkish workers was damaging to the economic health of the Bulgarian state, the disorderly emigration process cast shadow over the "Bulgaro-Turkish brotherhood" and particularly alienated Pomaks who were categorically denied exit visas. Furthermore, Turkey was not significantly destabilized by the emigration.[140] Thus, rather than furthering the BCP objective of national solidarity the emigration deepened Bulgaro-Turkish divisions in Bulgarian society.

After 1951 the BCP turned its efforts inward to reassess what remained of its "Muslim problem" and embarked on a reinvigorated campaign to "improve work" with Turks and Pomaks.

[140] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *op.cit*., pp. 169-172.

The change in the course of minority policy and the completion of collectivization by late 1950's were two factors, which increased further the tendency for emigration among the Turks. Moreover, the sudden closure of borders in November 1951 left a number of Turks who could not moved to Turkey[141] and many families were separated. Indeed the main aim of this second exodus was to unite these separate families. At the end of the day approximately 130.000 Turks left Bulgaria for good.

3.3.2 The Macedonians

The number of Macedonians has varied considerably in the censuses conducted in Bulgaria: in 1946 out of total 7.029.349[142], 165.544 people declared themselves to be Macedonians; in 1956 their number was recorded as 187.789; in 1965 their number drastically declined to 8.750.[143] Several factors explain this variation in numbers.[144]

During the interwar period the existence of a separate Macedonia nation was adopted by the international communist movement, Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) included. According to BCP leaders the "main nucleus of the Macedonian nation" which lives in Yugoslavia would form a zone of gravity to which the Macedonians of Bulgaria and Greece would join, evolving into unifying unit of the

[141] Bilal Shimsir, *Bulgaristan*...., pp.314-318.
[142] 1946 census results are available at: http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Religion.htm,
[143]The total population of Bulgaria in 1956 was 8.226.564, and in 1965 8.860.000. The figures are available in Robert King, *Minorities under Communism: Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkan Communist States*, (Cambridge, 1973), p. 262.
[144] Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans*..., pp. 107-108.

"fraternal union among Bulgaria Yugoslavia and Greece".[145] Yugoslav and Bulgarian communists, however, had their different reasons for accepting the existence of a separate Macedonian nationality. For the Yugoslavs a separate Macedonian nation would guarantee its control over Vardar Macedonia and counteract Bulgarian claims over the region and her influence there. Moreover, the recognition of Macedonian nationality was seen as an act that would remedy the attempts of Serbianization conducted during the interwar years and reduce any opposition to the current regime. On the other hand, Bulgarian communists accepted nationality's existence because they wanted to win over the Macedonians, as well, and assumed that "independent Macedonia…..would gravitate towards Bulgaria"[146]. This stand led BCP to the policy of "Macedonization" of the Pirin region in the years immediately after WWII. The Macedonian language was adopted as the official language of Pirin, teachers and books from Yugoslav Macedonia arrived there, a Macedonian newspaper *Pirinski Vestnik* (*Pirin Newspaper*) and a "Macedonian Book" publishing company was set up.[147] Furthermore, Georgi Dimitrov, the leader of the Bulgarian Communists, in August 1947 signed the Bled agreement with Yugoslavia which abolished entry visas and envisaged a customs union giving in practice the green light to a union between Pirin and Vardar Macedonia.[148] However, as Poulton points out, "Dimitrov opposed immediate formal union until after the proposed Yugoslav-Bulgarian federation had been realized. This proved [to be] something of a stumbling block as Tito wanted Bulgaria to join on a basis of equality with the other constituent republics of Yugoslavia (e.g. Serbia) while Bulgarians

[145] Krustyo Manchev, *Natzionalniyat Vupros na Balkanite*, (Akademichno Izdatelstvo "Prof. Marin Drinov, Sofia, 1999), pp. 316-317.
[146] Robert R. King, *op.cit*., p. 188.
[147] Poulton, *Who are*…., pp.107-108.
[148] Krustyo Manchev, *op.cit*., p. 317.

wanted equal status with Yugoslavia"[149]. Tito had assumed the role of a vanguard of large Balkan Federation that was to include Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Hungary and (communist) Greece. Stalin who was annoyed by Tito's initiatives viewed the project of a wider federation as a "plot to build a power block that would challenge Soviet hegemony"[150] and at a Kremlin meeting of Communist party leaders of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia "ordered an immediate small federation of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria".[151] This pressure was perceived by Tito as an attempt to penetrate within Yugoslavia's Communist part, as Rothschild puts it to "insert Trojan horse into the cohesive, Partisan-sealed Yugoslav cadres".[152] Bulgarian opportunism and use of conjunctural developments is reflected in the reversal of policies *vis-à-vis* the Macedonians in Bulgaria which took place after the Stalin-Tito split in June 1948.[153] At the fifth Congress of BCP (1948) a declaration against the "Macedonization" of Pirin region was made, criticizing the policy of Yugoslavia, which was qualified as a "systematic campaign against everything Bulgarian, against the Bulgarian nation and its culture".[154] Thus, the reevaluation of Bulgarian policy on the Macedonian issue was initiated. Under the leadership of Todor Zhivkov, the Communist regime in Bulgaria progressively moved towards expounding of the ideology that the population of the country was a "unified Bulgarian socialist nation" where there were no minorities, with the exception of the small Jewish and Armenian communities.[155] "A powerful effect of the party's April line was the thwarting of a

[149] Hugh Poulton, *Who are…*, p.107.
[150] Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: Apolitical History of the East Central Europe Since World War II*, (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 129.
[151] *Ibid*, p. 130.
[152] *Ibid*.
[153] Krustyo Manchev, *op.cit*., p. 317.
[154] *Ibid.*
[155] At the BCP's 1956 April Plenum a decision not to recognize the existence of a separate Macedonian nation was taken but this was openly expressed several years later due to the good

plot against the Bulgarian national consciousness among the population of the Pirin area. This brought trust and peace to the people, who had been the object of scandalous [Yugoslav] claims on their national self-consciousness. Anyone who travels in the Pirin region of our fatherland today is impressed by not only its great progress but also the people's high level of patriotic Bulgarian consciousness in the Blagoevgrad region".[156] In the beginning of 1960's the prevalent position on the Macedonian issue totally differed from the previous one: in Bulgaria there had never been a Slav population with non-Bulgarian national consciousness, Pirin regions population was an integral part of the Bulgarian nation and could not be considered a minority, the creation of Macedonian nation in Vardar region was realized on anti-Bulgarian basis by denationalization of a population which had Bulgarian consciousness and it was stated that Bulgaria was against any falsification of Bulgarian history and culture.

Thus, the short-lived period of recognition and even encouragement of the Macedonian identity in the Pirin Macedonian region was soon substituted with exactly the opposite attitude on the part of the state. While in the Dimitrov period people were reportedly forced to declare their Macedonian identity, now there was

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Soviet-Yugoslav relations in the post-Stalin period until late 1950's. Naturally, this new approach had implications on the field of "science". In the second edition of the "Academic History of Bulgaria" (1962) a new section under the rubric "National Liberation Movements in Macedonia and Thrace" were included and studied as a part of Bulgarian history, "scientific" findings proved the Bulgarian character of Macedonia, etc. At the same time the disputes and discussions on Macedonia did not remain only in the academic circles but also involved politicians and party leaders. Thus, the intended "fraternal union" gave away to quarrels on who the Macedonians were and whose Macedonia was, see Robert King, op.cit., pp. 189-191.

[156] Stanko Todorov, "Name Changes in Bulgaria" in Gale Srokes, (ed.) *From Stalinism to Pluralism/ A Documentary History of Eastern Europe Since 1945*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 232.

suppression and punishment of any exhibition of minority identity.[157] As will be seen later, this applied to most minority groups in Bulgaria.

3.3.3 The Pomaks

Soon after the BCP dominated FF's arrival to power the *Rodina* movement and its actions were declared fascist and state policy against the Pomaks in the interwar years were reversed by reinstituting their Turkish-Arabic (Muslim) names. In the period until the fifth congress of BCP the education policy of the party towards the Pomaks was controversial. On the one hand, there was a wide scale purge of "fascist elements" among the teachers, on the other hand some of those branded as fascists remained in their posts. Moreover, in order to motivate the Pomaks to send their children to school, initially, the teaching of Koran was kept. An element of this comparatively tolerant approach was the establishment of a theological school for Pomaks in Plovdiv.[158] Whether the BCP followed a special policy directed at the construction/establishment of a specific Pomak consciousness, as in the case with the Macedonians, before its fifth congress in December 1948, unfortunately cannot be assessed but the fact that at censuses they were not registered under a separate "Pomak" category may lead to the conclusion that they were not recognized as a minority. In the literature used, there is no information about the existence of an autonomous cultural organization or special department at the FF for the Pomaks, in the early years of post-WWII Bulgaria. The restoration of the Muslim names inclines one to think that the regime did not have intentions to undermine and challenge the

[157] Hugh Poulton, *Who are…*, pp. 108-109.
[158] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *op.cit*., pp. 79-80.

Islamic character of the Pomaks. Even if it is assumed that the BCP had an intention to foster the establishment of a distinct Pomak identity and consciousness, this plan was abandoned at the Plenum of BCP on February, 4, 1948 where the resettlement of Turks and Pomaks from Bulgaria's southern border zones was decided. A year later when the Politburo "prepared" itself for the emigration of the Turks it was explicitly stated that the "Bulgaro-Muhammedans (Pomaks) are a part of Bulgarian nation which was forcibly Turkicized" and converted to Islam[159]. Thus BCP got closer to the stand points of *Rodina*, the organization which together with its leaders was branded fascist. For instance one of the founders of *Rodina*, Kamen Bolyarski (Arif Beyski) was accused of being a Greek spy and consequently executed in 1951. And his associate, Kamen Kamenov, was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.[160] This purge of *Rodina* collaborators between 1949-1951 coincides with the increasing state involvement in the affairs of the Muslim communities. A part of the Turkish minority was allowed to emigrate to Turkey to which a number of Pomaks and Roma joined. With the assertion that the Pomaks were a part of Bulgarian nation the BCP most probably aimed that preventing Pomak emigration. Despite the initial relaxation of assimilatory policy in the first years of BCP rule it was only a matter of time when the party would turn to bring the Pomaks "back" to the Bulgarian national self. The "department for propaganda and agitation" of the Central Committee (CC) was given the task, together with the Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS), to prove the Bulgarian ethnic origins of the Pomaks. Extensive ethnographic, historical and other writings about the Pomaks were intended to prove that. However, the first concrete decisions that were to result in drastic changes in the live of Pomaks were taken after

[159] Stayko Trifonov, "Musulmanite .., p. 217.
[160] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *op.cit*., pp. 80-81.

the April plenum of 1956 and particularly after the 7th Congress of BCP in 1958. The party had its own reasons to be unsatisfied with the modernization measures-in 1956 it had been estimated that only 3,5% of the Pomak population was affected by collectivization of agriculture[161]. For the party leaders the reason for this low number was the "reactionary Islamic clergy" who would lose its social control by collectivization and that is why opposed it. Hence, "scientific" anti-religious program had to be initiated. At its meeting on November, 17, 1956, on Politburo's agenda was the future policy that to be followed towards Pomaks and at the end of this sitting, "Decree No 303" concerning the education policy of the regions with Pomak population was taken.

