

**Center for Documentation and Information
on Minorities in Europe - Southeast Europe (CEDIME-SE)**

MINORITIES IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Turks of Bulgaria

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MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS

State

Bulgaria

Name (in English, in the dominant language and -if different- in the minority's language)

Turks, Turtsi.

Is there any form of recognition of the minority?

Yes.

Category(ies) (national, ethnic, linguistic or religious) ascribed by the minority and, if different, by the state.

The post-Communist Bulgarian Constitution (adopted on July 13, 1991) recognizes not ethnic minorities but "citizens, for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother-tongue" (Troebst, 1994:33). Most Bulgarian Turks consider themselves a national minority within Bulgaria, while others have loyalties to the Republic of Turkey (Kanev, 1999b).

Territory they inhabit

Highest concentration in: the Arda river basin (the Kurdzhali area in Southeastern Bulgaria, 66 per cent of the population), the Dobrudzha region (near Shoumen, Razgrad and Targovishte in Northeastern Bulgaria, 48 per cent of the population), the Rhodope Mountains (Poulton, 1993:119).

Population

800,052 (1992 Bulgarian census).

Name of the language spoken by the minority (in English, in the minority and -if different- in the dominant language)

Turkish, Turski.

Is there any form of recognition of the minority's language(s)?

Yes.

Dominant language of the territory they inhabit

Bulgarian (where Turks are not the majority); Turkish (in the Kurdzhali and Razgrad regions).

Occasional or daily use of the minority language

Daily use in the compact Turkish areas and occasional in the other regions.

Access to education corresponding to the needs of the minority

Yes. Primary and secondary education (secular and/or religious).

Religion(s) practiced

There are 800,052 ethnic Turks in Bulgaria (253,119 of them live in urban centers and 546,933 -- in rural centers). When it comes to religion, the number becomes greater, because Bulgarian Muslims and Roma are also included. Thus the figures are respectively: 1,110,295 Muslims in total, 362,480 live in urban centers and 747,815 in rural centers (OSI/King Baudouin, 1997:108).

Is there any form of recognition of the minority's religion(s)?

Yes.

Communities having the same characteristics in other territories/countries.

Turks/Muslims in Greece. In Western Thrace and on the Greek islands neighboring Turkey. Recognized only as a religious minority (Muslims) and not as an ethnic one (Turks) (Poulton, 1993:182-183).

Turks in Macedonia. The second largest Muslim group in Macedonia, after the ethnic Albanians (Poulton, 1997:96-98).

Population of these communities in the other territories/countries.

- *Turks of Greece* - 191,254 (1928 census) (Poulton, 1993:182); in 1971 -- 90,000 Muslims in Western Thrace -- 70,000 Turks and 20,000 Pomaks (Poulton, 1997:84, quoting from Frangopoulos, 1994 and Kettani, 1980).
- *Macedonian Turks* -- 97,416 (1991 census) (Poulton, 1997:97).

PRESENTATION

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Important historical developments

In the early Ottoman period (mid-14th century) Islam established itself permanently on the Balkan Peninsula. In pursuit of the Ottoman state policy, many Muslims from Eastern Anatolia were settled in the Balkans. Within a short time they gained a dominant position in the region which lasted until the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Historical evidence shows that most of the Muslims in Bulgaria originated from outside the Balkans, while the rest were converts from the indigenous population (Eminov, 1997:26; Mollahuseyin, 1984:72; Simsir, 1986:2).

Around the end of the 14th century, the first large groups of ethnic Turks began to settle in Bulgaria. Nowadays, they live compactly in two rural areas in the Northeast (Deliorman/Ludogorie) and the Southeast (the Eastern Rhodopes) (Troebst, 1994).

The usual interpretation of the Ottoman period in Bulgaria is that of “the Turkish Yoke,” “the Dark Ages” of Bulgaria, etc., all of these being rather negative concepts, embedded in the minds of and learnt by young Bulgarians at school. One of the controversial issues is related to the question of whether the Bulgarians convert to Islam voluntarily or they were forced to do so by the Ottoman invaders.

Outside observers point out that in most cases conversion to Islam was not massive and violent. Rather, it was “carried out as part of Ottoman government policy, pursued by dervish orders as part of their proselytizing mission, or voluntarily entered into by groups and individuals from among the indigenous Christian population for perceived or real fiscal and social advantages” (Eminov, 1997:46).

