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MINORITY ISSUES IN THE BALKANS

May 16th, 2007

Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU and Fuat AKSU

Joint Conference Series No. 7

Proceedings of the International Conference on MINORITY ISSUES IN THE BALKANS AND THE EU

May 16th, 2007

AUDITORIUM

YTU Auditorium / Yıldız Campus

Beşiktaş - İstanbul

Edited by

Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU and Fuat AKSU

Joint Conference Series No. 7

Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies (OBİV)

YTU Department of Political Science and International Relations

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MINORITY ISSUES IN THE BALKANS AND THE EU

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Programme

Welcoming Remarks

10.00-10.10 *Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan (Head of DPSIR / YTU)*

Opening Remarks

10.10-10.20 *Ambassador (retd.) Güner Öztekin (Chairman of OBIV)*

1st SESSION

Chairperson

Aydın Babuna (Prof. Dr., Boğaziçi University, Istanbul)

10.20-12.30

10.20-11.40 Coffee Break

12.00-12.30 Discussion

12.30-14.00 Lunch Break

2nd SESSION

Chairperson

Hans Georg Majer (Prof. Dr., University of Munich)

14.00-17.00

15.00-15.30 Coffee Break

16.30-17.00 Discussion

1st SESSION

Chairperson

Prof. Dr. Aydın Babuna
(*Boğaziçi University, Istanbul*)

Minorities in the Balkans: The Ottoman Heritage Revisited

Prof. Dr. Hans Georg Majer
(*University of Munich*)

Albanian and Greek Policies for the Various Minorities during the 20th Century

Prof. Dr. Beqir Meta
(*Director of the Albanian Historical Museum, Tirana*)

The Turkish Minority in Macedonia: Between Prejudices of the Past and Minoritisation of the Present

Prof. Dr. Mirjana Najčevska
(*Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, Skopje*)

Minority Rights in Moldova and the Gagauz

Dr. Olga Radova
(*Moldova Academy of Sciences, Chişinău*)

2nd SESSION

Chairperson

Prof. Dr. Hans Georg Majer
(University of Munich)

Minorities in the Balkans and the Issue of Toponymy: The Bulgarian Case

Assist. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu
(Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul)

Muslim Minorities and the Democratisation Process in Bulgaria

Dr. Krasimir Kănev
(Director of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Sofia)

Changing Aspects of Minority Policy in Bulgaria after 1989: The Case of the Muslim-Turkish Minority

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ali Dayıoğlu
(Near East University, Nicosia)

The Turks of the Dodecanese: From Lausanne to the Present

Assist. Prof. Dr. Elçin Macar
(Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul)

Minorities in Greece: State Policies and Administrative Practices

Dr. Lambros Baltsiotis
(Panteion University, Research Centre for Minority Groups, Athens)

A Dispute Easy to Settle: Minority Issues in Turkish-Greek Relations

Assist. Prof. Dr. Fuat Aksu
(Yıldız Technical University, İstanbul)

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CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS	XI
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO MINORITY ISSUES IN THE BALKANS <i>Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU and Fuat AKSU</i>	3
WELCOMING REMARKS <i>Gencer ÖZCAN</i>	17
OPENING REMARKS <i>Güner ÖZTEK</i>	21
MINORITIES IN THE BALKANS: THE OTTOMAN HERITAGE REVISITED <i>Hans Georg MAJER</i>	25
ALBANIAN AND GREEK POLICIES FOR VARIOUS MINORITIES DURING THE 20TH CENTURY <i>Beqir META</i>	35
THE TURKISH MINORITY IN MACEDONIA: BETWEEN PREJUDICES OF THE PAST AND MINORITISATION OF THE PRESENT <i>Mirjana NAJČEVSKA</i>	43
MINORITY RIGHTS IN MOLDOVA AND THE GAGAUZ <i>Olga RADOVA</i>	51
MINORITIES IN THE BALKANS AND THE ISSUE OF TOPONYMY: THE BULGARIAN CASE <i>Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU</i>	61
MUSLIM MINORITIES AND THE DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS IN BULGARIA <i>Krasimir KĀNEV</i>	79
CHANGING ASPECTS OF MINORITY POLICY IN BULGARIA AFTER 1989: THE CASE OF THE MUSLIM-TURKISH MINORITY <i>Ali DAYIOĞLU</i>	89
THE TURKS OF THE DODECANESE: FROM LAUSANNE TO PRESENT <i>Elçin MACAR</i>	109
MINORITIES IN GREECE: STATE POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES <i>Lambros BALTSIOTIS</i>	119
A DISPUTE EASY TO SETTLE: MINORITY ISSUES IN TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS <i>Fuat AKSU</i>	137
DISCUSSIONS	149
CONFERENCE REPORT <i>Laçin İdil ÖZTİĞ</i>	175

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In this conference, experts and scholars from Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Macedonia, Moldova and Turkey came together to discuss the historical and current situation of the minorities in the Balkans. We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all participants for attending the conference and for sharing their remarkable work with us, as well as to the members of the audience who directed questions to the speakers.

For the organisation of this conference, a collaborative effort by the Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies (OBİV) and the Department of Political Sciences and International Relations of Yıldız Technical University, we thank Ambassador Güner Öztekin and Prof. Dr. Gencer Özcan for their institutional support. During the preparation of this conference, we received considerable help from OBİV, Fatoş İlter and Barış Kopdağ, from the secretary of the department, Hakime Soran, and also from the Public Relations Office and Auditorium personnel. Research assistant Laçın İdil Öztürk participated actively in the coordination of this conference and made amendments to the proceedings. Helin Sarı Ertem and Derya Kömürcü supported us on the conference day. We received much support from members of the International Relations Club of Yıldız Technical University at every stage of the conference organisation. We would like to thank every one of them once more for their valuable contributions and cooperation. We also thank Assist. Prof. Dr. Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu, Assist. Prof. Dr. Neriman Ersoy Hacısalıhoğlu and Entela Muço for their advice in the preparation of the conference programme, and Dr. Nina Ergin for the English translation and correction of some papers.

Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu and Fuat Aksu

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO MINORITY ISSUES IN THE BALKANS

Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU and Fuat AKSU

The Ottomans did not use the term ‘minority’ (*ekalliyet*) and, until the collapse of the empire, did not grant minority status to any ethnic group. The most important criterion of difference among Ottoman subject was religion. There were two major groups: Muslims and non-Muslims. In each group, there were further different confessions—such as Sunni and Shiite among Muslims, Greek-Orthodox Christian, Armenian-Gregorian Christians, after 1871 Christians under the Bulgarian Exarchate, Roman-Catholics, Unitarians, Jews and so forth—which created a basis for differentiating Ottoman subjects. The most important cultural boundary within the Ottoman Empire was religion,¹ in contrast to what modern national historiography claims. It was not particularly important whether one was

¹ Edgar Hösch, “Kulturgrenzen in Südosteuropa”, *Südosteuropa*, 47/12 (1998), pp. 601-623.

an ethnic Greek, Bulgarian, Serb or Turk. If one belonged to Sunni Islam, one would marry a Sunni Muslim; it was rare to see mixed marriages between Sunni and Alevi Turks. In spite of the ethnic cohesion, differences were clear-cut and stereotypes rampant. This is also true of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans. Orthodox Greeks, Bulgarians, Romanians, Albanians, Serbs and people from Montenegro interacted in the same way. There were strict boundaries between Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox Albanians.² Thus, until the beginning of the modern era, ethnicity carried little significance. Rather, people had strongly imprinted local or regional identities—another boundary, even if it did not count as much as religious difference. In regions where tribal structures predominated—for example, in Northern Albania or in parts of Kurdish and Arab provinces—cultural boundaries were located along the tribes' zones of influence.

The multi-cultural empire of the Ottomans had no interest in categorizing its subjects according to ethnic criteria. However, this does not mean that the many different ethnic groups in the Balkans disappeared. In fact, there were even more ethnic groups and names for these groups than we know today. Apart from Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Albanians, Romanians and Gypsies, there existed ethnic categories such as Bosniaks, Pomaks, Vlachs (Aromuns), Karakachan and many more, the existence of which later established nation-states on the Balkans denied and repressed, or still continue to repress.³

By no means was the Ottoman Empire a haven of multi-culturalism. The government was in the hand of Muslims, and non-Muslims held a semi-

² At the beginning of the twentieth century, Muslim Albanians still considered their Orthodox and Catholic fellow citizens 'infidels'. See: Avlonyali Ekrem Bey [Vlora], **Osmanlı Arnavutluk'undan Anılar (1885-1912)**, transl. Atilla Dirim, Istanbul: İletişim Yay., 2006, p. 157.

³ See for example the case of Vlachs / Aromuns: Max Demeter Peyfuss, **Die Aromunische Frage. Ihre Entwicklung von den Ursprüngen bis zum Frieden von Bukarest (1913) und die Haltung Österreich-Ungarns**, Wien, Köln, Graz: Hermann Böhlau, 1974; Thede Kahl, **Ethnizität und räumliche Verteilung der Aromunen in Südosteuropa**, Münster: Institut für Geographie der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 1999.

autonomous status as so-called *millet*s.⁴ As a result of centuries-long Ottoman rule in the Balkans, a very mixed population emerged. In almost all regions, Turks and Greeks lived next to the local ethnic groups. In most regions, Albanians, Aromuns and people of Slavic descent (Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins and so forth) settled down. In many cities, there was no obvious majority of one specific ethnic group, since the urban environment encouraged co-existence. Even today, one can easily discern the remnants of this co-existence in formerly Ottoman multi-ethnic and multi-religious cities. For instance, in Sofia a mosque (built by the famous architect Sinan), a medieval Orthodox church and a synagogue form a triangle within the city centre, each just a few hundred metres from the others.

Within the community of scholars working on South-eastern Europe, opinions regarding the Ottoman influence on Balkan society vary strongly. In general, Balkan historiographies condemn the Ottomans as oppressors. They identify the period as the ‘Ottoman yoke of oppression’ (*Tursko igo*, *Turkikos zygos*, and so forth) and see the Ottoman period as a dark era in their national history, strongly distancing themselves from it.⁵ Interestingly, Balkan historians rarely make use of Ottoman documents when studying this period—a situation comparable to studying the Roman Empire without recourse to Latin sources.⁶ This obstructs any real

⁴ Macit Kenanoglu claims that autonomy of the different *millet*s is only a myth, since the churches’ governing bodies needed to obtain a *berat* from the sultan before assuming their positions. M. Macit Kenanoğlu, **Osmanlı Millet Sistemi: Mit ve Gerçek**, Istanbul: Klasik Yay., 2004. However, I believe the term ‘semi-autonomous’ is applicable here. Ursinus points out that the term *millet-i Rum* was rarely used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Michael Ursinus, “Zur Diskussion um ‘millet’ im Osmanischen Reich”, **Südost-Forschungen**, 48 (1989), pp. 195-207; idem, “Millet,” **Encyclopaedia of Islam**, new ed. (1993), Vol. 7, pp. 61-64.

⁵ I. Snegarov, **Turskoto Vladičestvo Prečka za Kulturnoto Razvitie na Bălgarskija Narod i Drugite Balkanski Narodi**, Sofia: BAN, 1958.

⁶ On the importance of Ottoman sources for the study of South-eastern Europe, see: Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, “Osmanische Quellen zur Balkangeschichte: Eine Übersicht über die Bestände des Zentralarchivs in Istanbul und weiterer osmanischer Archive,” **Südosteuropa von der vormodernen Vielfalt zur nationalstaatlicher Vereinheitlichung: Festschrift für Edgar Hösch**, Ed. Konrad Clewing and Oliver Jens Schmitt, Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2005, pp. 35-85.

understanding of the Ottoman system of rule, which is very different from the nation-state system that we know today. Hans Georg Majer, an outstanding researcher of the Ottoman system with fifty years of experience in reading Ottoman sources,⁷ describes in his contribution to this volume the Ottoman multi-ethnic and multi-religious system. His findings show the way towards a balanced evaluation of the Ottoman period.

Only after the establishment of nation-states in the Balkans did the issue of minorities evolve, at the latest after 1830, when an independent Greece emerged and minority status became an issue under debate. Serbia, Montenegro and Romania received and/or expanded their right to autonomy after 1812 and, as a result of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, gained their independence. In 1878, the Bulgarian principality was founded. The administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina was transferred to the Austro-Hungarian government. The most important minority in these areas was comprised of Muslims. Muslims in the new Balkan nation-states were ostracised as representatives of the ‘Ottoman yoke of oppression,’ and their expulsion or re-settlement became a matter of course. They were considered ‘foreigners,’ and the first population re-settlements on the Balkans based on treaties and agreements—executed with the approval of the Great Powers of Europe—concerned the Muslim minorities. Already in 1826, when England and Russia agreed upon the establishment of an independent Greek state, Muslims in the Peloponnesus became the subject of a re-settlement agreement. With the 1830 treaty, it was agreed that Muslims had to leave the Peloponnesus within six months. The Muslim minority in Serbia received a similar treatment: While in 1830 Serbs received autonomy, Muslims had to leave Serbian territory within a

⁷ To give an overview his publications, see: Hans-Georg Majer (Ed.), **Die Staaten Südosteuropas und die Osmanen**, Munich: Südosteuropa-Ges., 1989; idem, “The Functioning of a Multi-ethnic and Multi-religious State: The Ottoman Empire,” **European Review** 5 (1997), pp. 257-265. For a revised and expanded German version of this article, see: “Gesellschaftliche und religiöse Auswirkungen der Osmanenzeit in Südosteuropa,” **Religion und Gesellschaft in Südosteuropa**, Ed. Hans-Dieter Döpmann, Munich: Südosteuropa-Ges., 1997, pp. 117-131.

year. As a result of wars, political oppression and other negative developments, an increasing number of Muslims migrated, or fled, to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman government established special commissions for the re-settlement of Muslim migrants in various regions of the empire. However, Muslim refugees arrived not only from the Balkans. There also occurred major waves of migration consisting of Circassians from the Caucasus (after the 1860s) and of Crimean Tatars.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Eastern and Western Thrace, Macedonia (today's Northern Greece, the Republic of Macedonia and Bulgarian Macedonia), Albania, Kosovo, and the region of Sancak were still under Ottoman administration. The area thus described had a large Muslim population, comprising Turks, Albanians, Slavic-speaking Pomaks, Bosniaks, Gypsies and others. Apart from the Albanians (who only initiated a nationalist movement after several Albanian regions were ceded to Serbia and Montenegro), none of the Muslim groups attempted to found a nation-state. They remained faithful to the Ottoman administration. The Albanian nationalist movement did not fight primarily against the Ottoman administration, but rather against Greece's and Serbia's designs on Albanian territory. Those peoples, who had already initiated a nationalist movement and achieved independence, however, were in a favourable position. In the end, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria divided the remaining Ottoman territory in the Balkans. Only the Albanians could establish a nation-state with the help of the European Great Powers, particularly Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, the larger portion of the Albanian population was now outside the borders of the Albanian nation-state and became minorities in the respective neighbouring countries. Therefore, the migration of Muslim minorities to the Ottoman Empire continued. For many, it was the second time they were forced to flee. Many had left Serbia and moved into the remaining Ottoman territory in the Balkans; during the Balkan Wars, they had to flee once more. A similar fate befell the Circassians and Tatars who, in the course of their first migration, settled in regions along the Danube and then had to be re-settled after the establishment of the Bulgarian principality. After

the Balkan Wars, it became obvious that only Anatolia would remain in Ottoman hands. Anatolia would be the final place of refuge. During World War I, the Ottoman government included persons who had been multiple refugees. Only this context can explain the radical stance that the Ottoman leadership took towards the empire's non-Muslim minorities during World War I and in the Early Republican period. Many considered World War I a fight for existence.

When, as a result of the war, the Balkan states reached their largest expansion, the issue of Christian minorities within these countries became acute. For example, in Bulgaria, especially on the Black Sea Coast and in its hinterland and cities, an important Greek minority existed. At the same time there was a considerable Slavic-Bulgarian minority in northern Greece. Like the Muslim minorities, Christian minorities experienced repression, and re-settlement was officially agreed upon after 1918. The nation-states attempted to create a homogenous population, forcing minorities—whether Turkish, Greek, or Bulgarian—to leave the country.

After World War I, the Turkish Republic was established. Thus, the Turks were the last to found a nation-state on the Balkans—that is, until 1990. The Turkish Republic's attitude towards the minorities was as radical as that of older Balkan states. With the exception of Istanbul and Western Thrace, the Orthodox Christians of Turkey were exchanged for the Muslims of Greece, based on a 1923 treaty. After their forced re-settlement in 1915, there were hardly any Armenians left in the country. The remaining non-Muslim groups officially received minority status. However, Turkish minority politics in the following decades was often repressive — for example, the minorities were faced with the Capital Levy of 1942-43 (*Varlık Vergisi*), the attacks on Istanbulite Greeks and other minorities in 1955, and the deportation of Greeks holding a Greek passport in 1964.⁸

⁸ For more information, see: Ayhan Aktar, **Varlık Vergisi ve “Türkleştirme” Politikaları**, 7th ed., Istanbul: İletişim Yay., 2004; Rıdvan Akar, **Varlık Vergisi Kanunu**, Istanbul: İletişim Yay., 1992; Faik Ökte, **Varlık Vergisi Faciası**, Istanbul: Nebioğlu Yay., 1951; A. Alexandris, **The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations, 1918-1974**, Athens: Centre for Asia Minor

Moreover, after World War I the Austro-Hungarian monarchy collapsed, and a kingdom encompassing Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia was established. In this new state, there existed a large minority of Muslim Albanians, mostly in Kosovo, and of Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1929, this state was transformed into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After World War II, the Federal Yugoslav People's Republic encompassed six republics (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia). Bosnian Muslims had to decide whether to declare themselves Serbs, Croats, or 'undecided'. Only in the 1961 census did it become possible for Bosnian Muslims to declare themselves Muslims. The 1963 constitution introduced the category 'ethnically Muslim'. Thus, Yugoslavia conceded to Muslims within its borders a 'nation of Muslims'.⁹ Vojvodina and Kosovo achieved the status of a republic only with the 1974 constitution. In 1989, Milošević's government abolished the special status of Vojvodina and Kosovo. After the collapse of Yugoslavia, the Albanians of Kosovo and the Hungarians of Vojvodina became a minority in a country consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. Aggressive repression under Milošević's government in the 1990s led to the involvement of NATO in 1999, finally securing the special status of Albanian-dominated Kosovo.¹⁰ In 2002, the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro was announced; however, in June of 2006, Montenegro declared its independence, followed in turn by Serbia's declaration of independence. The

Studies, 1983; Jean-François Pérouse, "Les non musulmans à Istanbul aujourd'hui: une présence en creux? Le cas de l'arrondissement de Fatih," **Identités confessionnelles et espace urbain en terres d'Islam**, Ed. Méropi Anastassiadou-Dumont, *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 107-110 (2005), pp. 261-295.

⁹ Srećko M. Džaja, **Die politische Realität des Jugoslawismus (1918-1991): Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Bosnien-Herzegowinas**, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002, pp. 238-239.

¹⁰ On Kosovo, see: Noel Malcolm, **Kosovo: A Short History**, New York: New York University Press, 1999; Konrad Clewing, "Mythen und Legenden zur Ethnostruktur in Kosovo: Ein geschichtlicher Überblick," **Der Kosovo-Konflikt: Ursachen, Akteure, Verlauf**, Ed. Konrad Clewing and Jens Reuter, Munich: Bayrische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000, pp. 17-63.

region of Sancak (Sandjak), home to a population that consists of seventy percent of Muslim Bosniaks, was divided between the two countries.

After the collapse of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina were torn apart in a bloody struggle, with Muslims falling victim to ethnic cleansing campaigns. NATO intervention and the Dayton Agreement on 21 November 1995 secured the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the republic consists of regions controlled by Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, in which one group or another *de facto* always remains a minority.¹¹

The Current Situation of Minorities and the Contributions in this Volume

In the political and academic discussions surrounding the issue of minorities in the Balkans, several minority groups have received more attention than others—among the well-studied ones are, for instance, the Albanians of Serbia and the Republic of Macedonia, and the Hungarians of Transylvania (Siebenbürgen, Erdel). Yet, there are many more minority groups in the Balkans whose problems are little known on the stage of world politics. On the other hand, many minority issues appear to have been solved, but continue to harbour potential for future conflict. In this volume of conference contributions, we have focused on minority groups that currently receive little discussion.

The largest minority crisis before the collapse of the socialist system in Eastern Europe occurred in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government under Todor Živkov after 1984 forced all Muslims to assimilate, their personal names being changed completely. Even deceased Muslims were re-named. According to Bulgarian propaganda, in this so-called process of rebirth (*Vāzroditelskijat proces*), Bulgarians who had been Turkified under Ottoman rule were re-united with their

¹¹ Noel Malcolm, **Bosnia: A Short History**, New York: New York University Press, 1994; Misha Glenny, **The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999**, New York: Penguin Books, 1999, pp. 634-652.

Bulgarian identity. This pushed the Bulgarian Muslim minority, who had already had to contend with all kinds of repressive acts, over the edge. The Bulgarianisation went so far as to prohibit Muslims to bury their dead according to Islamic rites and to force them to apply Bulgarian-Orthodox rites. The extreme nature of these measures resulted in widespread Muslim resistance. Turkey attempted to draw the world's attention to these developments. In 1989, the Turkish government under Turgut Özal opened the borders to Turkish 'co-nationals' (*soydaş*) in Bulgaria, and several hundred thousand Bulgarian Turks thus found refuge in Turkey.

After the collapse of the socialist regime in Bulgaria, the new government revoked earlier assimilation measures. A large number of the Bulgarian Turks who had emigrated to Turkey returned to their country and received permission to use their Turkish names. It is this process in Bulgaria after 1989 that Ali Dayıoğlu has taken as the subject of his contribution to this volume; he has already published an important work on this topic, a book entitled *Toplama Kampından Meclis'e: Bulgaristan'da Türk ve Müslüman Azınlığı* [From Refugee Camp to Parliament: The Turkish and Muslim Minority in Bulgaria].¹² Dayıoğlu emphasises that the Bulgarian government's wish to integrate the country into Europe has played a significant role in its change of policy towards its Turkish-Muslim minority.

Krasimir Kănev, the director of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, discusses the present condition of Turkish and Muslim minorities in Bulgaria. He points to the negative stereotypes that the majority population holds against Turks and Islam. As examples for the anti-Turkish, anti-Islamic atmosphere he mentions the newly established nationalist party ATAKA. He convincingly demonstrates that, in spite

¹² Ali Dayıoğlu, *Toplama Kampından Meclis'e Bulgaristan'da Türk ve Müslüman Azınlığı*, Istanbul: İletişim Yay., 2005.

of Bulgaria's EU membership, minority problems have not been resolved and continue to have potential for future conflict.¹³

As one assimilation measure, geographical names were changed as early as after the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality in 1878. The major name changes in 1906 and 1934 caused almost all non-Bulgarian place names, most of them Turkish, to be substituted by Bulgarian ones. One would expect that after the institution of democracy the Turkish minority in Bulgaria would be allowed to set up road signs with Turkish place names, but this did not happen. In his article, Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu discusses the process of place name changes in Bulgaria.¹⁴ He refers to current debates surrounding Slovenian place names in Austria and posits that minorities in the Balkans have not yet claimed the right to use place names in their mother tongue because they feel that they still have not completely secured more essential rights, such as the right to life and property.

Another country with a significant Muslim minority is the Republic of Macedonia—about a quarter of its population is Albanian. Its Western territories, including Tetovo (Kalkandelen), in fact house a majority of Albanians. Moreover, in Macedonia there live about 70,000-80,000 Turks, constituting four percent of the total population. Mirjana Najčevska, Co-Director of the Centre for Human Rights & Conflict Resolution in Macedonia, discusses here the Turkish minority and its problems in Macedonia.¹⁵ Like Krasimir Kănev, she emphasises the historic

¹³ For another publication by Kănev, see Krasimir Kanev, "Law and Politics toward the Muslims in Bulgaria," **Protecting the Human Rights of Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe**, Ed. Peter G. Danchin and Elizabeth A. Cole, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 316-344.

¹⁴ For an earlier publication on this topic, see: Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, "Bağımsızlıktan Günümüze Bulgaristan'da Yer İsimlerinin Değiştirilmesi," **Balkanlarda İslam Medeniyeti II. Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri, Tiran, Arnavutluk, 4-7 Aralık 2003**, Ed. Ali Çaksu, Istanbul: IRCICA, 2006, pp. 177-189.

¹⁵ Najčevska has published numerous studies on the minorities of Macedonia. See especially: Mirjana Najčevska and N. Gaber, **Ethnic Issues in the Republic of Macedonia: Survey Results and Legal Background**, Skopje: Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, 1995.

stereotypes of the majority against the Turkish minority and points to the Macedonian Turks' deplorable economic and social conditions. Turks in Macedonia have hardly received any attention from the world media. While after the crisis of 2001 Macedonian government concessions have allowed Albanians to improve their situation, these improvements have not helped the Turks who, according to Najčevska, are economically and socially the weakest population in the country, with the exception of the Gypsies.

The minority problems between Greece and Turkey continue to hold potential for conflict, having in the past repeatedly led to crises in the relations between the two countries. Fuat Aksu shows that, as a result of the 1923 population exchange, the Turkish minority in Western Thrace and the Greek minority in Istanbul no longer constitute the basis for irredentist politics. Since minority problems do not immediately affect the sovereignty of these two states, they should no longer have the potential to provoke a war.¹⁶ He claims that in both countries minority problems are rather an issue related to democracy.

Elçin Macar in his contribution focuses on the Turkish minority on the Dodecanese Islands (*Onikiada*), which international politics so far have largely ignored.¹⁷ The islands were ceded to Greece after World War II, and in spite of several migration waves to Turkey, there still remains a small Turkish community. As Macar describes in detail, minority rights on these islands are far removed from the EU's standards. He concludes that this situation results from the fact that the

¹⁶ For publications by Fuat Aksu on Greek-Turkish relations, see especially: Fuat Aksu, **Türk Yunan İlişkileri: İlişkilerin Yönelimini Etkileyen Faktörler Üzerine Bir İnceleme**, Ankara: SAEMK Yay., 2001.

¹⁷ Elçin Macar has published several studies on the Greek minority in Turkey. See especially: Elçin Macar, **Cumhuriyet Döneminde İstanbul Rum Patrikhanesi**, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2003; idem, **İstanbul'un Yokolmuş İki Cemaati: Doğu Ritli Katolik Rumlar ve Bulgarlar**, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2002. On the Turkish minority on the Dodecanese Islands, he has also previously published: "Onikiada Türklerinin Sorunları," **İstanbul Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi**, 34 (2006), pp. 35-52.

Turkish minority on the Dodecanese is little-known in Europe and Turkey and that, therefore, Greece feels no pressure to apply the EU's norms.

Lambros Baltsiotis discusses the complex structure of the Greek government in terms of minority issues. He considers the Greek government's and bureaucrats' fear of separatism to be an important cause for the deficits in Greek minority politics. He uses the example of Macedonia which, according to him, justifies this fear.

Another important minority issue in Greece concerns the Albanians in the country, as well as the Greek minority in Albania. In his contribution, Beqir Meta treats Greek and Albanian minority politics in the twentieth century. He claims that the Albanian state has followed a much more tolerant minority policy than Greece, citing Albania's multi-religious character. On the other hand, he criticises Greece which, regardless of its EU membership, does not recognise the Orthodox Albanians in the country as a minority.¹⁸

Another state whose minority issues remain largely unknown is the Republic of Moldova. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Moldova gained independence, and now the population is predominantly Romanian-speaking, while the minorities who until then had used Russian in education and public life have been forced to learn Moldovan-Romanian. The size of the Russian and Ukrainian minorities, who in 1989 made up a quarter of the total population, decreased by half during the 1990s due to emigration. There also exists a Gagauz minority who speaks a Turkic language (very close to the Turkish spoken in Turkey) and belongs to the Orthodox Church. The number of Gagauz totals about 150,000, or four percent of the population. Especially in the early 1990s, they found themselves in a precarious situation because they used Russian as their standard language. They attempted to obtain certain cultural and administrative rights to autonomy, and in

¹⁸ Beqir Meta has published several studies on Greek-Albanian relations. See especially: **Greek-Albanian Tension 1939-1949**, Tirana: Academy of Science of Albania, 2006.

1994 they received the right to administer themselves locally. The development of an independent Gagauz culture, however, remained limited. Russian continues to be used as the primary language, while the Gagauz battle with the need to learn the country's official language—that is, Moldovan-Romanian. Olga Radova, in her contribution, examines Moldova's ethnic structure in historical perspective.¹⁹ In the discussions she emphasised the continuing economic-based emigration of the Gagauz who, according to her, mainly leave to work in Russia and Turkey. This migration constitutes the most significant threat to Gagauz existence in present-day Moldova.

Conclusion

The contributions in this volume, written by scholars from different Balkan countries, demonstrate that minority issues in the Balkans continue to be a difficult and complex field of study. There exist many small and large minority groups whose problems have not reached a larger public—such as the Orthodox Albanians in Greece, the Turkish minority on the Dodecanese Islands, or the Turkish minority in the Republic of Macedonia. Specific minority issues which have long been solved in Western Europe cannot even be addressed in the context of the Balkans at this time. One interesting example in this respect is the issue of place names in the minority's native tongue. On the other hand, there are those minority groups—such as the Muslims and Turks in Bulgaria, and the Gagauz in Moldova—who continue to battle problems, even if these problems are considered to have been solved on the stage of world politics. Moreover, there are many minority groups on the Balkans that we have not been able to address within the scope of this conference and the resulting volume. Certainly, minorities in the Balkans, as a field of study, deserves many more symposia and publications in the future.

¹⁹ For an earlier publication by this author, see: Olga Radova, "The Problem of the Gagauz-Ethno-Demographic Development in the 19th Century," *Südost-Forschungen*, 54 (1995), pp. 263-270.

WELCOMING REMARKS

Gencer ÖZCAN *

On behalf of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, I would like to greet all of you with my deepest respect. We are pleased to see you all here. It is a great honour to be here with esteemed scholars. I am very proud to host this meeting, and so is my university.

When we talk about the Balkans we are referring to the most important laboratory of contemporary times, such is its importance. And, in particular, the Balkan experience in relation to nation-states and minorities is unique.

Generally, this experience has a centennial background. There seems to be three discernible eras that we can highlight. First, when we look at the beginning of the last century, we see that the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire

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have had an enormous impact on the region in administrative and political terms. The Balkan nation-states were by and large shaped by the experience inherited from these multi-religious and multi-linguistic empires. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars and the Great War, as nation states started being formed and new boundaries were demarcated, problematic relations between nation-states and minorities surfaced. The issues established a new experience as it took on distinct forms that were different from what we had witnessed in Latin America or the Middle East.

After World War II, the Balkans were exposed to a new set of political realities and lived through the so-called socialist experience. For the succeeding five decades, the socialist period left its own imprint as far as nation-state minority relations were concerned. In stark contrast to the post-imperial era, which has been studied thoroughly, the socialist period has been belittled and not received the attention that it deserves. And now, in addition to these two eras, we have the European Union experience in the Balkans, the outcome of which remains to be seen.

When you study our programme, you will notice that we will deal with the eastern side of this experience. In fact, we would have liked to cover the western Balkans as well. However, aware of the shortcomings, we had to make a choice and gave priority to the experience witnessed in the eastern part of the region.

The relationship between states and minorities has been painful. The minorities had to cope with assimilation, the exchange of populations, ethnic cleansing and all kinds of discrimination. There is no doubt that this experience aroused mutual suspicion, if not hatred, among the different communities that had coexisted for centuries. It would take a great deal of effort to overcome the residual effects of this experience. In this context, we have to take into consideration two things: In the first place, we have to work harder and, secondly, we have to approach problems from a humanistic angle. In other words, we should base our approaches on human rights. Thus, within this framework, as a department of political science

WELCOMING REMARKS

and international relations, we have spent a lot of time and energy on this topic and we keep a close eye on Balkan issues and try to approach problems without prejudice or bias.

After these words, I will leave the floor to our guests. But before that I would like to issue an invitation to our graduate programmes, for we would like to see more students from the Balkans. We will be more than happy to see students from the Balkan countries.

I would like to conclude by thanking those who were involved in the organisation of this meeting. We acknowledge Derya, Helin and İdil, our young colleagues, for all their efforts. I also have to thank Dr. Fuat Aksu for his significant contributions to the preparation of the programme. I would like to thank Dr. Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu because without his efforts it would have been very difficult for us to convene this conference.

I would also like to thank the Foundation of Middle East and Balkan Studies. They are the co-organisers of this meeting, and without their administrative and financial support, it would have been impossible for us to organise this meeting.

Thank you all together. I would like to thank all our speakers and I wish you a fruitful meeting.



OPENING REMARKS

Güner ÖZTEK*

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address the opening session of the Conference on ‘Minority Issues in the Balkans and the EU’ jointly organised by the Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies and Yıldız Technical University. Throughout the day we will discuss different aspects of minority issues in the Balkans

* Ambassador, Director of Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies-OBİV

Protecting the rights of minorities is one of the basic features of democracy. There is no universally recognised and legally binding definition of the term ‘minority’. Conferring persons minority status is a prerogative of the state in question.

Any majority rule that does not respect the basic rights and freedoms of minority groups or individuals may lead to oppression.

Thus, the principle of majority rule on the one hand, and the protection of individual and minority rights on the other hand, are the twin pillars of any genuine democracy.

Although the League of Nations developed treaties for the protection of minorities following World War I, the United Nations Charter adopted following World War II did not include an explicit concept of minority rights. Codifying ‘human rights’ was the central principle guiding the UN Charter, and the protection of individual rights was considered sufficient protection for those belonging to minorities.

In general, we can define minority rights as special human rights, or a special branch of it, recognised by a sovereign state *vis-à-vis* a minority group. But we should not forget that, as concluded in the CSCE Meeting of Experts of National Minorities in 1991, “Not all ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious differences necessarily lead to the creation of national minorities”. The minority issue is a very delicate subject; it has often been used in history as a means to interfere in the internal affairs of other states. The Ottoman Empire in its last years was often subject to external pressure using minority rights and the protection of certain minorities as a pretext.

Since the 1990s, we have witnessed important progress in human and minority rights and in the commitment to democracy and the rule of law. It is evident that further progress depends on sincere cooperation and transparency. In this context,

OPENING REMARKS

the media and education have important roles to play. Integration with EU institutions will, no doubt, have a positive impact on this process.

Under the Turkish constitutional system, the word ‘minorities’ covers only groups of persons defined and recognised as such on the basis of multilateral or bilateral agreements to which Turkey is party.

The Turkish constitutional system is based on the equality of citizens before the law, and fundamental rights and freedoms are enjoyed and exercised individually in accordance with the relevant law. It is a nation-state composed of citizens who are equal before the law regardless of their origin.

‘Minority rights’ in Turkey are regulated in accordance with the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923. According to this treaty, Turkish citizens belonging to non-Muslim minorities fall within the scope of the term ‘minority’. Turkish legislation which is based on the Treaty of Lausanne contains the term ‘non-Muslim minority’ only. The term ‘minority’ cannot be used for Muslim Turkish citizens.

Turkish citizens belonging to non-Muslim minorities have:

- 196 places of worship
- 42 primary and secondary schools
- 138 foundations
- 5 hospitals
- 9 newspapers

There is no restriction for Turkish citizens belonging to non-Muslim minorities as regards the use of their language in private and in public.

For all Turkish citizens, the language to be used before administrative authorities and courts is Turkish. It is the official language; however, if a person does not speak Turkish, an interpreter is provided.