The year 1962 is somewhat a turning point in Bulgaria's Pomak policy. Whereas previous party initiatives were directed at the modernization of this community lifestyle by means of literacy, courses, encouraging education or improving the living and working conditions, with "Decision A 101"[162] from 1962 a new line in the party's minority policy begins. The concern no longer is the modernization of Pomak (and Roma) lifestyle but the segregation of this section of society from the Turkish minority. Thus, the foundations of the name change campaign laid down. In the preamble of the Decision, the tendency of Pomak families to settle in places with compact Turkish population was criticized because they were assimilated into this Turkish mass. Moreover, the Pomak-Turkish intermarriages were seen as means of assimilation of Pomaks, because, party leaders argued, their Pomak wives and their children tended to identify themselves as Turks. To these were added the influence of conservative Turkish clergy, the coeducation of

[161] *Ibid*, pp. 82-85.
[162] The full text is available in Helsinki Watch, *op.cit*., pp. 72-73.

Turkish and Pomak children and the gathering together of Turkish and Pomak soldiers/conscripts in the same military units. Hence, in order to decrease Turkish influence, ideological work among the Pomaks (Roma and Tatars) had to be reinforced and Bulgarian Academy of Science was instructed to continue its work in the Rhodope region and prove the Bulgarian character of the Pomaks: "The study of the historic past of the Bulgarian Muslims in the Rhodopes, the Lovech region and other parts of the country must continue in order to make further discoveries about the historic truth, about the results of the assimilation policy of the Turkish oppressors, about mass and individual conversion to Islam."[163] The document's nucleus, however, remains the change of names with its main aim of removing external features, i.e. the Islamic orientation of the Pomak identity. The renaming campaign will be discussed in details later. Here, I would only liked to mention that it went through two phases. The first wave continued until 1962 when after mass protest there was a turn of the "old" names. The second wave covers the period 1971-1974. Here again the protest are observed but this second campaign was better planned and organized as return of names occurred only after fall of communist regime in Bulgaria In the years between the two campaigns BCP conducted meetings concerning the problem of Islamic fanaticism and increasing Pomak affiliation with the Turks via intermarriages or other means. One pillar (dimension) of this affiliation was the desire to immigrate to Turkey. Upon this perception BCP attempted to reverse the process by measures similar to those undertaken in 1962: modernization of Pomak settlements, prevent gathering of Pomaks and Turks in the same military units, but also closure of many mosques and introduction of socialist rituals in

[163] Decree 101a cited in *Ibid.*

marriages and funerals as measures designed to reduce the influence of Islam. The above mentioned rituals were propagandized again after the second change of names but as Alexander Lilov, BCP's leading ideologue, notes, the "Bulgarian Muslims" continued to have fudded nation consciousness (despite their Bulgarian origins) which would not be clarified by either administrative measures, or force, or passiveness. To this end further modernization of Pomak regions, increase of economic, educational and cultural standards together with active party work among Pomaks and fight against the reactionary Islamic propaganda, was needed.[164] No matter what measures taken, eventually it was a very wide practice to give children two names: one Christian-Bulgarian for "official use" and another Muslim-Turkish.

Throughout the 20th century the Pomaks have been subjected to campaigns targeting their Islamic names and religion. If in the immediate aftermath of WWII it was the BCP dominated FF which reversed the assimilatory policy conducted in the 1940's by returning their names, two decades later it was the same BCP to subject the Pomaks to assimilatory campaigns in the 1960's and 1970's. In the following, the two name changing campaigns and their outcomes will be discussed.

The first assimilatory wave of 1962-1964 affected only the central Rhodopes. After Politburo's 1962 decision it appears, as if initially, the name changes among the Pomaks (and Roma) was conducted quite imperceptibly but events changed in 1964. In that year, as Stayko Trifonov describes, several villages in Blagoevgrad district showed bitter resistance to the campaign with tendency to disrupt public order. These events erupted upon party activists' meeting in Gotse Delchev in March 1964 where they made statements in favor of name changes, which had been already

[164] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *op.cit*., pp. 86-87.

conducted in some of districts' villages. In the aftermath of the meeting local party leaders pressured Pomak BCP activists to change their Islamic names with the aim to serve as an example to the rest of the population. After this measure of "persuasion" it was decided to set up special district commissions for name changes to which a police and military force was to be attached. The Pomks were to be pressured but without use of any force. As Trifonov quotes from a party report, particularly problematic was the campaign in the village of Ribnevo where the Pomak inhabitants furiously opposed commission members who eventually used force. Upon these events, Trifonov notes, the party discussed how to react to such resentment. Whereas Traychkov, a local party leader, suggested use of force, Todor Zhivkov decided to stop the campaign and return the old passports of the victims. Thus, the conclusion that coercion did not produce the intended results but even led to further Turkicization was reached.[165]

The second attempt of enforced changes of names began in 1971. This operation which ended in 1974 is seen by many scholars as a preview of the "Rebirth/Revival Process" which affected Bulgarians largest minority, the Turks, eventually sending about 300.000 across the border to Turkey in 1989.

The timing of the second campaign is very interesting. It coincides with the agreement between Bulgarian and Turkey to unite separate families of those who had immigrated to Turkey earlier. Apparently the regime wanted to prevent Pomak emigration to neighboring Turkey and for this reason had to target the external features of their identity: names and wearing, perhaps existence as well. As Konstantinov describes, the campaign was very well planned and run from west to

[165]S. Trifonov quoted in *Ibid*, pp. 97-100.

east and then to north to cover small Pomak settlements.[166] By 1972 the campaign was assumed to be over. In contrast to the 1962 undertaking this time no resentment was able to interrupt the campaign and every opposition was brutally suppressed. Pomak women also fell under attack since the tradition of clothes were referred to as religious clothes symbolizing their backwardness and subservience to men.

To summarize, BCP did not recognize the Pomaks as a minority but attempted to rise their living and education standards and to transform their social structures. All these were done in order to avert Pomak affiliation with the Turk. To this end, BCP turned to a policy conducted before 1944, which the party itself branded as "fascist". The renaming campaigns were based on "scientific" findings about the Bulgarian origins of the Pomaks. This last cycle of identity conversion was the most brutal one. It was carried out with administrative orders and with de support of the police, army and paramilitary forces. Any attempts to resist the measures were crushed by force and an unknown number of Pomaks who refused to change their names were killed, injured or imprisoned.

3.3.4 The Roma

In the early years of post-WWII Bulgaria, the communist regime attempted to initiate a kind of "socialist nation building"[167] among the Roma. In an article in Romano Esi the following appeal to all Roma was made:

> Who until now have been ashamed to call themselves Gypsies, and who have gone over to the Turkish minority, or who have been baptized as Christians,

[166] Yulian Konstantinov cited in *Ibid*
[167] *Ibid,* p. 39.

> to tear off the mask from their faces, to lift up their heads, and to show that they are Gypsies.[168]

During these years of communist rule, minorities enjoyed more freedom and rights when compared with later stages. In the Roma case, the BCP in its attempt to win their support and incorporate them in the "building of new life", allowed the Roma community to establish their own cultural organizations (Cultural Enlightenment Organization of Gypsy Minority in Bulgaria), a theatre, newspaper, school in Sofia and Roma sent their representatives to the National Assembly[169]. It is obvious that the communists stimulated the development of national self-consciousness among the Roma which, in turn, would counteract their tendency to affiliate with the Turks. As Ulrich Buechsenschuetz points out, the imagined or real "danger" of Roma assimilation in the Turkish minority was the "determinant" in regime's policy formation towards the Roma.[170]

The shift on Roma policy began with the adoption of new constitution in 1947. Despite document's provisions on minorities' protection, the rights were disfunctioned and became meaningless.[171] In the early 1950's all Roma organizations and cultural institutions were dissolved. Moreover, around 5000 Muslim Roma were forced to emigrate to Turkey during the first exodus of Muslim population in 1950-1951.[172] Several years later, the nomadic way of life of some Roma groups was targeted. In 1958, with Decree No 258, Roma nomadism was prohibited[173] resulting in the creation of Roma ghettos. The dual policy of segregation and assimilation

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[168] David Crowe, *A Histori*..., p. 20.
[169] *Ibid*.
[170] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *op.cit*., p 39.
[171] David Crow, *A History*...., p. 21
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] Helsinki Watch, *op.cit*., p. 8.

continued throughout the 1960's. On April 5, 1962, BCP's CC issued Decree A101 which expressed its concerns on Muslim minorities' affiliation with the Turks. In order to stop Gypries' (Pomaks and Tatars) "assimilation" into the Turkish mass, all party organs in "places with Gypsies, Tatars, and Bulgarian Muslims should take as one of the major tasks in their political and ideological work among this population" the "gradual overcoming of the tendency to affiliate with the Turks by leading a systematic ideological and political struggle against the Turkish religious and chauvinistic propaganda and its pan-Turkish and pan-Islamic aims and aspirations"[174]. Moreover, the Ministry of Justice and other state organs were given "instructions" to point out that "religion and personal names are not criteria for nationality".[175] In addition, it was stated that "intermarriage does not lead to change of nationality of spouses", children of such marriages could be registered as Bulgarians, name changes of citizens with non-Bulgarian descent could be done "without asking for permission from the people's courts but by making written application to the respective people's councils", the settlement of Pomaks and Gypsies to "villages or towns with compact Turkish populations" had to be prevented, etc.[176] To prevent Turkicization of Roma school children, special schools were open for them in 1964.[177]

The name changing campaigns were practiced long before BCP's tenure in office and are not something peculiar to the communist regime. The renaming of Muslim Roma may be better comprehended in the context and relation with the renaming applied to Pomaks (and Tatars). These three minority groups because of

[174] *Ibid*, p. 71.
[175] *Ibid.*
[176] Cited in *Ibid.*
[177] David Crow, *A History*…, p. 25.

their Islamic religion were regarded as easy "victims" of Turkish influences. Their affiliation with the Turkish minority rather than with the Bulgarian majority for BCP meant further increase in the number of Turks.

The first attempts to prevent Roma "affiliation with the Turks" dates back to 1940's[178] and attained further significances in 1960's. If in the 1940's the aim was to establish a distanced Roma consciousness and identity in the 1960's this approach was abandoned and clear proof of that is the already quoted decree of 1962. There, for first time, the Turkish-Arabic names of Roma were targeted which gives hints of BCP endeavor to attract Roma to the ranks of the majority. To Crowe, Roma were forced to change their names before 1962 when became an official state policy[179]. The campaign was to be undertaken without any "perversion, pressure or administrative forces".[180]

It is hard to estimate how many Roma gave up their Muslim names for Bulgarian ones but Ulrich Buechsenschuetz estimates by late 1970's and early 1980's the majority of Muslim Roma were renamed.[181]

A change of internal passports (identity cards) began in 1981 and was planned to end by the end of 1985.[182] Those who "escaped" were renamed in the course of 1984-1985 campaign.