Turkish scholars support the view that conversion was voluntary, especially among groups like the Bogomils (Slavic Christians, adherents to the Manichaean doctrine, who were considered heretics both by the Catholic and the Orthodox Church). “As their reasons for clinging to Bogomilism had almost as much to do with protecting their ethnic identity in the face of a monolithic Byzantine orthodoxy as it did with firm religious conviction, they were quick to see the advantage of becoming, by the simple expedient of accepting Islam, members of a ruling religious group that recognized and tolerated ethnic differences and was not organized to persecute ‘heresy’” (Karpat, 1990:6).

Most of Bulgarian historiography supports the hypothesis that Islam was imposed forcefully, so that Christianity in general, and the Bulgarian nation in particular, would be destroyed. There are also other scholars (e.g. Antonina Zhelyazkova, Vera Mutafchieva) who take a more in depth look at the whole situation.

Mutafchieva points out the following ways of Islamization. First, there was slavery -- every Muslim warrior could acquire a slave and later on the warrior could give this slave some land on the condition that he adopts Islam. “It is precisely the institution of slavery among the Ottomans that provided the thoroughfare for the conversion of a large number of Christians to Islam” (A. Zhelyazkova). “It is typical of their Islamization that it took place after they were isolated from their ethnic surrounding” (Mutafchieva, 1994:9). Then there were also: the “natural way” of conversion (through marrying Christian women); the Janissary institution which existed from the

end of the 14th c. to the beginning of the 18th c. as “a major factor accounting for the rise of the Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire at the expense of the Christians (T. Georgieva)” (Mutafchieva, 1994:10). Each criminal convicted to death was pardoned by the Sultan if he adopted Islam.

Last but not least, Mutafchieva speaks of the mass forcible campaigns for imposing Islam for which there is much evidence from Bulgarian folklore. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Bulgarian Pomaks were converted in such a way, while somewhat earlier the same had happened to the Bosnians and the Albanians. Still, the process was not always against the will of the Christians because “the *cemaat* divided their subjects into ‘believers’ and ‘non-believers’ and levied on the latter the *cizie* tax, which was a major source of filling in the state treasury.” Non-believers were also denied posts in the military, administration and finance, so the Muslims had an advantage in every respect. That is why there were also people who adopted Islam voluntarily and received some financial privileges because of this (Mutafchieva, 1994:12).

In general, the local non-Muslim population in the Ottoman Empire was organized into the *millet* system. The latter took into consideration only profession and faith, while disregarding race and nationality. Although there was certainly no equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Empire, the rights of the non-Muslim subjects were recognized and such communities were given considerable autonomy in organizing their own affairs in return for their loyalty to the Empire (Eminov, 1997:46-47).

With the liberation of Bulgaria and the founding of the modern Bulgarian state in 1878, the situation in which the Turks lived changed substantially. Turkish scholars claim that this war changed the population balance in favor of the Bulgarians, while around one million Turks were uprooted from their homes and some 350,000 were killed or died of hunger and epidemics (Mollahuseyin, 1984:73). “The Turkish minority in Bulgaria was formed according to the classical patterns where, as a result of the disintegration of a multi-national empire and the drawing of new state borders, a nationality until recently dominant in political life proves isolated from its principal ethnic mass and is forced into a rudimentary existence in an alien environment” (Stoyanov, 1994:268).

During and after the Balkan wars and the First World War, Muslim emigration picked up (Eminov, 1997:48). According to a Bulgarian estimate, approximately 350,000 left between 1880 and 1911 (Hoepken, 1997:55, quoting from K. Popov, *La Bulgarie Economique*, Sofia, 1920). Between the World Wars, some 150,000-200,000 Turks emigrated, mainly on the basis of the Turkish-Bulgarian agreement of 1925 (Hoepken, 1997:55; Simsir, 1986:6; Karpat, 1990:4).

However, it should be kept in mind that Bulgarian governments in this period (1878-1944) tried to honor the provisions of international and bilateral agreements guaranteeing the rights of minorities (Eminov, 1997:49). Thus, there was no open legal discrimination against or political oppression of the Turkish and Muslim communities. Around the beginning of the 20th century, Turks enjoyed cultural and religious autonomy. The state did not interfere in the functioning of the Sheriat legal

system, the self-administration of Turkish schools, the publishing and spreading of books and periodicals in Turkish. However, there was some armed Muslim resistance in Southeastern Bulgaria, inspired by Great Britain and the Sublime Porte. It was put to an end in 1903 (Stoyanov, 1994:269).