Turkish citizens enjoy equal access to education in accordance with Article 42 of the Constitution, without discrimination. Additionally, Turkish citizens belonging to non-Muslim minorities as stipulated by the Lausanne Peace Treaty can benefit from positive discrimination.

The educational institutions of Turkish citizens belonging to non-Muslim minorities are regulated by the Law on Private Education Institutions. In minority schools, the mother tongue of Turkish citizens belonging to non-Muslim minorities is taught as a compulsory course of equal duration to the Turkish language component. In these schools, the courses, except Turkish and Turkish culture, are taught in their own language.

According to Article 67 of the Constitution, all Turkish citizens participate in political activities on an equal footing. The law on political parties prohibits discrimination on, *inter alia*, religious and racial grounds and safeguards the principle of equality before the law.

I am certain that this day in Istanbul will bring forth fruitful discussions and will help us all to better understand minority issues in the Balkans. With these thoughts in mind I would like to wish you all every success in your deliberations.

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* *

**MINORITIES IN THE BALKANS: THE OTTOMAN
HERITAGE REVISITED***

Hans Georg MAJER**

In the vast area of the Ottoman Empire, a variety of ethnically and linguistically diverse groups lived under extremely differing conditions. The most important of these groups were Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Kopts, Vlachs, Gypsies, Slavs of the Balkans and Hungarians. The composition of the population varied according to time and place. The Turks were by no means a dominant majority in every corner of the empire. Hardly any group lived in an ethnically pure and isolated way. As almost everybody had contacts

* This paper has drawn heavily upon material in Hans Georg Majer, "The functioning of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state: the Ottoman Empire," **European Review**, 5 (3) (1997), pp. 257-265, which is reproduced here with permission.

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with ‘others’, prejudice and aggression, as well as the inclination to tease the ‘other’ was not missing, but people had become used to living in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, which enabled them to avoid many a conflict. Certainly, even before the region fell victim to nationalism, the Ottoman Empire did not live in an atmosphere of undisturbed harmony. But all these groups lived together for centuries without experiencing conflict as the predominant factor of their existence. This situation, which some call *Pax Ottomanica*, was made possible by special conditions, as we shall see.

Before the law, the different groups were not equal. On the basis of the shari’a, the state dealt with them according to their religion. Most of them were Muslims, Jews or Christians, showing even among themselves a variety of religious shades. Only the Muslims possessed all rights, Jews and Christians in many respects had only reduced rights. Women were generally considered inferior to men and accordingly had fewer rights and duties. Slaves were, at the same time, persons and things, but not devoid of some rights.

Non-Muslims (*zimmi*s) were allowed to live according to their religion as long as their religious practices did not provoke Muslims. Appearing in court, they counted only as half a witness, but at the same time suffered only half the punishment. They were not accepted for military service but had to pay a poll-tax instead. Nevertheless, they knew which rights they had, and which they had not. As long as they kept within the framework of their rights they could live relatively undisturbed lives, earning a livelihood and even having the chance to become prosperous.

However, the prescriptions of the shari’a were one thing; the reality of life was another. In fact, only those being or becoming Muslim were able to make use of all the possibilities that the empire offered. Descent played no role; the decisive factors were to be a Muslim, to be able to speak Turkish and to be a capable person. Many a foreigner ‘became Turk’. The bulk of new Muslims, however, for

many reasons came voluntarily from among the non-Muslims living within the empire.

Systematic conversion undertaken by the state was limited to a number of Christian boys. They were taken from their families by the *devşirme*, had to learn Turkish and convert to Islam. They became members of the elite troop of the Janissaries, or of the leading political elite dominating the Ottoman state for centuries. Several of them did not forget their origin and adorned their native places with mosque complexes, bazaars or bridges. Of course, these men, other than Turkish, still spoke their Slav, Greek, Albanian or Armenian mother tongue and in many respects connected the ethnic and religious groups of the empire.

The Ottoman state was mainly interested in tranquillity, order, taxes and the military. In order to realize these aims, not only Muslims were drawn into the service of the state. Non-Muslims could benefit from several privileges, mostly tax exemptions. In addition, although military service in principle was restricted to Muslims, in early Ottoman times there were Christian *sipahis*, mostly members of former noble families, and even in later times there was the mixed Muslim-Christian troop of the *Martoloses*, who guarded fortresses and served as police units.

The Muslim and Christian rural population, the *reaya*, experienced the Ottoman state above all as soldiers and tax collectors. In cases of oppression, the *reaya* were free to apply to the *kadi* or directly to the sultan or his counsel, the *divan-i hümayun*, as thousands of entries in registers of the Ottoman archives show us.

On the whole, the Ottoman state – in contrast to modern states – had no obsession with ruling and regulating everything. Only when its essential interests were touched did the state intervene. By restricting its activities in this way, the Ottoman state left room for others and interfered only when asked to do so.

Of course, interference was unavoidable right after a conquest. The first consequences were drastic. But then the newly conquered territory had to be incorporated permanently, and the gains had to be secured. Tranquillity and a continuous stream of taxes could only be achieved by avoiding radical changes. Thus, the Ottomans were inclined not to disturb the conditions of life and the mode of production of newly incorporated subjects. Quite often, they just took over the regulations, especially agricultural regulations, used by their predecessors, even from non-Muslim states. This was, for example, the case with the Serbian and Bosnian mining law.

Non-Muslims had been living in the Ottoman state from the beginning. The sultan had even granted refuge to great numbers of Jews expelled from Spain. Non-Muslims paid taxes, and the Jews in particular stimulated the economy. The non-Muslims, however, were not always where they were needed most. In these cases, the Ottoman state used the method of *sürgün* (resettlement), which in other cases was used to neutralise unruly Muslim groups in an environment foreign to them. *Sürgün* thus contributed to the mixture of ethnic and religious groups in the Ottoman Empire. The most impressive example of *sürgün* was the repopulation of Constantinople after its capture in 1453. Such forceful measures at first threw things into a state of uncertainty. But Istanbul began to flourish again, and the same may be said of many other places and regions. Prosperity and poverty differed according to time and place and was not simply bound to a particular religious or ethnic group, but, of course, it was the high state officials who always had the best opportunity to amass riches.

Since the Ottomans had started to think and write about their state in the sixteenth century, we know that they were aware of the fact that the state could only prosper when its subjects were well-off. The most important bases for the prosperity of state and people in their eyes were justice and social stability. The idea that everyone should retain his social and legal position was a widely held opinion and mirrored the reality of life. People knew their place in life, whether they were Muslims, Jews, Christians or slaves.

Despite their religious differences, peasants, artisans, merchants and others often shared a common destiny *vis-à-vis* the apparatus of the state, which was Muslim, but for a long period represented by former *zimmis*. In this indirect way non-Muslims also participated. Apart from that, non-Muslim doctors, interpreters, moneylenders, merchants, tax-farmers and certainly the churches were not without weight.

Clashes between the Ottoman state and the *zimmis* occurred mainly when the *zimmis* were stirred up from outside and joined foreign invaders. In spite of the hopes in the West, this rarely happened in reality, because the local, mostly orthodox, Christians were rather reserved, fearing the turban much less than the tiara.

So-called ‘popular rebellions’, when examined closely, show mostly that, in reality, peasants mobbed a tax collector or another official oppressor, or that robbers had appeared who by no means were freedom fighters in every case. Most of the real rebellions were upheavals of the Muslim population resulting from social and religious problems, or revolts of the unsatisfied military. This situation, however, changed when the idea of nationalism penetrated the minds and started to dominate thoughts and actions.

However, it is true that there were oppressive and exploitative functionaries of the state, and their numbers increased in times of crises of economy and state. But these oppressors made no distinction between Muslim, Jew or Christian. The only important thing for them was simply that there was money or goods to get out of a person. But the sultan and *kadi* took the complaints of the people seriously and, for many an oppressor, life ended quite suddenly.

The religions in the Ottoman Empire were incorporated into the state in so far as their functionaries, at least the most prominent, were appointed by the sultan. Most important of course was Islam, the religion which, by the sixteenth century, the state had formed into a hierarchically organised administration, dealing with

religion, administration of justice and education, now called *ilmiye*. To some extent, it was financed by the state, but even more so, it was based on pious foundations, the *vakıf*, by which mosques, medreses, *mektebs*, dervish convents and libraries were built for religious practice and education. Other pious foundations made available social institutions for Muslims, such as baths, hospitals, soup kitchens, and the like.

The non-Muslims were organised by the Ottomans according to their denominations into *millets* which, in the course of time, developed hierarchical structures, headed by their patriarchs and for some time a Chief Rabbi. The whole of their religious life including some parts of the law, such as family and inheritance laws, was, within the framework of the shari'a, left in the hands of the religious group. Churches, according to the shari'a, could be repaired but not newly built. Nevertheless, we find a considerable number of new churches in the Ottoman Empire. The Christian monasteries for the most part were allowed to keep their property. The monks generally enjoyed tax privileges and were even allowed to collect alms among their faithful.

The churches and (especially) the monasteries resolutely defended the rights that the Ottoman state had granted them. They carefully kept all documents and, in case of need, they appeared before the *kadi* or applied directly to the sultan. In addition they knew how to use gifts for their ends.

Every Ottoman subject – Muslim, Jew or Christian – could go to the shari'a court. In court as well as in society, a Christian or Jew, just like a Muslim, was valued according to his piety. Sometimes non-Muslims came to the shari'a court even in cases which could well have been kept within his *millet*. By doing so, crafty people made use of the discrepancies between the two laws for their own ends. If a man within his own religious group got into trouble, he could try to escape punishment by becoming a Muslim. In many cases it was useful for *zimmi*s as well as for Muslims to have a transaction officially registered with the *kadi*. Disputes within churches quite often had to be settled by the sultan, who tried to

prevent or to stop quarrels between the Christian denominations, although sometimes he used them as a source for financial ends. No Christian group, and the Jews even less, were systematically persecuted. No doubt, however, not infrequently they were confronted with harassment, and now and then social pressure was put on them locally in order to make conversion desirable. The real objects of persecution in the Ottoman Empire were militant Muslims, as a rule Shiites, or apostates. Whoever apostatised from Islam faced death. Although the ultimate religious goal of Islam was and still is to unite mankind in Islam, the treasury in no way could be interested to reach that aim too quickly because it would have meant a complete loss of the poll-tax.

In essential parts of their lives, Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire could keep to themselves, attending their church, celebrating their feasts, singing their songs, wearing their costumes, studying their holy books and intermarrying. Marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims was only allowed by the shari'a in one combination: Muslim men and Christian women. Their children were Muslim with full rights, as were the children Muslim men had with slave women or also new Muslims with any woman. With these Christian women or slaves, their languages and customs to a certain degree penetrated into Muslim households. As a consequence, the strangeness of the 'other' diminished in many families. Over the course of time, habits, costumes, food, mentality and also words became adopted across the boundaries between religious and ethnic groups.

The existence of religious groups other than Muslims was guaranteed by law, and the fact that Ottomans were not interested in the internal affairs of these groups prevented the state from enforcing uniformity, as long as the virus of nationalism was still isolated in the poison cabinet of history. Inequality – and this may sound strange to us – was guaranteed by law and therefore secured the existence of all these different groups and their special character. Nobody was interested in changing them from outside. If they themselves wanted to change something, they could do so, as long as they did not leave their legal framework. But as soon as non-Muslims violated their status and provoked the Muslims, they were brought

back into line by prohibition, punishment and dress regulations, which, however, were never obeyed permanently.

As there was no compulsory school attendance ordered by the state, no group felt that it was necessary to force its language on other groups. Everybody was free to speak his or her own language. If someone learned other languages, it was on their own initiative because of the advantages. Classes were organised only within the religious groups and according to their needs. Thus, nobody was indoctrinated, provoked or forced into uniformity. Such oppressive tendencies develop best on the basis of a centralised school system, which the Ottomans did not have.

In later Ottoman times there were more and more economic problems – law and order dwindled and despotism spread on a local or regional basis. In that situation, religious propaganda and, increasingly, nationalistic and revolutionary propaganda coming mainly from outside the country fell on fertile ground. And exactly those elements which for a long time had enabled the Ottoman system to function now contributed to its collapse: the religious and legal inequality could not be tolerated any longer by people who had accepted the modern thought of equality. The religious, cultural and social life of the religious groups undisturbed by the Ottomans now offered the opportunity for modern thoughts — such as equality of men, national unity and independence — could develop and spread easily. The sultans themselves also contributed to this by changing the conditions of life. With the help of modern instruments of power, they tried to build up a modern, well-organised and centralised state able to keep the multi-ethnic state together. The non-Muslims were now by law treated as equals, and consequently the old *millets* lost many competences and functions as intermediaries. The modern Ottoman state of the nineteenth century thus no longer had to deal with its subjects with the help of traditionally organised religious groups, but directly with individuals, who had developed their own political will and no longer accepted a restricted, albeit protected, life.

As a result of all these developments people increasingly found their identity in ethnic groups and often gathered in political circles in order to fight for their national independence. As a multi-ethnic state in which ‘the other’ was something very common, the Ottoman Empire did not even have a term for ‘minority’ in its vocabulary until shortly before its end (*akalliyet*, *ekelliyet*, today *azınlık*). However, the successor states, which are nation-states built on rich and colourful multi-ethnic grounds, are dominated by one ethnic group while ‘the others’ have become minorities in need of protection. Their situation and their rights have become an important issue, especially in the Balkans, as we shall learn from the following papers.

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ALBANIAN AND GREEK POLICIES FOR THE VARIOUS MINORITIES DURING THE 20TH CENTURY

Beqir META *

The nation-states of Albania and Greece were created in different historical periods, and their national development also followed a different course. The key characteristic of the Greek state consists in the fact that it was created and consolidated as a homogenous and unitary state from the religious viewpoint, which helped the cultivation of hyper-nationalism and ethnic exclusiveness. In contrast, the Albanian state was founded and developed as a political entity based on tolerance and cooperation of the Albanian ethnic population belonging to three religions, with Muslims making up the bulk of the population. This greatly influenced the acceptance of co-existence in diversity and avoided the phenomenon of exclusiveness and hyper-nationalism. From the ways they developed, their

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differences had a considerable impact even on the respective policies towards the minorities.

The clearest testimonies of these differences are shown by the historical records and figures of the minority populations in the two states respectively. Greece won both Balkan wars and almost doubled its territory and population, but it also became less homogenous. According to a population register in the newly-annexed provinces, Greece's population grew by 2,103,038 inhabitants, which caused the total number of its population rise to 4,734,990 inhabitants.¹ Following the Sèvres Treaty, the minorities' population reached one million people, which was equal to 23 per cent of Greece's population.

Despite being considered an obstacle to the realisation of the *Megáli Idéa*, the heterogeneous elements of the population did in fact reinforce it and gave it a new nuance.²

The main international laws regulating the position of minorities in Greece were stipulated by the Sèvres Treaties, signed by the main Allied Powers and Greece. According to these treaties, Greece was obliged to protect the rights of all the minorities.³ But Greece systematically broke the treaties up to World War II when it carried out an overall bloody cleansing of the Albanian minority.

Following its agreement with Bulgaria on November 27, 1919,⁴ and the Treaty of Lausanne, Greece took a big step towards its transformation into a homogenous state. The Greek-Turkish accord at Lausanne was also unjustly used to evict the

¹ A. Andreades, **Les Effects Economiques et Sociaux de la Guerre en Grece** (Publications de la Dotation Carnegie pour la Paix Internationale), Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1928, p. 134.

² Dimitri Pentzopoulos, **The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact Upon Greece**, Paris, The Hague: Mouton, 1962, pp. 26-27.

³ Archive of Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AAMFA), year 1920, file.73.

⁴ Pentzopoulos, **The Balkan Exchange**, p. 60.

Albanian Muslims from their territories in Greece. Around 60,000 Albanians were expelled from the areas of Follorina, Kostur, Ioannina, as well as 20,000 Albanians from Chameria. In short, another step was taken in the process of ethnic cleansing of the minorities in Greece. The exchange of populations was done on the basis of religion. Nationality and language were ignored, allegedly because “of difficulties in interpreting those terms”, and no effort whatsoever was done to distinguish the Albanians, the Vlachs, the Pomaks and the Slavo-Macedonians.

Two years before the Treaty of Lausanne – on October 2, 1921, to be exact – Albania signed its Statement about the Protection of Minorities,⁵ and the main minority in Albania was declared to be the Greek-speaking minority. Thus, the Albanian Statement ceased to be an obligation after these acts of the Greek government, because the League of Nations could not or did not want to stop the violent expulsion of the bulk of the Albanian minority. However, Albania did not react in this direction and did not respond by taking similar measures against the Greek-speaking minority.

Greece continuously refused to correct its actions; thus (logically, on the basis of parity and reciprocity in international relations), it lacks the right to ask the Albanian side to respect the rights of its Greek-speaking minority in Albania in the future. That prediction has proved wrong. Not only did Athens step up its policy of pressure to secure the widest possible autonomy for Albania’s Greek-speaking minority, but it also tried to classify into the minority a part of the ethnic Albanian population belonging to the Orthodox religion.

Once the Treaty of Lausanne was finally implemented, Greece continued its policy of ethnically weakening and cleansing its minorities that had not yet or only partially been affected by the process of the Greek-Turkish population exchange. Consequently, between the years 1920 and 1930, the remaining part of the

⁵ AAMFA, year 1921, file 191, pp. 2-6, Statement of the representative of Albania to League of Nations Council, October 2, 1921.

Albanian minority was denied the right of representation in parliament, lacked access to state administration, and was denied the right of education in the mother tongue. It continued to lose gradually its remaining land.

The policies of the Albanian state developed in a completely different way. Since the very beginning, when it started to build its national life, the Albanian state distinguished itself by its benevolent and positive attitude towards minorities. All of them were treated well, but the greatest affinity was shown towards the Vlachs. Their schools functioned freely, owing to the support of the Albanian state until the end of World War II.

The government showed tolerance and a friendly attitude even towards the Greek-speaking minority. However, the Greek government was unhappy and complained to the League of Nations, which sent an Investigation Commission that collected considerable information about the situation of the Greek-speaking minority. The Investigation Commission reported to the League of Nations on January 23 that the representatives of the Greek-speaking villages did not present any complaints to them. They answered the question of the mission's chief, Sederholm, and confirmed the correct policy of the Albanian government, stating that they were satisfied by that policy.⁶ The investigative commission also verified that the Greek schools were regularly functioning in the area of the Greek-speaking minority, and so were the other Greek institutions.⁷

An interesting phenomenon took place concerning the Bulgarian minority, or the Macedonian one, as it was called later. Feeling endangered by the nationalist regimes of Greece and Serbia, this population asked the Ambassadors' Conference in 1921 to unite with Albania because it believed it could in this way secure the

⁶ AAMFA, year 1923, file 211, p. 118, Gjirokastër Prefecture for the Ministry of the Interior, January 17, 1923.

⁷ AAMFA, year 1923, file 211, Report of the Investigative Commission of the League of Nations on their activity in Albania from December 19, 1922 to February 1, 1923.

protection of its national identity. These villages, which were spread over the area of Prespa in South-Eastern Albania, joined the Albanian state in 1924. In the following period until the present day, this population has safeguarded its identity without problems, and the Albanian state has continuously given financial help for the community's education in the mother tongue.

But the most interesting and significant case is the preservation, entirely untouched, of the small Montenegrin community in Vrakë, which has a population of 1,500 people and is situated in the region of Shkodër.

Albania's historical record in protecting minorities importantly features the protection of the Hebrews by King Zog in the years between 1920 and 1930 and by the Albanian government and population during World War II. No Jews were handed over to the Germans during this period. This is a positive legacy that is often referred to in the press and scientific works of foreign and domestic scholars.

Albania followed a tolerant policy towards minorities and even exceeded some of the forecasts of the League of Nations Treaty. Thus, in addition to the public financing of minority schools, they silently tolerated even Greek and Serbian funding for minority schools in Albania, an action that these states would not have allowed on their own territories. The number of minority schools compared to the number of villages and the population was twice as high as the country's average number of schools. The Greek-speaking minority was proportionally represented in the Albanian parliament and in the state administration.

The historical record of the twentieth century lists the fact that not a single member of a minority was forced to quit his home or was expelled, which is probably a unique situation in the Balkans.

The minorities maintained the same specific weight compared to the Albanian population, three per cent, since the inception of the independent Albanian state to the present, throughout its 95-year-old existence. This is the clearest indicator of the constant and consequential policy of the Albanian state to safeguard and respect

minorities. Greece followed an entirely different policy; the official figures concerning the presence of minorities changed dramatically from 23 per cent of the population in 1920 to about 0 per cent today, because the existence of ethnic minorities is not recognised in Greece.

In Albanian policies, momentous cases highlight the efforts of the state to prevent the departure of minorities. One such case took place between 1928 and 1934, when the Government of A. Zogu took measures to prevent the migration of the Albanian Vlach community to Romania due to economic reasons. The government considered their departure at that time as an issue that hurt the prestige of the Albanian state and Albanian-Romanian friendship.

Another interesting story is the departure and the return of the inhabitants of Vrakë to their village. This happened twice. Initially, they left during World War II, abandoning their Albanian citizenship. They were re-accepted at the end of the war by the government, which ruled under German control, although they had voluntarily renounced Albanian citizenship. They left for the second time in 1998 during the Kosovo crisis, as a result of offers from the Serbian government to settle in the lands of the Albanians in Peje (Pec). But they returned again after 1999, and no one prevented them from returning. The opposite has happened with Greece. All the minorities that either departed or were violently evicted have not been allowed to return to their former homes and lands.

The attitudes of the Albanian and the Greek state towards minorities are dramatically different. The Albanian state has never followed direct or indirect expropriation policies, general or selective, towards its minorities. The minorities in Albania have over a span of 95 years improved their economic conditions and social status. Since the 1920s and 1930s, one could easily note the improvement of the property situation of numerous Greek-speaking families in Albania. In an effort to improve relations with Yugoslavia and the Slav minority in Vrakë in 1923, the Albanian government convinced the big landowner Sulçe Bej Bushati to sell his lands to the Vrakë farmers. This was a far too big concession and was accepted

only reluctantly by the owner after long debates and with the help of some of Sulçe Bej's friends.⁸

However, the most important measure in favour of the Greek minority, and perhaps unique to the Balkans, was agrarian reform. The communist government in 1945/46 expropriated Albanian owners and redistributed their land to Greek inhabitants, who had the status of serf farmers and worked on the lands of their Albanian masters during the entire time of the Greek minority's residence in the area. This was an enormous political and social investment, which started with class motives and illustrated that the Albanian leadership was not only not manifesting any nationalist nuances in its policy, but also strongly striking the base of Albanian nationalism – private property.

These measures impressed the UNRRA mission in Albania. P. Floud, the Deputy Chief of the UNRRA, wrote to headquarters about how the Greek farmers were benefiting from the communists' agrarian reform and were taking over the lands of Libohova's owners, where they had previously worked as farmers. Comparing the Albanian government's policy toward the Greek minority to the propaganda against it, Colonel Hill, the Chief of the mission, admitted that *The Times* and *New York Times* "have published reports against Albania, which in my view are totally false and must be referring to sources that wish evil upon Albania, most probably from the Greeks".⁹

In the post-communist period, the rights of the minorities advanced significantly. Although it is not a member of the European Union, Albania has signed and voluntarily and correctly applies the European Convention of Human Rights. Paradoxically, Greece, a member of the European Union, has not signed the

⁸ Central State Archives of Albania (CSAA), The Interior Ministry Fund, year 1923, file.177, p. 4. The War Minister, I. Tatzati to the Prime Minister's Office, May 23, 1923.

⁹ AAMFA, year, 1945, file 11, Report by Albanian Foreign Ministry on the British residence in Albania.

convention and does not apply it. It continues to deny the existence of minorities on its territories, although several minorities, including the Albanian Orthodox, have preserved their ethnic identity. Consequently, the situation of the minorities there is at a very unsatisfactory level.

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**THE TURKISH MINORITY IN MACEDONIA: BETWEEN
PREJUDICES OF THE PAST AND MINORITISATION OF
THE PRESENT**

Mirjana NAJČEVSKA*

The general elements that determine how minority issues are handled in the Republic of Macedonia are:

- Relics from the time of socialism (collective treatment, the different positions of different minorities, the disproportionate presence of members of minorities in public life)
- The presence of a significantly larger population of one minority (Albanians) which is also concentrated in one area of the country

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- The absence of a strategy to foster multi-culturalism as an important characteristic of the state (in education, culture, the local way of life)
- Development of the multi-party system on an ethnic basis
- The 2001 conflict and the Ohrid Framework Agreement

Even after the amendments introduced in relation to the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia has basically kept the combined (individually-collective) approach to minority issues. The preface to the constitution and some of its articles speak of citizens (that is, person, man); however, in several of the articles, enjoying and exercising certain rights is strictly related to a specific percentage, or the concentration of certain minorities.¹ With the latest amendments, the article for adequate and just representation of citizens belonging to all communities at all levels of state government and other institutions has been introduced, as a basic value of the constitutional order. With these changes, the Islamic religious community is mentioned by name in article 19 which guarantees freedom of religion. The constitution has also been enriched by article 48 which guarantees special rights for members of minorities to express and nurture their identity, the usage of symbols, and to be educated in their own language. Article 69 has introduced a special voting regime in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, while the bill directly affects culture, language, education, personal documents or use of symbols. According to these bills, the parliament decides with a majority of votes among the present members of the parliament, and there must be a majority within the members of parliament who belong to communities that are not the majority in the Republic of Macedonia. Two

¹ According to these articles, the members of the Turkish ethnic community can exercise the right to use the Turkish language at a municipal level in four municipalities. In ten other municipalities, the percentage of members of the Turkish community is over ten. There is no legislation regarding this, but there is the possibility for the mayors to include the Turkish language as a third language (particularly in those municipalities where the percentage is around 18-19). According to my knowledge, this has not been done in any of these municipalities.

institutions have been given particular responsibility by the constitution to protect the rights of the members of the communities. The first institution is that of the Ombudsman, who has the new task of paying particular attention to the protection of the principles of non-discrimination and to the adequate and just representation of members of the communities in the state administration and state bodies, local self-government and the public institutions and services. The second is the Committee for Interethnic Relations, which considers issues regarding the interrelations of the different communities in the Republic and gives opinions and suggestions for their resolution. Based on these changes, a process of adapting the entire legislation related to relevant areas has begun.

Nevertheless, there are many changes inspired by genuine multiculturalism and oriented toward achieving real equality between citizens in practice. The Ohrid Framework Agreement and the changes based on it have mostly been geared towards improving the position of the Albanian minority community, and very little or not consideration at all has been given to the other communities. In a number of cases, even the new solutions (which tend to establish bi-national relations, in which the only relevant factors are the two largest ethnic communities – Macedonian and Albanian) are the basis of bad treatment and decreasing the rights of other ethnic communities. In any case, it is the multi-cultural character of the state and its specific common culture built for centuries in this region that is undermined.

The position of the Turkish minority under these conditions is very specific and problematic. In general it is determined by:

- The historic background of the presence of the Turkish minority in this region
- Emigration towards the motherland Turkey
- The absence of concentrated enclaves (territorial dispersion)
- Sharing the religion of Islam with the Albanian ethnic community

- Concentration in rural areas

In the political vocabulary of modern Macedonia, the Turks are the ‘loyal’, ‘good’ minority, unlike the Albanians. However, this political vocabulary does not correspond to the message sent to the population throughout their education and does not result in acceptance of a common cultural and historic heritage.

Even after all the reforms in education and changes to the history curriculum, children in primary, secondary and tertiary education still see:

- the Turks as occupiers that perpetrated a bloody reign and tortured the Macedonian people
- Turkey as the Ottoman Empire, which for centuries occupied Macedonia, attacked the identity of the Macedonian people and destroyed Macedonia’s chances for progress
- Islam as a particularly belligerent religion that has been used for political goals

The period of Ottoman rule is connected solely with struggle and resistance, and there is no mention of communal living and the influence that the two groups had on each other.

In terms of the development of culture, no link is established with the influence of Oriental culture, which has been brought by the Ottomans. On the contrary, it is clearly stated: “Even though under foreign rule... the Macedonians continued to foster their ethnic characteristics – language, customs and culture”. It is noticeable that no influence is perceived in architecture, art, music, language, or in everyday life (customs, cuisine, dress, interior design). School textbooks do not explain at all the specifics of the *millet* system, the unusual religious tolerance (uncharacteristic for any European state of that period), or the contradiction between religious suppression and the flourishing of churches and monasteries during the entire rule of the Ottoman Empire.

In contrast to the exhaustive analyses of the developmental characteristics of the European states, always with a positive connotation, the analyses of the Ottoman Empire do not mention the unique nature of its structure — which, in many of its characteristics, is the embodiment of the most modern achievements of the time in the development of the state and is innovative precisely in certain state and juridical solutions. On the contrary, the Ottoman state is presented as the destroyer of the existing feudal system in the regions it occupied (while being less developed itself). It is connected to the deep-rooted ethnic changes that are felt even today, the destruction of the economy and pillage and plunder that ended the viability of a number of places. The conclusion is: “While the European people progressed further, the Balkan people under Ottoman rule stagnated.”

The result of this type of continual education is the perception that Turks living in the Republic of Macedonia are the unwanted remains of the occupier that prevented the country from developing. This population is not perceived as having an equal right to be present in this region, despite having lived there for generations, possessing property, having relationships and viewing their own place in the world as there and nowhere else.

The feeling of not belonging to Macedonia was manifested very clearly in the 1950s, when the emigration of a large number of Turks to Turkey was made possible, and was heightened after the 2001 conflict, when the inner resentment of Macedonians towards the Turks was revealed, with Macedonians attacking Turkish families, destroying Turkish stores and over 40 mosques, a large number of which were historic monuments. It is no coincidence that in a poll at the end of 2001, a significant number of Turks answered the question “Does everyone have the same rights in Macedonia?” negatively.

Ethnicity								
	Macedonian	Albanian	Turkish	Serbian	Roma	Vlach	Other	Total
Yes	52.97 %	11.24 %	32.14 %	52.94 %	14.04 %	100 %	20.83 %	40.95 %
No	36.54 %	73.49 %	55.36 %	47.06 %	77.19 %	0.00 %	79.17 %	47.96 %
I don't know	10.49 %	15.26 %	12.50 %	0.00 %	8.77 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	11.09 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

This position developed while being caught between opposing forces: the Albanian community performing open and often forced assimilation,² and the Macedonians who live in the myth of the past and refuse to consider the rights and interests of the Turkish minority.

These persisting conditions manifest themselves in a collective depression, withdrawal, isolation and general hopelessness. The dispersion of the Turks is an additional negative element, as it prevents utilising some of the language rights from the constitution and legislation and stimulates assimilation, as is the low level of education, a factor also related to the large percentage of rural population.

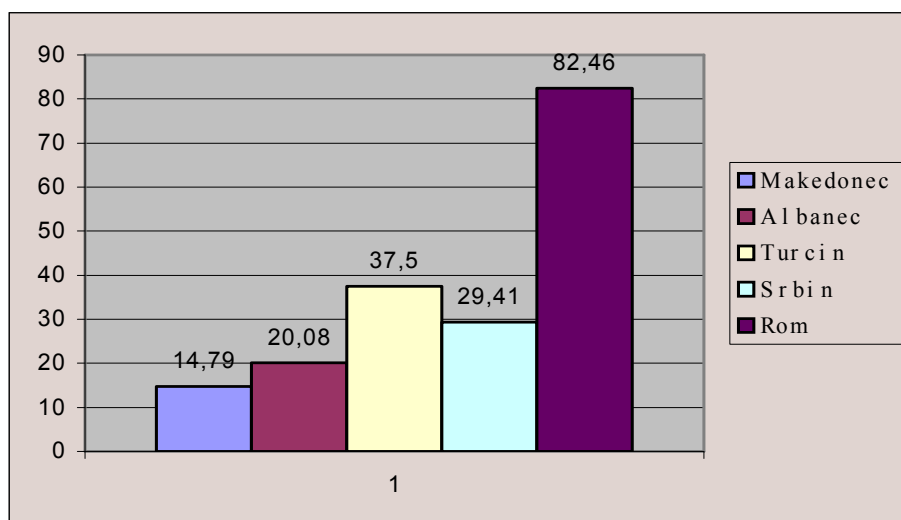
This is exacerbated by poor economic conditions,³ poor educational status,⁴ and their absence from public life.

² The results published in the beginning of December 2003 showed a significant increase in the presence of members of the Albanian ethnic community in the general population, and a decrease in all other communities. This resulted in the open denial of the results of the census by all the other ethnic communities.

³ According to perceptions of their own poverty, the Turks are in second place (after the Roma).

TURKISH MINORITY IN MACEDONIA

The situation has changed during the last few years, but first and foremost in favour of the Albanian community, while almost invisible or only very small changes took place for the Turkish community.



⁴ The Turkish community is the least included in primary education (69%). The situation in high schools is even more worrisome. For the members of the Turkish community, the percentage is 25.8% (compared to 85.2% for the Macedonians and 43% for the Albanians).

In the period between 1998 and 2001 around 10% of higher education students were from the minorities, from which (on average) 5.6% were Albanian, 1.1% Turkish, 0.2% Roma, 1% Vlach, 1.9% Serb and 1.4% other. These percentages are in proportion with the number of students that applied, according to nationality.

In the school year 1998/99, the enrolment in institutions of higher education was: 88% Macedonian, 5.4% Albanian, 2% Serbian, 1% Vlach, 1% Turkish, 0.1% Roma (**Statistical Overview 329**, Skopje, 1999).

Out of 569 regular professors in the institutions of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia, 528 are Macedonians, 3 Albanians, 4 Vlach, 2 Roma, 4 Turkish, 2 Austrian, 2 Bulgarian, 13 Serbian, 2 Croatian, 2 Muslim, 3 did not declare, 2 declared a regional belonging and 1 declared as Yugoslavian (**Statistical Overview 310**, Skopje, July 1998).

According to information from 2002, in the Republic of Macedonia there were 656 active judges out of which 577 were ethnic Macedonians (87.96%), 43 ethnic Albanians (6.55%), 13 ethnic Vlach (1.98%), 12 ethnic Serbs (1.83%) and 11 other (1.68%)

The end result is more emigration from Macedonia, or the visible process of self-isolation, to the level of not knowing any Macedonian or Albanian, as an attempt to preserve their own culture and identity.



MINORITY RIGHTS IN MOLDOVA AND THE GAGAUZ

Olga RADOVA *

Since the establishment of the Moldavian Principality in 1359, there have been various ethnic groups living on Moldovan lands. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the prince (*gospodar*) of Moldavia wrote: “Guess where else can we find a country like Moldavia, which is so small and possesses so many different nations!”¹ In describing the peoples in Moldavia, Dimitri Cantemir mentions Moldavians, Russians, Ukrainians (Cossacks), Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Germans, Armenians, Jews, and he also describes their places of settlement.² To this day, there is a combination of different ethnic groups

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¹ Dimitrij Kantemir, **Opisanie Moldavii**, Kişinev: Kartja moldovenjaskê, 1973, p. 147.

² Dimitrij Kantemir, *ibid.*

in Moldova. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and due to the opening of the borders in the 1990s, the number of ethnic groups in Moldova has increased. Moldova now has more than 120 ethnic groups, but the main ethnic components of Moldova came to existence in earlier historical periods.

The Bessarabian people reached their ethnic composition at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, being highly affected by the Russo-Turkish wars.³ As a result of the wars, the Nogais (Tatars) were taken away from the southern lands of Bessarabia and Budjak and after the population loss in the area only the Moldovans and Gagauz stayed there. At the same time, people from several Orthodox Balkan nations began to migrate to Bessarabia in great numbers. Therefore, at the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Bulgarians and Gagauz came from Thrace, Macedonia and Dobrudja and settled in Budjak.