[178] See Art. Roman esi in *Ibid*.
[179] David Crow, *A History…*, p. 22
[180] Helsinki Watch, *op.cit*., p. 72.
[181] Ulrich Buechsenschuetz, *op.cit*., p. 62.
[182]Milena Mahon, "*The Turkish minority*…", p.

CHAPTER 4

FROM CONFRONTATION TO RECONCILIATION

The last stage of Bulgarian Communist Party's policy towards the minorities was started in 1984 as a part of the "revival" of the Bulgarian nation in an attempt to create "ethnically homogeneous" Bulgaria. The consequent use of violence on Muslims and Roma greatly destabilized the legitimacy of BCP and oppressed minorities received international support. The policy was ended in 1989 when Muslims were allowed to have their names back.

4.1. Deadlock on minority question

In 1984 the BCP turned to the most radical attempt of "solving" the Turkish question: it officially declared the Turks to be Bulgarians. They were no longer perceived as a different ethnic group, but as ethnic Bulgarians who had been forced to adopt Islam and Turkish as their mother tongue under the "Ottoman Yoke"[183]. Before describing the events of 1984-1985 together with the measures to which the Turks of Bulgaria were subjected until the fall of Communist party's rule in 1989 the possible motives behind the "revival process" should be discussed.

[183] Ali Eminov, *Turkish*…., pp. 85-87.

In the midst of facts about socialist modernization achievements in the districts with predominantly Muslim inhabitants there was the sense of failure among top party cadres because the rapid economic transition and the accompanying cultural projects, despite of seeming successes, had not produced the desired results. The fact that among the Muslims, in general, and the Turks, in particular, who had remained primarily rural through the communist period, there was a persistence of various practices associated with Islam and that older people hardly spoke Bulgarian, if at all, were seen as obstacles to Bulgarian socialist progress. As Poulton points out, "both language and customs [were] seen as obstacles in the path to modernization and the authorities claimed that ethnic Turks……were offered the opportunity to become first-class citizens…".[184]

The urban-rural divide between Muslims and Bulgarians also resulted in lowering fertility rates for the Bulgarians but not for the Turks, Pomaks or Roma. Hence, the Turkish population growth began to outstrip that of the Bulgarians, which, in turn, raised concerns about the Turkish/Muslim minority presence. It had been estimated that by 1990 the Bulgarian population would experience very low grow rates, even negative. Upon this, the government provided incentives which aimed at stimulating birth rates: long and well-paid maternity leaves with provided job security at the end of the leave, material benefits for additional child, so on so forth. However, it was not the Bulgarian but the Muslim families who benefited from such incentives. This Eminov explains by the rural character of the Muslims where "additional children were seen as economic assets in the agricultural economy", whereas for the Bulgarians who predominantly lived in urban areas an additional

[184]Hugh Poulton, *Balkans*....., p.127.

child was seen as an economic liability. To Poulton this "substantial" increase in the number of Turks raised the concerns of the authorities who feared of autonomy demands if not assimilated quickly.[185] The authenticity of demographic statistics and predictions, however, was questioned by many authors. The rumors in 1980's that by the year 2000 Bulgarians would be numerically inferior to the rest of the population was challenged by Baest[186]:

> Even allowing for a slight decline in the Bulgarian growth rate – for which there is some evidence – the proportions could alter only slightly. In fifteen years time a population of 83% Bulgarians would confront 15% Turks and Romani, instead of 85% to 12.5% - hardly a dramatic shift.

Another cause for the forced assimilation might have been Turkey's intensions concerning the Turkish minority of Bulgaria. In Vesselin Dimitrov's opinion, the Turkish military intervention in Cyprus provoked a shift in Bulgarian approach to Turkish question by its demonstration to the "Bulgarian leadership that Turkey's interests in minorities outside its borders was becoming more than purely cultural".[187] This fear that the Turkish nationals want a Cypriot version in Bulgaria accelerated minority concerns eventually leading to reinterpretation of the Bulgaro-Turkish "brotherhood".[188] The bombings in 1984 which Bulgaria saw as terrorist activities conducted by members of the Turkish community and inspired by Turkey were another factor which reinforced the perception of Turkish threat. However, Poulton argues that these bombings may have been directed by some Bulgarian émigré circles who aimed at boycotting the 40th anniversary of communist takeover

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[185] *Ibid.*
[186] Thorsten F. Baest, "Bulgaria's war at home: the People's Republic and its Turkish minority, 1944-1985" *Across Frontiers,* Vol.2, No.2, 1995 cited in Ali Eminov, *op.cit*., p. 93.
[187] Vesselin Dimitrov, "In Search of a Homogeneous Nation: The Assimilation of Bulgaria's Turkish Minority, 1984-1985", *European Center for Minority Issues*, available at: www.ecmi.de/jemie/download/JEMIE01Dimitrov10-07-01.pdf, accessed on September 14, 2001.
[188] *Ibid.*

of power in Bulgaria in September 1944. To him, the appearance of leaflets stating "40 years: 40 bombs" supported the idea of the anti-communist nature of the activities.[189] Nevertheless, though characterized by rising Bulgarian fear of Turkey, the mid 1980's also provided a good window of opportunity to address the Turkish question. On the one hand, the military coup of 1980 could be used at the international level to discredit Turkey's democratic credentials, on the other hand, the war against the rising Kurdish terrorism and the human rights abuses were seen as factors which could hinder the attempts of Turkey to attract the international support for the events in Bulgaria when she herself was abusing her citizens. As far as the timing of the revival process is concerned, to Eminov, the plan census for December 1985 may have played a role in the decision to "reconstruct" the Bulgarian names of the Turks.[190] Indeed, all these were a clear reflection of Communist party's opportunism. First of all the developments in Cyprus took place in 1974 and to rise the argument that Turkey want a Cypriot version in Bulgaria was nothing more than an attempt to justify the assimilatory policies of the party. An attempt doomed to failure because first, it was clear that Turkey was not following irredentist policy, second, the intervention was legitimate, third, the intervention was in 1974 and the Communist party's assimilatory undertaking took place in 1984. What could explain this ten years delay in perceiving that Turkey has designs on Bulgaria? Moreover, what was seen as a window of opportunity, indeed, was a grave miscalculation on behalf of the Communist party leaders. It was believed that Turkey would have difficulties in mobilizing international support for the events in Bulgaria when she herself was abusing her citizens but there was a "slight" difference between Turkey's

[189] Hugh Poulton, *Balkans*...., p. 149.
[190] Ali Eminov, *op.cit.*, p. 95.

and Bulgaria's reasons for suppression of their citizens: rising terrorism and guerilla warfare in the former and no whatsoever armed challenge to the Communist party's rule in the later.

Official theory became practice when BCP leader Todor Zhivkov launched the much analyzed assimilation campaign of 1984-1989, referred to as the "revival process". The cornerstone of this process was the forcible change of Turkish names from Arabo-Turkic to Slavic-Christian. The second most important and visible measure was a ban on the use of Turkish in public. The Turkish-language daily Yeni Ishik (New Light) began to appear only in Bulgarian, Turkish place-names were changed, the observance of Muslim customs was strictly banned and Turkish tomb-stones were destroyed. This radical Bulgarianization campaign was accompanied by a wave of "academic" literature which tried to prove the Bulgarian ethnic character of the Turkish minority living in Bulgaria. A lot of research was undertaken to produce "evidence" for the Bulgarian origins of ethnic Turks. The common historical explanation of the existence of "Turks" in Bulgaria was that they had descended from Islamicized and further Turkicized Bulgarians.

Zhivkov's famous statement in 1985 marked the "final solution" to the Turkish issue: "There are no Turks in Bulgaria".[191] This name-changing campaign was the final blow to any illusions that Turks would be allowed their own place in Bulgarian Communist society. The Communist party rulers sought the support of Muslim institutions and Nedim Gendjev who became a Head Mufti in 1988 is accused of personal involvement in carrying out the "reconstruction" of the

[191] *Ibid*, p. 217.

Bulgarian names of Turks.[192] Because of local resistance to the name-changing procedure, considerable force was required in carrying out the official name-changes on the local level. Many Turks fled to the woods as Bulgarian soldiers went door to door, attempting to enforce the name-changes in Turkish districts. Tanks and tear gas bombs were even used to storm Muslim holdouts in Momchilgrad and other Muslim locales. By this all-encompassing attempt to eradicate every trace of Muslim difference, the very names of Turks were "reconstructed" in the name of Bulgarian national unification.[193]

> The "revival process" ended in a disaster. The Bulgarian authorities faced both internal resistance and a wave of international critique when applying their assimilatory measures. Despite brutal enforcement of the assimilation measures, which took the lives of many people - and the freedom of many more, who were imprisoned - internal opposition could not be silenced. On the contrary, during 1988 and 1989 resistance intensified, with an emerging armed Turkish resistance movement.

In this situation, the regime tried to expel the Turkish masses and the political and intellectual leaders of the resistance against assimilation by lifting restrictions for traveling abroad for the Turkish population of Bulgaria. Many of them took the chance to leave the country. In many ways the mass exodus of Turks from Bulgaria in the summer of 1989 that ensued was reminiscent of the 1950-1951 emigration – hurried, unorganized and devastating for both the Turkish community and Bulgarian economy. About 350.000 Turks left the country within a time span of few months,

[192] Nadege Ragaru, "Islam in Post-Communist Bulgaria: A Aborted "Clash of Civilizations"?, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol.29, No.2, 2001, p. 314.

F[193] For the events in the "eve" of the "revival process" see Ali Eminov, "There are no Turks in Bulgaria", in Kemal Karpat (ed), *The Turks of Bulgaria: The History, Culture and Political Fate of a Minority*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990), pp. 203-222; Ali Eminov, *Turkish…*, pp. 86-90.

most of them forced to leave behind whatever property and belongings that they had for the chance to escape Bulgaria, ironically only months before the fall of BCP rule in November 1989. This mass-emigration not only had serious consequences for the economy of the concerned regions, but also intensified the process of dissolution of Communist party rule in Bulgaria. Zhivkov would soon be replaced by Petar Mladenov as a result of intra-party coup.[194] Consequently, one of the first important acts of the post-Zhivkov government (after the downfall of Todor Zhivkov on November 9, 1989), was to abolish the "revival process" and to lift its discriminatory bans.[195]

The mass exodus, the last act of the Zhivkov led BCP, was indicative of the dual message of integration and expulsion that colored Bulgaro-Turkish relations through the communist party rule. Bulgarian propaganda, which had spent decades in convincing its citizens of the "Bulgarianness" of local Turks had suddenly launched a massive campaign implying that Turks "are infidel to the Bulgarian state and should leave forever".