In general, what affected the Turkish minority most was the overall trend towards social change and “Westernization.” This led to the conversion of mosques into non-religious purposes, the substitution of Turkish geographical names for Bulgarian ones and so on (Hoepken, 1997:59).

After the June 9, 1923 coup and the ousting of Alexander Stamboliiski’s government, the minority started to be discriminated against. The promised 3 million leva subsidy for the Turkish schools was not given by the government; teachers of these schools were deprived of their right to retirement; the schools lost their autonomy; the Turkish participation in political life was reduced. While there were 10 Turkish MPs in the Bulgarian National Assembly (1923), in 1925 the number dropped to only five and in 1933 there were four Turkish MPs left (Stoyanov, 1994:270).

The rise of Kemalism in Turkey changed the relations between the Bulgarian state and the Turkish minority even more. Bulgarian and Turkish historiography have different interpretations of the impact of Kemalism on Bulgarian Turks. While the former claims that it was a kind of “Panturkism” aimed at the transformation of the Bulgarian Turks into Ankara’s tools, the latter says that Kemalism succeeded in transforming the Bulgarian Turks into an “ethnically conscious Turkish minority” (Hoepken, 1997:61). Some authors claim that ethnic Turks did not evince any interest in Kemalism. It is because the latter ideology was extremely secular, it did not match the views held by the majority of the Bulgarian Turks. Moreover, the Bulgarian government was interested in the strengthening of the anti-Kemalist forces, it favored everything directed against Kemalism, including the Muslim religion (Hoepken, 1997:61).

In 1926 the *Turan Union* was founded in Bulgaria. It was a pro-Kemalist nationalist organization which united all Turkish cultural, sports and educational societies and developed political activity. In the 1930s-1940s, some local Bulgarian “patriotic” organizations (e.g. *Rodna Zashchita*) maltreated the Turkish population, forced them to speak Bulgarian and restricted their religious practices. The situation became even worse after the Military Coup (May 19, 1934) when Turkish political parties and organizations were banned, while schools and periodicals reduced in number. All this was accompanied by a mass anti-Bulgarian campaign in Turkey which there were even appeals for military intervention. The period 1936-1937 saw the signing of an agreement between the two governments for the long-term limited emigration of 10,000 Turks annually (Stoyanov, 1994:270-271).

The consolidation of power by the Communist party in Bulgaria did not bring considerable changes in the policy towards the ethnic Turks. This stage lasted from 1947 to 1958. It was characterized by the pressure on religion, but at the same time education and modernization were encouraged. Basically, all religious communities in the country were exposed to the same amount of atheist pressure from the secular government (Hoepken, 1997:64). Even though freedom of conscience and religion was an integral part of the Dimitrov Constitution adopted in 1947, the new

government made a conscious effort to undermine the religious practices of both Muslims and Christians in Bulgaria (Eminov, 1997:51-52). This policy had a limited success. For example, even in the early 1950s, after a massive campaign for Communist Party membership among the Turks of Bulgaria, the latter made up just five per cent of the Party members (Hoepken, 1997:66).

All this resulted in the sudden emigration of 155,000 Turks to Turkey in the summer of 1950. A session of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) in 1958 set the tone for a gradual shift towards “Communist nationalism” in dealing with the Turkish and Muslim communities. The goal of this campaign was to undermine not only religious affiliation, but also the separate ethnic identity of these minority groups. This policy was first implemented in the 1960s. The new constitution -- Zhivkov’s Constitution -- of 1971 spoke of “citizens of non-Bulgarian extraction” (Art. 45 (7)) and “in 1977 the BCP proclaimed that Bulgaria already was ‘almost of a single ethnic type and was nearing complete homogeneity’” (Mutafchieva, 1994:35).

1984 saw a radical change of strategy. It was then that the Bulgarian government started excluding the term “Turk” from official discourse, and replacing it with “Muslim Bulgarian citizens” or “Bulgarians with restored [Bulgarian] names,” implying that the so-called “Turks” were “Bulgarians” in origin. History books were re-written to avoid the term “Turks.” “The growing size of the Turkish community in the late 1960s and 1970s, and their yet increasing coherence as an ethnic group, were undoubtedly among the motivating factors for this action” (Boneva, 1995:78). The peak of this policy was reached in 1984-1985 with the so-called “Revivalist Process” (a.k.a. Revival Process/Rebirth Campaign/Regeneration Process). The first phase was called “priobshtavane” (“inclusion”), which declared the Turkish minority to have nothing to do with Turks in the Turkish motherland (Hoepken, 1997:67; Karpat, 1990:8; Saray, 1988:183; Amnesty International, 1986:9).