In 1814, German immigrants arrived in southern Bessarabia. They set up their own villages and became neighbours to the population already there. In 1815, 1816, 1825, 1830, between 1833 and 1835, and in 1842, new German migration waves to Budjak followed. Germans came to Budjak and settled there, primarily because there were religious conflicts in their own countries. There were wars with France at time of Napoleon as well. The German immigrants were looking for land for themselves. The first German immigrants came from the Principality of Warsaw.

When the German immigrants came to Bessarabia, the Tsarist government offered them very good opportunities. They were given land (every family received 30 *desyatine* of land) and, according to the laws of that time, their sons could inherit this land as well. They did not have to pay taxes for the first fifty years. And they were not asked to military service for the first twenty-five years. Similar

³ The southern part of Moldavia (in the present time Moldova) was called Bessarabia or Bucak (Budjak). A part of the Bessarabian lands was given to Ukraine.

advantages were granted to immigrants from the Danube, to the Gagauz and to the Bulgarians as well.

In 1842, there were between 25,646 and 28,812 German immigrants. In 1861, about 25,457 Germans lived in this area. In 1907, this figure reached 52,331, and there were 123 German villages. In 1861, they were settled only in 24 villages of Bessarabia. Thus, they expanded their demographic base in Moldova.

Bessarabia in the 1930s was within the borders of Romania; in the land between the rivers Prut and Dnester, there lived 81,889 Germans. In 1940, a new agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union greatly influenced the further destiny of the Germans, because according to these agreements the Germans living in Bessarabia and in the other parts of the Soviet Union had to go back to their original lands. In 1939, there were 77,547 Germans living in Bessarabia. In September of 1942, 72,171 of them migrated back to Germany.

The majority of Bulgarians migrated to Bessarabia between 1829 and 1830, during the Ottoman-Russian War. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, a group of Russians and Ukrainians also migrated to Bessarabia. These migration waves changed the population structure of Bessarabia in the nineteenth century. After a reduction, the population of this area increased again through new immigration. In this way the ethnic structure of Bessarabia was transformed. Consequently, the present ethnic structure of Bessarabia is a result of these historical processes in the nineteenth century. Since then, all communities have more or less maintained their populations. The total number of ethnic minorities has not changed.⁴

The population of the Republic of Moldova consists mainly of six ethnic groups: Moldovans, Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauz, Bulgarians and Jews. The other ethnic minorities — such as the Belarussians, Romans, Poles and Germans — have

⁴ Valentin S. Zelenčuk, *Naselenie Moldavskoj SSR*, Kişinev: Kartja Moldovenjaskè, 1987, p. 80.

a share of less than one per cent in the population. Table 1 shows the change in the ethnic structures of the communities living in Moldova:

Table 1 Ethnic Composition of the Population in Moldova in the 20th Century (%)								
Ethnic Identity	1930	1941	1959	1970's	1979	1989	2004	Difference between 1989 and 2004
Moldovans	56.2	68.7	65.4	64.7	63.9	64.5	76.1	+11.6
Ukrainians	11.0	11.0	14.6	14.2	14.2	13.8	8.4	-5.4
Russians	12.3	6.6	10.2	11.6	12.8	13.0	5.8	-7.2
Gagauz	3.4	4.9	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.4	+0.9
Bulgarians	5.7	7.5	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9	-0.1
Jews	7.2	0.2	3.3	2.7	2.0	1.5	0.1	-1.4
Other Groups	4.2	0.6	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.7	3.3	+1.6
Total:	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	-

From 1989 to 2004, the rate of ethnic population in Moldova changed significantly. The number of Ukrainians was reduced by 5.4%, and of the Russian population by 7.2%. The number of Bulgarians was reduced by 0.1%, and the Jewish population was reduced by 1.4%. The share of the Moldovan population within the total population increased by 11.6%. Even the Gagauz decreased by 0.9%. Numerically, the share of Moldovan and Gagauz populations was reduced from 1989 to 2004, while the share of several other small ethnic groups increased. For example, ethnic Romanians increased their proportion by 2.1%, and the number of Romanians grew rapidly from 2,477 to 70,258. Several reasons account for this rapid change. The main reason was the fact that in the census of 2004, a part of the population which was counted as Moldovans in 1989 declared themselves Romanians. However, it is necessary to do further research to see why the population structure has changed so significantly in Moldova since the fall of socialism.

MINORITY RIGHTS IN MOLDOVA AND THE GAGAUZ

Table 2 shows the number and percentage of different ethnic groups in Moldova in 1989 and 2004:

Table 2					
The Ethnic Groups in Moldova according to the Census of 1989			The Ethnic Groups in Moldova according to the Census of 2004		
Ethnic Identity	Number	%	Ethnic Identity	Number	%
Moldovans	2,794,749	64.50	Moldovans	2,579,202	76.1
Ukrainians	600,366	13.80	Ukrainians	283,367	8.4
Russians	562,069	13.00	Russians	198,144	5.8
Gagauz	153,458	3.50	Gagauz	147,661	4.4
Bulgarians	88,419	2.00	Romanians	70,275	2.1
Jews	65,672	1.50	Bulgarians	65,072	1.9
Belarussians	19,608	0.50	Other Groups	44,350	1.3
Gypsies	11,571	0.30	<i>Gypsies</i>	12,271	
Germans	7,335	0.20	<i>Belarussians</i>	5,059	
Poles	4,739	0.10	<i>Jews</i>	3,608	
Tatars	3,392	0.22	<i>Poles</i>	2,384	
Armenians	2,873	0.19	<i>Armenians</i>	1,829	
Azeris	2,642	0.17	<i>Germans</i>	1,616	
Romanians	2,477	0.16	<i>Other</i>	17,583	
Total	4,333,360		<i>Total</i>	3,388,071	
Source: Statistics and Sociology Department					

These censuses demonstrate that different ethnic communities are living in the Republic of Moldova; their rights are protected by the state.

According to the constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the foundation of the state is based on the political unity of the Moldovan people. The state is the indivisible fatherland of all citizens. Thus, the state guarantees and recognises the rights of all of its citizens. These rights include the protection of ethnic cultures, languages and the expression of their religious freedom as well (Article 10). Within the borders of the Moldovan state, the constitution recognises and guarantees also

the protection and development of non-native languages, such as Russian. No matter which race, nationality or ethnic origin citizens come from, no matter which language or religion they belong to, no matter what their gender is, no matter what their opinions and political ideologies are, in front of the law the Moldovan people have equal rights. This is defined in article 16 of the Moldovan Constitution.

Other laws are also based on the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova: there are laws that protect the cultures of these different ethnic groups. For instance, in September 1989 a law enacted concerning languages in the Republic of Moldova was enacted. This law regulates the use of different ethnic languages other than Moldovan in Moldova — such as Gagauz, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Jewish, Gypsy languages, and so forth. Thus, the state guarantees that the different ethnic communities in Moldova can use their own languages, including Russian. According to article 3 of this law, within the Republic of Moldova Russian can also be used as a common language among different ethnic communities, in addition to Moldovan. Moreover, after the ratification of this law, Moldovan became the official language instead of Russian.

On 23 December 1994, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova approved a special law for the land of the Gagauz in order to protect their culture and language. According to this law, the Gagauz land (*Gagauzia / Gagauz Yeri*) is an autonomous territorial land and holds special status. It can set its political, economic and cultural demands, according to the needs of its own community. There are three official languages in the land of Gagauz: Gagauz, Moldovan and Russian. In addition to these official languages, Bulgarian and Ukrainian are also spoken. This is also stipulated by article 3 of the same law.

On 21 June 1995, a law on education was adopted, and accordingly education should respect the family, cultures, language, customs and national identity of the state.

In May of 1999, another law on culture stipulated that, no matter which nation or state they come from, citizens have the right to protect and develop their own culture. Here again, the very same law, article 13, guarantees that each individual has rights and that the state is responsible for the protection of these rights and culture.

On 19 July 2001, the Moldovan Parliament ratified another law identifying minorities and the status of their institutions. According to article 1 of this law, minorities are defined as people who are permanent citizens of the Moldovan Republic and who have their own ethnic cultural, religious and linguistic identities. It also defines which communities describe themselves as having different ethnic backgrounds. This was based on the recommendation 1201 (1993) of the European Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

On 19 December 2003, another law was ratified in order to set a national policy for the Moldovan Republic, stipulating the protection of the cultural heritage of the different ethnic groups by the Moldovan government. In order to implement these approved and ratified laws and decisions, the Moldovan government makes efforts to further analyse the culture, language, religion and customs of different ethnic groups.

On 20/21 July 2006, in Comrat, the capital of Gagauzia (*Gagauz Yeri*), a Global Gagauz Congress (*Dünnaa Gagauzların Kongresi*) was organised. There were representatives from Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Canada, United States, Brazil and other states, because the Gagauz Diaspora encompasses all of these states. More than 220 delegates attended the congress. A very comprehensive cultural programme accompanied the congress as well. This congress was organised under the auspices of the President of Moldova and the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

A discussion topic that overlaps with what we have discussed today was also debated at the congress – that is, what the state has done for the minorities in

Moldova.⁵ Furthermore, important developments regarding the rights of the different ethnic groups were achieved:

Culture

In the Republic of Moldova, there were 525 communities of different ethnic backgrounds — such as the Gagauz, the Bulgarians, the Gypsies and so forth. Representatives of these groups participated in the promotion of these cultures: 259 Ukrainians, 119 Russians, 39 Gagauz, 43 Bulgarians, one Gypsy, and 125 others.

The national library in the capital of Moldova has an extensive catalogue in the languages of the different ethnic groups of Moldova. There are also other libraries housing books in different ethnic languages. In Comrat and Çadır-Lunga in Gagauzia there is a Gagauz theatre; in the district of Tarakli there is a Bulgarian one. In Chişinău and in other cities in Moldova Russian and Moldovan theatres stage shows.

Science

The National Academy of Sciences has branches of history and law and cultural heritage which analyse the culture, language, customs and the folklore of these different ethnic minorities.

Education

In Moldova, there are 1,499 schools (except for the schools on the left side of the river Dnestr). The education in 1,116 of these schools is in the Moldovan language. In 276 schools, the education is in Russian. Two schools are Jewish and 93 schools are mixed.

⁵ See the reports in the newspaper **Nezavisimaja Moldova**, No.110, 1 August 2006, p. 3.

78% of the students receive their education in the official language; 21.8% of them complete their studies in Russian; 0.06% study Ukrainian; and 0.02% study Bulgarian.

There are 52 schools and four high schools with 8,897 students that teach Ukrainian. There are 36 primary schools and 16 high schools teaching in Gagauz (29,483 students), and 22 primary schools and 8 high schools teaching in Bulgarian (8,186 students). Once they complete their studies in Moldova, many of these students study abroad — for example, in Russia, Turkey, the Ukraine or Bulgaria.

Press

Moldovan television and radio offer programmes in the languages of different ethnic groups – Russian, Gagauz, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gypsy languages, and the like. In Gagauzia, every village can receive programmes in the Gagauz language. Moreover, Gagauz newspapers also exist.

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MINORITIES IN THE BALKANS AND THE ISSUE OF TOPONYMY: THE BULGARIAN CASE

Mehmet HACISALİHOĞLU *

Ever since nation-states have begun to dominate Europe in the nineteenth century, the issue of place names has been under debate. In particular, last year's events in Austria have caused debates surrounding place names to be renewed. These debates emerged when the Slovenian minority in the province of Carinthia (German: *Kärnten*, Slovenian: *Koroška*) requested to use Slovenian names on road signs indicating settlements. The opposition of Austrian nationalist groups and especially of the governor of Carinthia and nationalist politician Jörg Haider turned discussions into a serious crisis concerning minority rights. In the middle of 2006, Jörg Haider requested that bilingual signs be completely removed and substituted by signs in German only. While on one hand Austrian politicians and courts

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prepared themselves to act, the persistent and vocal requests of the Slovenian minority were, on the other hand, closely followed by the European Parliament. In the end, the Slovenian minority's request was granted, due to the consensus-oriented approach of Austria's government and the EU's close interest in the issue. The issue of place names concerns almost all Balkan countries; yet, it has not been addressed in a serious manner.

In this respect, the Hungarian minority of Romania constitutes an exception. The Hungarian minority has for a long time been able to use Hungarian place names, even during the socialist era, since the government approached the issue in a highly sensitive manner, even under Nicolae Ceaușescu. At the same time, assimilation efforts were directed towards the Hungarian minority, such as the systematisation policy after 1988. The changes that Gorbačov instituted in the USSR after 1985 did not show much effect in Romania. Like China, Cuba and Albania, Romania also continued to defend Marxism and Leninism, refusing to follow the USSR's new direction. Gorbačov's 1987 visit to Bucharest and his criticism of Ceaușescu's politics did not lead to the expected results. Ceaușescu, who saw himself as the 'genius of the Carpathians', initiated a large systematisation project in 1988. According to this Marxist idea, a unified society was to be created by removing discrepancies between city and village. Thus, many villages were turned into 'centres of agricultural industry' by means of forced migration. In many villages, houses were torn down and the population re-settled in new multi-story buildings. The destruction of villages caused uproar, both within the country and internationally. The fact that minorities were uprooted from their communities and re-settled together with Romanians in common centres constituted a problem in itself and created a strong reaction among the Hungarians of Transylvania. In 1988, approximately 20,000 Hungarians fled from Transylvania to Hungary. Ceaușescu's systematisation politics was renamed 'bulldozer politics'

and generated much propaganda and protest in Hungary. Moreover, the issue of Transylvania created once more friction between Hungary and Romania.¹

However, Romania is the only Balkan state where the issue of place names in minority languages has been discussed and requested as a right.² This is related in no small measure to the political connections between the independent Hungarian state and the Hungarian minority in Romania, as well as to the long lineage of the Hungarian nationalisation process reaching back to the nineteenth century, and the highly developed consciousness regarding national cultural rights. The Hungarians, who constitute an important segment of Transylvania's population, were continuously supported by Hungary; therefore, this region became a battleground between the two countries during World War II.³ Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that Romania was forced to grant its Hungarian minority the right to use their native tongue.

However, if we define Hungary as Central Europe — as the Hungarians themselves do — it becomes difficult to claim that in the regions defined as the Balkans proper the issue of place names as a minority right has been seriously discussed so far. From a historical perspective, place name changes are a phenomenon related to the political fallout of the establishment of nation-states in the region. The policy of name changes — that is, the 'nationalisation' of place names appearing 'foreign' — was implemented in all Balkan states, including Turkey.⁴ The actual reason for my selecting Bulgaria as an example here is the fact

¹ Misha Glenny, **The Balkans. Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999**, New York: Penguin Books, 2001, p. 608.

² For the rights of the minorities regarding the languages in the socialist time in Romania see: Erich Kendi, **Minderheitenschutz in Rumänien**, München: R. Oldenbourg, 1992, pp. 66-77.

³ Barbara Jelavich, **Balkan Tarihi**, Vol. 2: 20. Yüzyıl, Transl. by Z. Savan, H. Uğur, Istanbul: Küre, 2006, pp. 262-268.

⁴ Name change policies in Turkey go back to the Young Turk era. See: Fuat Dündar, **İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası (1913-1918)**, Istanbul: İletişim, 2001, pp. 81-84.

that a large number of place names there are not of Slavic origin, but rather Turkish (including Arabic and Persian words) and, to a smaller degree, Greek.⁵

In principle, name changes — a product of the idea to annihilate everything that appears foreign to the nation and to create a homogenous nation and fatherland — constituted a tool of legitimisation that was applied differently in every country. The most detailed study on the issue so far in Bulgaria is the place name dictionary by Nikolaj Mičev and Petăr Koledarov.⁶ This study claims that, during the ‘five-hundred years of Ottoman oppression’ Ottoman-Turkish names were spread by force and under great pressure, with the aim to assimilate the Bulgarians.⁷ The same study also posits that changing names — claimed to have been ‘given under the foreign yoke of oppression’ and to have been ‘foreign to Bulgarians’ — was very natural and a necessary measure.⁸ Specifically, the authors claim that these names did not correspond to the new conditions after Bulgaria’s independence and that they needed to be changed again.

Changing almost all of these names resulted in a significant transformation of the region’s toponymic appearance and created a considerable break with the past. While in Bulgaria Turkish and Greek place names were removed, in Greece

Special Name Change Commissions or Commissions for the Changing of Foreign Names began their work in a systematic way in the 1950s and until the 1970s changed the names of a total of 12,000 villages. Esra Danacıoğlu, *Geçmişin İzleri. Yanıbaşımızdaki Tarih İçin Bir Klavuz*, Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2001, pp. 33-34.

⁵ For example, in the middle of the nineteenth century, 297 villages in the district of Filibe (Plovdiv) were registered; of these 214 had Turkish names. See Neriman Ersoy, **XIX. Yüzyılda Filibe Şehri (1839-1876)** (unpubl. PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2003), Part III.

⁶ Nikolaj Mičev and Petăr Koledarov, **Rečnik na Selištata i Selištnite Imena v Bălgarija, 1878-1987**, Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1989.

⁷ It is generally accepted in the field of Ottoman studies that in the empire Ottoman-Turkish names were not changed as a result of a conscious assimilation (that is, Turkification) politics, but that they spread as result of a historical process—for example, with the settling of Turkish or Yörük tribes in the region. For this reason, I will not touch upon this subject here.

⁸ Mičev and Koledarov, **Rečnik**, pp. 6-7, 9.

Turkish, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Vlach/Romanian and Albanian names were removed and substituted by Greek ones until 1940. In Turkey, also, in the 1970s, name change commissions Turkified a total on 12,000 place names. In brief, changing place names is not a practice specific to any single Balkan country, but a process occurring in almost all of them. Yet, the point that renders the names change process in Bulgaria different from that in other countries is related to political developments. The monarchy established after independence was overthrown by the socialist regime after 1945, and this event caused different name change policies to be implemented.

Name Changes in Bulgaria

Bulgaria was founded as a principality within the borders of the province of Tuna, essentially as a result of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78. Name changes in the region started during this war. In 1878, the province of East Rumelia was founded, by integrating the Northern and Western regions of the province of Edirne; with the annexation of this province by Bulgaria in 1885, the name change process began. During the Ottoman-Russian War and in the following years, forty-nine place names were changed without an official administrative decision. These villages usually received the names of Russian generals who had helped Bulgaria gain independence and of the Russian Tsar and members of his family. In this period, many Turkish settlements were removed from the map. For example, in the district of Filibe (Plovdiv) alone, 33 of the one hundred villages populated by Turks were emptied and never re-settled.⁹

Until 1912, the Turkish names of 65 villages with both Bulgarian and Turkish names were abolished. Based on the decision of the Bulgarian government, the names of a total of 423 villages were changed. Of these, three-fourths were changed in 1906. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the most important

⁹ Cf. Ersoy, **XIX. Yüzyılda Filibe**.

issue Bulgaria had to contend with was the problem of Macedonia. Especially in 1903, Bulgaria — which after the unsuccessful Ilinden Uprising was under the rule of Prince Ferdinand — armed itself and prepared for a war with the Ottoman Empire, aiming to add Macedonia to its territory. At that time, when the Liberal People's Party (*Narodnoliberalnata Partija*) was in government, General Račo Petrov was the country's prime minister.¹⁰ Moreover, 1906 was the year when the Bulgarians in Macedonia lost power *vis-à-vis* the Greeks and Serbs. It was during this time that the first major name changes were implemented in Bulgaria. At the end of the Balkan Wars, Bulgaria had added Tırnovacık (*Malko Tărnovo*), the Central and Southern Rodop Mountains and Pirin Macedonia to its territory. By 1920, the total number of settlements had risen to 5,659.¹¹

After the military intervention on 19 May 1934, a totalitarian regime came to power, ending Kimon Georgiev's provisional government and, with it, the parliamentary period.¹² The newly established regime, under the influence of the era's general conjuncture, emphasised the slogan of 'national unity' and, in particular, disciplined political life. While many laws concerning the Turks living in Bulgaria were enacted, great pressure was applied to the Turks to emigrate. After the military coup, the government restricted the political activities of the Turks, outlawed associations, decreased the number of Turkish publications, and stopped the publication of the magazines *Turan*, *Gerin*, *Öz Dilek*, *Yarın*, *Rodop*, *Halk Sesi* and *Dostluk* in the years 1934 and 1935. The number of Turkish schools decreased. Pressure on the Turks to migrate, applied by the Bulgarian government on the one hand and by nationalist groups on the other, increased greatly in this

¹⁰ The party chair Dimităr Petkov worked in the cabinet as Minister of the Interior. Milen Kumanov, **Političeski Partii, Organizacii i Dviženija v Bălgarija i Technite Lideri, 1879-1949**, Sofia: Prosveta, 1991, pp. 18-19.

¹¹ Mičev and Koledarov, **Rečnik**, pp. 8-9.

¹² Edgar Hösch, **Geschichte der Balkanländer, von der Frühzeit bis zur Gegenwart**, 2nd ed. Munich: Beck, 1993, p. 211.

period. Between 1934 and 1938, approximately 73,000 Turks migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey. In December of 1934 and May of 1935, the Turkish government requested that in a period of ten years more than 600,000 Turks be allowed to migrate. The Bulgarian government accepted the emigration of 263,000 Turks in the first half of this period. However, the Turkish government changed its mind and on 16th April 1937 suggested to the Bulgarian government that persons who had not received an entry visa from the Turkish consulate should not be given an exit visa; the Bulgarian government accepted this suggestion. Therefore, only 95,494 persons could emigrate to Turkey between 1935 and 1939.¹³

Under these conditions, with the government's decisions of 1934, the second major wave of name changes occurred: between 1920 and 1934, 1,971 out of a total of 2,091 settlements that would experience name changes had undergone the process. Between 1935 and 1944, the names of another 432 settlements were changed. Most of these were settlements located in Southern Dobrudja, which Bulgaria had added to its territory in 1940.¹⁴ Thus, almost all of the non-Bulgarian names of settlements on Bulgarian soil were changed before World War II.¹⁵

At the end of World War II, after the establishment of the socialist regime, name changes gained a new dimension. This time, while the still remaining 'foreign' names continued to undergo changes, names of Bulgarian origin that contrasted with the socialist worldview also began to be substituted. The 760 place names changed had mostly carried religious or monarchic significance and had commemorated the 'bourgeois' regime. These names were primarily those changed after Bulgaria's independence. Other changed place names included those carrying

¹³ For more detail, see: Valeri Stojanov, **Turskoto Naselenie v Bălgarija Meždu Poljusite na Etničeskata Politika**, Sofia: Izdadelstvo LIK, 1998, pp. 87-91.

¹⁴ Mičev and Koledarov, **Rečnik**, p. 10.

¹⁵ For example, the 158 Turkish village names in the district of Filibe (Plovdiv) were completely changed; in contrast, only 23 of the old Turkish village names were kept, their spelling being approximated to Bulgarian pronunciation. See: Ersoy, **XIX. Yüzyılda Filibe**.

the names of persons from the Bible, of Metropolitans, and having other religious meaning.¹⁶ The new names usually commemorated Bulgarian and foreign personalities who had participated in the socialist struggle. In addition, there were names commemorating persons who had served in Bulgaria's struggle for independence. Moreover, new place names referred to development, work, production, important historic events and the like.¹⁷

As an example for the change of place names, the villages of the Ottoman district of Hasköy (today Haskovo) are listed here:

¹⁶ When discussing this type of change of religious names, Mičev and Koledarov criticise the name change politics of the socialist era between the lines, emphasising that “the approval of the resident people was not obtained.” Mičev and Koledarov, **Rečnik**, pp. 12-13.

¹⁷ Mičev and Koledarov, **Rečnik**, p. 14.

THE ISSUE OF TOPONYMY: BULGARIAN CASE

Table 1
Change of Village Names in the District of Hasköy / Haskovo

ABDÜLBARİ (16 km NW)	deserted
AHADLAR-I KEBİR	1934 <i>Dve Topoli.</i>
AHADLAR-I SAGİR	1934 <i>Malko Kruševo</i>
AHIRYAN ÖRBEĞİ	1934 <i>Ahryane</i> , 1975 <i>Gălăbovo.</i>
AHLATLI	1934 <i>Krin</i>
AKÇE ALAN MEHMEDCE	1913 deserted, 1920 resettled, 1934 <i>Belopoltsi</i> or 1934 <i>Byala polyana?</i>
AKÇE KIRAK	1924 <i>Beli plaz</i> , 1956 <i>Beli plast</i>
ALALAR	1906 <i>Stambolovo</i>
ALAN MAHALLESİ	1906 <i>Široka polyana</i>
ALEMBEYLER	1934 <i>Bohyartsı</i>
ALİ BABA ZAVİYESİ	1889 <i>Sveti Iliya</i> , 1901 deserted
ALİ BEG	1906 <i>Bohyarovo</i>
AŞIKLAR	1934 <i>Rani List</i>
AŞIKLAR (12 Km N)	1934 <i>Pesnopoy</i>
AYDINLAR	1906 <i>Svetlina</i>
AYTOÇMUŞ	1934 <i>Zornitsa</i>
AYVACIK	1934 <i>Pančevo</i>
BAĞÇİLE-İ KEBİR	1906 <i>Golyam izvor</i>
BAĞÇİLE-İ SAGİR	1906 <i>Malki izvor</i> , 1966 <i>Malāk izvor</i>
BAKİLER	?
BAŞVİRAN	1934 <i>Yavorovo</i>
BEG KÖYİ	1934 <i>Golemantsi</i>
BEG PINARI	1906 <i>Bohyarski izvor</i>
BEYAZ FAKİH	1889 deserted
BODROVO	Bodrovo
BOĞACIKLI	?
BOYACI	1934 <i>Bagra</i>
CAFERCE	1906 <i>Elena</i>
ÇAKIRLAR	1934 <i>Yastreba</i>
ÇAMURLI	1906 <i>Dinevo</i>
ÇANAKLAR-I ATİK / Çitaklar eski	1934 <i>Goren čitak</i> , 1935 <i>Gorno Voyvodino</i>
ÇANAKLAR-I CEDİD / Çitaklar džedit, Çitaklar eni	1934 <i>Dolen čitak</i> , 1935 <i>Dolno Voyvodino</i>
ÇATAK	1906 <i>Byala reka</i>
ÇEBELCELER	1934 <i>Kokiče</i>
ÇELİKLER	1934 <i>Čilik</i>
ÇİFTLİK	?
ÇİLİNGİR	1934 <i>Klyučevo</i>
DAĞ HARMANLISI	1934 <i>Svobodino</i> , 1966 <i>Svobodinovo</i>
DAĞ MAHALLESİ	1934 <i>Balkan</i>

DAVUD	1934 <i>Davidkovo</i>
DEDELER	1934 <i>Miladinovo</i>
DERE	1906 <i>Poroyna</i>
DİPSİZ GÖL	1906 <i>Ezerovo</i>
DOBRİÇ	Dobrič
DOLAŞDIR	1934 <i>Zagražden</i>
DOYRANLAR	1934 <i>Doyrantsi</i>
DÜĞÜNCİLER	?
DURAK	1934 <i>Boyan-Botevo</i>
DURALI MAHALLESİ	1906 <i>Stoykovo</i>
EGİRÇİLİ-İ KEBİR	1934 <i>Dobrovolets</i>
EGİRÇİLİ-İ SAÇIR	1934 <i>Sedlovina</i>
ELMALI	1906 <i>Yabalkovo</i>
ELMALI KÖYÜ (29 Km SW)	?
ELMALIK	1934 <i>Yabälčeni</i>
ERİKLİ	1934 <i>Slivka</i>
ESKİ KÖY	1906 <i>Staro selo</i> , 1950 <i>Nikolovo</i>
ESMERLİ	1934 <i>Murgovo</i>
FINDICA-	1934 <i>Leskovo</i> , 1966 <i>Lyaskovo</i>
FİRTLİ (8 Km SE)	deserted
GABROVA	Gabrovo
GAZİ MAHALLESİ	1906 <i>Momino</i>
GEDİKLİ (7 Km WNW)	1900 deserted
GERDİME	1906 <i>Nadežda</i> , 1937 <i>Knyaginya nadežda</i> , 1946 <i>Nova nadežda</i>
GİRANE MAHALLESİ	1906 <i>Dolno Botiovo</i> , 1956 <i>Dolno Botevo</i>
GÖĞÜS	?
GÖKLEMEZLER	1934 <i>Stremtsi</i>
GÜNİLİ / Güneli	1906 <i>Lyubenovo</i>
GÜVENÇLER	1906 <i>Gäläbets</i>
GÜVENDİKLİ	1906 <i>Podkrepa</i>
HACI MAHALLESİ	1934 <i>Opälčensko</i>
HACI OĞULLARI	1934 <i>Hadžievtsi</i> , 1986 removed from the register
HARMANLI	Harmanli
HAS OBA	1934 <i>Tsareva polyana</i>
HASAN BABALAR	1942 <i>Baština</i> , 1966 <i>Baštino</i>
HASKÖY (Centre of the district)	<i>Haskovo</i>
HİMMET	1934 <i>Strahil Voyvoda</i>
HİSAR ALTI	1934 <i>Želyazna vrata</i> , 1958 removed from the register
HİSARLI OBA	1906 <i>Mānastir</i> , 1926 <i>Manastir</i>
HİSİMLAR	1934 <i>Orešnitsa</i>
HOCALAR	1934 <i>Popovets.</i>
HOROSLAR (34 Km SSW)	1934 <i>Petlino</i>
HOROZLAR	1906 <i>Petelevo</i> , 1966 <i>Petelovo</i>
HOTAKLAR	1934 <i>Sestrinsko</i>
HOTAŞLI	1934 <i>Rusalsko</i>

THE ISSUE OF TOPONYMY: BULGARIAN CASE

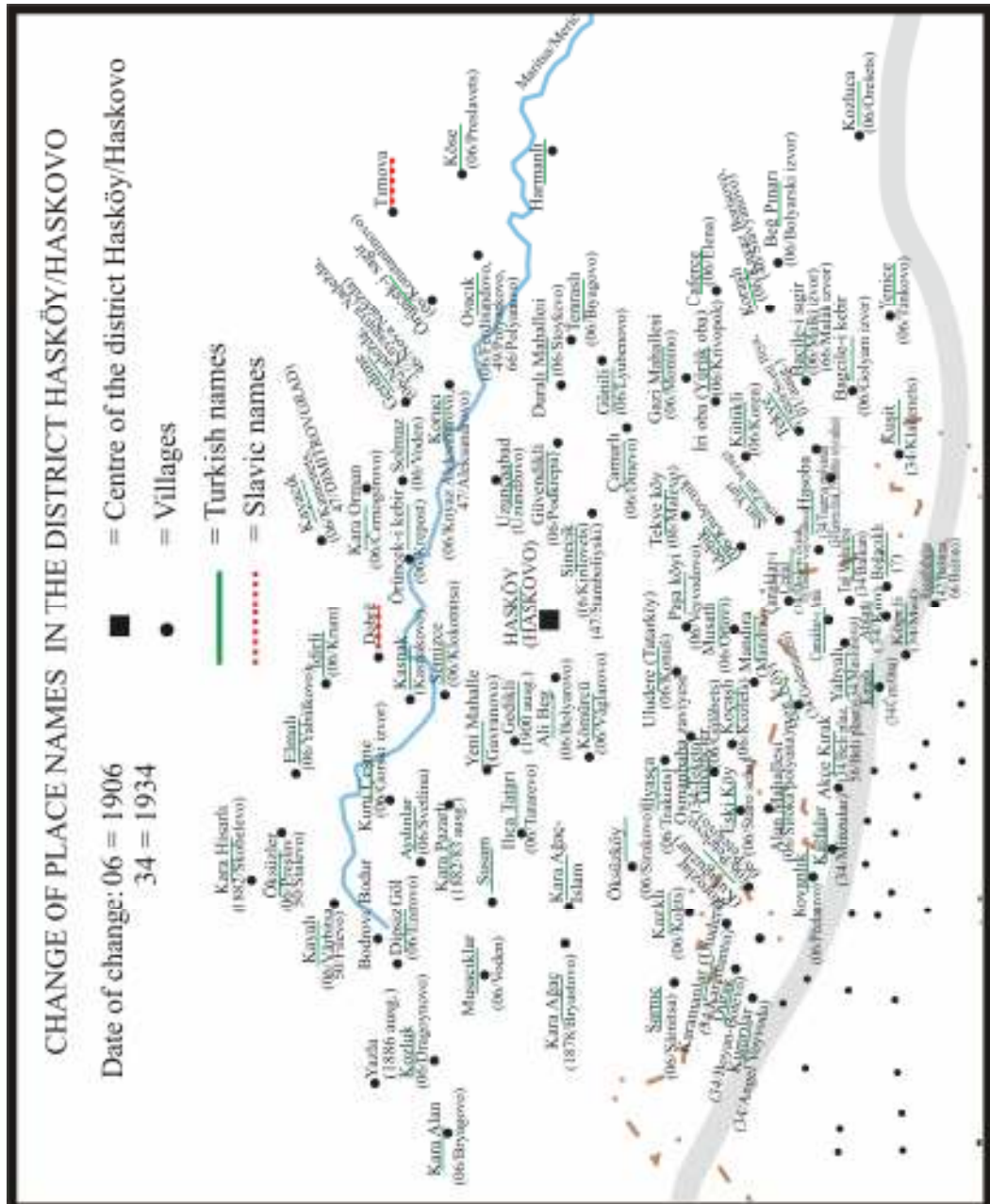
İBRAHİMLER	1934 <i>Avramovo</i>
İDEBİK	1906 <i>Knižovnik</i>
İDİRLİ	1906 <i>Krum</i>
İDRİSLİ	1934 <i>Lyulyakovo</i>
İLİCA	1972 <i>Banite</i>
İLİCA TATARI	1906 <i>Tatarevo</i>
İLYASCA	1906 <i>Trakiets</i>
İRİ OBA (YÜRÜK OBA)	1906 <i>Krivo pole</i>
İSHAKLAR	1934 <i>Ivantsi</i>
KABA AĞAÇ	1934 <i>Debelyanovo</i>
KABA VİRAN	1934 <i>Zvezdan</i> , 1966 <i>Zvezden</i>
KADEM ERLERİ	1934 <i>Staro myasto</i>
KALFALAR	1934 <i>Minzuhar</i>
KARA AĞAÇ	ca. 1878 <i>Bryastovo</i>
KARA AĞAÇ (İSLAM KARAAĞACI)	?
KARA AHADLAR	1934 <i>Konevo</i>
KARA ALAN	1906 <i>Bryagovo</i>
KARA HİSARLI	1882 <i>Skobelevo</i>
KARA ORMAN	1906 <i>Černogorovo</i>
KARA PAZARLI	1882-83 deserted
KARA TARLA	1934 <i>Černa niva</i>
KARA TİMUR	1934 <i>Železnik</i>
KARA YAHŞILI	1934 <i>Kaloyantsi</i>
KARACALAR	1906 <i>Popovo</i> , 1950 <i>Iskra</i>
KARAĞILAR	?
KARAGÖZLER	1934 <i>Černoočene</i>
KARAMANLAR	1934 <i>Karamantsi</i>
KARAMANLAR (ULUDERE)	1934 <i>Karamantsi</i>
KARLI	1934 <i>Snegotin</i>
KARTALLI	<i>Ilinita</i>
KASNAK	<i>Kasnakovo</i>
KAVAK MAHALLESİ	1899 <i>Kralyovo</i> , 1966 <i>Kralevo</i>
KAYA BAŞI	1934 <i>Skalina</i> or 1934 <i>Skalna glava</i>
KAYACIK	1906 <i>Kamenets</i> , 1925 <i>Rakovski</i> , 1947 <i>Dimitrovgrad</i>
KAYACIKLAR	1934 <i>Skalište</i>
KAYALI	1906 <i>Värbitsa</i> , 1950 <i>Filevo</i>
KEREMİTLER	1934 <i>Kalinka</i>
KİRAZLI	1934 <i>Čerešitsa</i>
KIRCA ALI	<i>Kardžali</i>
KIRLAR MA'A MAHALLE-I ÜRÜZLER	1934 <i>Zimzelen</i>
KİTANLIK	1906 <i>Lenovo</i>
KIZILCA HAFTAN	1934 <i>Iglovrah</i> , 1965 revmoved from the register
KLAZIKLI	1906 <i>Kolets</i>
KOÇAŞLI	1906 <i>Kozlets</i>
KÖKVİRAN	1934 <i>Patitsa</i>
KÖMÜRCİ	1906 <i>Văglarovo</i>