4.2. Retreat from the Revival Policy

In Bulgaria, before the fall of BCP's rule in 1989 there existed an acute form of ethnic conflict, at times, accompanied by instances of violence while after 1989, the country has managed to resolve the conflict with its major (Turkish) minority and ethnic tensions have steadily declined. In this section it will be attempted to analyze

[194] Kostadin Tchakurov, *Ot Vtoriya Etazh kum Nashestvieto na Demokartziata*, (Trud, Sofia, 2001), pp. 170-177.
[195] Ali Eminov, *Turkish*…., pp. 17-21.

processes, which have contributed to Bulgaria's successful transition from ethnic conflict leading to ethnic peace in the post-1989 era.

4.2.1. The Conceptual Framework

Robert D. Kaplan's book *Balkan Ghosts : A Journey Through History*[196], presents an approach to ethno-religious conflict which tries to explain post-Communists party ethnic conflicts in the Balkans with the resurgence of "ancient hatreds" that have been suppressed by the Communist rule but have nevertheless retained their destructive potential. Definitely there are elements in the culture of the dominant Slavic Orthodox-Christian majority in Bulgaria that could qualify as myths of hatred. Indeed ever since 1878 the Bulgarian state has been defined by ethnic nationalism and distinctly anti-Muslim historical mythology, transmitted from one generation to another through literature, history textbooks, and the symbolism of the nation state. When it comes to the minorities, the massacres of Muslims accompanying Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, the First Balkan War and the experience of living as politically, culturally and economically suppressed has led to resentment among the Muslim populations of Bulgaria.

However, Kaplan's argument has been criticized by some elite-centered theories of ethnic violence for misrepresenting the actual causes of conflict by looking at popular mythology instead of how this mythology is exploited by the elite for their own political purposes. For instance, Gagnon[197] who offers a theoretical

[196] Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993)
[197] V. P. Gagnon, "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia", *International Security* 19(3), 1994-1995

model based on a case study of Serbia tries to explain violent ethnic conflict as provoked by threatened ruling elites trying to create "a domestic political context where ethnicity is the only relevant political identity"[198] and thus fend off rivals who challenge the regime on issues of political and economic reform. With regard to the former Yugoslavia, Gagnon argues therefore, that the conflicts there were caused neither by culturally transmitted myths of ethnic antagonism nor by external security concerns and military imbalances after the collapse of Communism. Instead, to him, these conflicts were a product of deliberate provocation by the ruling elite-designed to make nationalist concerns the focus of domestic politics, delegitimize the regime's opponents, and thus help the former Communists preserve their grip on power. Gagnon also argues that the likelihood of threatened elites resorting successfully to the provocation of ethnic conflict depends on a number of factors, such as how threatened the elite feel, how politically relevant ethnicity has been in the past, whether the elite could be seen as credible defenders of the ethnic interest, and whether they enjoy sufficient control over the mass media.

Snyder shares the Gagnon's view that threatened ruling elites of the post-Communist world used nationalism as "an attractive instrument to mobilize popular support and to demobilize support for opponents"[199]. Moreover, Snyder argues that this exploitation may be observed in the ex-Communist States, which he classifies as "late" developers[200]. In the states which he classifies as "early" developers[201], on the other hand, Snyder contends that very little ethnic conflict has been experienced

[198] *Ibid*, p.132
[199] Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), p. 198.
[200] Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia and the former Yugoslav republics except Slovenia are included to the group of late developers in terms of social and economic development, *Ibid*.
[201] Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, and Slovenia

because of their highly educated and "relatively sophisticated" societies that contributed positively to the speedy consolidation of democracy there[202].

One set of factors that could be credited for the explanation whether an ethnic minority would be inclined seek separatism is offered by ethnic demography, in particular, the relative size of ethnic minorities and whether they live in compact masses close to the border of a kin state or external homelands. Snyder however, has argued that one and the same demographic patterns[203] i.e. Hungarians in Romania, Armenians in Azerbaijan, Russians in Kazakhstan or Russians in Latvia and Estonia- could result in very different stances and strategies for resolving minority problems, e.g. accommodation in Kazakhstan and discrimination in Estonia and Latvia, and different outcomes, e.g. peace in Romania and war in Azerbaijan. With regard to Bulgaria, where the Muslims live in two big enclaves in the Northeast and the Southeast of the country, with the latter adjacent to the border with Turkey, the higher birthrates of the Muslims and the migration of ethnic Bulgarians to the larger cities resulting in the relatively ethnic homogeneity of these enclaves, ethnic demography has not led to separatism. Hence, although the percentage of Muslims in Bulgaria's population may have been sufficient to justify a challenge to the unitary character of the state, neither autonomy demands in the Northeast nor secessionism in the Southeast of Bulgaria were that realistic. Moreover, the percentage of Muslims in Bulgaria's population was largely the same in the 1980s, when the country did experience an ethnic conflict, and in the 1990s, when the conflict was resolved.

Here it should be acknowledged that there hardly exists a single structural factor that could be effectively employed in determining whether an ethnic conflict

[202] *Ibid*, pp.195-197.
[203] *Ibid*, p.194.

would break out or not. A framework, which considers the interaction of a set of relevant factors, may be more useful in determining the ethnic conflict and the behavior of the actors involved in it. Rogers Brubaker with his argument that the best way of conceptualizing the main actors and their interaction in a nationalist conflict by examining the relationship between "nationalizing states", "national minorities", and "the external homelands of these minorities" offers a framework with multi dimensional focus[204]. Brubaker's model is particularly valuable for its consideration of actors external to the state in question. As far as the specific case of Bulgaria is concerned the stand of Turkey towards Bulgaria and the Muslim minority there is of a particular significance because she has played a stabilizing role on the ethnic relations in Bulgaria.[205] It is useful also to keep in mind that the relationship among the nationalizing state, the national minority and the latter's external homeland could be taking place in yet another field, that of the influence of a major foreign power, able to modify the behavior of the above-mentioned actors—and in the cases of Bulgaria this was the West, whose policies influenced the development of the ethnic policies in this country in important ways.

4.2.2. Revision of Minority Rights Strategy

As already stated, in the early 1990's, immediately after the fall of Zhivkov in November 1989, there was a serious possibility of interethnic conflict in Bulgaria. Turkish demonstrations in Sofia, the communist rulers rejection of the "revival

[204] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
[205] Mustafa Türkeş, "Geçiş Sürecinde Dıs Politika Öncelikleri: Bulgaristan Örneği", in Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel (eds), *Türkiye'nin Komşuları*, (Ankara: Imge, 2002), p. 194.

process" and the party's announcement on December, 29, 1989 that it would restore the rights of its Muslim citizens were met with country-wide protests by Bulgarian nationalists. This wave of anti-Turkish demonstrations started on 31 December in the predominantly Turkish populated city of Kirdzhali and later spread to Sofia, Plovdiv and other major towns. The nationalists also set up the Committee for the Defense of National Interests (CDNI) which accused the Turks with separatism.[206] There were several developments which prevented the outbreak of interethnic conflict within this context of nationalists outcry and insecure political environment. The Grand Mufti's declaration that Muslim clergy were against any demands of secession or territorial autonomy supporting the status of Bulgaria as the only official language and the establishment of the Social Council of Citizens (SCC, January 1990) where talks for ending ethnic strife were held among the representatives of the government and organizations from the entire political spectrum made significant contribution to interethnic tension's ease.[207] Demonstrations lost intensity after the Council reached a consensus on condemning past violations of minority rights in Bulgaria but opposed separatists movements and confirmed Bulgarian as the sole official language. A draft declaration which was signed by SCC and the government and presented to the National Assembly for approval pledged to restore the names of Turks and their freedom of creed but rejected any autonomy or secessionists undertakings. The declaration was approved by the Assembly in January 1990 and amnesty to those prosecuted in connection with the assimilation campaign was passed. However, the danger was still present. While the government was taking

[206] Nadege Ragaru, *op.cit*, pp. 301-302.
[207] Rossen V. Vassilev, "Post-Communist Bulgaria's Ethnopolitics", *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2001, p. 40.

initiatives to restore the civil and religious freedom of the Turks, on the one hand, the nationalists were again involved in demonstrations against the new ethnic policy, whereas, on the other, in March 1990 the Turks were marching in Sofia demanding more concessions from the government on the restoration of their rights. The outcome of these protests was the formation of another high-level body, the Public Council on Ethnic Issues (PCEI), after which the restoration of Muslim rights proceeded rather swiftly. In March the parliament allowed those who were subjected to Zhivkov's forced name changing campaign to resume their old names through a complex legal procedure which was amended in November enabling Muslims to restore names administratively without the Bulgarian suffixes –ov, -ev, -ova, -eva.[208] This was fallowed by opening of the mosques which were closed during Zhivkov's term of office accompanied by the restoration of religious freedom. Meanwhile, the property problems of Turks sold during the 1989 exodus was considered under a special decree issued by the Council of Ministers and was initially tackled on a case-by-case basis to be later consider within the framework of the so-called Dogan Law.[209]

In the fields of media and education, the first bilingual paper was published as early as April 1990 and the introduction of minority language teaching was initiated in 1991. Moreover, in July 1991 the Grand National Assembly passed a new constitution which provides basic minority rights but avoids explicit recognition of minorities and their collective rights and bans the registration of political parties

[208] Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans…*, pp.168-169.
[209] Irina Nedeva, "Democracy-Building in Ethnically Diverse Societies: The Case of Bulgaria and Romania", in Ian Cutherbertson and Jane Leibowitz (eds), *Minorities: The New Europe's Old Issue*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. 135.

based on "ethnic, racial or religious basis" (article 11/4).[210] All these developments, however, provoked a renewed nationalists mobilization. In protests to the November decision of Muslim names' restoration the CDNI announced the establishment of the so-called "Razgrad Republic" and threatened to declare independence. In June, the National-Radical Bulgarian Party (NRBP) attempted to prevent the Movement of Rights and Freedoms' (MRF) parliamentarians to enter the parliament building. Later, it was the issue of mother tongue instruction that led to nationalist demonstrations and protests but in time, all these xenophobic undertakings lost intensity. It should be noted that the nationalist parties have gathered few votes in the national electoral races.[211]

The formation of MRF was a very positive factor in Bulgaria's democratic development and may be considered as one of the major reasons for Bulgaria's peaceful resolution of minority problems. As Zhelyazkova notes its establishment "inspired confidence in the minorities that, in an environment of radical change and insecurity in all spheres of life, they could defend their rights and participate in fully and adequately in the political and economic life of Bulgaria"[212]. MRF's accommodation to Bulgaria's political life, to great extend, prevented Muslim's radical responses to ethnic hostility of the Bulgarian majority with such destabilizing demands as territorial autonomy or secession. The MRF had to adjust to a situation created by nationalist opposition intensity and the adoption of a new constitution which banned the establishment of political parties based on ethnic and religious

[210] The full text of the 1991 Constitution is available at: http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/bu00000_.html, accessed on February 16, 2002.
[211] The NRBP never managed to exceed 1.5% of the total vote and the other nationalist party, the Patriotic Labor Party had only one representative elected to parliament as an independent candidate in June 1990. Electoral results are available at Bulgaria Online's cite: http://www.online.bg/main/politics.htm, accessed on 25 August 2001.
[212] Antonina Zhelyazkova, *op.cit.*, p.297.

grounds. The outcome of these was the MRF leaders' cautious strategy of avoiding extremism, ethnic separatism and perceived pro-Turkey stand. *De facto* being a party which articulates the demands and protects the interests of the Muslim minorities, the MRF balanced its emphasis on group rights and limited cultural autonomy by firm rejection of the idea of political and territorial autonomy by declaring it dangerous to national unity. As a response to accusations of being Turkey's "fifth column" in Bulgaria the party has constantly avoided ethnic confrontation by reiterating its policy of defending minority rights within the framework of loyalty to Bulgaria, her independence and territorial integrity. Furthermore, being careful in not provoking nationalist outcry, MRF has also distanced itself from Adem Kenan's radical Turkish Democratic Party which advocated the creation of federation in Bulgaria.[213] The MRF has ever since June 1990 elections sent its representatives into the Subranie and the party's establishment as a prominent player in Bulgarian political life, to Ragaru, has acted "as a powerful brake on the use of anti-Turkish slogans"[214].