During the Revivalist Process (between 1984-1989), the Party launched a direct attack on the identity of the Turkish population. It forcefully changed their names to Bulgarian ones, banned public use of the Turkish language and Muslim religious rituals (Hoepken, 1997:67-69). There was nothing new in the state’s approach, since as early as 1960-1976 it had changed the names of some 220,000 Bulgarian Pomaks. In 1965 a special team of scholars at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences was set up to prove that all Bulgarian Turks had been forcibly converted to Islam and “Bulgarian blood runs in their veins” (Mutafchieva, 1994:34).

In the mid-1980s, however, things were carried to the limit. Religious practices were further impeded and “the traditional Muslim burial rituals were characterized as contrary to socialist practice and were replaced with a ‘socialist’ burial ritual” (Eminov, 1997:59). Store and restaurant managers and clerks were ordered not to serve Turkish and other Muslim women wearing traditional clothes. The authorities also began strictly enforcing the ban against circumcision of young Muslim boys. If found that the ban had been violated, both the parents and the person who performed the ritual were punished (Eminov, 1997:58-61; Karpat, 1990:20; Mollahuseyin, 1984:79; Amnesty International, 1986:9).

The Bulgarian authorities made no official statement about any resistance to the Revivalist Process. On the contrary, it was described as “a new force, a spontaneous and comprehensive process of reconstructing the Bulgarian names of our compatriots who had Turkish-Arabic names. . . . Why did this measure occur so spontaneously and painlessly? Above all because the working people reconsidered their own past and became conscious of their Bulgarian origins and their membership in the Bulgarian nation. This was a historic choice of people who understand that only unity with the Bulgarian people offers opportunities for their development and well being. The people understand that the changing of names is a historic measure, a new birth that opens space for their comprehensive development and for their complete realization in life. Now everyone knows better that the People’s Republic of Bulgaria is a mononational state” (Todorov, 1985:232-233).

Turks in Bulgaria were thus presented as people who “were exposed to the intensive working over of bourgeois Turkish propaganda, which created nationalism, religious confusion, and a conservative life-style. The reactionary forces in neighboring Turkey made futile efforts to speak in the name of the citizens with Turkish-Arabic names living in Bulgaria and arbitrary to draw them into the Turkish nation. The reconstruction of the Bulgarian names will contribute to withdrawing the reactionary Turkish influence from our co-citizens so that they can live peacefully and without contradiction” (Todorov, 1985:233-234).

Internationally, the name-changing campaign in Bulgaria was met with severe condemnation (e.g. Amnesty International, 1986). Turkish sources claimed that hundreds of Turks were killed during the campaign; the names of Turks who were already dead were changed; the fathers and grandfathers of the Turks were also given Bulgarian names, so that the claim of common Bulgarian descent is substantiated (Simsir, 1988:29).

The Bulgarian government tried to defend itself in the face of the international community, sometimes using curious arguments. On August 26, 1985 at the 38th Session of the Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in Geneva, Valentin Bozhilov, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN, cited Midhat Pasha, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, who wrote in a French journal in 1878, “Firstly, it must be borne in mind that among the Bulgarians who arouse so much interest there are more than one million Moslems. These Moslems did not come from Asia to establish themselves in Bulgaria, as it is widely believed. They are themselves descendants of those Bulgarians converted to Islam at the time of the conquest and during the following years. They are children of one common country, from one common race, and share a common origin” (AI, 1986:39).

On May 29, 1989 Todor Zhivkov addressed the Bulgarian public on the National Television. In his address, he appealed to Turkey to open up its borders to every Bulgarian Muslim willing to emigrate. This speech provoked a real emigration euphoria in the compact Turkish areas of Bulgaria, which resulted in the fact that in the summer of 1989 half of the work force in Bulgarian agriculture was lost due to the unprecedented “Big Excursion.” In the period May-August, 369,839 people left for Turkey. Some 320,000 of them managed to cross the border. By the end of the year,

154,937 people (42 per cent of the total number of emigrants) returned to Bulgaria as they were disappointed by the reception on the Turkish side, while 214,902 stayed in Turkey (Stoyanov, 1998:204-214).

On July 18, 1989 the Senate of the 101st Congress of the USA voted unanimously on the Byrd-DeConcini Amendment No.279. This amendment expressed “the sense of the Congress condemning Bulgaria’s brutal treatment of its Turkish minority” and it allocated about \$10 million as assistance to the Republic of Turkey, in order for the latter to cope with the huge influx of refugees (Senate Record Vote, 1989).