KÖPRÜLÜ	1934 <i>Most</i>
KORAŞLI	1906 <i>Knyaz Borisovo</i> , 1946 <i>Slavyanovo</i>
KORICI	1906 <i>Knyaz Aleksandrovo</i> , 1947 <i>Aleksandrovo</i>
KÖSE	1906 <i>Preslavets</i>
KÖSTİ MAHALLESİ (9 Km SE)	deserted
KOVANLIK	1906 <i>Pčelarovo</i>
KOZLICA	1934 <i>Oryahovets</i>
KOZLUK	<i>Dragoynovo</i>
KULAĞUZLAR	1934 <i>Vodač</i>
KUMRILAR	1934 <i>Angel voyvoda</i>
KURICA VİRAN	1934 <i>Pădartsî</i>
KURU ÇEŞME / KORU ÇEŞME	1906 <i>Gorski izvor</i>
KUŞ 'ALİLER	1934 <i>Komuniga</i>
KUŞİT	1934 <i>Kladenets</i>
KÜTÜKLİ	1906 <i>Koren</i>
KUZGUN DERE	1934 <i>Bărza reka</i>
MAKSUDLAR	1934 <i>Beli vir</i>
MANDIRA	<i>Mandra</i>
MEMİLER	1934 <i>Nenkovo</i>
MOLLA MUSALAR	1934 <i>Daskalovo</i>
MUSACIKLAR	1906 <i>Voden</i>
MUSATLI	1906 <i>Orlovo</i>
MÜSELLEM MAHALLESİ	1906 <i>Pravoslaven</i>
NEVESEL	<i>Novakovo</i>
ÖKSÜZ KÖYİ	1906 <i>Sirakovo</i>
ÖKSÜZLER	1906 <i>Preslav</i> , 1950 <i>Stalevo</i>
OLUCAK	1934 <i>Spoluka</i>
ÖRÜNCEK-İ KEBİR	1906 <i>Krepost</i>
ÖRÜNCEK-İ SAÇIR	1906 <i>Konstantinovo</i>
OSMAN BABA ZAVİYESİ	1934 <i>Teketo</i>
OSMAN BEŞELER	1934 <i>Osmanovo</i> , 1958 removed from the register
OVACIK	1906 <i>Ferdinandovo</i> , 1949 <i>Polyankovo</i> , 1966 <i>Polyanovo</i>
PAŞA KÖYİ	1906 <i>Voyvodovo</i>
ŞA'BAN	1934 <i>Draganovo</i>
ŞAHİNLER	1934 <i>Sokolite</i>
SALMAN CEMAATİ	1934 <i>Enčets</i>
SARI YURT	1906 <i>Žalti bryag</i>
SARNIC	1906 <i>Sărnița</i>
SELEMENLER	1934 <i>Široko pole</i>
SEMİZCE	1906 <i>Klokotnitsa</i>
ŞEREMETLER	1934 <i>Vinevo</i>
SEYYİD BEGLİ	1906 <i>Špahievo</i>
SİNECİK	1906 <i>Kirilovets</i> , 1947 <i>Stamboliyski</i>
SİVRİ KAYA	1906 <i>Ostri kamāk</i> , 1966 <i>Ostār kamāk</i>
SOFİLER / Sofular	1934 <i>Mădreis ?</i>
SOLMAZ	1906 <i>Voden</i>

THE ISSUE OF TOPONYMY: BULGARIAN CASE

SÜLE KÖY	1934 <i>Ohlyuvets</i>
SUSAM	Susam
SUSIZ	1934 <i>Bezvodno</i>
TAHTALI	1925 <i>Malko Topolovo</i>
TEKYE KÖY	1906 <i>Malevo</i>
TEMRASLI	1906 <i>Bryagovo</i>
TEPE ALTI RÜSTEMLER	1934 <i>Dolište</i>
TEPECİK	1934 <i>Rudina</i>
TIRNOVA	between 1910 and 1920 <i>Zlaten dol</i> , 1934 <i>Zlati dol</i> , 1947 <i>Maritsa</i>
TOĞANCA	1934 <i>Sokolyane</i>
TORBALI	?
TÜRK ÖRBEGİ	1934 <i>Latinka</i>
ÜCPINAR	1950 <i>Pilaševo</i>
ÜÇTEPE	?
ULUDERE (TATARKÖY)	1906 <i>Komuš</i>
UZUNCAABAD	<i>Uzundžovo</i>
YAĞMALI	1934 <i>Propast</i>
YAHŞİLER	1934 <i>Perperek</i>
YAHYALI	1934 <i>Maslinovo</i>
YALCILAR	1934 <i>Žinzifovo</i>
YAŞLI	1934 <i>Ženda</i>
YAYLACIK	1934 <i>Visoka polyana</i>
YAZLA	1886 deserted
YENİ MAHALLE	?
YENİ MAHALLE [Gedikli]	<i>Garvanovo</i>
YÜRÜKLER (YÜRÜCEKLER)	1934 <i>Patitsa</i> ?
YUVALAR	1934 <i>Gnyazdovo</i>

Sources: **Salname Edirne** 1290 (1873), pp. 217-225; Ottoman population register of Hasköy from 1840, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), ML.CRD. No. 626, date 1840; Russian Military Map: **Karty Časti Balkanskago Poluostrova**, Russian Generalstab, Department of Military Topography, 1884, republished 1895. For the preparation of this map see Vincenz Haardt von Hartenthum, **Die Kartographie der Balkan-Halbinsel im XIX. Jahrhundert**, Wien 1903, pp. 319-324; Ottoman Military Map: **Rum ili-i Şahane Haritası. Erkân-ı Harbiye istiksaf postaların tarafından ...**, date 1317 (1899-1900); Austrian Military Map: **Generalkarte von Mitteleuropa**, prepared by K.u.K. Militaergeographisches Institut Wien, 1913-1915, new edition 1939-1940; Map of the Sandjak Filibe: **Filibe Sancağının Harita-yı Umumiyesidir**, Prepared by Mirliva Nusret Paşa, published by Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun, 1279 [1862/63]. German translation of this map by H. Kiepert, **Karte des Sandjak Filibe (Philippopolis)**, aufgenommen nach Anordnung des dortigen Provinzial-Gouverneurs Mehemed-Nusret Pascha. Nach dem zu Constantinopel lithographirten türkischen Original übersetzt, auf den halben Laengenmassstab reduziert und autographirt von H. Kiepert, 1876; L. Cvetkov, M. Božilova, **Bălgarija: Pătna Karta**, 6th ed., Sofia: Kartografiya EOOD, 1997; For the dates of place name changes see: Mičev and Koledarov, **Rečnik**.



In the period until 1987, in the process of changing the personal names of the Muslim minority, those place names that were of Turkish origin and had been approximated to Bulgarian were also substituted by purely Bulgarian names. In fact, while implementing the personal name changes to the Muslim minority, references were made to the previous place name changes. A 1985 propaganda text draws such a connection in the following way:

*For five hundred years (1396-1878) Bulgaria was under the yoke of Ottoman oppression [...]. Hundreds of thousands of Bulgarians were forced to convert to Islam and become Turkified [...]. Exchanging Bulgarian names for the Turkish names for cities, settlements, regions and humans was a natural process. This process has begun more than one hundred years ago.*¹⁸

As a result, many place names in Bulgaria experienced several name changes during this period of one hundred years. These did not only concern villages and cities, but also mountains, hills, rivers, urban neighbourhoods and any other geographical name one can think of.

The socialist regime collapsed in the 1990s and a new major wave of place name changes has not yet occurred. However, several place names that were changed during the socialist period have been changed once again. For example, the city of Dobrič in Northeastern Bulgaria under the Ottomans was called Hacıoğlu Pazarcığı. In 1882, the Ottoman name was turned into Dobrič, which in turn was changed to Tolbuhin in 1949. Feodor Tolbuhin was a Soviet general who, as a representative of the Soviet general staff, signed the peace treaty with Bulgaria on 28 October 1944. With this agreement, Bulgaria was forced to bow to the USSR's command and accepted to fight alongside the Soviet army against its old ally, Germany. After 1990, the name Tolbuhin was abolished and exchanged for

¹⁸ **Offener Brief einer Gruppe Bulgaren aus der Volksrepublik Bulgarien, die ihre bulgarischen Namen wieder angenommen haben, an den Ministerpräsidenten der Republik Türkei**, Sofia, 1985, pp. 3-4.

the old name, Dobrič. Another example is the town of Vasiliko on the Black Sea coast, which was changed to Carevo in 1934, to Mičurin in the socialist era, and back to Carevo after the collapse of the socialist system.

The Current Situation

The new government in Bulgaria has not shown the same sensitivity towards place names in the mother tongue of the Muslim minority. With the transformation of the political structure, the change of personal names was revoked;¹⁹ however, this has not happened with place names. As of today, the government has not yet allowed the use, together with the Bulgarian names, of the Turkish names that still live on in the collective memory of settlements inhabited by Turks. Neither has the Muslim minority seriously requested to open this problem to discussion. The same is true for minorities in other Balkan countries. An example such as the Slovenians of Austria cannot be found elsewhere on the Balkans so far. Why is this so?

When comparing the situation of minorities in the Balkans, among the many assimilationist pressures that they have been exposed to, the least attention-grabbing one is the changing of place names. Minorities have experienced much pressure and threats to life and property that impact them in a more immediate way, so much so that place names are not of primary importance to them. Today, although the situation has very much improved, especially during the process of integration into the EU, it appears that issues of symbolic significance — such as place names — have not come on to the agenda yet because more immediate pressures and threats continue to exist. The fact that minorities have not seriously expressed such a request demonstrates that they do not perceive their basic rights and freedoms to have been completely secured. In fact, the fear that their present rights could be taken away again and that they could once more experience assimilationist pressures has not entirely disappeared. In such an atmosphere, one

¹⁹ For the transformation process see Ali Dayıoğlu, **Toplama Kampından Meclis'e. Bulgaristan'da Türk ve Müslüman Azınlığı**, İstanbul: İletişim, 2005, pp. 375-387.

does not pay much attention to place names as integral part of the fields of language and culture.

However, in Central and Western Europe the situation is quite different from the one on the Balkans, since the minorities themselves, as well as the stability of the states in which they live, have contributed much to their confidence. Thus, they are able to make themselves heard when it comes to place names, as did the Slovenians of Austria. To give another example, in 1945 the region of Silesia which surrounds the city of Breslau (Wroclaw) and was part of Germany until the end of World War II was annexed to Poland; most of its German population migrated to Germany. After the collapse of the socialist regime in Poland, the cultural and political rights of the German minority were restored in the 1990s. The German minority requested permission to officially use the old names in their native tongue again. Now, official Polish institutions have begun to use in their German-language publications the old German names of settlements (e.g. Breslau, Bielitz, Krakau, Thorn) with German minority populations. Germans also requested permission to use road signs with German place names in addition to the Polish ones.²⁰ A similar policy has been followed for a long time in other European countries—for instance, in regions in Finland where Swedes live, and in Belgium where Germans live.²¹ In summary, the Swedish minority in Finland, the German minorities in Belgium and South Tyrol (Northern Italy), and the Slovenian minority in Austria can call attention to the fact that they have rights concerning place names in their mother tongue, because their rights concerning life and property are secure and because they do not need to fear anything in this respect.

It is possible to predict that the issue of place names and similar rights will be addressed in a serious way once the same conditions have been established for

²⁰ Adrian Sobek, “Die Zeit ist reif: Deutsche Ortsnamen in Oberschlesien: Wann ist mit zweisprachigen Ortsschildern zu rechnen?,” **Junge Freiheit** 14/01 (30 March 2001).

²¹ Sobek, op. cit.

minorities in the Balkans. For example, the institution of such rights in regions of Bulgaria with a Turkish population will, I believe, allow the Turkish minority to forget some of the sufferings they have experienced in the past and to contribute to a lasting friendship between Turks and Bulgarians.



MUSLIM MINORITIES AND THE DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS IN BULGARIA

Krasimir KĀNEV*

Several years ago, I presented the Bulgarian policy on the legislation and policy towards the Muslim minorities in Bulgaria at a conference on Islam and Human Rights in Post-Communist Europe. This presentation resulted in a paper, published by the Columbia University Press and I would suggest that those of you, who are interested in more detail, take a look at it.¹

I will now just briefly say a few words about the contemporary situation of the Muslim minorities in Bulgaria. I am talking about the Muslim minorities, because

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¹ Cf. Krassimir Kanev, "Law and Politics towards the Muslims in Bulgaria", paper presented at the Conference "Islam and Human Rights in Post-Communist Europe", Sofia, 15-16 March 1999, published in: **Protecting the Human Rights of Religious Minorities in Eastern Europe**, Eds. P.G. Danchin, E.A. Cole, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp. 316-344.

they are several. Let me start with data from the last census of population from March 2001 as a point of departure:

Table 1				
Population in Bulgaria by Ethnic Group and Religion in 2001				
Population by Ethnic Group				
Total	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma/Gypsy	Other
7,928,901	6,655,210	746,664	370,908	156,119
Population by Religion				
Total	Christian	Muslim	Other	
7,928,901	6,638,870	966,978	323,053	
*Source: Census of Population and Households, March 2001, at: www.nsi.bg				

Ethnic Turks are the largest ethnic minority group in Bulgaria. In March 2001, almost 750,000 Bulgarian citizens declared themselves to be Turkish. Second are the Roma with more than 370,000. These are the two most numerous ethnic minorities. The smaller ones include the Russians, Armenians, Vlachs, Macedonians, Greeks, Jews and others. We have to take into consideration, however, that the ethnic mosaic in Bulgaria is more complicated. The 2001 census data was based on free personal self-identification and some Roma, because of the stigma associated with this ethnic group, self-identified as Bulgarians, as Turks (where they were Muslim) and, to a lesser extent, as Vlachs or Romanians.

The census data does not mention Pomaks or Bulgarian-speaking Muslims. They too were counted as ethnic Bulgarians or Turks, even where they declared themselves as having a separate Pomak ethnic identity. No one knows their exact number nowadays. We only know that in 1974, when the first massive wave of official oppressive changing of Muslim names in Bulgaria was completed, there were 220,000 Bulgarian-speaking Muslims whose names were changed into Bulgarian. There was a second big wave in 1984/85, in the course of which the Communist Bulgarian government forced some 850,000 Turks to change their

names. To these we have to add the smaller-scale name changes under communism, which were going on throughout that period.

So far, we have focused on three big Muslim groups in Bulgaria: Turks, Pomaks and Roma. Recently, a new Muslim minority, composed of immigrants, has emerged. These are people from Arabic and other Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries, most of whom are not citizens but have settled permanently in Bulgaria as refugees or as other legal migrants. Some of them have acquired Bulgarian citizenship; others are on their way. Thus, at present the number of Bulgarian Arabs, i.e. Arabs who are Bulgarian citizens, is much bigger than the number of Bulgarian Jews.

This is the ethnic divide. There is, however, another divide, a village-town divide that has very much to do with social status. In the nineteenth century, most of the Turks in the Balkans lived in the cities. And the Bulgarian cities were predominantly occupied by Turks under the Ottomans. Nowadays, however, most of the Turks — 63% according to the last census — live in villages. The urban life and the party membership were two major indicators of higher social status under communism and, at the same time, major factors for further advancement in society. Bulgarian Muslims were underrepresented among both communist party members and city dwellers. Asserting the dominant role of the city, industrialisation and the accompanying migration brought the villages under communism close to collapse. After the fall of communism, the party membership lost significance, but the city-village divide continued to be one of the major social status indicators.

The Economic Roles and Socio-Economic Status

The fact that most Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks live in villages suggests something about their economic role. They are mostly agricultural workers, one of the poorest strata of Bulgarian society. Even among the agricultural workers, the Turks and Pomaks are poorer than the average agricultural worker. Many of them

have traditionally engaged in tobacco cultivation, a craft with a progressively decreasing economic significance in Bulgaria, as well as worldwide. Only Turks and Pomaks engaged in construction could benefit from the recent boom in this business. The latter, however, is restricted to several big cities and the Black Sea coast. This leads to a vast in-country migration of the Turkish and the Pomak male population, which of course goes along with difficult life away from home and family.

The situation of the Muslim Roma deserves a special mention. This is the poorest social group in Bulgaria, no matter where they live – in the cities or in the villages. For many of them, social assistance is the only source of living. Poor education, large families, poor health, discrimination and social exclusion has marked the lives of the members of this group for generations.

Birth Rates and Migration

With 13% of Bulgaria's population, at present this country has the highest share of Muslim population compared to any other EU member state. When considering the Bulgarian official statistics since the beginning of the century, it is apparent that the number of the Muslim population in Bulgaria has been more or less constantly circulating around 13-14%. Since World War II, birth rates among the Muslim communities have been much higher than the birth rate among the rest of the population. These higher birth rates were coupled with a much faster natural growth. Therefore, this constant stable share was maintained in spite of several big migration waves – voluntary exoduses, as well as expulsions. And only after World War II, there were three such big migration waves.

The first was in 1950/51 when more than 150,000 Bulgarian Turks migrated to Turkey. The second one took place between 1969 and 1978 and was based on a bilateral agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey. At that time, around 130,000 Bulgarian Turks migrated to Turkey. The last big migration wave took place shortly before the fall of communism, when the communist government opened the

borders for migration of those Bulgarian Turks which were believed to be dissatisfied with the forcible name-changing campaign of 1984/85. At that time – after June 1989 — more than 300,000 Turks migrated to Turkey. Of those, 100,000 returned already under communism. After the fall of communism, many Turks circulated back and forth, and it never became clear how many settled permanently in Turkey. We can safely assume that between 200,000 and 250,000 did, although many of them kept their Bulgarian citizenship.

When considering expulsion, we have to bear in mind that this is a controversial term in Bulgaria. Who you are and what attitude you have towards the Turks determines how many people you consider as expelled to Turkey. There is no doubt that in the summer of 1989 around 5,000 Turks were specifically targeted for expulsion and given very short notice, in some cases just a few days, to leave the country together with their families. Thus, there is no dispute concerning these 5,000. But for the remaining 300,000, there is a dispute: some would say that the rest of the migration was voluntary; others that it was voluntary to a certain degree and in certain cases and compulsory in other cases; still others claim that it was entirely compulsory. I think it is impossible speak about voluntary migration, given the political and cultural pressures to which the Turkish population was subjected more or less throughout communist rule, but especially after 1984/85.

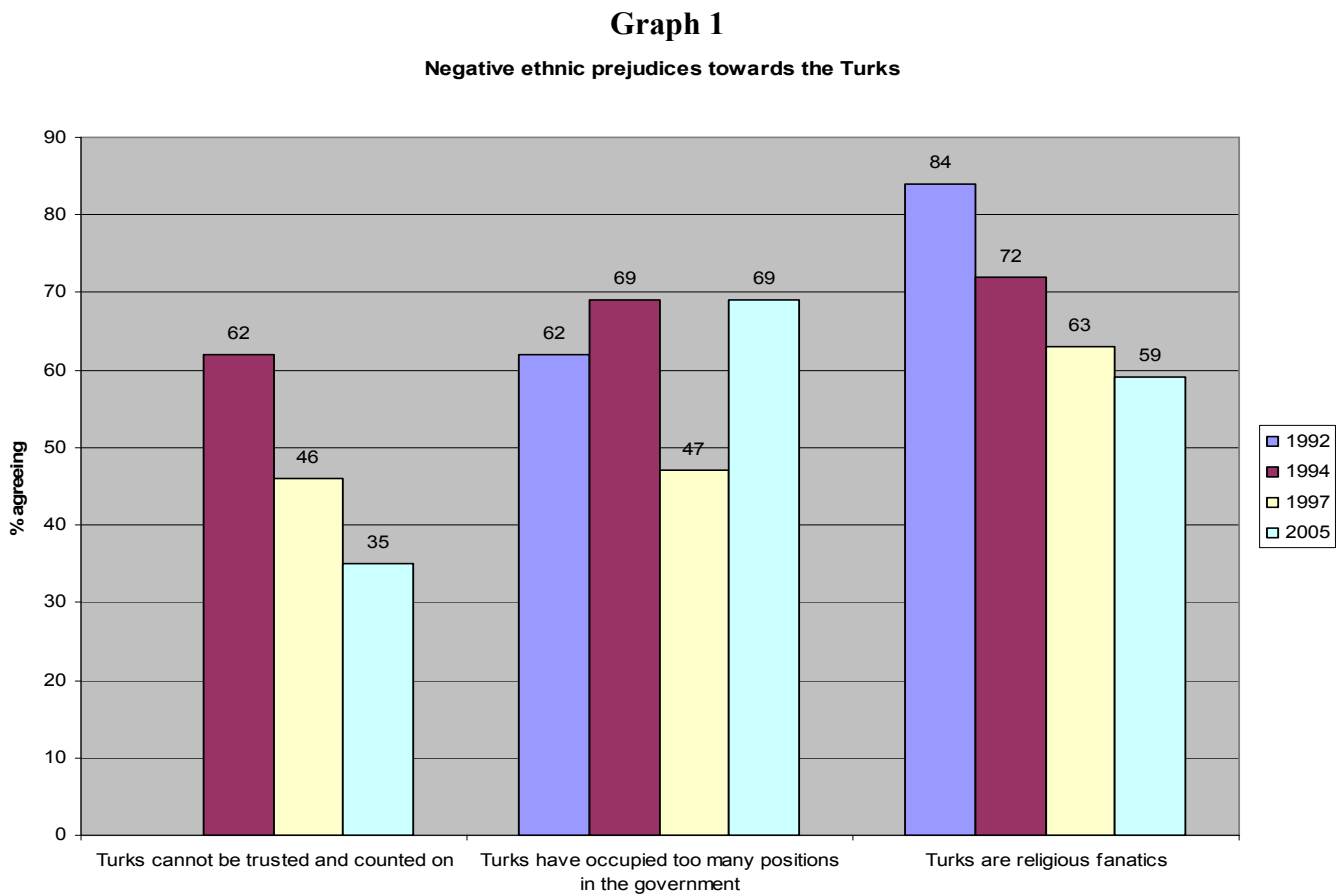
In terms of cultural contacts in the context of migration, once can claim that there are not very many contacts, and that Bulgarian culture continues to be very much dominated by what the educated people, the intellectuals in Bulgaria believe to be purely Bulgarian culture. Culture that is dominated by the ethnic and the national values of the Bulgarians leaves very little space for the culture of the minorities in general, and still less, I would say, for the culture of the Turkish minority.

The Situation after EU Accession

It is too early to evaluate the impact of EU accession on migration and inter-cultural contacts between Bulgaria and Turkey. Some believe that it might boost migration from Turkey to Bulgaria, especially of former migrants who kept their Bulgarian citizenship, which now counts as EU citizenship. With all the scepticism that one might have about the possibilities to settle back in Bulgaria, there is little doubt that this might allow them to travel easier throughout Europe and to benefit from employment opportunities that the EU labour market offers to EU citizens.

On the other hand, the Bulgarian cultural and political environment continues to present serious challenges to ethnic Turks. Since 1992, I have taken part in several surveys on inter-ethnic attitudes. They attempted to measure the level of negative ethnic prejudices and the attitudes to social distance between different ethnic groups. Graph 1 presents results on negative ethnic prejudices towards the Turks among Bulgarians, as measured in four representative surveys on ethnic Bulgarian population conducted in 1992, 1994, 1997 and 2005.²

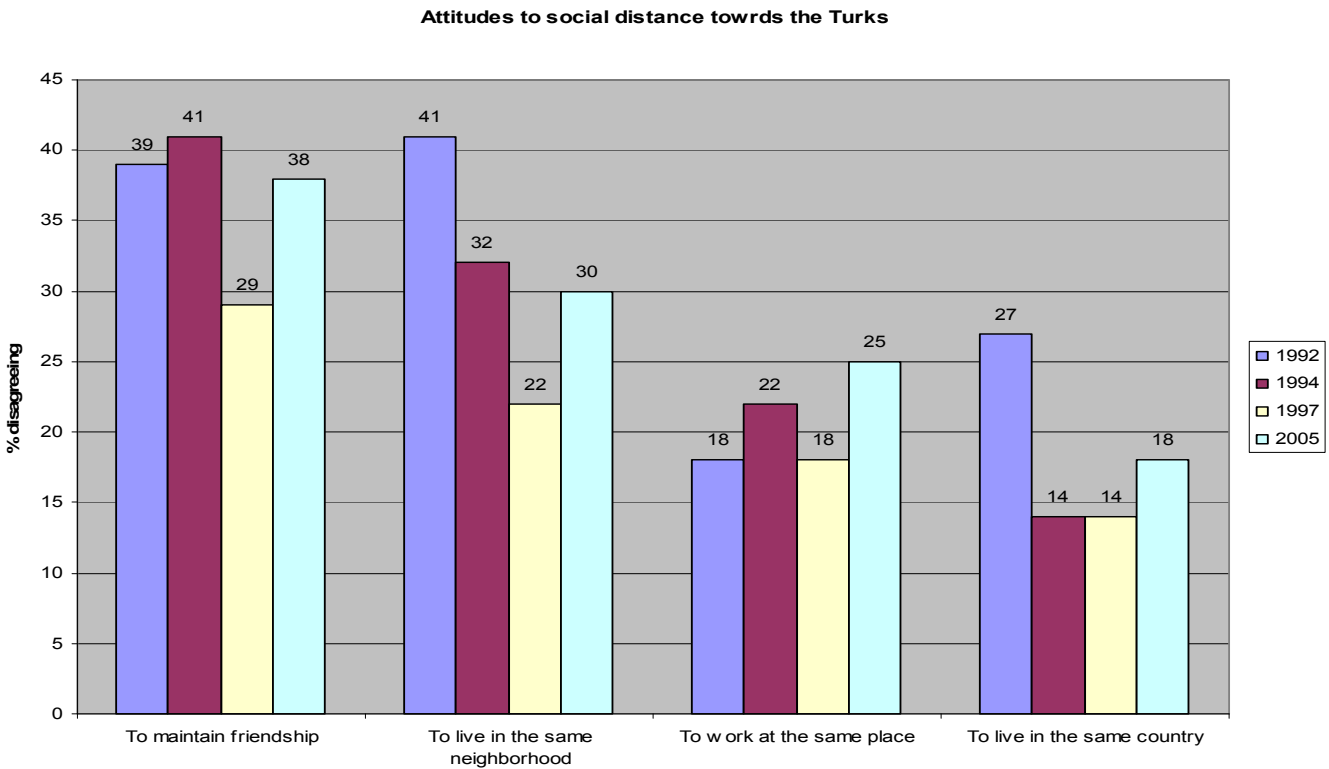
² For more details on the first three surveys see Krasimir Kanev, "Changing Attitudes towards the Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria and the Balkans 1992-97", **Ethnicity and Nationalism in East Central Europe and the Balkans**, Eds. Thanasis Sfikas and Christopher Williams, Ashgate: Aldershot etc., 1999, pp. 197-236.



The figures represent the share of those surveyed who agree with the statements, which express some of the most typical ethnic prejudices towards the Turkish population in Bulgaria. While in general these figures are quite high, there are some positive dynamics in the perception of the Turks as religious fanatics and when people judge whether they can be trusted and counted on. There is no positive dynamics with regard to the degree to which Bulgarians believe that Turks have occupied too many positions in the government. In 2005, the percentage of those who shared that opinion was exactly the same as in 1994. This is due to the fact that since 2001 we have had Turks as government ministers for the first time in the past century. This, as a matter of fact, has been the case from 2001 up to now, something that many Bulgarians find difficult to swallow.

Graph 2 presents the dynamics in the attitudes to social distance among ethnic Bulgarians towards Turks in the period between 1992 and 2005, on the basis of the same surveys. These attitudes are measured through the percentage of negative answers to questions on whether the respondent is willing to maintain friendship, to live in the same neighbourhood, to work in the same workplace or to live in the same country with an ethnic Turk. The same four representative surveys are the basis for tracing the temporal dynamics.

In this case, the picture shares several similarities with the one of negative ethnic prejudices. In general, one can detect positive dynamics of decreasing negative answers between 1992 and 1997. In 2005, however, higher percentages of Bulgarians say that they do not want to maintain friendship, do not want to live in the same neighbourhood, do not want to work in the same workplace and even do not want to live in the same country with ethnic Turks, compared to the 1997 survey. The share of negative answers as to the offer to work in the same place in 2005 is the highest of all surveys. Thus, apparently the social distance has generally worsened, and one can only speculate as to whether this is due to the stronger participation of ethnic Turks in the government at central and local levels since 2001.



This worsening of attitudes contributed to (although it was by no means the sole reason) the rise in 2005 of the extremist nationalistic party ATAKA. It gained 8.14% of the vote at the 2005 parliamentary elections and, its leader, Mr. Volen Siderov gained 24.1% of the vote in the presidential elections in October 2006. Anti-Turkish and anti-minority rhetoric played a key role in ATAKAK's election campaigns. For the upcoming EU elections, the party has decided to play on the Islamophobic sentiments of the public, coupled with a strong message against the membership of Turkey in the EU.

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**CHANGING ASPECTS OF MINORITY POLICY IN
BULGARIA AFTER 1989: THE CASE OF THE MUSLIM-
TURKISH MINORITY**

Ali DAYIOĞLU*

Introduction

Along with human rights, the subject of minority rights, which first appeared with the beginning of the Reformation Movement and the emergence of religious minorities and absolutist monarchies in the sixteenth century, today has become one of the most important factors in international relations. This development has become a vital issue for Bulgaria, which has a large minority population, mainly consisting of Muslim Turks. Following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc at the end of 1989, Bulgaria has wanted to become a member of Western international organisations and integrate with the Western world.

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Apart from the periods between 1919 and 1923, and 1944 and 1947, when the Bulgarian Agrarian Party and Fatherland Front were, respectively, in power, Bulgaria perpetrated a systematic and repressive state policy against minorities and particularly against the Muslim-Turkish minority which was (and is still) the largest one in the country. It did so from 1878 when the Bulgarian Principality was founded, until 1989 when the 'real socialist' regime collapsed, in an attempt to create a linguistically, culturally and racially homogenous nation-state.. This policy was implemented either in the form of assimilation practices to dissolve the minorities within the majority, or by forcing them to leave the country. This policy, which was carried out against minorities in general, and against the Muslim-Turkish minority in particular, reached its peak during the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) reign (1947-1989). A systematic campaign, whose intensity changed from time to time, was carried out to assimilate the minorities. Various pressures were imposed especially on the Turkish minority during the period between 1984 and 1989, which could be defined as 'Harsh Assimilation Period', as well as the policy of Bulgarianizing the Turkish minority by means of changing their names during the 1984/85, under the name of 'Revival/Rebirth Process'. This policies drew a strong reaction from international public opinion, which, until then had not shown much interest in the problems of the minorities in Bulgaria, and the international prestige of Bulgaria, whose image had already been dented in the 1980s because of the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II and arms smuggling, was heavily damaged. The development to change this situation was the beginning of a new era in Bulgaria after BCP General Secretary and President of State Council Todor Živkov, who was faced with difficulties both at home and abroad, as a result of forcing the Turkish minority to leave the country, had to step down on November 10, 1989.

At this stage, Bulgaria put forward its intention to radically change its foreign policy, which could be summarised as becoming a member of Western international organisations and to integrate with the Western world. In order to realise this goal, Bulgaria remained aware that embracing certain values such as

pluralist and liberal democracy and respecting human and minority rights was a prerequisite. Therefore, Bulgaria put aside its systematic and repressive state policies aimed at its minorities in general and at the Muslim-Turkish minority in particular and began to reinstate the minority rights recognised by international. With the help of Turkey and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), the most prominent representative of the Muslim-Turkish minority, the transition period from the collapse of the real socialist regime in Bulgaria to the establishment of a Western type pluralist parliamentary system did not involve any bloodshed or acts of violence among ethnic groups, unlike in other former Eastern Bloc countries. The main reason why Bulgaria managed to realise such a radical change in a short time without any bloodshed was that, by carrying out its responsibilities in terms of human and minority rights, it wanted to solve the minority problem which was its ‘weak spot’ in the international arena and to become a member of Western international organisations, mainly the European Union (EU).¹

This study is an attempt to analyze Bulgaria’s rapidly changing minority policy after 1989, focusing on the Muslim-Turkish minority. To this end, the issue of restitution of names that were changed by force during the harsh assimilation period between 1984 and 1989 was absolutely vital to the minority. Developments in education, religion and conscience and freedom of press will be covered.² In addition, I will discuss the difficulties faced by the Bulgarian governments in overcoming the nationalist circles’ reactions to the new policy about minorities.

I) Bulgaria’s First Steps to Change its Policy against the Muslim-Turkish Minority during the Post-1989 Pluralist Democracy Period

¹ Regarding the practices within the Muslim-Turkish minority in Bulgaria between 1878 and 2005, see Ali Dayıoğlu, **Toplama Kampından Meclis’e, Bulgaristan’da Türk ve Müslüman Azınlığı**, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2005.

² Because it is impossible to discuss all aspects regarding the minority in this paper, where the main points of the post-1989 developments are concerned, I will only mention these areas.

A) The First Tangible Result of the Bulgarian Administration's Changing Policy against the Muslim-Turkish Minority: 29 December 1989 Resolutions

By the end of 1989, Bulgaria's failure to keep in step with USSR leader Michail Gorbačov's 'openness' (*Glasnost*) and 'restructuring' (*Perestroika*) policies and the developments in Eastern Europe, the major economic distress in the country, the attempts to assimilate the Muslim-Turkish minority by force, and the subjection of hundreds of thousands of Turks to forced emigration after May 1989, as well as other developments left the country in a difficult position in the international arena and, thus, weakened Živkov's position. Even though Živkov promised that Gorbačov's policies would also be adopted in Bulgaria and that the party and state would be separated, this attempt was not enough to save Živkov. Faced with pressure from within the Party and Gorbačov, following the BCP Central Committee's meeting on 9 November, on November 10, 1989, Živkov was forced to resign from his posts as BCP General Secretary, which he had held since 1954, and as the President of State Council, which he had held since 1971.³ Consequently, a new era began for both Bulgaria and the Muslim-Turkish minority.

At the meeting on 9 November, after which Živkov was forced to resign, Petar Mladenov, who had held the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs since 1971 and who had more moderate political views in comparison to Živkov, was elected General Secretary of the BCP.⁴ As soon as the new government under the leadership of Mladenov, who had also assumed the Presidency, came to power it concentrated on changing minority policies.

³ Živkov's resignation demanded by the politburo of the BCP on 9 November 1989 appears, on account of the meeting held between the Bulgarian Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov and Gorbachev in Moscow only a day earlier, to have been demanded by the USSR as well. See Richard Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 214-216; Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasî Tarihi (1914-1990)*, Vol. II, 3rd ed., Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1991, p. 163; "Bulgar Dönüşü", *Milliyet*, 1 January 1990.

⁴ "Komşuda Yeni Dönem", *Cumhuriyet*, 11 November 1989.