4.2.3. Clarifying Foreign Policy Orientation and its Impact on Bulgaria's Minority Rights Strategy

The collapse of the communist regimes in 1989 aroused the interest of the new ruling political elites of the ex-communist states in European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The leading role in the approval of a new face for Bulgarian foreign policy after 1989 was played by the one-year, first non-communist government of the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), under the leadership of Philip Dimitrov[215]

[213] Rossen V. Vassilev, *op.cit.*, p. 46.
[214] Nadege Ragaru, *op.cit.*, p. 305.
[215] Emil Giatzidis, *An Iintroduc to Post-Communist Bulgaria: Politics, Economics and Social Transformation*, (Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 66-69.

(established as a result of the parliamentary elections on 13 October 1991), and the foreign policy activity of the directly-elected president Zhelyu Zhelev. Bulgaria developed into an active promoter of closer ties with NATO as President Zhelev was judged to be the Balkans' most consistent NATO supporter. During the first half of the 1990's NATO membership was Bulgaria's foreign policy priority because it was seen as a factor that would contribute to the democratization process in the country and the security system in the Balkans[216].

The Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP-the ex-communists of the Bulgarian Communist Party) which won the 1994 elections and ruled the country until 1997demonstrated their intention to oppose some aspects of this policy mainly because it could worsen relations with Russia. This was the beginning of a three years period of alienation from the West[217] but at the beginning of 1997, Bulgaria seemed on the verge of total collapse. Zhan Videnov had resigned as prime-minister and chairman of BSP in late 1996[218] following widespread public and intra-party criticism, being widely blamed for Bulgaria's sorry conditions, especially for the economy's collapse. In November and December 1996 alone, the lev had dropped from 240 to around 500 against the U.S. dollar, bringing the inflation rate for 1996 to 311 percent. Wages and pensions had fallen considerably, and by the end of the year, many people found themselves below the poverty line.

[216] Dimitar Tzanev, "Bulgaria's international relations after 1989: Foreign policy between history and reality", in Iliana Zloch-Christy (ed), *Bulgaria in a time of change: economic and political dimensions* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1996), pp. 179-84.
[217] For Zhelev's discontent on Videnov's NATO policies see: www.hri.org/news/balkans/bta/95-05-02.bta.html ,accessed on January 20, 2001.
[218] http://www.csdr.org/96Timelines/december96.htm, accessed on January 20, 2001

In early January 1997 over 40,000 people gathered in Sofia at a rally organized by the United Democratic Forces[219], protesting against the BSP and demanding early elections. Under public pressure President Zhelev refused to give BSP a mandate to form a new government. Meanwhile presidential elections were held and the new president Petar Stoyanov who took office on 22 January 1997[220] managed to reach a compromise between the major parties to form a caretaker government and to hold elections in April. During this time, Bulgaria's economic collapse continued and the lev fell from around 500 to $1 in early January to 2,937 to $1 in February. On 6-7 February alone, the official exchange rate dropped from 1,638 to 2,608 to $1 as monthly inflation jumped from 44 percent in January and 240 percent in February[221]. The 19 April elections resulted in a clear UDF victory. The UDF got 52 percent of the vote, securing 137 out of 240 seats in the National Assembly, the BSP fell to 22 percent (58 seats), the National Solvation Union received 7.6 percent (19 seats), the Euroleft 5.6 percent (14 seats), and the Bulgarian Business Bloc of Georges Ganchev, 4.9 percent (12 seats)[222].

On 8 May, a "Declaration for National Salvation" adopted by the Parliament called for the establishment of a currency board, "fair distribution of the social cost of the reform" the opening of communist secret police files on officials and judges, the full privatization of agricultural land, and membership in the European Union and

[219] The United Democratic Forces had been formed by the main opposition parties before the presidential elections and comprised the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), the People's Union (PU), the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), and the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party (BSDP), source: http://www.hri.org/news/balkans/bta/97-01-21.bta.html , accessed on January 20, 2001.
[220] http://www.math.bas.bg/dt/1997.html, accessed on January 20, 2001
[221] http://www.mac.doc.gov/eebic/cables/1997/feb/sof853.htm. accessed on January 20, 2001.
[222] http://www.math.bas.bg/dt/1997.html, accessed on January 20, 2001.

NATO.[223] These initiatives brought renewed backing from abroad. Bulgaria received loans from IMF, The World Bank, EBRD and currency board was introduced on 1 July 1997[224].

1997 also brought major changes to Bulgaria's foreign-policy orientation. With the election of Stoyanov to the presidency and the arrival of the Sofiyanski and Kostov governments, Bulgaria's international standing improved considerably. The fact that many leading foreign politicians visited Bulgaria may be interpreted as the West support for the former opposition and its bid to reform Bulgaria and bring it closer to European structures. Furthermore, in a symbolic move, President Stoyanov paid his first foreign visit to Brussels on 29 January, visiting the EU and NATO headquarters and this visit was followed by the interim government's announcement that Bulgaria would seek full NATO membership, a position endorsed by Kostov's government[225]. Most of the damage done by Videnov's government to relations with the West and with international financial institutions had been repaired by the end of 1997. Most importantly, Stoyanov during an official state visit to Turkey removed one of the main obstacles for better relations with Ankara by apologizing for Bulgaria's attempts to "Bulgarianize" its ethnic Turkish minority in the 1980s, a campaign which involved compulsory name changes and other indignities, and caused many Turks to flee the country.

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[223] http://www.freedomhouse.org/nit98/bulgaria.html , accessed on January 20, 2001. For the Declaration see Stefan Krause "Winds of Change Sweep Bulgaria" available at: http://archive.tol.cz/countries/bular97.html, accessed on January 20, 2001.

[224] *Ibid.*

[225] For the statement of Stoyanov to the North Atlantic Council see: http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1997/s970129b.htm

The last parliamentary elections in Bulgaria were held on 17 June 2001. At this electoral contest the National Movement Simeon the Second (NMSS) managed to send 120 representatives into the Subranie by getting 42,74% of the votes to be followed by the United Democratic Forces (18,18%, 51 representatives), the BSP led Coalition for Bulgaria (17,15%, 48) and the MRF in coalition with the Liberal Union and EuroRoma got 7,75% of the votes and was represented by 21 MPs.[226] After successful coalition negotiations a coalition government was formed between NMSS and MRF which in their coalition protocol identified issues of economic improvement and integration with Euro-Atlantic structures as top priorities.[227]

As Turkes notes, the 1990's were characterized by Bulgaria's clarification of her foreign policy priorities[228]. The years between 1990-1996 were marked with the BSP's attempt to restore its previous relations with Moscow and the party was in disagreement with the President on NATO membership. This "dichotomy between Russia and the west"[229] was overcome in the post-1997 years the main feature of which was the firm orientation towards Euro-Atlantic structures.

The Council of Europe (CE) and the European Union (EU) represent the force which was influential in Bulgaria's reconsideration of her minority policy.[230] Particularly in its bid for accession to the EU Bulgaria has undertaken reform measures, including those concerning minorities.

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[226] The data on the 2001 Parliamentary elections was obtained from Bulgaria Online's internet cite http://www.online.bg/main/politics.htm, accessed on January 25, 2001

[227] Ali Dayioglu, *Bulgaristan'daki Musluman-Turk Azinligi: 1878-2000*, (Ph.D Thesis, Ankara Universitesi, 2002), p. 293

[228] For extensive analysis of Bulgaria's foreign policy orientation in the 1990's see Mustafa Türkeş, "Geciş…". pp. 171-213; and Birgül Demir-Coşkun, *Bulgaristanla Yeni Dönem: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Ankara-Sofya İlişkileri*, (Ankara, ASAM, 2001)

[229] Richard Crampton, *A Concise..*, p. 236.

[230] Mustafa Türkeş, "Gecis…", pp. 205-206.

The history of Bulgaria's relations with the European Union (European Community at that time) before the end of the Zhivkov era and beginning of the reform process in late 1989 is rather short. Under the communist regime the country's trade external relations were the most Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)- oriented ones in Eastern Europe. As the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) was Soviet Union's (SU) most loyal ally, Sofia didn't make any substantial attempt to conduct its own policy vis-a-vis the EC[231]. Normalization of relations between Brussels and Sofia however, is observed from 1985 onwards because of the favorable influence of Gorbachov's policy of glasnost and perestroika[232]. Formally, the beginning of this normalization period can be placed at the time of signing, on 25 June 1988, of joint declaration for establishing of diplomatic relations between the EC and CMEA[233]. Negotiations between Bulgaria and the EC on the "Agreement on Trade, Commercial and Economic Cooperation", which were supposed to begin in early 1989 were seriously endangered when the political situation in the country deteriorated rapidly as a result of the persecution of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. It was only after Zhivkov's overthrow in November 1989 that the European Commission showed readiness to resume the negotiations and the agreement was signed on 8 May 1990.[234]

In Bulgaria, like in all former countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the people who suffered under communist rule for more than four decades were in a state of euphoria in their belief that the idea of united Europe would become a

[231] Susan Senior Nello, *The New Europe: Changing Economic Relations between East and West* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 157-163.
[232] Attila Agh, *The Politics of Central Europe*, (Sage Publications Ltd, London, 1998), pp. 28-32.
[233] Ilko Ezkenazi and Krasimir Nicolov, "Relations with the European Union: Developments to date and prospects", in Iliana Zloch-Christy (ed), *Bulgaria in aTtime of Change: Economic and Political Dimensions* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1996), p. 189
[234] *Ibid*

reality, that democracy and market economy would bring their living standards close to the western, European levels.

As in the rest of CEE, the process of political, economic and social reforms in Bulgaria produced a reorientation in her foreign policy towards closer links with western liberal democracies and integration into European structures was a priority.[235] However, the collapse of communism revealed that the EU either lacked a strategic vision for a post- Cold War Europe or from the very beginning deliberately followed a policy of delaying CEE countries incorporation to the EU. Furthermore, the transition to market economy required considerable investment, which was not available in the reforming countries. It was in June 1993, in Copenhagen, when progress was made, after negotiations with the Visegrad group and upon the Commission's report "Towards a Closer Association with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe", that the goal of EU membership became reciprocal. In Marceau's words by declaring that "the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union.....as soon as they will be able to assume the obligations for membership" the "twelve unequivocally confirmed the CEE's eligibility for membership"[236] under specific conditions which both differentiated the Visegrad from the rest of ex-communist Europe and converged with EU's enlargement priorities. These were the so-called Copenhagen criteria[237], the parameters that would be prerequisite for EU membership defined as follows:

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[235] Richard Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century- and After*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 435-437.
[236] Marc Maresceau, "On Association, Partnership, Pre-accession and Accession", in Marc Maresceau (ed), *Enlarging the European Union: Relations between the EU and central and Eastern Europe* (Longman, London, 1997), p. 42.
[237] http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm, accessed on April 5, 2001

1. Political: “the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities”
2. Economic: “the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU”
3. Legislative/Institutional: “the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political unification as well as Economic and Monetary Union”.

Indeed, the “Copenhagen Criteria” formulated principles that had been advocated by the West during the Cold War as standards to which the communist states should adhere but in the post-communist era they have been viewed as constituting a successful EU incentive in the promotion of democracy, human rights and protection of minorities.

Prior to the Treaty of Maastrich the EU had an indirect conditionality of minimum human rights and minority protection standards for new members. It was the 1977 Council-Commission-European Parliament Declaration on Human Rights that required all EU candidate states to be parties to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and to accept the right to individual petition under it. Thus, indirect link between EU and CE membership was established because the ECHR is open only to CE members. Though criticized for its weak mechanism for enforcing and monitoring compliance of minority protection in candidate states, the above mentioned political criteria, together with the CE’s norms borrowed by the EU and the Union’s indirect link of membership have been positive developments as far as the promotion of human and minority rights are concerned.

One of Bulgaria's most serious undertakings in the field of minority protection was the ratification of the CE's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). The FCNM entry into Bulgaria's political agenda was accompanied with serious discussions on its ratification. One group led by BSP objected its ratification on the grounds that it would encourage and strengthen secessionist movements, even challenge the unitary character of Bulgaria. A view, contrary to that of BCP, was held by the President, MRF and majority of UDF, who argued that FCNM's ratification would further improve and consolidate majority-minority relations in the country.[238] After lengthy discussions the Convention was ratified by the Subranie on 18.02.1999 with the following declaration attached to it:

> Confirming its adherence to the values of the Council of Europe and the desire for the integration of Bulgaria into the European structures, committed to the policy of protection of human rights and tolerance to persons belonging to minorities, and their full integration into Bulgarian society, the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria declares that the ratification and implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities do not imply any right to engage in any activity violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the unitary Bulgarian State, its internal and international security.[239]

To summarize, Bulgaria's admission to the Council of Europe the ratifications of ECHR and the FCNM represented the most significant undertakings of Bulgaria in the field of minority rights in the 1990's. Moreover, as a candidate for accession to the EU, Bulgaria was aware of the preconditions set on the field of minority rights and to this end Bulgaria is under obligation to respect and protect minorities.

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[238] Mustafa Türkeş, "Geciş...", pp. 206-207.
[239] The Declaration is available at: http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/157.htm, accessed on Mart 25, 2003. See also *Ibid*, p. 207.

CHAPTER 5

EXPANSION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS vs. DECLINE IN LIVING STANDARDS

As far as legal arrangements are concerned, Bulgaria has made a considerable progress in the field of minority rights. On the other hand, however, Bulgaria is on the top of the poorest EU applicant countries list. The 1990's were characterized by economic hardship and the economic reform's outcomes have been much more devastating for the minority groups when compared with the Bulgarian majority. Particularly the crisis in 1996-1997 impoverished large segments of the population. Minorities, in general, live in the countryside which means that they have much limited access to infrastructure, work opportunities, better educational, cultural and health-care facilities than town-dwellers which further deteriorate their living standards and economic wellbeing.[240] The current unemployment is reported to have fallen to 13,6 % of the active population but unofficial estimates are as high as 38 %. When there is a shortage of jobs it is very often the minority groups that are discriminated against. Unfortunately statistics of unemployment based on ethnic characteristics are difficult to come by but some data on this respect, particularly concerning Turkish and Roma minorities, may be found in World Bank[241] and

[240] Petya Nitzova, "Bulgaria: Minorities, Democratization, and National Sentiments", *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1997, pp.729-730

[241] World Bank, "Bulgaria: Poverty During the Transition", (World Bank Report, 2002), online version of the report is available at: http://www-

USAID reports on Bulgaria. According to the figures provided by the World Bank's 2002 poverty report, Bulgarians are two times poorer than they were in 1995 and the minorities and people in rural areas are the worst off. Moreover, it was found that in 2001 the heads of 38 percent of families were out of work and 62 percent of jobless people have been out of work for more than a year.

The Roma minority which makes up 4.6 percent of Bulgaria's population presents a particular problem because half of impoverished people in Bulgaria belongs to this minority group and poverty in Roma families is more serious than in poor Bulgarian homes. In Bulgaria where families with more than four members make up 30 percent of the population but 60 percent of the poor, Roma's household size is another factor related with their poverty. Their only sources of heating are wood and coal, 80 percent do not have indoor toilets, less than 20 percent have access to public drainage systems, 90 percent do not have telephones and less than a third have electric stoves. The World Bank has also noted a "widening gap in access to basic education for the poor", creating a "vicious circle of poverty" because those people who lack secondary education make up 70 percent of the poor.

5.1. Unemployment and Poverty

Particularly the 1996-1997 crises impoverished a large segment of the society which is indicated by the percentage of the population that lives below the poverty line: in 1995 5.5% of Bulgarian citizens were living under the poverty line, which in 1997 was as high as 36%. Since the crisis the economic conditions have improved

wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/12/06/000094946_02112204044990/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf, accessed on December 22, 2002.

but when compared with 1995 figures the percentage of those living under the poverty line in 2001 was as high as 12.8%.[242] Moreover, poverty rates in Bulgaria exceed those of the "high-performing countries" of Central and Eastern Europe.

Table1. Poverty Rates in Selected Countries of Central and Eastern Europe[243]

Country	Survey Year	at $2.15 ppp/day	at $4.30 ppp/day
Bulgaria	1995	3.1	18.2
Bulgaria	***2001***	***7.9***	***31.9***
Romania	1998	6.8	44.5
Latvia	1998	6.6	34.8
Ukraine	1999	3	29.4
Hungary	1997	1.3	15.4
Poland	1998	1.2	18.4

An overall decline in poverty rates since 1997 is observed but the existence of pockets of poverty persists. The World Bank's report on Bulgaria has identified several such pockets amongst which are:

1.*Rural Residents*: In 2001 33% of Bulgaria's population was living in rural areas but these 33% accounted for 66% of the total poor. Moreover, whereas a considerable decline in poverty rates between 1997 and 2001 is observed (from 33.5% in 1997 to 5.9% in 2001) it has only halved in rural areas (from 41.2% to 23.7%).[244] Having in mind the fact that the large portions of minority groups are rural settlers it could be said that they are the ones most affected by this rural-urban feature of poverty.

2.*Household Size*: A clear connection between household's size and poverty is found. Households of five or more persons represent 30% of the population of Bulgaria but

[242] *Ibid*, p. ix.
[243] *Ibid*, p. 4.
[244] *Ibid*, p. 27.

these people have a share of 60% in the total number of the poor. Since it is the Turks and Roma who's household's size is above the average of three persons a connection between large households, poverty and minorities may be established. Particularly striking are the results of Bulgarian Integrated Household Survey's (BIHS) research on the characteristics of Roma and non Roma households. The former's average household size, patterns of energy consumption for heating and cooking, access to telephone and other basic facilities, average household and per capita consumption clearly reflect the poor leaving conditions of Roma.

3.*The Poorly Educated*: The World Bank report's founding is that those people with less that secondary education (36%) comprise 80% of the poor. This leads to the conclusion that the lower the educational level the higher the probability to be within the group of those characterized as poor. Here the existence of a link between poverty and unemployment should be mentioned because the likelihood of people with less than secondary education to be unemployed is as six times higher that those who hold such a diploma.

4.*Ethnic Minorities:* It is estimated that 60% of the poor belong to ethnic minorities and that the Roma are 10 and Turks 4 times more likely to be poor than ethnic Bulgarians.

Table 2. Poverty by Ethnicity[245]

		Rate	
	% population*	Percent	Share
Ethnic Bulgarian	82.3	5.6	39.6
Turks	7.1	20.9	12.8
Roma	8.8	61.8	46.5
Other	1.8	7.6	1.2
Total	100	11.7	100

The basic occupation of these minorities during the BCP's rule was associated with agriculture but after the restitution of agricultural lands to their former owners considerable portions of Roma and Turkish minorities were negatively effected: whereas the former became unemployed, the later experienced difficulties in cultivating the restituted land due to lack of equipment and capital accumulation. Moreover, during the transition period from centrally planned to market economy due to existing ethnic prejudices Roma and Turks experience difficulties in realization in the labor market, especially in the case of Roma this has resulted in unemployment rates varying between 75-90% which in turn has prompted the Roma to "apply basic survival strategies".[246] Kiril Kertikov categorizes these strategies as legal (garbage collection, collection of materials for recycling and seasonal work at farms), semi-legal (street-vendors), and illegal activities (prostitution, drug smuggling and dealing, fortune telling, burglary, vehicle theft, etc.).[247] To this picture the differences in regional economic development may be added. It is worth to note that in the regions where the percentage of people

[245] *Ibid*, p. xii.
[246] Kiril Kertikov, "Adaption of the Roma Ethnic group to the Conditions of Lasting Unemployment", available at: http://www.unesco.org/most/p86unm14.doc, accessed on January 14, 2002.
[247] *Ibid.*

belonging to minorities is high the level of economic development is the lowest, e.g., Silistra, Razgrad, Kurdzhali, Targoviste.[248]

Table 3. Selected Indicators of Regional Development, 28 New Regions[249]