Encouraged by the winds of change in the country, Turks and Pomaks held a widely participated demonstration on 11 December in Sofia, for the restitution of their names and recognition of their religious rights. Following this demonstration, until the end of the year minority members continued to voice these demands at demonstrations held in various places in the country. On December 29, 1989, while the minority members were holding a sitting protest for the restitution of their rights in front of the Parliament building in Sofia, the BCP Central Committee adopted the expected resolution on the issue. Parliament Chairman Stank Todorov, described as “the best Christmas present the Turks could have”, who announced these resolutions to the minority members waiting outside the Parliament building. He said that from now on everyone in Bulgaria could freely choose their name, religion and language. The BCP Central Committee’s resolution, which was also approved by the Council of Ministers and the State Council, meant that minority members whose names had been changed by force could have their names back, could worship freely and could speak Turkish. Although the Bulgarian nationalists exhibited a serious reaction to this resolution, the Bulgarian administration did not retreat and the 29 December resolutions were approved by the Parliament on October 10, 1990.

B) The First Application of the 29 December 1989 Resolutions: Restitution of Names

Following the 29 December resolutions and beginning with the restitution of names forcefully changed during the harsh assimilation period, the Bulgarian government took concrete steps to restore the rights of the Muslim-Turkish minority. Within this framework, on March 5, 1990, the Parliament unanimously adopted the “Act on Bulgarian Citizens’ Names”.⁵ The act included Pomaks together with Turks and envisaged a simplified court process by 31 December in order to restore names. Those who applied for the restoration of their names after

⁵ “Azınlıklar İçin Önemli Gün”, *Cumhuriyet*, 6 March 1990.

this date had to go through a complicated and costly procedure. Another striking point in the act was that suffixes such as -ov, -ev, -ova and -eva, which are characteristic of Bulgarian and are added to the end of the names, were made compulsory.

The subject of the restitution of names was brought to the Parliament's agenda in November 1990 by MRF, who had gained seats in Parliament following the elections on June 17, 1990. Speaking on the subject in Parliament, Ahmet Doğan, the leader of MRF, said that he would not be responsible for the events that could occur if Bulgarian suffixes were not abolished with an amendment to the Act on Bulgarian Citizens' Names. Following the discussions on the subject, on November 16, 1990, with an amendment to the act, removal of Bulgarian suffixes from Turkish names and restitution of names through an administrative act, not by court decision, was accepted.⁶ Bulgarian authorities announced that minority members had time until October 1993 to reclaim their former names and that once the deadline had passed the procedure of changing names could only be done through a court order.⁷

The amendment to the act led to a strong reaction by the Bulgarian nationalists. Despite these reactions, the Bulgarian government held its ground and continued its efforts to ease the tension among the ethnic groups.

⁶ "Türklere Ad Özgürlüğü", **Cumhuriyet**, 17 November 1990; Hugh Poulton, **The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict**, 2nd ed., London: Minority Rights Publication, 1994, p. 169.

⁷ Baskın Oran, "Balkan Türkleri Üzerine İncelemeler (Bulgaristan, Makedonya, Kosova)", **Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi**, Vol. XLVIII, No. 1-4, (January-December 1993), p. 126; "Türk Azınlığa 4 Ay Süre", **Cumhuriyet**, 6 July 1993.

II) The Bulgarian Government's Practices against the Muslim-Turkish Minority Regarding Education, Religion and Conscience, and Freedom of Press in the Post-1989 Era

A) Practices in the Field of Education

As education plays a vital role in minorities' protecting their identity as a minority group, the Muslim-Turkish minority's rights to establish and administer its own schools and receive education in its own tongue have been guaranteed in all the international conventions on minority rights which Bulgaria has signed since the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality.⁸ In spite of these international assurances, Bulgarian administrations have, from time to time, carried out practices violating minority's rights. In particular during the BCP reign these practices reached a peak. As a result, Turkish minority schools were closed down, and education in these schools was provided in Bulgarian language in this period.⁹

Following the difficulties experienced in education during the BCP reign, with the beginning of a pluralist democratic era after 1989, some important developments were achieved in education, besides other areas. In order to observe these developments, it is appropriate to analyze the issues related to education separately, as I will do in the following two sections.

1) The Problems of Turkish Education in Public Schools

Having reclaimed their former names and rights regarding various issues through the 29 December resolutions drawn up by the Bulgarian government, the minority turned its attention to demanding the inclusion of Turkish lessons in the curriculum of public schools. Within this framework, the MRF and the Ministry of

⁸ See Dayıoğlu, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-184, 229-232 and 312-315.

⁹ For implementations regarding the educational field during the BCP period see *ibid.*, pp. 315-323.

Education officials came together at the end of 1990 to discuss the issue and prepare a programme. At the meeting it was decided that beginning with the 2nd term of the 1990/91 academic year Turkish would be taught at public schools in areas where minorities predominantly lived. According to the agreement, all Turkish primary students would have four hours of Turkish lessons a week. However, there had to be at least ten Turkish students in each class for the course to be taught. Following this agreement on February 14, 1991, the Minister of Education, Matev Mateev, announced that as of March Turkish courses would be piloted in some primary schools and that starting from the following academic year Turkish would be taught at all primary schools.¹⁰

After this announcement by the Minister of Education, Turkish began to be taught at public schools, but the Bulgarian nationalists in areas where Turks were predominant showed a strong reaction. As reactions escalated, the government was forced to retreat on the issue of teaching Turkish at schools, and eventually Turkish lessons were dropped. Despite the MRF's persistent stance on this issue, Turkish was not included in the curriculum for the 1991/92 academic year. As a result, on September 16, 1991, the Turks, starting with Kărdžali (Kırcaali), in many parts of the country, started to boycott classes and did not send their children to school.¹¹

In the general elections held on October 13, 1991 the number of seats won by each party was: Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) 110, Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP-the former Bulgarian Communist Party) 106 and MRF 24. With Parliament having been reduced to 240 seats, the chances of passing the act seemed small. One of the conditions put forward by the key party MRF in return for supporting UDF to form the government, was to allow Turkish students to be educated at public schools in areas where the minority lived. As a result of this agreement, the

¹⁰ Poulton, *op. cit.*, p. 171. For minority views on the subject see "Bulgaristan Okullarında Türk Dili Eğitimi", *Hak ve Özgürlük*, (weekly, published in Bulgaria), 25 February-3 March 1991.

¹¹ "Türk Çocukları Okula Gitmedi", *Cumhuriyet*, 17 September 1991.

Ministry of Education began working on a regulation, which was prepared by late November. According to this new regulation, different from the agreement that had been reached between the MRF and the Ministry of Education, Turkish would be an elective subject and taught four hours a week outside normal school hours. Moreover, in order for the students to be able to take Turkish lessons, their parents had to hand in a written application, whereas in the previous agreement all Turkish students were eligible to take Turkish lessons. Although the regulation was far from meeting the minority's expectations with regard to Turkish education, since it was the first step the minority had to be content with these achievements.¹² After the regulation was accepted, the minority members ended the boycott and from 25 November 1991 onwards started to send their children to school again.¹³

As a result, after about twenty years the minority regained the opportunity to learn its mother tongue. Even though nationalist circles reacted strongly to the Ministry of Education's decision regarding Turkish lessons,¹⁴ the government did not retreat and four hours of Turkish lessons continued to be taught as an elective course at public schools.

Immediately after the Ministry of Education's decision in November 1991 to teach Turkish at the public schools in the areas where the minority lived, problems arose. Most of these problems resulted from the Ministry of Education's failure to set up a control mechanism that would ensure the implementation of the decisions and check whether these decisions were being implemented or not. The implementation of the decision to provide Turkish lessons was left to the local officials, most of whom had been appointed during the Živkov era. As a reaction to the Turkish lessons being taught at schools, certain school officials and teachers

¹² Ali Eminov, **Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria**, London: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Hurst and Company, 1997, pp. 140-141.

¹³ "Sofya'da Türkçe Krizi Çözüldü", **Cumhuriyet**, 24 November 1991.

¹⁴ **Milliyet**, 6 February 1992.

tried to prevent these lessons as much as they could. Moreover, since they were perceived to be ethnic Bulgarians by the Bulgarian government, attempts were made to prevent Pomak students from taking Turkish lessons.¹⁵

While discussions on education in the mother tongue continued, on September 5, 1994, the Council of Ministers issued a new regulation. According to regulation No. 183, students whose mother tongue was not Bulgarian could take their mother tongue as an elective course from first to eighth year at public schools.¹⁶ The funds for these courses were to be provided by municipality budgets. In spite of these regulations, which were intended to set certain standards for the education in the mother tongue, in practice, the problems mentioned above continued.

Following BSP's victory in the elections on December 18, 1994, Jan Videnov, who formed the government, appointed Ilčo Dimitrov, one of the most fervent supporters of Živkov's assimilation policy, as Minister of Education, and the problems regarding the issue further increased.¹⁷ The problems continued throughout the BSP reign until 1997 and decreased to a certain extent later, when in 1997 the UDF and in 2001 the National Movement Simoen II (NMS) and MRF formed a coalition and came to power. However, complaints that authorities were trying to dissuade Turkish students from attending the Turkish elective course

¹⁵ Ömer Turan, "Bulgaristan Türklerinin Bugünkü Durumu", **Yeni Türkiye**, No. 3 (March-April 1995), p. 299. Especially in the statements issued by the BSP, it was made clear that to extend the Turkish lessons to the Pomaks was unconstitutional and, therefore, it was imperative to take effective measures. Poulton, **op. cit.**, p. 170.

¹⁶ Elif Özerman, **Avrupa'da Dil Hakları: Genel Bir Çerçeve**, transl. Burcu Toksabay, Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği / Helsinki Citizens' Association, 2003], http://www.hyd.org.tr/tr/rapor.asp?rapor_id=14, 06.07.2005.

¹⁷ Dimitrov, who was also the Minister of Education during the harsh assimilation period, in an article published in the *Duma* newspaper, a publication of the BSP, defended the 'revival/rebirth process' from the historical point of view as very correct, but went on to state that the MRF was founded against the Bulgarian nation and that, therefore, it ought to be closed down. Turan, **op. cit.**, p. 298.

continued from time to time.¹⁸ After the coalition government was formed among BSP, NMS, and MRF on August 15, 2005, no changes occurred, and Turkish remained as an elective course in public schools.

2) Developments and Problems Regarding Schools, Teachers and Course Books

Today, in Bulgaria the minority does not have a single school where Turkish language education is offered. Nevertheless, the minority has four education institutions which teach in Bulgarian and hold a public status, but which operate under the chief mufti's office. Three of these institutions are vocational religious high schools and one a Higher Institute of Islam. The vocational religious high schools are in Šumen (Şumnu), Ruse (Ruşçuk) and Momčilgrad (Mestanlı), and the Higher Institute of Islam is in Sofia. While the vocational religious high schools in Šumen and Ruse are co-ed, the one in Momčilgrad is a boys' school. In addition to these schools, there is a girls' vocational religious high school, affiliated to the school in Momčilgrad, in the village of Rogozče (Hasarcık). The Higher Institute of Islam in Sofia is also co-ed. These schools are partly funded by the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs.¹⁹ Although the medium of education at these schools is Bulgarian, Turkish is also offered as an elective course. If they are successful in the university entrance exams, the graduates of vocational religious high schools have the opportunity to study in any department at the university. Although the Higher Institute of Islam is not currently accepted as a higher education institution equivalent to a university, graduates of the institute are accepted as graduates of the New Bulgaria University, which is a private university recognised by the state, if they take the extra courses and fulfil their requirements.

¹⁸ U. S. Department of State, **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1999: Bulgaria**, <http://www.state.gov/www/global/human-rights/1999-hrp-report/bulgaria.html>, 16.04.2001.

¹⁹ Apart from contributions received from the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, contributions are also received, with the knowledge of Turkey, from the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia.

In this way, a middle way has been found for the graduates of the Higher Institute of Islam. Apart from these schools, there are two five-year pedagogy institutes in Kărdžali and Šumen, set up to train teachers, and the universities in Sofia and Šumen have opened Departments of Turkish Language.

Despite these positive steps taken during the post-1989 era, certain problems persisted particularly in the field of education. The biggest problem faced after Turkish language began to be taught at public schools was the insufficient number of qualified teachers to teach the course. Many teachers who had become unemployed as a result of the gradual decrease in the number of hours of Turkish language teaching in Bulgaria since 1958, and the abolishment of Turkish in 1974 had to leave Bulgaria. More importantly, many Turkish teachers migrated to Turkey during the forced migration in 1989. Most of them who stayed in Bulgaria were retired and had not been teaching Turkish for about twenty years. The younger ones' Turkish and training education was not up to the standard. Although a lot of Turkish books had been imported from Turkey during the post-1989 era, the teachers did not know how to make use of these books effectively, because they did not know any educational methodology.²⁰ Therefore, the available teachers had to undergo training, and it was necessary to educate new teachers. In this respect, in addition to the Departments of Turkish Language opened at the universities in Sofia and Šumen, institutes of pedagogy were opened in Šumen and Kărdžali. Furthermore, students started to be sent to universities in Turkey in order to be trained as teachers.²¹ Also, Turkish language teachers were sent to courses in Turkey to learn methodology. The expenses were met by the Turkish government.²² However, after Ilčo Dimitrov became Minister of Education in

²⁰ Oran, **op. cit.**, p. 129. On this subject also see Yasemin Çongar, "Bağımsız, Bağlantısız Bulgaristan", **Cumhuriyet**, 24 October 1991.

²¹ Ali Piroğlu, "Türkiye'ye Giden Gençlerimize Uğurlar Olsun", **Hak ve Özgürlük**, 9 July 1993.

²² Oran, **op. cit.**, p. 129.

1995, the ministry did not permit any teachers to receive training in Turkey.²³ Following BSP's defeat in 1997, all the problems regarding teachers were gradually eased.

Another problem regarding education was the issue of course books. During the harsh assimilation period, the Turkish books published in the 1950s and 1960s were confiscated and destroyed. Consequently, there was not a single Turkish book available in the post-1989 period. Upon these developments, in September 1990, Turkish language experts and teachers formed a committee and started preparing readers in Turkish.²⁴ The readers prepared by the committee were written in both Turkish and Bulgarian, which led to a reaction from the minority,²⁵ and because of this, the Turkish Ministry of Education was asked to help with the preparation of the books. Following this cooperation, all of the course books necessary for the years 1 through 5 of education were supplied from Turkey and approved by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education in 1992. With the distribution of these books to the schools where Turkish was being taught, in the 1992/93 academic year, the problem about Turkish course books was partially solved.²⁶ Nevertheless, the MRF continued its efforts to solve the problem of Turkish course books once and for all.

B) Practices Regarding in the Field of Freedom of Religion and Conscience

Since the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality, with the various international agreements it has signed, and the documents pertaining to domestic law, Bulgaria has guaranteed the freedom of religion and conscience of the

²³ Eminov, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

²⁴ "Komşuda Türkçe Eğitimi", *Cumhuriyet*, 2 December 1990.

²⁵ Oran, *op. cit.*, p. 128. In the statement made by the components of MRF, it was announced that the reason why the books for teaching Turkish were prepared in two languages, namely Turkish and Bulgarian, was attributed to the desire of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, like English and French. For the announcement made by Talat Çoban, Secretary General of Kardzhali Branch of MRF, see *Cumhuriyet*, 17 September 1991.

²⁶ Eminov, *op. cit.*, pp 141-142.

country's Muslim-Turkish minority.²⁷ In spite of these arrangements, particularly during the BCP reign, in order to weaken the effect of Islam, which was seen as one of the biggest obstacles to the aim of assimilation of the Muslim minority within the socialist Bulgarian community, Bulgaria carried out practices violating the minority's freedom of religion and conscience. These practices reached a peak during the harsh assimilation period. This period witnessed the closing down of mosques, obstructing worship, prohibiting Qur'an courses and pilgrimage to Mecca, forbidding circumcision, fasting, wearing baggy trousers (a traditional costume), sacrifices during the Festival of Sacrifice and burials performed according to Islamic rites.²⁸

After Todor Živkov fell from power on November 10, 1989, as in other fields, a new period began with regard to the freedom of religion and conscience. Following the BCP Central Committee's resolution dated 29 December 1989, which stated that everyone living in Bulgaria could freely choose their name, religion and language, significant progress was made. Many practices restricting freedom of religion and conscience, which had been put into effect during the BCP reign, were abolished. With the state pressure on religion now lifted, construction and renovation of mosques and *medreses* started. In spite of these positive developments, occasional attacks on mosques were witnessed.

Even though most obstacles to the construction of new mosques were lifted in the post-1989 period, in reality permission for the construction of new mosques was proportionate to the population. For example, if the majority of the population in an area is Turkish, constructing a mosque is easy. If the Turks are minority, then it is difficult. From time to time, mosque constructions in the Pomak and Roma areas are also obstructed. Particularly the Muslim Roma face difficulties in receiving permits.

²⁷ About this subject see Dayioğlu, *op. cit.*, pp 182-184, 229-232 and 312-315.

²⁸ For detailed information see *ibid.*, pp 348-357.

In addition to permitting the opening of mosques for worship and the construction of new ones, the mufti offices and Community Administrative Councils were permitted to offer Qur'an courses. Religious courses were also offered now as an elective course at public schools. When the practice first started in 1997, the course included only information about Christianity, but in 1999 Islam was also included in the curriculum.²⁹ During the BCP reign, all restrictions imposed on Qur'an and other religious books were lifted. As a result, all restrictions on the importation and publication of religious books were also lifted. On the other hand, again during the BCP reign all restrictions on celebrating religious days, burials according to Islamic traditions, religious marriages and circumcision were removed.³⁰

Even though various restrictions regarding freedom of religion and conscience were lifted, as in previous periods, pressure and activities targeting minority members to accept Christianity continued during the post-1989 era. The article 13/3 of the 1991 Constitution, stating that Eastern Orthodox Christianity is Bulgaria's traditional religion, in a way opened the path for discrimination between Orthodoxy and other religious beliefs. While Bulgarian governments and the Orthodox Church prevented the spread of missionary activities among Orthodox Christians,³¹ some governments and the Church supported activities aimed at Christianizing Muslims. It is noteworthy that during the post-1989 era Orthodox clergymen set out to spread Christianity, particularly among Pomaks and Muslim Roma. In addition to the Orthodox Church, the Protestant, Evangelist and Catholic

²⁹ U. S. Department of State, **International Religious Freedom Report 2005: Bulgaria**, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51545.htm>, 17.04.2007.

³⁰ Yonca Özkaya, "Demokrasinin Ucunu Gördük", **Cumhuriyet**, 15 April 1991.

³¹ On this subject see U. S. Department of State, **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 1994: Bulgaria**, <http://www.state.gov/www/global/human-rights/1994-hrp-report/bulgaria.html>, 16.04.2002. Also see Human Rights Watch, **World Report 1998: Bulgaria**, <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/worldreport98/europe/bulgaria.html>, 17.04.2002; Human Rights Watch, **World Report 1999: Bulgaria**, <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/worldreport99/europe/bulgaria.html>, 17.04.2002.

Churches also started intensive missionary activities, particularly among Muslim Roma.³² While Bulgarian governments prevented the conversion of Orthodox Roma to Protestantism, under the table they supported the Protestant missionaries' activities targeting the Muslim Roma.

C) Practices Regarding Freedom of the Press

Even though freedom of press has been secured by domestic law and through various international agreements to which Bulgaria is a party,³³ just as with the issues of education and freedom of religion and conscience, Bulgarian governments continues certain practices that violate the minority's rights. In particular, during the harsh assimilation period, publication of Turkish newspapers and magazines was banned, and the Bulgarian radio's Turkish broadcast was terminated. Moreover, listening to radio channels of Turkey was forbidden, and Turkish books were confiscated from libraries. In fact, to speak Turkish in public places and places of work was forbidden, and those who did not abide suffered punishment ranging from fines to imprisonment and exile.³⁴

During the post-1989 pluralist parliamentary period, all restrictions on the freedom of press were lifted and in time Turkish publication-broadcast activities were allowed. In this context, newspapers and magazines like *Müslümanlar*, *Hak ve Özgürlük*, *İslam Kültürü*, *Güven*, *Zaman*, *Kaynak*, *Deli Orman*, *Balkan Aktüel*, *Filiz*, *Cır Cır* and *Balon* were published. In the 2000s, the work of Turkish internet news agencies and publication of newspapers also began. Although some of them suffered attacks by Bulgarian nationalists from time to time, most of the agencies and newspapers in the electronic medium continued publication. In addition to

³² Eminov, **op. cit.**, p. 65. On this subject also see U. S. Department of State, **International Religious Freedom Report 2005: Bulgaria**, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51545.htm>, 17.04.2007.

³³ On this subject see Dayioğlu, **op. cit.**, pp. 266-267 and 357.

³⁴ For further details on this subject see **ibid.**, pp. 297-298 and 358-359.

newspapers and magazines, Turkish books were also allowed to be published during the post-1989 era.³⁵ Moreover, in June 2004, a Turkish Book Room was opened in Sofia City Library.³⁶

In addition to allowing publication of Turkish newspapers, magazines and books, Radio Bulgaria, a state broadcast corporation, began Turkish broadcast for an hour three days a week, targeting settlement areas where predominantly Turks lived.³⁷ Gradually, time allocated to Turkish broadcast on Radio Bulgaria was increased. Hence, broadcast time was increased to 30 minutes daily, and in 2004 to three hours a day. Also, a broadcast of one hour per week in the Roma language has been initiated. Christo Botev Radio, a state broadcast corporation, has allocated 2,000 of its yearly total of 7,800 hours of broadcast to minorities, ethnic and religious issues.³⁸ In July of 1998, following the Parliament's ratification of a bill regarding amendments to the Radio and Television Law, the legal basis for broadcasting Turkish programmes on television was secured.³⁹ In this respect, from February 2000 onwards a 20-minute Turkish news, music and entertainment programme called *Beyaz Güvercin* (White Dove) started its broadcast on Sunday afternoons. In addition, Bulgarian National Television (BNT) began to broadcast from 2 October 2000 onwards an eight-minute news bulletin in Turkish every weekday on Channel 1 at 17:00, after the Bulgarian news bulletin.⁴⁰ This time was

³⁵ Turan, **op. cit.**, p. 299.

³⁶ "Sofya Kütüphanesinde Türkçe Kitaplar Bölümü Açıldı", **Bulgar-Türk Haber Ajansı**, 4 June 2004], <http://www.forums.host.sk/btha/news.php?id=562>, 20.08.2004.

³⁷ Nurcan Özgür, **Etnik Sorunların Çözümünde Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi**, İstanbul: DER Yayınları, 1999, p. 190; U. S. Department of State, **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002: Bulgaria**, <http://www.novinite.com/view.news.php?id=21169>, 08.07.2005.

³⁸ U. S. Department of State, **Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2004: Bulgaria**, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41674.htm>, 07.07.2005.

³⁹ "Bulgaristan'da Türkçe Yayına İzin", **Cumhuriyet**, 1 August 1998.

⁴⁰ Besides Turkish, broadcast in Armenian and Jewish has started on Bulgarian TV. "Bulgaristan, Nerden Nereye", **Hürriyet**, 25 February 2001. Also see Lilia Petkova, "The Ethnic Turks in

extended to ten minutes in 2001.⁴¹ Although the country's various nationalist circles, led by the Attack Coalition which entered Parliament in the 25 June 2005 elections and has maintained a racist policy against the ethnic minorities (mainly the Turks and Roma) in the country, reacted to the broadcast of the Turkish news bulletin and repeatedly, but ineffectively, attempted to prevent it.

Conclusion

With the specific case of the Muslim-Turkish minority's fundamental rights, in the post-1989 era Bulgaria abandoned its policy, which it had pursued between 1878 and 1989, with the exception of a few periods, of assimilating the Muslim-Turkish minority, seen as a threat to the country's unitary structure. While establishing a libertarian order based on democracy and human rights, Bulgaria began to restore the rights recognised by international law to the country's minorities. The main reason for carrying out such a radical change without bloodshed was Bulgaria's desire to join Western international organisations, mainly the EU. Especially from the mid-1990s onwards and led by the presidency, all sectors of the community showed full determination, which enabled Bulgaria to make significant progress in human and minority rights issues in a very short time period.⁴² In this respect, Bulgaria clearly understood that adopting certain values — such as respect for pluralist and libertarian democracy, human and minority

Bulgaria: Social Integration and Impact on Bulgarian-Turkish Relations, 1947-2000", **The Global Review of Ethnopolitics**, Vol. I, No. 4, (June 2002), p. 52.

⁴¹ Can Dündar, "Türkler Kilitli Çevirdi", **Milliyet**, 20 November 2001; "DPS, Okullarda Türkçe Ders Kitapları İstiyor", **Bulgar-Türk Haber Ajansı**, 23 June 2006, <http://www.bg-turk.com/index.php?act=news&id=1023>, 24.04.2007. Films criticizing the harsh assimilation period have been shown in cinemas. For instance, a film named *The Stolen Eyes*, a joint Bulgarian-Turkish venture, which depicts the compulsory replacement of Turkish names by Bulgarian ones in 1984/85 period and criticises the assimilatory practices between 1984 and 1989, was shown in Bulgarian cinemas in September 2005. "Türk-Bulgar Yapımı Film "Çalıntı Gözler" Sinemalarda...", **Bulgar-Türk Haber Ajansı**, 16 September 2005, <http://www.bg-turk.com/index.php?act=news&id=527>, 24.04.2007.

⁴² Mustafa Türkeş, "Geçiş Sürecinde Dış Politika Öncelikleri: Bulgaristan Örneği", **Türkiye'nin Komşuları**, Der. Mustafa Türkeş, İlhan Uzel, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2002, p. 206.

rights — was a prerequisite to join Western international organisations and integrate with the Western world. Bulgaria did not make the mistake of adopting the infrastructure of the West, whose main element is capitalism, but leave its superstructure, which respects human and minority rights. While gradually making the transition from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy, it began to establish this superstructure.

In addition to the determined stance adopted by the Bulgarian governments in power after 1989 and by the opposition parties, the minority's representative (MRF) also made significant contributions to Bulgaria's efforts to integrate with the Western world. Unlike the political parties representing minorities in the former Eastern Bloc countries, the MRF never followed a policy demanding secession or autonomy; always emphasised Bulgaria's national unity in its statements, and did not make extreme demands that would draw a reaction from the Bulgarian majority. Instead, it waited for the conditions to mature and eliminated the radical elements within the movement; at the same time, it carried out an active policy protecting the minority's rights, all of which made significant contributions to achieving communal peace in Bulgaria. Achieving communal peace enabled Bulgaria's membership to the EU, which adopts a policy of not accepting countries with problems.

Turkey also made important contributions to Bulgaria's efforts regarding integration with the West. By distancing itself from irredentist policy ever since the early republican era, coupled with the adoption of a policy that Turks outside of Turkey can be happy only in their host states, Turkey helped Bulgaria to satisfy, in terms of human and minority rights issue, the political criteria of the EU. In addition to ensuring the restitution of rights of the Muslim-Turkish minority in

Bulgaria after 1989, this policy also greatly improved Turkish-Bulgarian relations.⁴³

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⁴³ For Turkish-Bulgarian relations during the post-1989 period, see Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun, **Bulgaristan’la Yeni Dönem: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Ankara-Sofya İlişkileri**, Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001, pp. 41-112; Türkeş, **op. cit.**, pp. 192-210; İlhan Uzel, “Bulgaristan’da Rejim Değişikliği ve Türk-Bulgar İlişkileri”, **Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar**, Ed. Baskın Oran, Vol. II, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001, pp. 484-490.

**THE TURKS OF THE DODECANESE: FROM
LAUSANNE TO THE PRESENT**

Elçin MACAR*

The purpose of this paper is to attract your attention to the Dodecanese Turks, because when the Lausanne Treaty was signed, the Dodecanese were not considered to be Greek islands. This is not a very well-known issue in Turkey, because Turks in Greece are usually thought of as living in Thrace, but no one considers the ones in the Dodecanese.

In 1912, the Italians reigned in the Dodecanese, and in 1923 with the Lausanne Treaty their dominance on these islands was ratified. Germans occupied the islands in 1942, and at the end of the war and afterwards the British took over. In 1946,

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with the Paris Treaty, the American and Soviet foreign ministers reached a consensus on transferring the islands to Greece.¹

The Dodecanese Turks were sent to islands to settle there during the Ottoman period. At the end of the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century, Muslims from Crete travelled to Rhodes and Kos.

Under the Italians, the Dodecanese people had certain privileges; for example, they did not have to serve in the military.² The Ottoman *millet* system was quite practical for the islands, and this system continued during the reign of the Italians. Thus, the Dodecanese continued to have their own schools and their own courts. That was valid both for the Greeks and for the Turks. Turks were used as a component of balance, as a leverage against the Greeks. There was a policy of converting the Orthodox population into Catholics. Italians were taken to the Dodecanese to settle there. Two-hundred fifty new villages were constructed in the 1930s.³ Italian became the compulsory language at schools, and the names of different settlements, as in the examples shown by Mehmet Hacısalihoglu, were changed to Italian.⁴ This region was still under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch in Istanbul, and Italians tried to form an independent Church in the Dodecanese, probably on account of a slight whisper from the Vatican.⁵

During World War II, Germans took the agricultural products of Greece to Central Europe. Due to the war, food was scarce, and starvation in Greece

¹ Zeki Çelikkol, **Rodos'taki Türk Eserleri ve Tarihçe**, 2nd ed., Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992, p. 34.

² Michèle Nicolas, "Une Communauté Musulmane de Grèce (Rhodes et Kos)", **Turcica**, VIII/1, 1976, p. 61.

³ Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi [Republican Archive of the Prime Ministry in Ankara], (030.10 235.666.6).

⁴ Çelikkol, **op.cit.**, p. 33.

⁵ For details see, Elçin Macar, **Cumhuriyet Dönemi İstanbul Rum Patrikhanesi**, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2003, pp. 144-145.

followed. The islands were even more affected, because agriculturally they depended on the mainland and on Anatolia, but during the occupation, such links were completely broken, resulting in a stoppage on the importation of agricultural goods and starvation. During these years, the Turks in Greece fled to the coasts of Mugla, but almost 95 per cent of them returned after the war.

In 1947, when Greece received the islands, there was a massive migration wave from the islands to Turkey, because they had two options: either becoming a Greek citizen, or emigrating. Most of these migrations focused on the Aegean coast. In 1947, the year when the islands were transferred to Greece, in Rhodes there were 4,321 Muslims, and in Kos 1,726.⁶ However, just like Turkey, which did not ask for questions on religion or mother tongue in the census any longer, Greece decided to do the same after 1951. Thus, it became very difficult to follow up on these figures. According to data received from Rhodes, in 1966 there were 3,000 Turks, and 1,300 of them were on the island of Kos.⁷

Of course, the intervention in Cyprus in 1974 caused the second wave of immigration, with people mostly settling in Izmir, Karşıyaka or Marmaris in Turkey. In 1970s, there were reportedly only 4,000 Muslims on the islands, and about 700 to 800 of them preserved their Turkish identities or Turkish citizenship.

In Rhodes, Turks mostly resided in the centre, right by the castle, or in the neighbourhoods around Rhodes. Turkss in Kos live in Germe, a village only two kilometres from the centre. In the 1970s, Germe was said to have a population of one thousand, and three fourths of those were Muslims. In the 1990s the number of Turks went down to two thousand in Rhodes and nineteen hundred in Kos.⁸

⁶ **Dōdekanēsa-Synthēkes, Nomoi, Statistikes, Chartes 1947-1997**, Prepared by T. A. Gerozisis, Athens: Vulē tōn Ellēnōn, 1998, pp. 375-380.

⁷ Zeki Çelikkol, **İstanköy'deki Türk Eserleri ve Tarihçe**, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990, p. 3.

⁸ Çelikkol, **Rodos'taki**, p. 35.

In the 1970s a significant change occurred in Rhodes, from a more traditional agricultural structure to tourism, and Europe became interested in the Greek islands. Of course, this brought about a significant increase in land prices, and increasing land prices brought about a new policy of Greek nationalism. At the same time, the precious land brought about an opportunity *vis-à-vis* the Turks. Many Turks in this period sold their land and migrated back to Turkey.

There is something else that is particular to the 1970s. For the very first time, island Turks started to earn enough money to send their children to Turkey for education. When they returned, they faced a very serious rate of unemployment. These well-educated Turkish children then migrated to European countries, especially to France, Belgium and the Netherlands, for economic reasons. Young girls, of course, had even more difficult times, because it became common practice to marry them off to a Turkish man from mainland Turkey, on recommendations of the relatives.

The residents of Rhodes mostly find employment in agriculture, or in tourism and small business around the castle. They are involved in dairy farming, and working as waiters, while the Turks in Kos mostly pick fruits and vegetables on the farms. According to Nicolas who researched the situation of the island Turks in the 1970s, about 750 Turks from the islands registered themselves at the consulate and asked for financial help.⁹

In the 1970s, with the general increase in wealth in Greece, many Turks from the Dodecanese bought property in Turkey as a guarantee of their future.

The most important problem that the Dodecanese Turks face is schooling and education in the mother tongue. Until they were closed down in the 1960s, in Rhodes there were Turkish schools in the neighbourhood of Crete, Gain Hamlet, Augur, Kiziltepe, Salakos, Mikse, Lindos, and Hurmalı Mescit, with the largest

⁹ Nicolas, “Une Communauté”, pp. 67-68.

being the Suleymaniye Medrese.¹⁰ In 1970s Kos, there were three schools with a Turkish curriculum. In Imroz (Bozcaada) education in Greek was discontinued in 1964 – and I think there is a connection – as a result of which the education in Turkish on Greek islands was discontinued. Turkish teachers were either asked to retire or were paid half their salary.

Before continuing with other problems, I would like to touch upon another issue. In March 2000, an association was founded in Rhodes, called the Muslim Brotherhood and Culture Association, with Mustafa Şeyh as president. Although it was called Muslim, it had fifteen Christian members as well. Starting in 2000, this association highlighted the problem that there are no language courses or religious courses for the Turkish minority, which causes the Turkish minority to lose its identity. I will later return to what happened to this association.

Another problem concerns the mufti, the religious leader for the Muslims. At this point, even the Greeks are confused when they are asked whether or not there is a mufti in Rhodes. The ones in Western Thrace, of course, were given special status in 1927 with a decree in Greece, but at that point in time the Dodecanese did not belong to Greece; therefore, they are not covered within the framework of this decree.

After 1947, an official mufti is mentioned in certain documents. There is only one imam in Rhodes, from Western Thrace. In 2001 a scandal occurred when a person in Rhodes received an invitation from the President's Office, calling him mufti.¹¹ Later the official authorities explained that he is not a mufti, but only an imam, and that he receives his salary from the Rhodes authorities.

Of course, the imam problem is quite a significant problem in Rhodes, because there is only one single imam on the island. He takes his yearly leave on certain

¹⁰ Çelikkol, **Rodos'taki**, p. 98.

¹¹ **Dēmokratikē**, 23 November 2001.

dates, and if there is funeral on one of those dates, there might be significant problems. Thus, the association that I have just mentioned asks for two or three imams to be employed at the same time, as there are in Kos.