	GDP per capita	% urban population	Unemployment rate (%)	Social assistance expenditures per capita (leva)
Varna				
Varna	2,796	79.5	17.0	27.9
Shumen	2,310	61.4	26.1	32.9
Dobrich	2,764	63.8	22.6	24.2
Bourgas				
Bourgas	3,293	69.9	17.4	23.3
Yambol	2,638	66.0	23.5	41.3
Sliven	2,524	66.7	22.0	30.3
Lovech				
Lovech	2,420	60.5	19.5	17.3
Gabrovo	2,796	77.7	11.9	12.5
Pleven	2,189	62.7	21.1	26.2
Veliko Turnovo	2,338	63.8	22.2	19.8
Rousse				
Razgrad	1,997	43.8	30.1	27.7
Russe	2,527	69.8	21.1	26.1
Silistra	2,078	43.6	23.2	24.9
Targovishte	2,194	50.3	34.9	37.3
Montana				
Vidin	2,032	58.1	27.0	42.4
Vratsa	3,031	57.9	26.4	42.0
Montana	1,934	59.4	27.2	44.5
Haskovo				
Stara Zagora	3,396	68.4	16.8	28.5
Kardjali	1,717	33.1	15.8	15.4
Haskovo	2,117	68.6	16.2	19.1
Plovdiv				
Pazardjik	2,118	57.2	24.9	23.2
Smolyan	2,069	51.6	25.9	21.0
Plovdiv	2,313	72.0	15.0	18.3
Sofia Region				
Sofia Region	2,583	59.4	15.3	23.2
Blagoevgrad	2,311	56.4	15.5	16.0
Pernik	2,128	75.6	14.2	21.6
Kustendil	2,787	65.3	15.1	25.7
Sofia City	4,917	95.6	16.8	5.4

5.2. Education and Healthcare

Provisions concerning the education of minorities are included in the 1991 Constitution. According to Article 36/2 citizens "whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian shall have the right to study and use their own language alongside the

[248] For information on the ethnic composition of districts in Bulgaria see: http://www.nsi.bg
[249] World Bank, "Bulgaria…", p. 38.

compulsory study of the Bulgarian language".[250] In Article 53/5 it is stated that citizens and organizations are free to find schools. To these may be added articles 12, 13 and 14 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities to which Bulgaria is a party, however, the main problem of minorities' education in Bulgaria is school children's low attendance.

Table 4. Trends in School Attendance Rates[251]

	Preschool education			Basic education			Secondary education		
	1995	1997	2001	1995	1997	2001	1995	1997	2001
Total Population	44	14	22	87	88	90	47	55	46
Males	42	12	21	88	88	90	49	54	46
Females	46	15	24	85	88	89	45	56	46
Urban	46	13	24	88	90	92	52	63	53
Rural	40	14	20	83	84	84	31	32	22
Bulgarians	44	15	26	90	93	94	55	66	56
Turks	53	10	19	88	93	90	10	30	34
Roma	25	5	16	55	58	71	3	5	6

The main feature of school attendance rates among schoolchildren belonging to minority groups is their low level, which in turn increases the risk of being unemployed, hence join the group of poor. The lower attendance rates among ethnic minority groups are worrying. As far as basic education is concerned the basic education attendance rates among ethnic Bulgarians in 1995 was 90%, in 1997 93% and in 2001 94%; among ethnic Turks 88%, 93% and 90% respectively; among the Roma 55%, 58% and 71%. The gap is in basic education attendance among the various ethnic group is not as pronounced as it is for secondary education. Bulgarian Integrated Household Survey's reports show that secondary education attendance rates among the Bulgarians, Turks, and Roma in 1995 were 55%, 10% and 3%

[250] Full text of the Constitution is also available at: http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/bu00000_.html , accessed on April 15, 2001.
[251] World Bank, "Bulgaria...", p. 108.

respectively to increase to 56%, 34%, and 6% respectively in 2001. This gap of enrolments has its impact on the skills of those entering the labor market where the demand for unskilled labor force is rather low which rises their likelihood to be unemployed. The Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society which was signed in Mart 1999 has addressed major issues that face the Roma, including the inferior level of education offered to Roma children when compared to that afforded to other students. However, a set of constraints to school attendance that are identified, varying from high cost of education to bad command of Bulgaria and social exclusion, still persist.

USAID and World Bank experts in their analysis of the healthcare system in Bulgaria have put emphasis on the limitations to healthcare access because of poverty, geographic distance or minority status. One of the major findings of the surveys conducted on minority members utilization of healthcare services is their low level. In the case of Roma this was the outcome of the interplay of several factors including their high self-assessment of health status, the out-of-pocket payments associated with medical treatment and in some cases the distance to health facilities.

Table 5. Reasons for not Seeking Medical Treatment[252]

	Not needed	Too Far	Wait too long	Too expensive	Other	Total
Total	59.36	2 26	3.23	26.13	9.03	100.00
Male	56.67	2 50	5.83	25.00	10 00	100.00
Female	61.06	2.11	1.58	26.84	8.42	100 00
Urban	52.83	5 66	0 00	33.02	8.49	100.00
Rural	62.74	0.49	4 90	22.55	9.31	100 00
Bulgarian	60	2.75	3.92	24 31	9 02	100.00
Roma	60	0.00	0.00	40.00	0.00	100.00
Turk	50	0.00	0 00	50.00	0.00	100 00

[252] *Ibid*, p. 123.

One of the most serious impediments to seeking medical care is the high costs associated with it, "ranging from expenditures on consultations and tests, medications and transportation, to 'gifts' to the providers".[253]

The current situation of minorities in Bulgaria raises particular concerns in relation to poverty, unemployment, low school attendance and access to healthcare. Legal arrangements have proved insufficient in addressing the problems that the minorities face. In predominantly Roma settlements of Bulgaria, schools are segregated, lacking basic educational supplies. Measures are also necessary to address the lack of or/and the impediments to access to healthcare services to minority groups, especially the Roma many of whom can not pay the minimal fees for treatment.

[253] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this study before the attempt to explore how the emergence and evolution of Bulgarian state and national identity left its imprint on the Balkan landscape, specifically in relation to the minority groups, an overview of the changing approaches of minority rights within major international organizations during the twentieth century had been made. The League of Nations', United Nations', Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (later Organization) and Council of Europe's practices revealed that minority issues would become a concern to any major international organization if they present an actual destabilizing factor for the stability of the international or regional system. And in order to maintain order this organizations have not gone beyond initiatives which aimed at securing minimum stability. As already stated, during the LN's term the minority treaties were designed with the aim to secure the maintenance of peace between the sovereign states of Europe viewing the minority problem as a highly volatile source of conflict which needed to be regulated. When the minority treaties system was discredited, the notion of minority rights was brought into disrepute, the United Nations' method for maintaining minimum stability was the advocacy of human rights. A return to minority rights advocacy is observed in the post-1990 period when the upsurge of ethnic nationalism and the fragmentation of several multi-ethnic states reflected the growing importance of such rights. To this end, the office of the High Commissioner

on National Minorities was designed as an instrument of conflict prevention. Minority questions should be identified and solved before they develop into an armed conflict. The Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is regarded as one of the most serious contributions to the field of minority rights. But even this initiative is not much ahead of international instruments that contain only political obligations. Here it should be noted that the Convention lacks a strong enforcement mechanism and as of 30.08.2003, 15 signatory states had made reservations or declarations with respect to the Convention.

When it comes to Bulgaria, it was the Russian invasion of Ottoman territory that assured autonomous and later independent Bulgarian, state to be established in the southeastern corner of Europe. Out of Balkan reality where the Slav and the Turk, the Christian and Muslim were intermeshed, where boundaries between cultures were shifting, modern ideas and methods mitigated a new fixing of borders. Over the course of modern Bulgarian history, Muslim minorities came to represent all that was presumably "foreign" to the Bulgarian nation, a perceived threat and barrier to national, economic and cultural integration and obstacle to progress.

In the pre-1945 period there seemed to be clarity of purpose in the attempted homogenization of Bulgaria, achieved to a large extent through out-migration of Muslims into the Ottoman Empire and later Turkey. However, this drive to build Bulgaria may appear as if accompanied with contradictions throughout the pre-1945 period. Despite the fact that Muslims had been granted certain rights and privileges both according to international treaties and Bulgarian constitution that included the right of autonomy through Muslim institutions their out migration did not stop.

Indeed by allowing the Muslim community to control its schools, encouraging religious teaching and in keeping the schools in financial hardship, Bulgarian official assured both the socio-economic backwardness of the Muslims and the political and economic supremacy of the Bulgarians, which was in line with the state policy of reducing the number of the Muslims to figures as low as possible. The Turks comprised about 32% of Bulgaria's population (Eastern Rumelia included) in 1881 but as a result of the state policies their number declined to 20% in 1887 and further to 12% in 1905 and less than 10% in 1934.

The Pomak, during the Principality, because of their religious affiliation were seen and treated as Turks and as such had to attend Turkish minority schools where the languages of instruction were Turkish and Arabic. At those times the voices of intellectuals who insisted on Pomaks' Bulgarian origins were not so widely accepted and popular, not until the early decades of the twentieth century. It was during the First Balkan War and again in the late 1930's and during WWII when Pomak names and clothes entered into national projects. Particularly during the Balkan wars when the Bulgarian authorities were faced with the difficulty of integrating the Rodope region which was ethnically and religiously heterogeneous they turned to new definition of the Pomaks, namely that they were Slavs who converted to Islam to be reclaimed back, which, in turn, led to campaign of name and religion changes. This new perception of the Pomak persisted throughout the 1930's and 1940's. During the Kingdom, dramatic campaigns for changing of Pomak names and clothes were orchestrate by *Rodina*, which supported the wartime "Law for the Purity of the Nation" which prohibited mixed marriages between Bulgarians and "foreigners" meaning that mixed marriages between Pomaks and Turks were made illegal and the

1942 law for the "Bulgarianization of Mohammedan names of Bulgaro-Mohammedans" which led to rapid forced name changes of about 60.000 Pomaks. These campaigns were the culmination of Bulgarian scholarship which had presumably proved through social science and history Pomak's Bulgarian origins. In Bulgarian formulations "foreign" and "backward" names and clothes occupied Bulgarian bodies which had to be "liberated".

Even the limited information available concerning Roma status and treatment during the Bulgarian Principality exposes the fact their history of segregation is not recent and goes as back as 1882 when their *mahala* (quarters) were declared illegal. The Roma community experienced particular hardship during the WWII when they were denied access to the central parts of Sofia, forbidden to use public transportation and given smaller food rations than the rest of the population.

Primordial features as religion, language and culture made the Macedonians the most serious candidates to be considered an integral part of the Bulgarian national self. Exarchate's activities in Macedonia, the presence of Macedonian deputies in the Turnovo Assembly in 1879 and government inspired incursions of bands into Macedonia were indicators of Bulgarian perception of Macedonian land and people. Moreover, IMRO, with its strong hold in Bulgaria evolved into a paramilitary formation which launched armed raids into the territory of Greece and Yugoslavia leading to instabilities in Bulgaria's internal and foreign affairs.