A further problem has to do with the properties of the charitable endowments and the cultural heritage. This constitutes quite a significant problem in Western Thrace, because the Greek authorities do not allow Turkish associations to elect their own administrators; the same is valid for the foundations in the Dodecanese as well. The Greek authorities want the appointed persons be as docile as possible, so that they react to the demands of the government. Many endowed properties in the last fifty years were granted to municipalities, to the central government, or to the church. These authorities work under the authority of the South Aegean Regional Secretariat.¹² There are two exclusive foundations in Rhodes, and their trustees live in Istanbul. One is the Fethi Paşa Foundation, part of which is a very interesting library in Rhodes with many manuscripts; more than 860 of them are still preserved there. It used to be called the Turkish Library, but its name changed to the Muslim Library in the 1980s. The library is very famous among Muslims, and many festivals are celebrated there. But the most urgent problem is that these books and manuscripts need to be preserved under the right conditions to be repaired as well. In 1852, Fethi Paşa also constructed a watchtower, but starting with the year 2000, this watchtower has been referred to as the Byzantine Tower.

The second foundation, which has an exclusive nature, is the Melek Paşa Foundation. The oldest heir of the founding family appoints a deputy to these foundations, but the Turkish bureaucracy does not function very well, creating a negative impact on the functioning of these foundations. The Melek Paşa Foundation has very large olive groves, but they could claim only 77 acres of their lands, partly because the trustees did not have access to the land registry documents, partly because the lands were confiscated by the Greek authorities.

¹² **Drasis**, 18 February 2002.

Until 1987, the Muslim community did not have legal personality status, but it had representation. The community leader was also the leader of the Foundations (*evkaf*) authority, and was appointed by the government. However, after 1987 the Greek authorities put an end to this appointment and, therefore, currently there is no legal community leader in Rhodes.

Maybe it is not the place to discuss this, but there are also many other complexities, such as Ottoman monuments and mosques on these islands. The local press tries to give the impression that these are not Ottoman buildings, but rather Arabic or Oriental. Thus, the denial of the Ottoman presence continues at present.

The Dodecanese Turks also experience a problem related to mosques. In fact, there are many mosques on these islands, but only two of them were still functional when I conducted my research.¹³ Moreover, in 2002, during the month of Ramadan, one was being renovated, and it is still in the process of being renovated. Since then, if I am not mistaken, there is only one functional mosque in Rhodes. The Murat Reis Mosque, the one under renovation, witnessed a very interesting event: In the yard of this mosque, where the community meets for their sacrifices and rituals, the president of this association, Mustafa Şeyh, gave a petition to the Prosecutors' Office, saying:

For the last thirty years, we have been living in a country with freedom of expression, but especially in religious issues we are deprived of certain human rights. First of all, we want the foundation administration to leave their positions, because this administration has been in this capacity for more than twenty-five years without any elections being called. Two, in Rhodes we want a second imam to be appointed. Three, we want our children to receive religious instruction, because for more than thirty years, even us, the parents, are Godless, and the existing imam does not know enough about our religion or God either. Four, we

¹³ Gnōmē, 4 March 2002.

*want our children to learn their mother tongue. We want a course, and a teacher from Rhodes of Greek origin to be appointed to that course. We have such a candidate in place.*¹⁴

After the Tax Collectors went to the office of the president of the association and fined him with a very large amount of taxes, he no longer appears to be involved.

To come to another instance of discrimination: in Greece, young men have to serve in the military. After completing a certain part of their military service, they can complete the rest of the service with their families, or where their families are. Turks in Western Thrace are given this right, but this is not the case for Dodecanese Turks, for reasons unknown.¹⁵

In conclusion, there are about one hundred double citizens registered with the Consulate General. In Rhodes, there are about 3,700 Turks, and in Kos 1,500 to 1,600. About one half of them carry dual citizenship, but they prefer not to declare their residence at the Consulate General.

Under the Italians, Turks were not considered to constitute a significant threat. That is why during this period Turks mostly struggled with economic problems, rather than with social or cultural ones. The identity problem and social and cultural problems emerged after the transfer of the islands to Greece. With the problem of Cyprus, the Dodecanese Turks living in Rhodes and Kos were faced with the tension that the Turks in Western Thrace faced. Of course, this oppression increased even further in the 1960s when schools were closed down.

If I am to make a comparison between the Turks in Western Thrace and the Turks in Rhodes, I can say that the Turks in Rhodes are more urbanised and mostly involved in trade. Turks from Western Thrace are generally villagers and more

¹⁴ **Proodos**, 13 February 2002.

¹⁵ **Dōdekanēsos**, 26 November 2001.

involved in agriculture. This is one of the main differences between the two populations, between the two communities. In Rhodes, the Turks do their trade mostly with tourists, and this makes the Turks in Rhodes look much more cosmopolitan in comparison. However, we should not forget that they never were the majority, as in certain regions of Western Thrace. In other words, the emphasis on religious identity and ethnic identity is much less pronounced among Turks on the Dodecanese. It is not as visible a problem as in other parts of Greece.

This cosmopolitan expression and the fact that the ethnic identity does not take up much space in their daily life bring about a lack of community leadership among the Dodecanese Turks. Maybe Nasuhoğlu could be a good name here, but he only has unofficial weight. He is not an official leader, as in Western Thrace.

As a result, the Dodecanese Turks have lived in an EU member country for many years, but they still face these challenges such as education in their mother tongue and general schooling. This should be a major problems in a EU member state, because the EU expects much from candidate countries, but the EU seems to disregard the issue. Maybe this community has to be encouraged more, especially by the advocates of human rights both in Turkey and Greece, rather than by their states of citizenship.

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**MINORITIES IN GREECE: STATE POLICIES AND
ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES**

Lambros BALTSIOTIS*

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to trace who is responsible for making crucial decisions regarding minorities in Greece and on what basis these decisions are made. The significance of this attempt is related to a deeper interest regarding the function of the rule of law in Greece, as it leads us to examine the possibility of the existence of a space of administrative and political action not covered by law. This invisible space has traditionally been the ground upon which the discourse on minority issues builds.

To this effect it is important to consider the following: Which factors have influence on the choice of the designation of specific decision-making centres for

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minorities, and how far do these factors influence that choice? Furthermore, who really decides on minority issues if we take for granted that legislation is not the only and final foundation for such decisions?

The answer to this question is not easy considering the lack of written evidence pertaining to this issue, or at least, taking into account the difficulty in accessing the available relevant documents. At any rate, it is very difficult to trace the path followed in the assumption of that crucial choice, especially when in the final result different players (such as the secret services) and vague practices (such as oral guidelines) appear to be essential confounding elements to the adopted decision. For this reason, this paper constitutes a preliminary assessment of the issue, rather than a clear and verified conclusion on the subject.

The Historical and Institutional Background

In the modern Greek ideological system, the notion of ‘being Greek’ is neither simple nor one-dimensional. This notion springs forth as a true heir of the Ottoman *millet* system; thus, in its substance it incorporates the sense of ‘the ability to be Greek’. This ‘ability’, at its ultimate level, is extended to include nearly every orthodox Christian individual of the Southern Balkans and Asia Minor, irrespective of his/her mother tongue and specific culture.

However, this broad, strong, ideological element began to weaken when the Bulgarian, the Albanian, and to a lesser extent the Serbian and Romanian nationalist movements, started to claim national affinity with the same populations.¹ The last part of this long process of identity formation is still played

¹ The Romanian nationalist movement was linked with the Vlachs living in Greece. Arab nationalism was also marginally involved in the dispute. During the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey discussions occurred concerning the issue of the Greek-Orthodox Arabic-speakers of Cilicia (in modern regions of Mersin, Adana and Osmaniye), whether they were to be included in the population exchange as Greek-Orthodox or not.

out, as Greeks and Macedonians are in dispute over the ‘real’ history and the allegiances of the Macedonian/Bulgarian-speaking population of Northern Greece.

In view of the aforementioned, the claim that the *millet* system is alive today in Greece should not be surprising. In fact, it is argued here that the existence of the *millet* system is manifested in two ways: First, it is reflected in the legislation pertaining to the status of Western Trace as a Muslim minority, and in the power entrusted to the three mufti courts to apply the shari’a law to family and inheritance disputes of the Muslim-Turkish minority.² Second, and more importantly, the *millet* system, as a wider concept, is still in use today, with evident ideological and legal results as it will be partly illustrated below, in the manner in which immigrants, or even Greek citizens, are presently classified.

Specifically, since the time of so-called *revolutionary constitutions* at the beginning of the nineteenth century until today, the inclusion/exclusion of an individual from the Greek nation has been accomplished through a process of a pre-modern, we will argue, classification — that is, through a proof of belonging to the *genos*.³ *Genos* is a term initially used to denote more or less the whole of the Greek-Orthodox population under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, irrespective of the state or the geographical area of residence.⁴ This notion should be roughly understood as an equivalent to the *Rum millet*. Gradually, though, there was a shift and the meaning of *genos* referred more to a population within the confines of a nation-state and areas that have been considered as *uterus of Hellenism* – such as Cyprus, Istanbul and Southern Albania. Thus, an individual belonging to the *genos* ended up meaning a person belonging to the Greek nation, strongly related to Greece.

² The rabbinic courts were banned just after World War II.

³ The English word *genus* derives from the Greek word *genos*.

⁴ Some Greek-Orthodox from other Patriarchates of the Middle-East, the so called historic patriarchates, could be included under certain conditions.

Consequently, the determination of being a *homogenis* [of the same *genos*] or an *allogenis* [of another *genos*] is essentially based on the evidence linking the individual to the Orthodox Church, which in turn is connected to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. A Muslim, in this sense, cannot be thought of as belonging to the Greek nation.

The determination of an individual belonging to the Greek *genos* is basically the conclusion of a converging process, whereby *prima facie* incongruent elements (such as attendance to Greek-language school, membership in the Greek-Orthodox church, acceptance, even in abstract terms, of the Greek-Orthodox doctrine, participating in customary or religious services performed by and in Orthodox churches linked to Greece or directed by Greeks) unite into a recognisable figure of *being the same*. According to that figure, the majority of the Vlachs of Albania are considered *homogenous* by the Greek state because they are Greek-Orthodox, and, thus, a part of a Church essentially connected to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Similarly, Arabic-speaking Greek-Orthodox residents of modern Hatay (Antioch), when they relocate to Istanbul and attend Greek-Orthodox churches and schools, are considered to be part of the *genos*.

Greece has always been aware of the multiple groups that made up its population. Historically, this familiarity was instrumental for the unrestrained inclusion of groups with a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the nation. It is only after World War II that a shift has occurred in the Greek state mentality/policy leading to the prevailing present doctrine which states that “there is only one minority in Greece, in Thrace, and it’s a Muslim one”. In the past, however, hostile to anything that could subvert its homogeneity, as intuitively every nation state is, the Greek state was not pretending that there were no minorities and minority languages in the country. It could be argued that the presence of minorities groups in Greece was so obvious that denying their existence would have created more problems for Greece in the international political arena, rather than solving it within the country itself. The recognition of the existence of minorities in the country was common, ordinary, at least up to the

time of the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor and certainly up to the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949. It is only after the end of World War II and of the Civil War that the official annihilation of internal ‘alterity’ has prevailed. Ever since, every linguistic, religious, ethnic or national group distinction is ‘erased or hidden’, through the process of *occultation* or, as it has been described by Gal and Irvine, through a process of *erasure/muting*, according to which certain minority groups gradually are becoming invisible in the public sphere and/or are folklorised.⁵ Thus, irrespective of the specific group or individual concerned, to a smaller or larger degree, the expression of particularity was suppressed, or simply disposed of as a threat to the national identity and cohesion.

The state continues to be hostile or at least suspicious of anyone who is not speaking Greek does not embrace the Orthodox faith, and/or upholds his/her distinct culture, language, religion, ethnic or national affiliation. The case of the Armenians of Greece is a characteristic example:⁶ Although they were thought of as a perfect example of people close and friendly to the Greek nation, Armenians nonetheless were not treated as such. As disclosed by a top-secret state document written in 1952 (parts of it were first published by us in 2004), the Armenians of Greece are portrayed as traitors, black market dealers, armed anarchists, and generally horrid people with a notable hate for Greece and the Greek people. Furthermore, in the same document, there is a series of harsh guidelines proposed against them, including the creation of a strong impetus for them to immigrate to other countries,⁷ stalling their acquisition of Greek citizenship, rejection of new applications regarding the operation of Armenian schools, and the like.⁸

⁵ In S. Gal and J. T. Irvine, “The Boundaries of Languages and Disciplines: How Ideologies Contract Differences”, *Social Research* 62, 1995, pp. 967-1001.

⁶ The vast majority of them settled in Greece after the Greco-Turkish War.

⁷ In fact they were forced to emigrate to Soviet Armenia during 1947 and 1948 (see next footnote)

⁸ Genika Archeia tu Kratos [General Archives of the State in Kavala], Ph. [file] 95b, Ministry of Interior, Alien’s General Direction, Department B, Office IV, protocol nr 421/7/2/4, March 1952,

Even the Old Calendarists Orthodox Christians,⁹ a generally quite imperceptible religious and nationalist group, even though it counts a few hundred thousands of adherents in the country, received this negative treatment. The Old Calendarists were not only veiled to outsiders, but were rather treated as ‘enemies of the state’. Their ceremonies (baptisms, marriages, and so forth) were not recognised as civil acts by the state, as are the ones held by the Orthodox Church of Greece, and the police would persecute them until the period of the dictatorship.¹⁰

It should be understood that in this climate a generalised phobia surrounded everything that was not classified as ‘Greek’. ‘Greek and ‘Greekness’, as an imaginatively conceptualised notion, governed the public discourse and the content of education. Consequently, oftentimes, this notion – what constitutes Greekness — would come into conflict with reality, as some politicians and officials, blinded by the national ideology they had adopted, would act in ignorance of the true facts.

Following the fall of the dictatorship in 1974, a gradual relaxation to the restraints towards ‘the other’ was manifested. The establishment of the administration of the Socialist Party (PASOK) after 1981 is considered the turning point which provided the impetus for the public expression of minorities, as well as for the appearance of additional forms of alterity in Greece.

Amongst the groups which were able to voice their identity and concerns count the Macedonian/Bulgarian-speaking groups and certain religious minorities. It was at this time that these groups could, for the first time, openly declare their presence and distinctiveness and dare to express their desire to preserve their culture and

pp. 27, 34-35 (Published in L. Baltsiotis, “Politographēsē kai Ithageneia stēn Ellada: (Anti)phaseis Mias Adieksodēs Politikēs”, **Ē Ellada tēs Metanastevsēs: Koinōnikē Symmetochē, Dikaiōmata kai Idiotēta tu Politē**, Eds. Miltos Pavlu, Dimitris Christopoulos, Athens: Kritikē, 2004, pp. 303-337, pp. 312-313).

⁹ For the Old Calendarists (Palaiooimerologitai) see Kallistos Ware, “Old Calendarists”, **Minotiries in Greece. Aspects of a Plural Society**, Ed. Richard Clogg, London: Hustt & Co, 2002, pp. 1-23.

¹⁰ A gradual relaxation of the rules of this hostile apparatus began to occur after 1967.

distinctive identity. The cultural associations of Arvanites and the Vlachs, although in total conformity with the Greek nationalist discourse, were springing up like mushrooms.¹¹

Nevertheless, there was one community which was not affected by this democratisation process: the Turkish Muslim minority of Thrace. Several researchers believe that the aforementioned process of free expression had influence on the minority elites of that period, until the late 1980s. These elites, or at least a part of them, attempted to ‘enter’ the Greek political system by participating as members of political parties and by taking posts in the political structure. However, the Greek state and the Greek political system as a whole were not at all receptive to this effort or likelihood.¹² It was only after the late 1980s that the Turkish-Muslim minority, having being rejected by the Greek political system, was embraced by the Turkish political system. Assisted by the change of political forces in Turkey, from this period onwards the minority in Thrace, as well as other Balkans and ex-Soviet Union Muslim minority groups, were (re)discovered by Turkish politics. This fact allowed Turkish politics to effectively influence everything that had to do with the Minority in Thrace.

Reforms started to materialise in Thrace a decade later, in the early 1990s. During the late 1990s, one more step towards respect of human rights was taken, as

¹¹ Arvanites are Albanian-speaking Greeks. Vlachs are speaking a Balkan neo-Latin language closely related to Romanian. Both languages are losing ground rapidly, and in some cases speakers of the younger generation can hardly be located. Both groups have been fully incorporated into the Greek national discourse and, in the case of the Arvanites, mostly, it is difficult to classify this group as a linguistic minority, if that term means a social group who desires to preserve its language and culture.

¹² The most striking example of this political evolution was the demonstrations, without guardianship, that took place in Komotini against the expropriation of land that belonged to members of the minority. For a detailed discussion see Vemund Aarbakke, “Oi Politikes Kinētopoiēseis tēs Musulmanikēs Meionotētas stē Dekatēia tu 1980 kai oi Epiptōseis stis Metagenesteres Ekselikseis”, [to come, in **Diepistēmōnikes Prosengiseis tu Meionotiku kai Metanastevtiku Phainomenu**, Athens: KEMO-Kritiki 2007]

a more liberal policy was adopted, affecting all minorities, including the Turkish-Muslim one and every other form of alterity in Greece.

Who decides on minority issues in Greece?

Approximately twenty years ago, the academic community began to scientifically study the minorities in Greece.¹³ Thus, applying the methods and procedures of contemporary scientific disciplines and not biased by the national ideology, academic researchers operated with the following specific viewpoint in regards to what was happening to minorities: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the government in general were forming the overall policy guidelines in regards to minorities, while the local public administration and other local fora were implementing them on the ground. This meant that the local administration and local special interest groups had much latitude in interpreting these general guidelines. To illustrate this point, I will examine the following example: in Greece there is a special Pedagogical Academy.¹⁴ The graduates of this academy are exclusively employed in primary education Muslim minority schools in Thrace. The duration of studies in this academy was initially two years and subsequently was increased to three. The rest of the Pedagogical Academies in Greece, however, require four years of study for the completion of the programme, and they operate as integral departments of Universities. The special legal status of the Pedagogical Academy provides that teachers who complete the programme of this academy would be less qualified than their counterparts in the university academies and generally that their decree would represent lower qualifications.¹⁵ In the academic program of the Special Academy, Turkish language and literature are taught on an

¹³ In the early 1990s, scientific publications on minorities appeared en masse in Greek.

¹⁴ Eidikē Paidagōgikē Akadēmia Thessalonikēs (EPATH/ΕΠΙΑΘ) in Greek.

¹⁵ For detailed reference to the legal status of the academy see, Lambros Baltsiotis-Konstantinos Tsitselikis, *Ἐ Μείονοκίτῃ Ἐκπαίδευσῇ τῆς Θρακῆς. Συλλογὴ Νομοthesias-Scholia*, Athens: A. N. Sakkula, 2001.

elementary basis, despite the fact that the graduates would be called to teach Turkish language to Turkish-speaking students. In other words, the Pedagogical Academy seems to be intentionally structured to turn out inferior educators. It is obvious that the relevant decisions for the operation of the academy are governmental, or, to be more precise, they are adopted by the central and the higher administrative bodies of the state.

But are there guidelines issued by the Government or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which deal with other important, perhaps not institutionalised, aspects of this school?¹⁶ For instance, the ‘secret’ prerequisite that the overwhelming majority, if not all, of the students attending the academy had to come from Slavic-speaking villages, or that at least they had to come from a Slavic-speaking background¹⁷ — was this prerequisite an order of the ministry, or was just invented by the people who operated in the field locally, the individuals who acted in a grey area, somewhere between Secret Services, offices in other ministries, local Thracian minority policy makers and other interested groups?

Some Greek scholars used to believe that, somewhere amongst the administrative corpus, there were persons, or group enclaves, who had influence on the low-level decision-making process as far as minority issues are concerned.¹⁸

This process of decision making, as we have been able to ascertain, possibly included three pillars and simultaneously a ‘low politics *espace*’ for decisions and

¹⁶ Under its organisational law the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for minorities in Greece.

¹⁷ Until the late 1990s, some of the students were not fluent in Turkish. Until that time, more than 90% percent of the students had not graduated from secondary schools, but are graduates of a *medrese*. On these issues see Nelly Askuni, **Ē Ekpedevsē tēs Meionotētas stē Thrakē. Apo to Perithōrio stēn Prooptikē tēs Koinōnikēs Entaksēs**, Athens: Alexandraia, 2006, pp. 75-78.

¹⁸ An argument supporting this idea can be found in the article: Lambros Baltsiotis, “Ellēnikē Dioikēsē kai Meionotikē Ekpaidevsē stē Dytikē Thrakē”, **To Meionotiko Phainomeno stēn Ellada**, Eds. Dimitris Christopoulos, Constantinos Tsitselikis, Athens: KEMO-Kritiki Publishers, 1997, pp. 315-348.

policy formation of minor importance: The first pillar is constituted by the government;¹⁹ the second by the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and to a much lesser extent of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and/or the Ministry of Public Order;²⁰ and the third by a variety of civil administrators and/or other circles external to the government. Sufficient evidence supports that the latter pillar sometimes acted against the intentions and policies of the central administration and the government, or that it adopted a much harder line than the one the central policy makers were proposing. This seems to be an old fact: according to several documents concerning Minority Education in Kavala's General Archives of the State, until 1964 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs always was in favour of a more liberal policy concerning the educational matters of the minority in Thrace, always insisting to the local hardliners that they must think of the Greek minority in Istanbul and the consequences their policies might cause.²¹

Returning to our initial question, attempting to determine the course followed in the formation of a particular decision is like entering a labyrinth. Usually, the initiative for such a decision originates at the local level. For example, this was the case on certain occasions for the activities of the notorious Coordinating Council of Thrace,²² a body which was abolished in the late 1960s. This board, among others institutions, was submitting proposals concerning the Minority to the Ministry of

¹⁹ The legislator has entrusted the role of forming decisions about minority issues to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Public Order and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

²⁰ Police authorities were the main responsibility of this ministry, which was banned after the elections of 2007 and integrated into the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

²¹ Personal communication with Giorgos Mavromatis.

²² Syntonistiko Symbulio Thrakēs / Συντονιστικό Συμβούλιο Θράκης in Greek. This council was formed in 1959 in order to follow the minority issue and propose or decide at a local level on the policy tactics against the minority. For this council see ο ιος, "Ethnikophrosynē me to Stremma", **Kyriakatikē Eleftherotypia**, February 19, 2006.

Foreign Affairs.²³ Although in any given case the ultimate decision was in the hands of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is also true that the way a proposal was presented to the ministry essentially affected the outcome of the decision, setting apart the importance of the way every decision was interpreted and implemented. In the end, irrespective of the content of the decision, the individuals entrusted with its implementation were sometimes hesitant to carry it out, since they had to consider the side effects and the fallout from a variety of consequences which could follow from the execution of that decision — for instance, the consequences from the outcome of elections, or, the public opinion of Greek-Orthodox population living in the area. For example, consider the long-term secret project of land acquisition. According to this project, a Christian who buys land from a Muslim is granted a bonus and a low-interest-rate loan. These buyer incentives in 1972 led to a considerable increase of land prices in the areas of Komotini and Xanthi.²⁴

Somewhere in the process of decision making, the Secret Services were present and active. For example the Secret Services, although they participate in the meetings of the Coordinating Council of Thrace, a reality that is not disputed and accepted by the players in Thrace, their role on minority issues has never been officially acknowledged. Of course, we do not know exactly what functions the Secret Services play. However, there is evidence from documents and the statements from retired Secret Service personnel that leads us to deduce that the occultation of alterity in Greece and the expressed hostility towards any ‘other’ is an inevitable fact; integral to the political system and the Secret Services are, or at least used to be, major players in the system. This stand on part of the Secret Services allows for a wide range of possible deeds and thus constitutes an obscured

²³ The Council could also issue (secret) circulars and guidelines concerning minority policy (op. cit.). I have to stress here that all the important decisions and policies are not coming from local initiatives.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*

practice, although some policies may appear legitimate. This is primarily the case for Macedonian-speaking groups, religious minorities, and until recently, the Vlachs.²⁵ On the other hand, we must not overestimate the role of those services. For example, although it could be easily identified as student research of minor interest, a sketchy fertility rate research among Christians and Muslims in Thrace held by the Secret Services, it is officially designated ‘secret’.²⁶

In Thrace, it is evident that the state apparatus, or the influence on the state fora, are in a way institutionalised. In contrast to other areas in the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is officially present.²⁷ This presence does not exist in the case of Greek Macedonia. The complexity of the Macedonian case falls within a continuum of identities in Greece which begins, on one end, with a sense of Macedonian identity and finishes, on the other end, with a sense of Greek identity. In this continuum — for example, in terms of Macedonian language competence — we can measure a shift: on the one end, there are young people speaking fluent Macedonian; on the other end, there are elderly people who are terminal speakers of the Macedonian language. Oftentimes, language shifts and the conception of minority identity do not coincide; at other times, the sense of a local quasi-minority

²⁵ A variety of documents of the Secret Services concerning the Macedonian/Bulgarian speakers of Greek Macedonia see at Tassos Kostopoulos, **Ἐ Αpagorevmenē Glōssa: Kratikē Kataistolē tōn Slavikōn Dialektōn stēn Ellēnikē Makedonia**, Athens: Mavrē Lista, 2000.

²⁶ Ethnikē Ypēresia Plērophoriōn / Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών, α.π. 502670, 31st of May 1995. In this document it is shown that the birth rate of Christians and Muslims is approximately equal at the city of Xanthi. At the city of Komotini the birth rate of the Christian population is much higher than Muslims. The leaking of the results of such a research though, could invalidate the widely adopted myth that the Muslims of Thrace have a high birth rate.

²⁷ Sometimes even by violating the law, as in the case of foundation of non institutionalised infant schools in minority villages (see the indirect relevant parliamentary questions of the MP İlhan Ahmet nr 8669/10-3-2005 and nr 2038/13-9-2005).

identity is more important than the competence in language. This mixed, complex reality in the field often puzzles the Greek state.²⁸

Within this framework, local police and Secret Services play a significant role. A striking example of the impact that these bodies have on the minority issue is the debate concerning the open and public performance of songs in the Macedonian language, mainly at the annual (summer) fair (*πανηγύρι* in Greek).²⁹ During the early 1980s, when first attempts in such a performance occurred, it was not unusual for the police to stop the performances while they were taking place. Bringing a performance to a stop did not have to happen in a violent way. A hint to the band by the police, such as a movement of the hand meaning “do not play songs in this language any more”, was enough to terminate a show. Some years later, however, a similar hint meaning “do not disturb them any more” will be given and would make us wonder why this order was not given in nearly every relevant village fair and festival until the mid- or late 1990s.

A rather interesting story illustrating the diverse role of local actors in minority issues is the event that happened when the European Court of Human Rights ruled against Greece for failing to recognise the ‘Home of Macedonian Culture’.³⁰ When the applicants tried to obtain the required legal recognition of their association from the local court, no lawyer from the local Florina Bar Association was inclined to handle the case. Even though there is a specific procedure that must be followed by

²⁸ In the case of Macedonian/Bulgarian-speakers we must agree that the great majority of persons coming from a Slavic-speaking background, although they are recognising their linguistic and cultural affiliation with Macedonia, and to a lesser extent with Bulgaria, consider themselves Greek, feel offended when Greeks (state or individuals) treat them as not being Greeks or view them with suspicion. The fact that they consider themselves Greek is not contradictory to the reality that they feel, and sometimes want to act, different from the ‘ordinary’ Greek. For this reason, some researchers identify them as a linguistic or ethnic minority group, if this type of classification can accommodate persons who pursue the preservation of their alterity within a larger whole.

²⁹ This fair is dedicated to the saint-protector of the village and traditional music is usually performed for a couple of days.

³⁰ *Stegē Makedoniku Politismu / Στέγη Μακεδονικού Πολιτισμού* in Greek.

the lawyers and the courts in cases such as this, the local Bar Association and the local judge did not comply. Neither the Bar's administrative council nor the judge in charge expressed any willingness to comply and follow the required procedure, despite the fact that this issue had raised international attention and the Greek Ombudsman had concluded that both bodies were violating the law through their inaction.³¹

This incident, therefore, leads us to assume that the aforementioned judge could have been either influenced by the shadowy local state forces, or acted in fear of raising negative public reaction. Another option is to believe that the judge acted on the direction of an official from the Ministry of Justice. The response of the local lawyers, on the other hand, could be an outcome of a mixture of different factors — such as fear of risking their careers, given that the nationalistic lobby in the area is very strong; fear of becoming stigmatised as pro-Macedonian Slavic-speaking people, or even worse; fear of engulfing the political parties to which they belonged into a negative climate, with the view in mind that at some point they personally may decide to engage in politics.

Consequently, is important to consider that in some areas there are local lobbies and local mechanisms which, motivated by various interests, have the power to impose their decisions concerning certain issues. And this is due mainly to the fact that the local or even the central administration does not want to engage in conflict with them. For illustration of this, consider the case of licensing of pharmacies operated by members of the minority in Thrace.³² The local pharmacist association did not permit for more than a decade the operation of a pharmacy owned by a member of the minority, without any legal reason. Obviously this was a purely financially motivated behaviour.

³¹ See Greek Ombudsman, reference nr 6173/2001

³² Among others see *To Vima*, 19th of January 1997.

We also occasionally observe a conflict on specific subjects amongst ministries. For instance, such a conflict generated the notorious article 19 of the previous Greek Citizenship Code. Under the auspices of this provision, the deprivation of citizenship (nationality) was permitted if the individual concerned was categorised as *allogenis*,³³ and if he/she had emigrated “without any intention of returning to Greece”. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had suggested to the Ministry of Internal Affairs the repeal of that article as early as in the late 1980s, but later declined to agree on this proposal until 1998.³⁴

Furthermore, disagreement between ministries is not always the problem. Sometimes the whole government may stand against a group of high-ranking officials or bureaucrats. An exemplary case concerns stateless persons — that is, Greek citizens from whom citizenship was withdrawn but who continue to live in Western Thrace. The Ministry of Public Order, for no obvious political reason, refused to supply these persons with their required special identity cards,³⁵ or was issuing these documents with great delay, which could span from one to two years from the date of application.³⁶ It is important to underline that the situation in which the government decides and the bureaucrats decline to comply, but instead succeed to impose their position and points of view on the political organs of the government, is not rare. This can be further illustrated with the following examples. The first deals with the effort of KEMO to organise a conference in

³³ See above p. 109.

³⁴ A similar case documented by written evidence concerns the conflict between the same ministries on another important issue. Until recently, persons or their descendants who had lost their citizenship and belonged to minorities could not receive any proof of their existence (birth registries, certificates) that showed that they were Greek citizens. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had opined on the abolishment of the interdiction, the Ministry of Internal Affairs partly agreed only in 2001. See the secret documents and the relevant opinions in o ios, “Ē Ēmitelēs Lēksē tu Emphyliu”, **Kyriakatikē Eleftherotypia**, 7 April 2001.

³⁵ According to the International Convention for Stateless Persons

³⁶ See the Greek Ombudsman references nr 10087/2003, 878/2004, 17582/2004 (The Greek Ombudsman, **Annual Report**, Athens 2004, p. 90 [in Greek] .

2000,³⁷ a congress of all parties concerned, on the subject of minority languages of Greece, in the auditorium of the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Mr. Giorgos Papandreou, had approved the application submitted by KEMO, the conference did not take place as the bureaucrats of the ministry and several Vlach associations and mayors of Vlach origin opposed it. In the end, the minister was forced to withdraw his approval for the conference.³⁸ The second example refers to the Macedonians. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andreas Loverdos, took the lead in 2003 to permit the entry to the country to Macedonian citizens, who although they were born in Greece, had lost their citizenship and were living abroad, and who, for that reason, were considered *perosonae non gratae*, for the celebration of an anniversary. However, certain high-ranking officers of the ministry and police officers ordered the border police to prohibit the entry to the country, without the knowledge or at least the approval of the deputy minister. They succeeded in that the majority of ex-Greek citizens was refused entry.³⁹

In conclusion, I argue that Greece continues to use a multi-dimensional decision-making system as far as minority issues are concerned. Thus, although the control of the policy and the guidelines reside in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including its high ranking officers), in a more significant way than we like to believe, the Greek state still utilises the input of all these invisible fora other than the government, groups of interest and nationalist lobbies, which at one point in time were created for the purpose of supporting the state and subsequently act in a

³⁷ Minority Groups Research Center, an independent scientific organisation.

³⁸ Personal observation, as I was a member of the organizing committee. See also, among others, **Ē Oraia Samarina** Nov.-Dec. 2000, **Ē Avgē** 3rd of Feb. 2001, **Eleftherotypia** 23th of Feb. 2001.

³⁹ See o ios in **Eleftherotypia**, 26th of July 2003.

prima facie opposition to it. Although the power of these groups is gradually weakening, they still remain active.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that these lobbies intend to sustain and justify their existence in a variety of ways and that the state has not taken the appropriate measure to distance them in an effective way.⁴¹ The influence of these lobbies on public discourse finds fertile ground on the civil servants' internalised phobia of alterity. This applies to both high-ranking and low-level public servants.⁴² The phobia of otherness penetrates the entire public administration. This fear may perhaps be explained in the case of Greek Macedonia, as the separation of Western Greek Macedonia appeared likely during the period between 1941 and 1949. But there are other cases — for instance, the situation of Western Thrace — where that fear is inexplicable, at least insofar as the national minority exists in Thrace. The refusal to grant citizenship to a few hundred stateless persons residing in Greece cannot be explained in any other way than being the outcome of phobia cultivated in the administration. The politicians have expressed their willingness provide an end to this issue a long time ago, but it was only in the last few months that a large-scale granting of citizenship to stateless persons occurred in Thrace.⁴³

⁴⁰ A striking example is KEMO's meeting in Larissa in 1998 for the Vlach language which was broken off by a ultra-right nationalist group. see Stamatis Beis-Dimitris Christopoulos, "Ta Vlachika", **Glössikē Eterotēta stēn Ellada**, Eds. L. Embrikos et al., Athens: KEMO-Alexandria, 2001, pp. 69-139, pp. 73-76, 131-132.

⁴¹ Eleftherios Venizelos legally banned all irredentist Northern Epirus Associations during the 1920s. However, they still continue to function in an open way.

⁴² Disregarding law court decisions which are 'influenced' directly by the state politics (like the ones related to the Turkish associations of Western Thrace), there are others which the state is unable to influence. Opposite to the expressed view coming from every major political party and the government, the First Instance Penal Court of Athens in 2001 sentenced the Vlach language and culture activist Sotiris Bletsas to fifteen months of imprisonment (converted to a monetary fine), pronouncing the judgment that "...no other languages are spoken in Greece". See 11263/2-2-2001, I' Trimeles Plēmēliodikeio Athēnōn.

⁴³ See the ministerial decisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of December 2006. More than thirty stateless persons residing in Thrace regained their Greek citizenship.

In the light of this, we may explain the frequent backward steps taken by the public administration on the issue of minority policy, based on the general rule that although politics and society change, public administration always stays behind. Sometimes it takes too long for them to enter the train of alterity.

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A DISPUTE EASY TO SETTLE: MINORITY ISSUES IN TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS

Fuat AKSU*

This presentation will mainly focus on the impact of the status of minorities within the scope of Turkish-Greek relations. In this context, my argument is based on the thesis that, compared to other pending issues, the magnitude of minority issues can hardly be claimed to be as potent as to take first priority in the agenda. My two major arguments to justify this view are:

- The dispute on minority issues between Turkey and Greece do not go as far as mutual territorial claims and sovereignty issues.
- The existence of such claims influences numerous other conflict issues between the two.

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Eventually, given the existence of such problematic issues, at least one side has to impose an order of priority. In that case this list might appear as:

- Disputes related to minority issues
- Cyprus Issue
- Aegean Issues
- Other Issues

This is a general list, in chronological order.¹ The order of the list is also far from pointing out which dispute can probably turn into hot war between the sides; that is why the items need to be detailed further.