In the aftermath of Bulgaria's defeat in WWII, the Bulgarian Communist Party was the only real contender for power, the force that would claim to act and speak on behalf of Bulgarian nation in the post-war climate. Since the pre-war monarchical regime was discredited by defeat and the Soviet forces occupied

Bulgaria in 1944, the BCP had the means to impose its new vision of socialist development on Bulgarian society. The BCP vision and the means to attaining it would be more totalizing and reach further into all spheres of minorities' life than anything in the pre-war period. BCP tendency to entangle social and national terms and categories gave Bulgarian communism a nationalist undercurrent from the very beginning. As in the pre-war period, Bulgarian intellectuals and political leaders linked the Muslim minority's presence with potential threats to territorial integrity and domestic integration. Hence, the ultimate goal of BCP's project of building a "socialist nation" was nothing more than a masked drive to build a Bulgarian nation in socialist guise. To this end, Muslim cultural and economic practices and their very presence in Bulgaria was seen as a constant obstacle in the communist drive to create a modern socialist nation. In order to build such a nation the BCP attempted first to expel the Turks and later to wholly ingest Pomaks, Roma, Turks and Macedonians into the Bulgarian nation by extending their projects into every aspect of minority life.

Throughout the Communist party rule state campaigns to uproot the symbols of foreign occupation continued and were applied not only to Pomaks but also to Turks who were eventually redefined as Bulgarians converted to Islam. It was here that the BCP would face the most formidable resistance in the face of re-emerging Muslim practices. Most probably because of this resistance, Muslim names, clothes and religious practices were a crucial realm for carrying out the transition to communism, in reality the building of a homogeneous Bulgarian nation. Yet in its incursions into the realm of Muslim life with cultural and economic integration efforts, the BCP only sharpened ethnic divisions in Bulgarian society. Furthermore,

the imposition of Bulgarian nation-building projects was complicated by the conditions of their international position and domestic realities.

At the beginning of BCP rule, Soviet pressure compelled BCP to foster Turkish national development in Bulgaria as part of the internationalist, socialist brotherhood of Turks and Bulgarians. It was expected that Turks would spread Communism to neighboring Turkey. In time however the Turks were presented with a socialist framework for national development with their autonomous institutions liquidated or co-opted. Mass emigrations were one of the "special measures" that constituted continuity in Bulgaria's approach to the Turkish question. The first mass exodus of approximately 155.000 Turks during the Communist party rule dates back to 1950-1. This party inspired mass emigration of Turks was indicative of the wavering BCP trust in the commitment of local Muslim communities to fulfill "socialist tasks", which had brought the mass emigration of Turks to the fore as a proposed solution to both domestic and developing international dilemmas. In was assumed that by allowing "voluntary" emigration of Turks multiple domestic and international problems that faced the regime in 1949-1951 could be solved. First, the party could expel from the "socialist nation" political and socio-cultural anomalies, i.e. "backwards elements" who were most under the influence of "foreign reactionary propaganda". These Turks, it was assumed, were the most likely to apply for emigration from Bulgaria. Furthermore, the BCP move to allow emigration was the result of the need for economic restructuring of Turkish districts in the Dobrudja region in particular which were slow to collectivize. Finally, the rapid movement of a large number of refugees across the Turkish border could destabilize Turkey, whose "imperialist" ties had become firmly established by this period.

A new view of Turks of Bulgaria which claimed that "Bulgarian Turks are an inseparable part of the Bulgarian people" was laid down in the statement of the Party's Central Committee plenary session in April, 1956. The April 1956 plenary session was to become a watershed in Bulgaria's minority policies because from then on, Communist party's policy towards her minorities was aimed at eliminating all signs of their "foreignness". As a result, one minority group after other was claimed to be "Bulgarian" by nationality and ethnicity. To this end ethnic markers such as religion, names, dress codes and finally language would be subjected to the fiercest attacks. Thus, by the late 1970s, ethnic Turks were increasingly considered Islamicized and Turkicized Bulgarians to disappeared from official Bulgarian history by the first half of 1980s.

Despite the fact that BCP reversed state policy followed against the Pomaks during the interwar years by reinstituting their Turkish-Arabic (Muslim) names the Politburo declaration that the "Bulgaro-Muhammedans (Pomaks) are a part of Bulgarian nation which was forcibly Turkicized" and converted to Islam was indicative of party's perception of the Pomaks. The decisions taken at the April plenum of 1956 and the 7th Congress of BCP in 1958 led to policies which drastically changed the live of Pomaks. The "department for propaganda and agitation" of the Central Committee was given the task, together with the Bulgarian Academy of Science, to prove the Bulgarian ethnic origins of the Pomaks and extensive ethnographic, historical and other writings about them were intended to prove that.

The developments of 1962 represent another turning point in Bulgaria's Pomak policy. Whereas previous party initiatives were directed at the modernization of this community lifestyle by means of literacy, courses, encouraging education or

improving the living and working conditions, with "Decree A 101" from 1962 a new line in the party's minority policy began. Since the Bulgarian origins of Pomaks began to be (re)discovered the concern could no longer be the modernization of Pomak (and Roma) lifestyle but the segregation of this section of society from the Turkish minority. Thus, step by step, the foundations of the name change campaign were laid down. In the preamble of the Decree, the tendency of Pomak families to settle in places with compact Turkish population was criticized because they were assimilated into this Turkish mass. Moreover, the Pomak-Turkish intermarriages were seen as means of assimilation of Pomaks, because, party leaders argued, their Pomak wives and their children tended to identify themselves as Turks. To these were added the influence of conservative Turkish clergy, the coeducation of Turkish and Pomak children and the gathering together of Turkish and Pomak soldiers/conscripts in the same military units. Hence, in order to decrease Turkish influence, ideological work among the Pomaks (Roma and Tatars) had to be reinforced and Bulgarian Academy of Science was instructed to continue its work in the Rhodope region and prove the Bulgarian character of the Pomaks: "The study of the historic past of the Bulgarian Muslims in the Rhodopes, the Lovech region and other parts of the country must continue in order to make further discoveries about the historic truth, about the results of the assimilation policy of the Turkish oppressors, about mass and individual conversion to Islam."[254]. All these were done in order to avert Pomak affiliation with the Turk and in order to achieve its goal, the BCP turned to a policy conducted before 1944, which the party itself branded as "fascist". However, this time the renaming campaigns of the 1960's and 1971 were

[254] Decree 101a cited in Helsinki Watch, *Destroying..*, pp. 72-73.

justified and legitimized by “scientific” findings about the Bulgarian origins of the Pomaks.

In the case of Roma treatment 1962 again presents a shift in governments approach to that minority- to prevent their assimilation into the Turkish mass.

The Macedonians were (and still are) traditionally considered to be Bulgarians. The short-lived separate cultural institutions and recognition of Macedonian nationality reflected the opportunism of the Communist party rule in the second half of the 1940’s. It was believed that in the would be federation between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia independent Macedonia would gravitate towards Bulgaria but immediately after the plan was abandoned reevaluation of Bulgarian policy on the Macedonian issue is observed and there was a swift return to repressing Macedonian consciousness. Under the leadership of Todor Zhivkov, the Communist party rule in Bulgaria progressively moved towards expounding of the ideology that the population of the country was a “unified Bulgarian socialist nation” where there were no minorities.

The mixture of nationalist elements in Bulgarian minority policy from 1944 until 1989 didn’t contribute at all to Communist party attempts to overcome social and ethnic differences. On the contrary, ethnic tension increased as assimilatory measures were applied.

All in all, there are certain shifts and continuities in Bulgaria’s minority policy. As to the Turks during the Principality and the Kingdom they enjoyed autonomy in cultural, educational and religious matters but were intentionally neglected and kept in economic hardship which in turn helped the Bulgarians to accomplish their goal of reducing the number of Turks living in Bulgaria. Indeed,

resort to emigration was one of the elements that constituted the continuity in Bulgaria's dealing with the Turks be it either during the Principality, the Kingdom or the Communist party rule. It is worth to mention that ever since 1934 their number has not exceeded the psychological 10% "limit". The most dramatic developments concerning the Turkish minority took place during BCP's rule. At one time the government encouraged the development of ethnic institutions as Turkish language press, primary and secondary schools, theatres and clubs. The various motives for this toleration may be discussed but eventually Turks' place within the Bulgarian society was reconsidered and as early as 1956 they were claimed to be "inseparable part of Bulgarian people". In its strive to build a Bulgarian socialist nation which in fact meant Bulgarian nation in socialist guise, the BCP gradually redefined the Turkish minority, which resulted in elimination of the above mentioned institutions in the 1960s and early 1970s and the proclamation of the "unified Bulgarian nation" in 1970s. These developments were the harbinger of the assimilatory initiative of 1984-1985. Today only the fiercest Bulgarian nationalists would claim that Turks of Bulgaria were in fact Muslim Bulgarians. The perception in Bulgaria today is that the Turkish-speaking Muslim minority consists mainly of ethnic Turks whose ancestors came from outside the Balkans

In the case of the Pomaks this redefinition is more vivid. Whereas in the early days of Bulgarian independence, because of their religious affiliation, they were treated as Turks, the conjunctural developments in the beginning of the twentieth century prompted Bulgarian officials to resort to a new definition of the Pomak minority. One constant trait in Bulgaria's Pomak policy is her persistent attack on minority's life. After 1944 their Muslim names that were changed in the 1940s were

reinstituted but in 1949 when the Communist party prepared itself for the emigration of the Turks it was explicitly stated that the Pomaks were "Bulgaro-Mohammedans" forcibly converted to Islam. This insistence on Pomaks Bulgarian origins was reflected in BCP's attempts to prevent their affiliation with the Turks which, when failed, resulted in campaigns of changing Pomaks' names. Even today Bulgarians continue to regard them to be of Bulgarian origins.

As far as the Roma minority is concerned, their Christian-Muslim subdivision should not be forgotten. The existence of negative stereotypes has always resulted in Roma segregation and in order to avoid it they have tended to affiliate either with the Bulgarian majority or the Turkish minority. After 1944 there was an attempt to develop a distinct Roma consciousness which would obviously counteract Muslim Roma's affiliation with the Turks but when it fell BCP resorted to policies similar to that applied to the Pomaks. As to the Macedonians except for the short period of recognizing separate Macedonian nation in the second half of the 1940s, due to external pressure and in Bulgarian self interest, Bulgarian political leaders have persistently denied its existence.

The changes in the 1990's seemed to have resulted from external integrations tendencies of Bulgaria, particularly integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Thus Council of Europe's political pressure and European Union conditionality forced the Bulgarian political establishment to work out an inter-ethnic dialog mechanism which enabled minorities to express their individual demands. However the tension between collective corporate interests of the minorities and political freedom and rights extended to persons belonging to minorities is still valid.

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