Disputes on Minority Issues:

- Problems which can be considered as violating the statute concluded by Lausanne
- Failure in supplying the demands of minorities and/or *de facto*, legal and political impediments

Cyprus Issue:

The unilateral accession of the Cypriot Greek Administration to the EU in April 2004 has brought a different character to the issue. Formerly, from the Turkish point of view, the concern was to prevent the island's accession to Greece, whereas at present this probability has been minimised. Today, the problem is

¹ It is chronological because the major disputed issue in the relations used to be minority problems between 1923 and 1930; starting with the 1950s, the Cyprus issue gained in importance; in the 1970s, Aegean issues emerged and gradually escalated to become the foremost item to shape relations as a whole.

stuck at the point of whether the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus will be recognised independently or not.

Aegean Issues:

A good number of controversies fall under this heading.

- Islands, islets and rocks, the sovereignty of which have not yet been handed over
- Territorial Waters Dispute
- Continental Shelf Dispute
- Flight Zone and disagreement over FIR (Flight Information Regions) liabilities
- (Dis)armament of the Islands
- SAR (Search and Rescue) disagreement

Other Issues:

The problems under this heading are at the forefront of daily practices and either of tactical or political nature — namely, the rivalry for building alliances and impediments, media-supported propaganda, the backing of terrorist organisations and so forth.

When we review the picture emerging from this itemisation, we can conclude that, apart from the Aegean issues, the probability of the remaining items to create hot confrontation is quite weak. Within the framework of our arguments, the group of conflicts that could possibly take both sides to the brink of war appear under Aegean issues. When we reconsider the items under that heading, the need arises to

put them in order. This is necessary since during the stage of negotiation, the issues have to be taken up in a specific order of technical and legal priorities.² Critical Aegean issues likely to drag the sides towards hot war can develop in the following order:

- A *de facto* attempt to claim unilateral sovereignty over the islands, islets and rocks in the Aegean, the autonomy of which is undetermined
- A *de facto* attempt by Greece to extend territorial water limits beyond 6 miles
- Unilaterally stipulating the limits of the continental shelf and the initiation of the exploration and extraction process
- Insisting on flight zone of 10 miles, interpreting the FIR liability as sovereignty right and initiating practice accordingly
- Armament of the islands by Greece up to a level comprising an imminent threat for Turkey

It needs to be noted that the first and the third issue point out that sovereignty and sea zone limitations have not yet been concluded mutually by the sides. As for the second issue, since any unilateral claim for sovereignty and extension of limits would create overall transpositions in the Aegean, Turkey conceives those as *casus belli*. The fourth and the fifth items are related to a great extent to *de facto* situations; if/when confidence is secured, they can be settled under the terms of international law.

² For instance, in negotiations about the settlement of disputes related to the Law of the Sea, the sides should beforehand agree on the borders of territory that they claim in the Aegean. The order of issues could then follow as: basic principles, territorial waters, continental shelf, restricted economic zones and other matters needing limitation. In the case of the Aegean Sea the sides have neither reached consensus on the sovereignty of several islands, islets and rocks, nor have the basic principles been determined yet. Consequently, maritime borders of coastal states are not determined under negotiation.

Returning to our original argument, we can conclude that presently minority issues between Turkey and Greece are not so severe as to be discussed at the level of sovereignty and territorial claims. In fact, Turkey and Greece, in order to prevent hot war, had settled this issue in the past to a great extent, with the exchange of minorities. Even though there were times when large numbers of people were subject to compulsory exchange,³ Turkey and Greece tried to find a remedy as humane as possible, took precautions for the solution to be durable and to avoid hot war.⁴ Thus, they could prevent probable irredentist approaches beforehand. Even

³ The Convention and Protocol on the Exchange of Turkish and Greek Populations between Turkey and Greece was signed on 30 January 1923, and Article 1 of the same is as follows:

“Commencing 1 May 1923, the compulsory exchange of Greek-Orthodox Turkish citizens, settled on Turkish territory, with Muslim Greek citizens settled on Greek territory will be initiated.

These people will neither be allowed to return and settle down in Turkey, without the permission of the Turkish government, nor to Greece without the permission of the Greek government.”

According to the terms of Article 2: *The exchange will not be subject to: (a) Greek people living in Istanbul, (b) Muslims living in Western Thrace.* For the text of the agreement, see İsmail Soysal, **Türkiye’nin Siyasal Andlaşmaları**, Vol. I, Ankara: TTK Yay., 1983, pp. 176-183.

However, upon the conclusion of the agreement on 30 October, 1930, which came into force on 3 March 1931, as “Convention d’Etablissement, de Commerce et de Navigation entre la Turquie et la Grèce” several Greek people could return to Turkey and enjoy the rights offered by this agreement. See also Baskın Oran, “Kalanların Öyküsü: 1923 Mübadele Sözleşmesi’nin Birinci ve Özellikle de İkinci Maddelerinin Uygulanmasından Alınacak Dersler”, **Ege’yi Geçerken: 1923 Türk-Yunan Zorunlu Nüfus Mübadelesi**, Ed. Renee Hirschon, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay., 2005, p. 172; Damla Demiröz, **Savaşın Barışa Giden Yolu: Atatürk-Venizelos Dönemi Türkiye-Yunanistan İlişkileri**, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2007, pp. 165-168.

⁴ The instruction, item No: 9, given to the Turkish delegation in Lausanne, was on the direction that the minority issues were to be settled through the exchange principle. However, whether the exchange was to be optional or compulsory was to be figured out during the course of discussions. For a detailed study on the same topic, see Ayhan Aktar, “Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesinin İlk Yılı, Eylül 1922- Eylül 1923”, **Yeniden Kurulan Yaşamlar: 1923 Türk-Yunan Zorunlu Nüfus Mübadelesi**, Ed. Müfide Pekin, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay., 2005, pp. 41-74. In fact, the concern for the exchange being compulsory was discussed during the meetings in Lausanne. As delivered by Cemil Bırsel, the ‘compulsory’ suggestion came from Fridtjof Nansen (Representative of the League of Nations). “... İsmet Paşa also admitted that the exchange being compulsory was found unpleasant and added that he would be ready to accept any better suggestion”. Cemil Bırsel, **Lozan**, Vol. II, İstanbul: Sosyal Yay., 1998, p. 294.

though in this region, minority issues have always been of an irredentist nature, it would not be proper to claim that such a quality exists in the minority issues between Turkey and Greece.⁵ However, when we observe the turmoil following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, we note that both strive for sovereignty, and the irredentist approach of minorities spread out in almost every newly founded country and still persists. In the same manner, nationals living outside their homeland also endeavour to broaden the national borders. Greater Albania, Greater Macedonia, Greater Bulgaria and Greater Greece are examples of the same dream. It is also a fact that this situation eventually deteriorates into instability in the region and leads to the collision of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the states. Geographical location is also made a myth, for the sake of legalizing other national identities. (A good example of this approach is the importance of Kosovo for Serb nationalisation). Furthermore the symbols, expressing a specific national identity, can be conceived as a claim for sovereignty, even if it is a matter of conception, as a means of challenge and threat. (The name and the flag of Macedonia caused great concern in Greece.)

That is to say, in the axis of the minority arguments in the Balkans lies a kind of search for the expansion of territorial borders, as mentioned above, and the

On the other hand, one can assert that, compulsory exchange “being the only efficient solution in the short run to minimize the death toll, upon a deathly confrontation of opposing groups”, in the short and long run it can also impede the masses to rebuild a dialogue. In this context, see Rene Hirschon, “Ege Bölgesindeki Ayrışan Halklar” **Ege’yi Geçerken: 1923 Türk Yunan Zorunlu Nüfus Mübadelesi**, Ed. Rene Hirschon, Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yay., 2005. p. 14.

⁵ This fact is rightfully true for Turkey. It is impossible for Turkey to lead an irredentist policy on the Turks of Western Thrace, since it falls completely out of Turkey’s major state policy. In the ‘National Oath’, a plebiscite was foreseen for this region. This issue gave rise to stormy arguments and hindered the negotiations. In the aftermath of the conclusion of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, the survival of the newly founded Turkish state was bound to the full perpetuation of the *status quo* laid out by Lausanne, and it was particularly stressed that any approach towards violations from determined borders should be strictly avoided.

anxiety arising due to such ambition.⁶ However, this is surely not the case for Turkey and Greece. Turkey, having no territorial claims from Greece over the Turks of Western Thrace, also has no inquiries towards Greece on the rule of the region. In the same manner, it is not feasible and reasonable for Greece to have territorial claims over the Greek-Orthodox population living in Istanbul. Nevertheless, the discourse of the *Megali Idea* aiming to expand towards Anatolia proved to be a dream which could not come true, leaving behind bitter memories.

It is reasonable to say that minority problems between the sides have emerged on matters other than sovereignty disputes. In fact, when listening to the minorities' complaints from both sides, the major problem shows itself; they either complain that Articles 37-45 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty are not fully implemented, or express that the rights and statutes need to be updated. The demands of minorities focus on matters which the state has to provide within the course of public order. These quests bear no sovereignty claims and do not question the sovereignty of that state.

Considering this, the minority problems between Turkey and Greece involve no argument on sovereignty right and statutes. This paves the way for the solution of disputes, under the framework of general public arrangements. On the other hand, it is difficult to formulate a constructive negotiation process between the sides on other matters of dispute relevant to their sovereignty rights and territorial integrity, which could well take them to the brink of war. These issues are extremely strenuous and require comprehensive negotiations. It is even more difficult to sustain consensus on them in domestic politics.

⁶ Without a doubt, in both countries there are speculations regarding the existence of fanatic nationalists still holding historical expectations. Indeed, from time to time such fantasies can turn into an event. However, on rational grounds the feasibility of such a plot is nearly impossible. Yet, particularly in the writing of history, in case a clause like "once those places belonged to us" is inserted, it can impede the chances to build a healthy and workable confidence atmosphere.

Political parties in power can hardly take decisions to alter the *status quo* and the stability together with decisions to amend national borders and sovereignty rights. In most cases, governments even avoid to initiate a dialogue which might lead to a negotiation process to resolve these issues once and for all. Instead, they either choose to leave the issue pending or from time to time enact a policy to escalate it for the sake of their domestic political interests.

When assessed in the context of the issues relevant to the Aegean Sea, it is apparent that the undetermined status of the islands, islets and rocks and the unilateral claim to extend territorial water limits beyond 6 miles are both vital issues which can take both sides towards serious confrontation. Both issues are of extreme significance for the sovereignty rights of the sides, and some cases have already proved that they would revert to the use of force upon controversy over such issues. Once they comprehended that those issues were directly relevant to sovereignty rights and interests, they indicated that they could use force for settling the conflict. In a way, using the means of coercive diplomacy, they could at least defer the crisis before it turned into total war. Yet, in cases when conflicts occurred due to minority problems, reactions generally stayed at a diplomatic level, and military sanction has hardly been an option.⁷

Minority Issues as an Easily Dissolvable Conflict

As mentioned in the above context, unlike others, issues regarding the statutes of minorities are much easier to settle, as long as they do not escalate into sovereignty disputes and territorial claims. This does not mean that violations of minority statutes can be tolerated.

⁷ For instance, when a serious crisis came up in Western Thrace at the beginning of the 1980s, Turkey refrained from threats as well as the use of force. Instead, it preferred to activate international organisations and media, trying to declare to the world that Turkey would not step back from the rights and statutes recognised to the Turks of Western Thrace with agreements and in International Law.

I would like to underline that the degree of sensitivity and the priority of the policy first created by Greece and then Turkey as ‘the other vs. us’ is not as vivid and vital as before. Today, though the sides are still very keen on the integrity of their national borders, conflicts exist on regions other than their common borders. More explicitly, there is no wish for or expectancy of a dispute on their common land borders. However, both sides suffer similar anxieties elsewhere on their borders today. Macedonia is said to be a source of complaint for Greece, while Turkey is disturbed by the idea of an independent Kurdish state to be founded adjacent to its south east border, within Iraq.

Consequently, the ongoing arguments between the sides can be easily settled, since the nature of minority dispute is not directly relevant to their territorial integrity and sovereignty rights. Once the complaints of minorities are relieved, this will not only serve for the rightful implementation of concluded agreements, but it will also guarantee the total rule of democracy in Turkey and Greece, with all its institutions and principles.

The situation arising upon such violations does not only harm ‘the other’, but also the country’s own citizens. Furthermore, such violations will surely disturb the public order.

As a matter of fact, if Turkey and Greece violate the statute of minorities, this means in a way that they violate their own founding agreements.⁸ That is to say, in general, the Lausanne Peace Treaty could not be faithfully implemented in relations between Turkey and Greece. However, soon after the previous war after which their national borders were determined their leaders could get together and build a common ground, wiping out the traces of pain and demolishment caused by the war. They could convene on such a friendly common ground that once the residents issue was settled, efforts to foster communication and cooperation

⁸ For a detailed analysis and argument in this respect, see Baskın Oran, **Türkiye’de Azınlıklar: Kavramlar, Teori, Lozan, İç Mevzuat, İçtihat, Uygulama**, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2005.

between them were accelerated. These efforts reached such a high level that on 14 September 1933 they concluded the “Pact d’Entente Cordiale entre La Turquie at la Grèce”⁹. Under the terms of this pact, not only did the sides mutually conclude the inviolability of their common borders, they also agreed to consult each other on international issues related to both. Beyond that, they agreed to send one common representative to those international gatherings where representation was limited. One representative was to defend their common interests as well as individual ones.

However, in later years, these friendly ties deteriorated. The fragile balance reached in the relations following the Lausanne Peace Treaty was particularly disrupted during and after World War II. The sovereignty of the Aegean Islands was handed over to Greece and the ‘Enosis’ ambition broke out in Cyprus, which also harmed the sensitive balance accomplished and the shared sovereignty of the island. Starting with the 1950s, relations entered a period of controversy, the repercussions of which still prevail to some extent. This long process has had a negative impact over the people in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus, causing co-habitation to be almost impossible. The negative influence of rivalry over the sovereignty of Cyprus has been most detrimental to the minorities residing on the island. Let it not be misunderstood, the minorities were made the scapegoats for this rivalry.¹⁰

The Republic which had been founded in Cyprus upon the agreements concluded in 1960 in a way proved that Turkish and Greek communities could live together in peace.

⁹ For the details of the Pact, see Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Siyasi Andlaşmaları...*, pp. 435-436.

¹⁰ This period brings back bitter memories of a time when discrimination and violence against minorities escalated in both countries. EOKA assaults in Cyprus and the 6/7 September events in Turkey, as well as assimilation attempts towards Turks of Western Thrace shook the foundations of the fragile confidence atmosphere. As iterated by all approaches, conflict resolution is an outcome upon which all sides win. However, a reslution can not be durable, due to well-known reasons.

In conclusion, when considered from the aspect of securing the sovereignty and territorial integrity and the search of new sovereignty rights, minority issues have secondary significance. The rights and statutes of minorities were efficiently insured by numerous international agreements of which Turkey and Greece are parties and, above all, by the Lausanne Peace Treaty. The current practice in this context is that whenever the sides offend such rights and statutes, international public opinion applies sanctions against those states. Consequently, both in Turkey and Greece, when the understanding and practice of democracy is fully assumed, it is likely that the complaints of minorities will fade away.

More explicitly, Turkey and Greece will not fall into hot confrontation due to the violation of the statutes of minorities, but such a probability still exists if the case is related to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. The same was experienced during the Kardak Rocks crisis. Consequently, since the sides have disputes more serious than minority issues, this gives secondary importance to the problem. However, most probably any dispute relevant to these rights and statutes to arise will harm the minorities residing in both countries. There is only one way to prevent minorities suffering from such disputes: history can be re-written cooperatively, and at least a certain degree of empathy can be built up for the entire Balkans, as well as for Turkey and Greece. However, this is also a completely different matter of argument.

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DISCUSSIONS

Questions & Answers of the Morning Session

Chairperson: Aydın Babuna (Prof. Dr., Boğaziçi University, İstanbul)

Ali Engin Oba: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, it was a wonderful session. I would like to address a perhaps sophisticated question to Herrn Professor Majer. He gave us a general view about the Ottoman Balkans. He put forward the main views that I am accustomed to hearing for many years. I hope there should be some new interpretations. Prof. Majer, is there any new vision on the topic of the Ottoman Balkans based upon new facts deriving from the new archives, documents?

I completed two missions in Yugoslavia and dealt with Balkan affairs. The same elements have been repeated frequently. New elements should be found to

DISCUSSIONS

interpret the Ottoman presence in the Balkans. To be somewhat provocative, I would like to address this.

I understand that in one part of your exposé you have also pointed out that the *millet* system became an important factor in the collapse of the empire. Would it be possible, for example, for an historian dealing with the Ottoman past, to say that the Ottoman Empire collapsed due to the fact that it allowed all the minorities to flourish and that the Ottomans had not forced Islamisation in the fifteenth and sixteenth century?

They could do this easily. If the Balkans had been Islamised by force, or by other means, I understand the problem of today would have been completely different. And the Ottomans did this based on a Qur'an verse which states that there is no obligation in religion. But it would be possible for an emperor or sultan to take an entirely different *fatwa* from a *sheikhulislam* and to change completely the configuration of the Balkans. Would you be able to make, for example, an analysis from this view?

Hans Georg Majer: Thank you very much for your remarks. I am a historian, not a politician, and used to looking at history from the sources. And a hypothesis as: what could have happened when history is not allowed to historians. This might be a nice play with ideas, but it has no concrete background, and therefore, I would not do it.

I would just like to remark that the Ottomans lived under certain conditions, and these conditions were the framework of their decisions. And the framework was not one verse from the Qur'an, but the whole tradition that had developed in Islamic law. And this was a framework which could maybe be altered by the Ottomans in small details, but not in general. And the situation that Islam allows religious minorities could not be just put aside. I think in no Islamic state it has ever been done, so this question cannot be answered.

DISCUSSIONS

And concerning what you said about the innovations in our views of the Ottoman Empire; well, it depends on which people are listening. For instance, I do not think that everything I said is the general knowledge of everybody, because many parts of it are based on new information. It might be that some of these things have been known all the time, but now they have been proved. And this makes the difference. A historian has to try to prove things, politicians tend to, well, to have their own ideas. Let us say so in that case.

So, if you are asking for new ideas about the way the Ottomans were governing South East Europe, I would also like to learn about them. But I do not know them.

And on the other hand, of course, in twenty minutes you cannot go into all the details. My paper has been shortened terribly.

Mirjana Najčevska: I was not addressed. I really want to make one remark because I was analysing the *millet* system from the point of view of the minorities. And according to this analysis, maybe we can put the whole thing on the opposite side, that the Ottoman Empire survived seven hundred years because of the *millet* system. They managed to have relations between different ethnic cultural and religious communities that avoid some of the ugly conflicts that could have happened in the earliest stage of the life of the Ottoman Empire. So, we can look at these relations or on this side of all the points.

Olga Radova: It is clear that there has been a discussion. The conflicts could be between Muslims and Christians, but there were also conflicts among Christians. It seems to me that people who migrate begin to migrate because of conflicts between ethnicities.

Question: (Ayten Davutoğlu) I have a question to Mr. Meta. As we all know, tolerance and nationalism are two terms that do not go well together. Albanians are the most radically nationalist group in the Balkan region. How could Albanian governments succeed in creating and preserving a friendly atmosphere and attitude

DISCUSSIONS

towards minorities that you mentioned during your presentation? What is the Albanians' key to success?

Beqir Meta: Thank you for the question. Very interesting question, but I don't agree with you on the kind of nationalism of Albania. There is not a radical nationalism in Albania or among Albanians. Albania, in my opinion, has not had at any time any sort of hyper-nationalism or any harsh nationalism. Because Albania has always been a weak state and there has always been big pressure from the neighbours; also Albania is a new state in the Balkans. Maybe there are many reasons, but it is not the place to elaborate every one of them.

But, the co-existence of Albanians with minorities is a historical reality, and this result is proved by data. Also, I want to underline that not only the government policies but also the people's thinking and behaviour concerning minorities is very liberal and very cooperative. In the about 95 years of the life of Albanian state, the stance towards the most important minority in Albania, i.e. the Greek minority, was friendly and didn't create any social conflict between different villages, also for other small minorities in Albania. Albanian politicians during the about hundred years of the life of Albanian state always used to manage and treat minorities as an entity that secures them friendly relations with the neighbours and conducted those policies in these directions, because they always knows that they were under pressure of powerful neighbours. Also, they very much hoped to give a good example for those neighbours for treating the largest Albanian minorities inside their states in the same way.

If you see the Albanian press between the two world wars, when the nationalism was very strong in the Balkans, it is quite different because in this press we can not see any offences against the minorities. It is very important to underline this, because this represents the thinking of the intelligentsia at the time.

Question: Thank you, honourable Chair. I would like to address a question to Prof. Meta again. Well, if such was the case... in Greece, concerning the Albanian

DISCUSSIONS

minority, how would you perceive the influx of Albanian immigration in Greece nowadays, having a numerous population counting over one million?

Beqir Meta: The emigration of Albanians to Greece now is an economic phenomenon, and a social phenomenon. So, I think it is connected with our past, with the Communist regime of Albania. The situation created by the tragic change of political system was very difficult, first of all, economically, and then it was connected also with the difficult period of transition to democracy. So, for us this is a historical phenomenon, an objective phenomenon, and the Albanians treat this phenomenon in different ways, in a very complex way, with some pain, with some hope, first of all, for Albania to improve the situation. Also, they have seen it as a case to force the Greek-Albanian relations, and we have seen those peoples as a source of convergence and cooperation in a common Europe and a common, integrated Balkan.

Question: My honourable Chair, if I may proceed. Well, a lot of the immigrants are the Greek minority of Albania. They are claiming that they were living under terrorism in Albania, and this was the reason for their emigration to Greece.

Beqir Meta: Ah, it is quite different, it is not true. Those people are Greek nationals from Albania, but they are not the largest portion of emigrants. There is only a small portion, a very small portion of emigrants. You know, the Albanian emigration to Greece is about eight hundred thousand people, but the Greek minority emigrants do not exceed thirty five or forty thousand people, so it is a very big difference. And at no time, no one can claim that in Albania they proved any violence or any violations of the rights of this minority. This minority people have only one reason, just like all Albanians, to go to Greece. To improve their economic conditions and their social status, but it is important to underline that this minority has preserved in Albania the properties, the houses, so nothing has been done to cause damage to this minority or to force this minority to stay in Greece. This minority also returned to Albania time after time and makes a lot of

investments. And this important fact underlines that the people of this minority are among very important and successful businessmen in Albania. They gain capital in Greece and invest in Albania in their villages or in their area and also in Tirana and other centres of Albania. So I want to underline, the situation is quite different than as you say.

Lambros Baltsiotis: Permit me some remarks concerning Mr. Meta's reply to Ms. Najčevska. I have a completely different view about the nation-building process. I think that nations are a product of modernity, so being an Albanian, a Greek or a Turk is mostly the result of the last two centuries, although Balkan nationalisms were based mostly on the *millet* system. What I want to say is that when the first Balkan nationalism was invented or happened, they were based on the *millet* system. So, being a Greek was at that time meaning being a Greek Orthodox. Being a Bulgarian means that you were under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate. All the Balkan nationalisms were based on religion. But there was a nationalism that was not based on religion, and that was the Albanian one, based on language. Consequently; in Albania, they were led to create partly different national myths and invented traditions different from the ones that the Greeks, the Turks, the Macedonians, and so forth utilise. So, the Albanians invented the non-religiousness of the Albanian people. For me, as an historian, it is very difficult to accept that there were Albanian-speaking Muslims in the Balkans, e.g. in the areas of Kostur (Kastoria), Lerin (Folorina in Albanian, Florina in Greek) in the early twentieth century, and that they created an Albanian national identity. It is quite different. The self-definition 'Albanian' as a sociolinguistic and cultural one is quite different from a national one. Of course, there were also transitional identities at that period. The national consciousness of the Muslim populations of the Balkans was created gradually. In my point of view, we can not talk about Turks, Greeks in the fifteenth century as modern nations before the nation building process, which in our area does not appear before the eighteenth century.

DISCUSSIONS

And the second remark is about the notion and the numbers of minorities. It is very easy to talk about the numbers of minorities, but I think it is very risky; we must be more precise. I mean, you said in Greece at once, I do not remember when, 23 per cent of the population consisted of minorities. I can easily increase this figure to 50 per cent. It depends on what and how we count, with what tools we are excavating the past. If these tools, our methodology is not scientific, the outcome also will not be reliable. We have national minorities, linguistic minorities, religious minorities, groups that speak a different language but they identify themselves as members of the nation etc. It is even more complicated when we are trying to identify the past. Identities are not stable and the way of belonging to a certain group, nation etc. changes over time. There are persons who, although they are Macedonian-speakers, think they are 'pure' Greeks. Or vice versa, there are persons that do not speak a word of Kurdish, and they are Kurdish nationalists. I can understand the Albanian difficulties: The Albanian nationalism was created through language. In that way, the Albanians were always 'loosing' persons from the dominant cultures of the ex-Ottoman Empire. Albanians were identifying themselves, through religion, as Turks and Greeks. I was interviewing the other day an Albanian from Greece who migrated to Turkey in 1912. His father was a general in the Ottoman Army, and after that, the Turkish Army. He told me that there are about ten million of Albanians in Turkey. So this is a pro-national approach, in his mind, his national consciousness is Turkish.

Two questions to Ms. Najčevska, the differentiated numbers in the Turks and Albanians that we see in the censuses have to do with migration to Turkey, or the fact that Roma and Albanians at the next census declared themselves Turks, or vice versa. The second question is: what is the culture and language dominant in the urban Muslim population in the big cities of Macedonia? Is it Turkish or Albanian? I mean, is it related to social stratification?

Beqir Meta: Thank you Mr. Baltiotis, it is very interesting to hear your remarks, but I have an opinion, and now many students have this opinion, that Albanians have religion, as do all other peoples, but the problem is that they have

DISCUSSIONS

different religions. To have different religions does not mean that you don't have a religion, I say. This is one thing.

The second thing is that this people living in these territories for centuries need to be cooperative towards different religions and to be in harmony village with village, neighbour to neighbour, etc. And this is also true, I say, for the Greek minority because many Albanians had the same belief as the Greek minority. Albanians during a century of their national life have co-existed in harmony and have cooperated successfully with different national or religious beliefs. They created their national religious institutions and always put the interest of the Albanian nation at the top of state and society policies. The religion was always secondary in this hierarchy. This tolerance and harmony between religious communities is the very principal reason that Albanian nationalism was very tolerant and benevolent towards minorities. This is also the most important difference between Albanian nationalism and other Balkan nationalisms. For example, some Albanians have the same religion as the Greek minority. This is a reason for them to have good relations, but this is also a reason for Albanian Muslims to adopt the same benevolent attitude towards the Greek minority.

In the beginning of my paper I said that there is another reason. It is a very important reason, because in history we need to be precise and balanced. Albania has been a very small state, a weak state. It was always under pressure from the neighbours; so Albania always had a lot of difficulties. It would like to expel, for example, the Greek minority, or to maltreat this minority, because it always would be under Greek pressure. And this pressure is a historical reality. There are now many records from the British Foreign Office, from the Albanian archives, and Greek archives which prove that between 1923 and 1926, when many Albanians were expelled from Greece, from Kastoria, Florina and Çamëria, the Albanian government intervened and made an desperate announcement to the Greek government: if you expel Albanians, we will also do the same with the Greek minority in Albania. But then Greece threatened Albania with military intervention. So, Albanians did not implement this measure. It was also, let us say, an effort to

stop the Greek action towards the Albanian minority. So, this responds to the first remark.

Another remark was about the formation of nations, I think many nations have their specific historical conditions. When it was created, Albania had some specific condition. It was a new nation, but it was not quite different from Bulgaria, for example, or the Rumanian nation, etc. All these nations at an early period had one church, and this church was the Eastern Church. These nations emancipated themselves, evaluated, and created their conscience, their national churches and their state. The Albanians acted similarly some decades later. So, here we don't have any big difference.

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, when the first state was created, the most important thing, I think, was that Albanians had a conscience as a nation, not only the language. Albanians have a national conscience, common and specific traditions and habits, as well as a common language. And this was a very important factor for Albanian independence.

Mirjana Najčevska: Concerning the first question regarding the numbers, there are different reasons why these percentage was changed. The main reason is and was the agreement between Yugoslavia and Turkey, when the majority of the Turkish population from the western part of Macedonia was to emigrate, but we can also speak about immigration from Kosovo, we can speak about different birth rates and in the last years there is some kind of forced assimilation from the Albanian side. Sometimes it is not even forced assimilation, because earlier, before the 2001 conflict, it was privileged to be recognised as a Turk, not as an Albanian. Albanian was the second-stage minority. Now, it bestows privilege to be recognised as an Albanian because of the benefits of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. But these are minor changes; the big change was in the 1950s.

And concerning the culture, in Macedonia there are no mixed villages. There are villages which are ethnically pure. There are mixed regions, but the villages

DISCUSSIONS

more or less are pure, and they are developing and preserving their own ethnic culture.

Lambros Baltsiotis: It was the Turkish culture that predominated in cities. Is it true that it has changed in the last years and the Albanian culture and language is now predominant in Skopje, for example? What is your opinion or idea?

Mirjana Najčevska: You can't change the culture so easily, so Skopje and all other major cities were and still are under the influence, or they are showing the influence of the Ottoman Empire, and the Arabic or Oriental culture. So, there is no such sub-Albanian culture or influence in these cities.

Mehmet Hacısalihoglu: I would like to thank Prof. Najčevska especially, because in all the recent minority discussions in the Balkans, there are certain issues that have been disregarded. There are certain minorities that were completely disregarded in these discussions, and one of these groups apparently is the Turkish minority in Macedonia. As an historian working on the Balkans I did not know, for example, that the Turks were even the poorest people after the Romany in Macedonia, also in terms of their social and educational status. So I would like to thank Prof. Najčevska for her very relevant contribution.

I have a question to Prof. Majer. Maybe that would be a bit too daring, but can you take any examples from the Ottoman system to solve the existing problems today?

I will have another question to Dr. Olga Rodova. As far as I could understand from your paper, the Gagauz have no problems at all. This was the picture that you presented to us. If there was a discussion back in socialist times, the representatives from the socialist countries gave the same picture. Is today really everything perfect for the Gagauz in Moldova?

Hans Georg Majer: The problem whether the Ottoman system could be a model: Well, I think, to make it short, no! And I think, I showed in my paper why.

DISCUSSIONS

Because it was bound to the conditions of a period, and it would not be able to function outside these conditions, and the conditions can not be renewed. It is impossible nowadays to have a state with two kinds of citizenship, or even three types. And this is only one problem. And it is impossible for a state nowadays to give as much cultural and religious freedom. Everywhere, for example, we have centralised school systems and it would be very difficult to return to the disinterested Ottoman way. In that respect, I think the Ottoman model as a whole is outdated, but maybe you can take details from it and consider them.

I think that one of the most important parts of the Ottoman regime was not interfering in daily life, not interfering in everything that touched the people deeply. I mean their religious practices, their everyday life. In the Ottoman Empire, this non-interference even included parts of the law. So I am afraid it is not a very suitable model for solving modern problems. Unfortunately! As an Ottomanist, of course I would have liked to give a different answer.

Olga Radova: Thank you, Mr. Mehmet Hacisalihoglu, for this question. I was running out of time, so I could not go into detail very much, but during the period of the Soviet Union, of course, there were minorities... actually all minorities had problems, and back then of course the Gagauz people had problems as well. Today their problems mainly focus on culture and demography.

I could not make a very long analysis. I have just shown you the figures, but if you look into the details you will see that all those examples actually explain themselves. Now let me give you some further explanations.

The first problem with Gagauz people is their economic status. Following the collapse of Soviet Russia, there was a significant deterioration of economic conditions, as you know. As a result, Moldova suffered greatly, and the Gagauz people suffered greatly as well. Some Gagauz people find work in Russia, men mostly work as construction workers, and many women come to Turkey. Actually they are high school graduates, but they come to Turkey and take care of patients,

DISCUSSIONS

or do cleaning jobs. Of course, it is very important to protect the rights of these people because seventeen teachers from a village Kazaklia all came to Turkey within one month. They left their schools there, and came to Turkey, so that they could take care of their families, so that they could earn some money.

If we make some further analyses, of course, we can come up with the conclusion that the state should protect people's rights. Turkey, Moldova and Russia should help these people, so that they can stay where they are, and so that they can help the economy grow.

With the introduction of perestroika in 1986, people could make a living but we did not use to learn our language or our history. We wanted to know more about our origins. And then we started doing research. Back then, there were no schools teaching Gagauz, but now in Gagauzia there are many... all the schools actually teach Gagauz. Certain books have been published by the Ministry of Education as well, but as I have shown you before, there are 36 schools, 36 primary schools teaching Gagauz, and 16 high-schools. There are more than 29,000 students, and in Bulgarian... we have 28 high-schools teaching Bulgarian, and more than 8,000 students.

When we compare these figures, we see that there are still problems to be solved on the Gagauz side. But the state can't manage all these problems, because we are not doing well economically. We have significant migration... emigration from Moldova actually. If the states do not protect the rights of our people, then maybe in two decades there will not be a state called Moldova.

I think the main heritage for the Gagauz people is their language. They could preserve their language. They could preserve the old Turkish language since the first years of the civilisation. We see ourselves as a distinct state, as a distinct nation actually, and as a distinct people, but our language is very similar to the Turkish spoken in Turkey and to the Turkish spoken in Azerbaijan. We are a minority right now, but this special culture should be preserved by... should be

DISCUSSIONS

preserved in the Turkish community. The Orhon Inscriptions are written on stone, you know, so we could protect them and the same goes for our language. I think we should all do our best to preserve this language.

Question: My name is Hasbiye İshak. My question is to Prof. Najčevska. I am from Macedonia. It is my sophomore year at this university. I am studying business administration. In your presentation you said, “Turks are not doing well in terms of education”, but my family is in Macedonia. I wanted to study here and go back to my country. Do you really think that the education level is so low in Macedonia for Turkish people? And how could you get these results?

I will have a second question. Many Turks living there decided to immigrate to Turkey right now. Is it supported by the state or do they want to preserve Turkish culture as a joint culture there, or do they want a completely purified Macedonia? Or do they want to preserve their mixed cultural structure? Or would they prefer a purified Macedonia? Is that their policy?

Mirjana Najčevska: The numbers are from the official statistical data and from the data of the Ministry of Education. The problem with the numbers for the Turkish minority is that some of the Turks are having their schooling in the Macedonian or Albanian language, but according to the explanation favoured by the Ministry of Education, this is a minor percentage. So these numbers are more or less presenting the real picture. The problem is that when we are speaking about Turkish minority we are usually addressing the life of the Turkish minority in the major cities, in Bitola, Skopje, where the Turks living as high status ranking Turks from previous times are still living, so the richer ones, but the vast majority of Turks are now living and remain in the villages, in the poorest part of Macedonia, and the situation more or less concerns them.

And for the second question, no, the state does not care about the preservation of multi-culturalism, and this is the problem. This is the problem after the Ohrid Framework Agreement also, and this is something we have to think about in the

DISCUSSIONS

future, if we really want to preserve Macedonia as a multi-cultural and multi-confessional state.

Chair: Thank you very much for your attention and for your interesting questions. Now it is time to take a lunch break. See you at the second session, in the afternoon session of our conference.

Questions & Answers of the Afternoon Session

Chairperson: Hans Georg Majer (Prof. Dr., University of Munich)

We have come to the end of the session, and now we can begin the discussion.

Question: My name is Alaaddin Yalçınkaya, from Sakarya University, the Department of International Relations.

There are forgotten nations. Let us mention Crete, since we have mentioned Dodecanese. There is a Cretan nation with a different alphabet, with a different identity, with a different faith; there are some Christians, but they are under *Girit Milleti*, they are Christians, but these people are like that. The ones that I met are this way. In Greece, there are Albanians, Macedonians, and Turks, but they all have a fatherland, a motherland. But these Cretans do not have anybody. Is there any investigation into this issue? Because this is a research topic, and when I am asking this question, I should also say that there are already many problems, let us not introduce yet another problem.

It was mentioned in the morning, as Prof. Najčevska said, why the Ottoman Empire lasted for seven centuries. We have to look for answers. And the answer, I believe, is the *millet* system, because all countries, all states had a life, and what was abnormal with respect to Ottomans is that it lived very long, and I have been into the Ottoman Archives for eight, nine years, because it recognises differences; it gives them a breathing space; it gives them a space to live. If it had applied just the same in the judiciary, the cultural system, education, I think nobody would say that Ottomans would live longer. That is why I asked this question.

Elçin Macar or maybe Lambros Baltsiotis from Greece may respond to this question.

Lambros Baltsiotis: Giritli, I can answer. What do you think a nation is? Is it something created from time immemorial or is it something coming from God? If

DISCUSSIONS

we say that a nation is a group of persons who believe that they have common ancestors, common history, maybe a common language, common destiny. That is what they believe. It does not matter if it is true or not, all this common history, common heritage are created through a procedure of nation-building. But, anyhow, I do not think there is any scientific work of any kind that can prove that in Crete there are persons who believe that they do not belong to the Greek nation and they belong to a separate nation, or they think that there is another nation, the Cretan one.

Probably what you are talking about is that in different places of Greece, there are different local cultures or different dialects. In Crete, there is a promotion of this local culture, this local difference in a more public way, as it is welcomed by the state for some reason. But this has nothing to do with a nation.

Elçin Macar: I agree with what Mr. Baltiotis has said. I agree with the statement that a separate culture cannot be qualified as a nation. I think we have to be careful in doing that. Giritli, Cretans, always had some distance to mainland Greece in many respects. It is true, because of their toughness, they love arms, they love honour (*namus*) and they are like the people living in Anatolia. But just like you said, there is a community of people with national distinctive features, I do not think so.

Question: Zülfiye Mutlu, a student from the Political Science and International Relations (YTU). I was born in Bulgaria, and migrated in 1989. And I had the opportunity to listen to you speaking about what the minorities lived through. I know that those who believe that... who does approve that they were born in Bulgaria will be given Bulgarian passports and why is it so simple? This is one question.

How did the 1989 migration affect the Bulgarian economy? Maybe Mr. Kănev could address this question very briefly.

DISCUSSIONS

Krasimir Kănev: The first question is very simple to answer. It is not that people who were born in Bulgaria can easily acquire citizenship. Those who were born in Bulgaria from Bulgarian citizens can acquire citizenship easily, because the Bulgarian law and the Bulgarian Constitution say that those who are born in Bulgaria by Bulgarian citizens are automatically citizens. And they do not have to go through a process of naturalisation, and this is common sense. This works the same everywhere. So you can, I think, easily acquire Bulgarian citizenship if you were born in Bulgaria from Bulgarian citizens.

The second question... and acquiring Bulgarian citizenship generally is not easy. The Bulgarian law is discriminatory in many respects. For instance, those who are not born in Bulgaria, but want to acquire Bulgarian citizenship... the law distinguishes between those who are of Bulgarian blood and those who are not. And those who are of Bulgarian blood, they can acquire citizenship easily. Those who are not, they have to live in Bulgaria a certain number of years, have a status of permanent residence, learn the Bulgarian language, and so forth. Then they can apply for Bulgarian citizenship.

The second question was about the economic effect of migration. There were several economic effects. One immediate economic effect caused a lot of hardship to the Bulgarian economy in the summer of 1989.

And there are also some speculations that this might have brought down the communist regime. At least some people would like to see everything in that respect, but that is going too far. The exodus, the emigration of the Bulgarian Turks from Bulgaria certainly had great costs and contributed to the bringing down of the communist regime, but this was one of the many factors, and I would not even say that this was the most important factor.

The emigration of the Turks, however, also did not bring immediate effects; it brought some secondary effects. And one can see those in many different respects. There are some benefits apparently from this. Certain people migrated to Turkey,

DISCUSSIONS

then they returned with their skills, with their money, and they have contributed to a certain extent to the Bulgarian economy, and that was the beneficial side of this emigration.

There were negative sides as well, though, and those were in the depopulation of certain areas, now in the region of Kărdžali. For instance, there are entire villages where everybody has left, because all the people emigrated to Turkey either in 1989 or subsequently, or they would come and go, but this is not something that would contribute to the local economy. And, as a result, there are entire areas where the land is not cultivated, or it is cultivated one way or another, but it is not cultivated with a long term perspective. A person who would stay there, who would invest in the land, who would plan in a long-term perspective... and this is a loss to the Bulgarian economy. But generally there has not been any study of the economic effect of the migration, and if you wanted, you could do such a study.

Olga Radova: Dr. Kănev, how is the situation of many Gagauz living in Bulgaria now, at present? Now they accept Moldovans to become Bulgarian citizens, and as far as I know, there is a quota, and it seems that Gagauz ethnos... do they consider Bulgarian ethnos the same as Gagauz ethnos?

Krasimir Kănev: ... how many Gagauz living in Bulgaria, because change of identity of these people. There was a very serious blow to the Turkish language and Turkish culture particularly during the last years of the communist regime in the 1980s. And Gagauz would be for some understandable reasons the first to be affected by this blow. For several decades, as a matter of fact, Turkish language was not studied, and Gagauz people migrated to the cities, and when one migrates to the city, the mixing of culture is very easy. When one keeps to his or her own village, it is much easier to preserve the national culture, and lots of Gagauz have lost their Gagauz national consciousness.

DISCUSSIONS

There is another factor that contributed and it also has to do with Europe. Second question: another factor that has contributed to the loss of Gagauz national culture, ethnic culture was the official hue of the Bulgarian historians and the Bulgarian government, which says that the Gagauz are Bulgarians who lost their language. They preserved their religion, but lost their language, which is not easy! [Laughter] It would be much easier if it was the other way around!

On the one hand, Gagauz in Moldova do not qualify for the accelerated procedure for acquiring Bulgarian citizenship. So on the one hand, they are considered Bulgarians historically. Several books were written on this; on the other hand, when they live in Moldova they are not, only the Bulgarians of Moldova are considered Bulgarians by blood, and therefore only they qualify for acquiring Bulgarian citizenship in an accelerated procedure, that is without waiting, and without being required to settle in Bulgaria for a certain number of years.

Olga Radova: If I could have a couple of minutes, I would like to say that Gagauz ethnically consider themselves a separate nation, and they are present in Bulgaria; we know this from history. In the sixteenth century and the eighteenth century they were present there. And I believe that these questions have to be researched to be explained better. Because in Bulgaria scientists and scholars have accepted that the Gagauz are separate nation.

And my question regards Greece: are there any Gagauz in Greece? And is there any link? What would you like to say about Gagauz presence in Greece?

Chair: Mr. Kănev, would you answer?

Krasimir Kănev: There is no question that there was an official recognition of the Gagauz ethnic identity. The debate is on the origins. Scholars do believe that this is a separate nation, a separate people, and no one denies this. The debate is on the origins, and the origins, according to the official point of view, show that they used to be Bulgarians who lost their language.

DISCUSSIONS

Lambros Baltsiotis: Yes, there is a common tradition in the Balkans: when the language is not matching with religion, someone forced the group to change one or the other. So the Turkish-speaking Greeks claim “we have to preserve our faith, so we lost our language”. You can say that vice versa in most cases. Pomaks say “we changed our language because we have to preserve our Muslim religion”.

Anyway, in Greece there are Gagauz that came from the area of Edirne, during the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey. They were considered Greeks, because they were Orthodox, so independently of the language, every person who is Greek Orthodox under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople was moved to Greece. Most of them settled in villages of the Prefecture of Evros which is at the eastern north part of Greece, near the borders with Turkey and Bulgaria. Some of them settled in the Serres prefecture, which is in Eastern Macedonia, Serez I think it is in Turkish too, and there is one mixed village in Thessaloniki Prefecture, as far as I remember. The language is quite vivid in these villages.

Besides that, there are five villages that are supposedly ‘indigenous’ Gagauz, or Yoluç. I am not quite sure how they call themselves now. These villages are in the Zikhni region of Serres. I think one of those villages has lost the language completely, a century ago. There are also two ‘indigenous’ villages in the area of Komotini, in the Prefecture of Rodopi.

You can meet Gagauz persons who believe that they lost their language in order to preserve their tradition, their ...Greekness. More interesting though is the fact that the Gagauz of Greece are now used as a vehicle for the Greek policy in the Greco-Turkish conflict. There is a battle for the Gagauz of the Moldova Republic. So, we have a conflict between Greece and Turkey about who will more influence the Gagauz of Moldova, and the Gagauz of Greece in a way are used by the Greek state, I do not know how to say, as a vehicle for the interests of Greece to the area.

Chair: Thank you, now it is your turn, please.

DISCUSSIONS

Question: I am from the Istanbul University, Ertuğrul Paçal, I am a pharmacist.

My mother came from Crete in 1903; my father came from Sofia in 1908. But I was born in Tekirdağ, then we moved to Istanbul. I would like to ask a question here. The topic mentioned by Macar is interesting. Since my childhood I can say the same looking at my traditions actually, and I do not want to push far on these issues. I agree with him. I have a question to Mr. Kănev: we have a border with Greece, and we also have a border with Bulgaria, but our border with Greece is a sea border. With Bulgaria we had problems during Todor Živkov's regime, but recently we have good relations with Bulgaria. They are doing business with us; we are doing business with Bulgaria. It works perfectly well. I believe that we should have had better relations with the Greek side where my mother came from, but that is not so. Is there an active policy of the Bulgarian side to have good and fruitful relations with Turkey?

Krasimir Kănev: Well, I would say that there is now, and this even supports present government for Turkey's accession to the European Union. And there is an openness to all types of relationships with Turkey in the present government, but the problem is that the government policy changes, and if those people in that clip I showed [the propaganda clip of the nationalist ATAKA Party] come to power, policies are apparently going to be different. So, it is hard to say, but at present the situation is much better than it used to be even in the framework of the period of democracy. If we look into the period between 1989 and today, I would say that the relationship between Bulgaria and Turkey between 2001 and now is the best, I would maybe even say, in Bulgarian history.

Question: My name is Emre Erkan, my question is to Mr. Baltiotis. In the past, in January, the Foreign Minister Bakoyannis went to Western Thrace, and in that visit he said that the foundation (*vakf*) problems would be resolved, debts would be forgiven, it would be made easier to have access to university, public employment would be facilitated, etc.

DISCUSSIONS

And you made a presentation regarding the administrative practices. Is this opening presented by Bakoyannis one of the liberal policies of the Foreign Ministry, and has international pressure been influential on this?

Lambros Baltiotis: What I presented was the general frame in the post-war period, aspects of the Greek policy towards minorities. Gradually the situation with the minorities is getting better; in Thrace, it is getting much better. The situation with religious minorities in Greece is also getting much better. However, there are still problems with other minorities, and specific problems in Thrace, for example, the *vakıf* issue..

Chair: Yes please.

Question: My name is Savvas Papilidis [?], I am doing master studies in the Department of International Relations in Bilgi University, and I am from Rhodes. I actually live right opposite the Murat Reis Mosque that you have mentioned. And I wanted to make some comments and ask one question about the Rhodes minority.

First of all, I think it is a very interesting subject to be researched for an extra reason since there is, to a larger extent, other minorities which actually integrated themselves into everyday society in Rhodes, they are not in ghettos, let us say, as they are in other places. Recently, I was very much interested in that subject and looked into it. I wanted to use it for my thesis perhaps, and I did some preliminary research on Rhodes, and I encountered silence on the part of the minority institutions themselves.

I was told there were no archives for the *vakıf*, I was told that there was nothing in the library, the Turkish library you have mentioned. I wanted to know if you have any comments on the fact that they seem to be very reluctant to speak officially about it to someone who wants to research it.

And the other question, I am sure it is very difficult to come by such a thing, but is there anything published about any oppression at any date, let us say, forced

DISCUSSIONS

migration during the time of the Junta, because the dictatorship between 1967 and 1974, for I know from the oral history of Rhodes that there was a lot of pressure on members of the minority to leave during that time. They were told: You Turks, go back to your home! And when answering “this is our home”, they met with denial, so they just had to leave. Is there any data about, let us say, any decrease in the numbers of the minority at that time?

Oh, sorry, just one last thing. Did I get it right that you said there are three thousand right now in Rhodes, 3,700, you say.

Elçin Macar: In fact, regarding the Junta, the dictatorship period, I did not see any special information. My essential source was the republican archives in Ankara, and it is quite well classified until the early 1960s, and the rest which belongs to the period towards the end of the 1960s is not very clear. The documents are not there or not classified. I believe it will happen.

But I suggest you to consult the Greek Foreign Ministry archives, and there is no other published work that I know.

Lambros Baltsiotis: I agree that there are no public published sources on this question. What we know comes from little research. Some Turkish nationals from the Dodecanese were forced during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus to sell their property. So in this case, besides the direct or indirect push to migrate to Turkey, a semi-forced selling of property of Muslims to Christians took place. Some say it happened by violence, pointing guns, not by the state, by private individuals. Detailed research must be undertaken.

The other thing is that the Greek state had an ‘excellent’ idea when in 1947/48 it annexed the Dodecanese islands. There was a law about the acquisition of citizenship for persons originating from Dodecanese and living abroad. The Dodecanesians had a big diaspora, even the Muslim ones, in Turkey, in the United States, etc. The Greek law provision was the following: Among those who are living abroad, only the Orthodox have the right to Greek citizenship! Muslims and

DISCUSSIONS

Jews were excluded. The Muslims coming from Rhodes, and the Jews coming from Rhodes who were living abroad were excluded from citizenship. So in that way, thousands of Muslims and Jews did not obtain the Greek nationality.

Question: My name is Pantelli, Dina; I am an exchange student in the Department of International Relations in Bilgi University. My question is addressed to Prof. Fuat Aksu. Well, do any of the ethnic minorities, Rums of Istanbul or the Muslims of Thrace by acting as a pressure group affect any foreign policy of their countries of residence? Because according to my personal view, both were used as hostages.

Fuat Aksu: When you look at the compulsory exchange of population, it is not easy, and when you look at the deliberations made here, of course, compulsory migration is not humane. Exchange of population is not voluntary, but this was a fact, and İsmet İnönü, even in his memoirs, mentioned that this would have been stopped altogether. But after a while we see that when the settlement issue was resolved, another agreement was signed, and then a part of the Greek population came back. So in the right aftermath of war, there was a rapid exchange of policy, but later a more natural course began to take place.

Minorities taken as hostages, using such a term would maybe go too far. They may have felt it that way, and we should understand that, because they were forced against their will ... as you remember 63, 64 incidents; they did not feel safe. And they are still not feeling safe. This is understandable.

But first of all, in both societies, the state mechanisms should stay away from creating the 'other' identity; I mean, if we could create empathy in our societies and share the same feelings and ideas, then they would not feel like hostages at all. But who is responsible for this? As I said in the beginning, I am very pessimistic because I think this was the easiest problem to resolve. And when I look at the situation, I think I made a wrong classification because it does not seem that all the problems are not really easy to resolve. Because we should also ask how much

DISCUSSIONS

people in these states believe in democracy, in the countries in this area. From our perspective, we see the European Union as something that would save us. Maybe we see that in Bulgaria minorities are getting more rights, but in Greece, which has been a member of the European Union for so long and the cradle of democracy, we see how they treat the minorities.

So one party is doing a mistake, what about the other party? Rather than asking who is right and who is wrong, I think, we should be on the side of the victims. I do not know if I could answer your question, but this is how I think.

Elçin Macar: My dear Fuat, you said that people who went came back. No, they are not coming back, because they were hoping that exchange was going to be banned, and therefore they did not get citizenship from the host country, and they always kept the hope that they would one day go back. And their hopes came to an end after 1930, and then all of them became communists, because they calculated that nothing good would come out of Venizelos. So those who come back are not the ones who leave in that respect.

Fuat Aksu: No, maybe I should explain it. I did not say that they were exactly the [exchanged] people who came back. They came back with their Greek identity now, as a citizen of Greece. They were Greeks and had Greek passports. After the war between Turkey and Greece and the compulsory exchange of people, national leaders and both people wanted to cover the enmity and tried to develop cooperation. I think the most important thing is this common sense of cooperation and living together. Enosis claims and Cyprus conflicts caused this common sense to collapse.

Chair: One last question is left and, if you excuse me, I would like to ask one myself.

A very short question to Mr. Kănev: You told us that 80 per cent of the Turks in Bulgaria are living in the country and that 70 per cent of the Bulgarians are

DISCUSSIONS

living in towns. So there are only 30 per cent of the Bulgarians in the country. Does that mean that the Turks are feeding the Bulgarian townspeople?

Krasimir Kănev: Well, 70 per cent of the entire population is living in cities, the 30 per cent of the entire population is living in the country. And 80 per cent of the Turkish population are living in the villages. Well, we cannot say that Turks are feeding the country, because they are not very many, somewhere around 600,000 at that, but of course, they are contributing a lot to Bulgarian agriculture and the Bulgarians benefit from them.

Question: There is democracy, we have to be equal. I have a question.

Hans Georg Majer: I was told that there is a problem of organisation, and sometimes even in democratic systems one has to be strict. Everybody is open to further questions after we finish here officially. Please make use of this opportunity.

Now the last word I want to say is thanks to the organisers of the conference, which I think was a great success, and very interesting and fruitful for all of us. We have to thank Yıldız Teknik University, we have to thank the Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies. And I think, if I may mention one more name, it is the name of the gentleman sitting on my side, Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, who was something like the spiritual rector of the conference. So many thanks to everybody and I hope that you have profited from it, and thanks also to the audience which has been very interested and has asked many questions, although there is one question left. I am sorry. Two questions? Well, we could go on, and I think that it is a very good sign for the conference that there are more questions than we have time to have answered.

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CONFERENCE REPORT*

Laçin İdil ÖZTİĞ**

The conference on “Minority Issues in the Balkans and the EU” organised with the cooperation of Yıldız Technical University, Department of Political Science and International Relations (Istanbul), and Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies (OBIV-Istanbul), and coordinated by Mehmet Hacısalıhoğlu, was held on 16 May 2007 in Istanbul. The objective of the conference was to highlight the situation of different ethnic and religious groups living in various Balkan countries, mainly Turkish-Muslim minorities in Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia, which are less prominent in recent political discussions. Additionally, it dealt with minority issues in Albania and Moldova. While the conference covers the issue of the

* For a short version of this report see: Humanities – Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte (H-Soz-U-Kult) <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=1651>

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CONFERENCE REPORT

minorities in the Balkans, a one-day conference does not allow time to examine issues such as the Muslims in the Sandjak region, Albanians in Macedonia or Hungarians in Transylvania. In his opening remarks, Gencer Özcan, Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Yıldız Technical University (Istanbul), gave a concise overview of the Balkan region, emphasizing that it is an unprecedented laboratory for studying minority issues. He said that minority issues have a 100-year-old history, dating back to the multi-national and multi-religious structures of the Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian Empires. He also highlighted the socialist era through which Balkan states lived for five decades, a period still understudied. Next followed Güner Öztek, Ambassador (ret'd.), Director of Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies (Istanbul), who argued that protecting the rights of the minorities is a prerogative of the state in question in the twenty-first century. Öztek expressed his concerns by stating that the United Nation's Chapter adopted after World War II does not cover minority rights extensively. As minority rights are a special branch of human rights, they have been easily exploited in history with the aim of manipulation. Owing to the fact that different ethnic and religious groups lived in the country, the Ottoman Empire was subject to external pressure. He also argued that since the 1990s important steps have been taken to improve human rights and minority rights. Further progress depends on the transparency of the media and the educational systems, which have a great deal of impact on related issues.

The first session was chaired by Aydın Babuna, Bosphorus University (Istanbul), who specialises in the Bosniaks and former Yugoslavia. The conference opened with a talk by Hans Georg Majer, University of Munich, with the title "Minorities in the Balkans: The Ottoman Heritage Revisited". He discussed the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of the Ottoman Empire which provides the corner stone in studying minority issues in the Balkans. Majer began his presentation by touching upon the issue of different ethnic groups living in the Ottoman Empire. The most important of these groups include Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Albanians, Kopts, Vlachs, Gypsies, Slavs and

Hungarians. He stressed that the Pax Ottomanica provided a relatively peaceful and tolerant environment for these groups in social and economic life. In this regard, specific examples were given, such as no compulsory school attendance in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, no oppressive tendencies as would flourish in centralised school systems developed. Furthermore, everybody was free to speak his/her own language. Later on, he moved on to the issue of the legal structure of the Ottoman Empire, pointing out that only Muslim groups possessed all rights. Jews, Christians and women had rights at lower degrees. However, non-Muslims could practice their religion without any interference. The non-Muslims were organised according to their denominations in the *millet* system, headed by their patriarchs. Their civil code, including all aspects of their religious life, was within the framework of the shari'a. On the basis of the points mentioned above, he commented that although they were unable to enjoy the same rights as Muslims, their status was under legal protection. That is to say, tolerance, rather than inequality, was the unique characteristic of the Ottoman Empire, which makes it different from its contemporaries. As he evaluated the social, economic and religious patterns and the legal structures in which different ethnic groups lived, he concluded his remarks by emphasizing the last periods of the Ottoman Empire, when inequality rather than tolerance came to the fore. In conclusion, the unique character of the Ottoman Empire, which provided not equality, but tolerance which allowed non-Muslim groups to live and practice their religion and speak their language in a free environment, became an issue of manipulation in order to weaken the empire by other states.

Beqir Meta, Director of the Albanian Historical Museum (Tirana), presented the issue of "Albanian and Greek Policies for the Various Minorities During 20th Century", by giving an comparative overview of the situation of minorities in Albania and Greece. In his paper, he claimed that the nation-states of Albania and Greece were established in different historical periods and followed a different route. His argument was that while Albania was tolerant towards the ethnic population belonging to three religions, Greece refrained from giving freedom to

CONFERENCE REPORT

minorities since it was established as a unitary, homogenous state. He tried to strengthen his idea with numerous historical records, stating that following her agreement with Bulgaria on November 27, 1919, and the Lausanne Peace Treaty, Greece transformed herself into a homogenous state by deporting the Albanian Muslims. Around 60,000 Albanians were expelled from the areas of Florina, Kostur, Ioannina, as well as 20,000 Albanians from Chameria. He also stated that during the process of population exchange, Greece took into consideration religious differences. Nationality and language were ignored. In addition, Albanians were not distinguished from Vlachs, Pomak or Slavo-Macedonians. He also stressed the sensitivity of Albania towards religious and ethnic minorities. The main minority in Albania was the Greek-speaking minority. In 1921, two years before the Lausanne Peace Treaty came into effect, Albania had signed a statement about the protection of minorities. However, the statement ceased to be an obligation after the policies of the Greek government. Moreover, the League of Nations could not or did not want to stop the violent expulsion of most of the Albanian minority. However, Albania did not react in this direction against the Greek-speaking minority. According to Meta, after the communist period, the rights of the minorities advanced significantly in Albania. Although she is not a member of the European Union, Albania signed and applies voluntarily and correctly the European Convention of Human Rights. Paradoxically, Greece, a member of the European Union, has not signed the Convention and does not apply it. It continues to deny the existence of minorities in its territories, although some minorities, including the Albanian Orthodox, have preserved their ethnic identity. Consequently, he concluded with the idea that the situation of the minorities in Greece is at a very unsatisfactory level.

Mirjana Najčevska, Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution (Skopje), in her presentation entitled “The Turkish Minority in Macedonia: Between Prejudices of the Past and Minoritisation of the Present” concentrated on the Turkish minority living in Macedonia. She pointed out the key issues determining minority issues in Macedonia as relics from the time of

socialism (collective treatment, the different positions of different minorities, the disproportionate presence of members of minorities in public life), the presence of a significantly larger population of one minority (Albanians) which is also concentrated in one area of the country, the absence of a strategy to foster multiculturalism as an important characteristic of the state (in education, culture, the local way of life), development of the multi-party system on an ethnic basis and the 2001 conflict and the Ohrid Framework Agreement. She asserted that the Turkish minority is economically and socially the least developed in Macedonia, followed only by the Gypsies. Moreover, although compared to the Albanian minority, the Turkish population was seen as ‘good’ and ‘loyal’, there is a continuing indoctrination in the school system in the country. Macedonians think that the Ottoman Empire occupied Macedonia for centuries, attacked the identity of the Macedonian people and destroyed Macedonia’s chances for progress and that Islam as a particularly belligerent religion. For this reason, there has been continuing prejudices towards the Turkish minority in Macedonian society. The Turkish minority is still subject to the indoctrination of the educational system. As a conclusion, she stressed the poor economic conditions, poor educational status of the Turkish minority and their absence from political life.

Olga Radova, Moldova Academy of Sciences (Chişinău), spoke on “Minority Rights in Moldova and the Gagauz”. She analyzed the multi-ethnic composition of Moldovan society. She started her presentation by giving a short historical review about Moldova and Gagauz. Since the establishment of the Moldovan Principedom in 1359, many different ethnic groups have lived in Moldova — such as Moldovans, Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Albanians, Serbians, Polish, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Germans and Armenians. In modern times, the Republic of Moldova is also a mixture of different ethnic groups. However, the basic ethnic characteristics of Moldova developed in earlier historical periods. The basic features of different ethnic groups living in Moldova were constituted in the nineteenth century. The majority of the Moldovan population is composed of six ethnic groups; Moldovans, Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauz, Bulgarians and Jews.

CONFERENCE REPORT

According to the census of 2004, 3,388,071 people live in Moldova, out of which 2,579,202 or 76.1 % are Moldovans and 23.9 % include Ukrainians, Russians, Gagauz, Greeks, Bulgarians, White Russians, Jews, Polish, Armenians and so on. In her discussions, she affirmed that in 1994 *Gagauz Yeri (Gagaouzie)*, which has an autonomous administration, was established. In *Gagouzie*, the Gagauz have autonomy and rights to autonomous education and other activities. However, due to economic reasons, there has been a continuing emigration to Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Canada. She concluded her remarks by stating that the existence of Gagauz will be under threat if this situation continues.

Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, Yıldız Technical University, with his presentation on “Minorities in the Balkans and the Issue of Toponymy: the Bulgarian Case” discussed the process of Bulgarian policies for changing place names in the country and compared the issue of toponymy with that of other European countries. He stated empirically that the issue of toponymy in the Balkans is related to national policies following the creation of nation-states in the region. The point which makes Bulgaria different from other Balkan countries is that the policy of changing place names diversified according to the political developments in the country. The policy of changing place names was justified by claiming that Ottoman-Turkish names were imposed in order to assimilate Bulgarians in the Ottoman period. The process began with the establishment of a Bulgarian Principedom following the 1877/78 Ottoman-Russian War. The first comprehensive place name change took place in 1906, the second one in 1934. Subsequently, in the socialist period, along with the names of Turkish or Greek in origins, also Bulgarian names with monarchic and religious connotations were changed. In the span of a century, not only were the names of villages and cities changed, but all types of geographical names referring to mountains, rivers, and neighbourhoods. While minorities in many West European countries (such as the Swedish minority in Finland, the German minority in Belgium, the Austrian minority in North Italy, and the Slovenian minority in Austria) could raise their voices about the protection of their names, Balkan minorities, which do not feel that their basic rights have been

secured, are silent about the issue. Although there have been advances in minority rights with EU membership in the region, there are still pressures directly affecting fundamental freedoms.

Krasimir Kănev, Director of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Sofia), discussed the issue of “Muslim Minorities and Democratisation Process in Bulgaria”. He gave a general outline of statistics of ethnic minorities living in Bulgaria. The numerical findings covered the population of Turks, Pomaks, Roma, Russians, Macedonians, Greeks and Jews. He stated that the first wave of changing names in Bulgaria was completed in 1974. As a result, 220 names had been changed. The second wave began in 1984, resulting with the fact that 800,000 Turks had to change their names by force. In his presentation, Kănev made a comparison with the social status of Turks living in different periods. He highlighted that while most Turks lived in cities in the nineteenth century, today most of them (80%) live in villages. Additionally, he stressed that party membership provides an important step in penetrating society. It would give Turks the opportunity to raise their voices and concerns. It would also contribute to their welfare and increase in social status. Compared to life in the cities, social status is lower for Turks who live in villages. He then looked at the impact of two emigration waves which took place after World War II. 150,000 Turks emigrated to Turkey between 1950 and 1951 through a bilateral agreement between Bulgaria and Turkey. In 1989, during the junta regime, 300,000 Turks emigrated to Turkey and 100,000 of them returned after the collapse of communism in Bulgaria. However, official statistics showing the numerical evidence of population flow is not clear. He argued that the process of emigration in Bulgaria include internal migration, migration waves to Turkey, and expulsions. Kănev concluded his remarks by expressing his concern about the rise of nationalist movements in Bulgaria culminating with the establishment of the ATAKA party in 2005, which shows a hostile attitude towards the Turkish minority.

Ali Dayioğlu, Near East University (Nicosia), gave a lecture with the title “Changing Aspects of Minority Policy in Bulgaria after 1989: The Case of

CONFERENCE REPORT

Muslim-Turkish Minority” and paid particular attention to Bulgaria’s changed attitude towards Turkish minorities. He argued that the minority issue has become a very sensitive issue for Bulgaria after the fall of the Berlin Wall, especially during her quest for becoming a member of Western institutions and integrating into the Western world. Between the years of 1984 and 1989, the ‘Harsh Assimilation Period’, Bulgaria imposed various limitations for Turkish minorities and even deported them. In this period, many mosques were closed; several of them were converted into museums and libraries. Hundreds of thousands of the Turkish minority were expelled from Bulgaria. Following that period, Bulgaria faced reactions from many countries and international organisations. Due to these factors, Todor Živkov, the President of the State Council, was toppled and a more moderate period began. Concrete steps were taken for minority rights. The names of minorities were changed to their old form. The right to establish their own schools and education in their native languages were guaranteed by the state. The limitations on their freedom of religion and freedom of press were lifted. They could establish mosques and follow media and publication activities in a free environment. All in all, the aim of this presentation was to explain that various reforms after 1989 could not be considered without also taking into consideration the swift and radical changes in the international system. The end of the Cold War and the necessity to integrate into the Western system triggered Bulgaria to adopt more moderate policies towards Turkish minorities.

Elçin Macar, Yıldız Technical University (Istanbul), presented a paper entitled “The Turks of the Dodecanese: From Lausanne to Present”. He gave an overview of the situation of the Turks in the Dodecanese especially after 1923. He explained that the Turks of the Dodecanese were neglected in comparison with West Thrace’s Turkish minorities. When the Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed in 1923, the Dodecanese belonged to Italy, and since the Dodecanese were given to Greece in 1947, following World War II, minorities of the Dodecanese did not benefit from the minority rights brought by the Lausanne Peace Treaty. The Italian administration continued the *millet* system with slight changes. The people of the

Dodecanese did not have to do military service; in addition, they had their own schools and courts. Italians imposed serious pressure on the Greek population which made up the majority in the Dodecanese. Italian was made compulsory at schools, and place names were Italianised. Moreover, the Roman-Catholic rite was imposed on the Orthodox majority. That the Dodecanese were left to Greece following the occupation period caused impressive emigration waves of the Turks of the Dodecanese to Turkey, since their community was left to decide whether to obtain Greek citizenship or to emigrate to Turkey. Following that period, Hellenisation policy took over, with a tendency to be quite systematic. These factors accelerated the emigration process of the Turkish minority. The second emigration wave began with the 1974 intervention of Turkey in Cyprus. Macar concluded his presentation by outlining the general problems of the Dodecanese Turks today. He affirmed that the Dodecanese Turks have economic problems, limitations on education in Turkish at schools, difficulties in the appointment of the mufti and imams, problems related to the belongings of charitable endowments, mosques, conscripts and so on. In conclusion, Turkish minorities lack certain rights which should already have been given based on Greece's membership in the European Union. He discussed that the minority problem in the Dodecanese should be sensitively dealt with by EU authorities which put the minority issue on top of the agenda in the membership process of some candidate countries.

Lambros Baltsiotis, Panteion University, Research Centre for Minority Groups (Athens), explained the issue "Minorities in Greece: State Policies and Administrative Practice" by giving a concise overview of the *millet* heritage of the Ottoman Empire. He explained the process from Greek society living in the Ottoman Empire to the creation of an ethnically and religiously homogenous state in Greece. He affirmed that religion is a crucial factor for national inclusion and exclusion, which can be understood as the intermingling of nationality and religion in Greek society. In order to become a member of the Greek nation, not only did one have to be ethnically Greek, but Orthodox as well. For that reason, he stressed that a Muslim cannot be included in the Greek nation. Later on, he discussed the

decision mechanism related to minority issues in Greece. He stressed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Public Order and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs are responsible for the policy-making process. Baltiotis's presentation concentrated on the issue of decision-making structures determining the situation and status of minorities. To this end, he used a different approach by explaining not only the social and economic conditions of the minorities, but also how political elites react to them. In discussing the topic, he also did not neglect national and religious characteristics of the Greek state, which determine the framework in which society and political elites shape their opinions towards minorities in Greece.

Fuat Aksu, Yıldız Technical University, presented "A Dispute Easy to Settle: Minority Issues in Turco-Greek Relations". He was concerned with the situation of minorities in Turkey and Greece. He stressed that disputes over the status of minorities do not have a dimension related to sovereignty and irredentism, even though both countries have many other disputes in relation to sovereignty rights and status. The list of disputes between these countries include minority problems, Cyprus, the Aegean, competition and limitations regarding alliance organisations, propaganda implemented through mass media, and support of terrorist organisations. He supported this thesis by acknowledging that Turkey and Greece solved the issue of minorities with the decision of compulsory exchange of population. That explains why minority issues between Turkey and Greece do not have warlike characteristics, while the same issues related to sovereignty and irredentism have resulted in bloody and continuous wars in the Balkan region. All in all, compared with the disputes over the Aegean Sea or Cyprus, the reaction towards the violation of minority rights between these countries have not transcended the limitations of diplomacy and do not have potential to cause hot conflict. These issues have been accepted to remain under the rule of internal state affairs and to be solved under public order, taking into consideration the relevant articles of the Lausanne Peace Treaty. To sum up, minority issues are questions of democratic development.

Conclusion

The economic, social and legal structures of the Ottoman Empire are of great importance in analyzing minority issues in the Balkans today. A historical perspective would facilitate the comprehension of the sequence of conditions under which minorities have lived in the Balkan countries. The unique character of the Ottoman Empire was its tolerance towards different ethnic and religious groups. Ironically, with its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character, it became vulnerable to waves of nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, minority issues in the Balkans are problematic in the sense that most Balkan countries are reluctant to give more freedom and rights to minority groups. Turkish minorities in Macedonia are worst in terms of economic and social condition, followed only by Gypsies. Due to severe economic conditions, Gagauz minorities are forced to migrate to other countries. The Turks of the Dodecanese even lack rights normally recognized in any European Union member state. Nationalism is on the rise in Bulgaria, reaching its peak with the creation of the ATAKA party which shows a hostile attitude towards Turkish minorities. The problem of changed place names does not even become a current issue in the Balkans, since minorities do not feel that their basic rights have been secured. All things considered, the issue of minorities is a highly sensitive one, an issue which should be tackled with well-thought-out and multi-dimensional policies. It should be handled with both regional and bilateral perspectives. The main objective of this conference was to raise awareness in regard to these issues and provide a common ground which might lead government authorities to take concrete steps towards minority issues in the region.