After the downfall of the Zhivkov regime and the return of a part of the Bulgarian Turks who had emigrated in 1989, the government allowed restoration of the Turkish and Arabic names through the Names of Bulgarian Citizens Act (March 1990). “By March 1991 more than 600,000 Turks, Bulgarian Muslims and Roma had already applied for re-appropriation of their old ‘Islamic-Arabic’ names” (Hoepken, 1997:72). Regardless of all the positive developments after the fall of communism, ethnic Turks in Bulgaria still face some problems that resulted from the neglect of their minority status in the country.

1.2. Economic and demographic data

Demographic data: Turks are the most numerous minority in Bulgaria. Notwithstanding emigration in large numbers over the last 50 years, they still constitute a considerable percentage of the Bulgarian population (from 9.4 to 9.8 per cent according to different figures). In 1941, Turks were close to 1.5 million people. The 1965 census showed that there were some 746,755 ethnic Turks in Bulgaria, an increase of approximately 90,000 on the 1956 figures (656,025) (Poulton, 1993:119; Simsir, 1986:3; Mollahuseyin, 1984:74). Some Turkish sources claim that the figures were even higher -- 1,075,000 (1956) and 1,450,000 (1971) (Karpal, 1990:16).

None of the subsequent Bulgarian censuses recorded ethnicity. That is why the demographic dynamics of the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria within this period can only be guessed. Before the massive exodus of 1989 (“The Big Excursion”) the number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria may have been as high as 900,000 (some estimates give the figure of up to a million and a half). In December 1990, there were 632,000 ethnic Turks in Bulgaria. The latest Bulgarian census of 1992 which recorded ethnic affinity indicated that the number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria was between 800,000 and 822,253 (hence the slight difference in the percentage figures shown above) (Hoepken, 1997:54-56). There are also Turkish sources that put the figure as high as two million people (Saray, 1988:190).

Emigration: The Russo-Turkish war was followed by the February-March 1878 peace talks in San Stefano. During the peace talk, an Ottoman delegation proposed a Turkish-Bulgarian population exchange, which was rejected by the Russians. Thus, thousands of Turks were left in Bulgaria without being able to choose their nationality. The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) forced many of these people to migrate from Macedonia and Thrace. Ever since then, emigration of Turks from Bulgaria into Turkey has been steady and continuous (Eminov, 1997:48-49).

On October 18, 1925 Bulgaria and Turkey signed the Convention of Establishment which stated in its Art. 2 that “both contracting parties have agreed not to obstruct in any way optional immigration of Turks in Bulgaria and Bulgarians in Turkey” (Saray, 1988:191). In 1923-1933 there were some 101,507 migrants; in 1934-1939 -- 97,181 migrants; in 1940-1949 -- 21,353 migrants (Simsir, 1986:5-6).

After the Second World War there have been several waves of emigration of ethnic Turks to Turkey, often provoked and instigated by the state authorities in Bulgaria. Thus, in 1949-1951 a large number of ethnic Turks fled to Turkey encouraged by the Communist government. In November 1950, Bulgaria sent a note to Turkey to accept 250,000 immigrants within three months. Since Turkey was unable to accommodate such a number of refugees, it closed its border in November 1951. After the exchange of notes between the two countries, 50,000 persons were accepted in 1950 and some 102,000 in 1951. Subsequently Bulgaria forged Turkish visas to get rid of as many ethnic Turks as possible (Minority Rights Group International, 1991:125; Saray, 1988:191-192).

Emigration continued through the 1960-1970s, mostly of relatives of those who had left in 1949-1951. On November 30, 1978 the agreement between Turkey and Bulgaria on family unification (concluded on March 22, 1968) expired. The Bulgarian authorities did not permit further emigration. According to official Bulgarian figures, 52,392 Turks had left Bulgaria up to August 1977. Turkish estimates give the figure of 130,000 people (Poulton, 1993:119-120; Hoepken, 1997:55-56; Karpas, 1990:17; Saray, 1988:191-192; Amnesty International, 1986:4).

In 1989 following a crackdown on Turkish activists, a new massive exodus of Turks from Bulgaria started. This was called “The Big Excursion” (See also 1.1.). In late June 1989, the number of refugees exceeded 60,000 with thousands leaving Bulgaria every day. Official Bulgarian statements informed that 150,000 passports had been issued and another 100,000 applications received. By late August 1989 over 300,000 ethnic Turks had left for Turkey. Once in Turkey, they were issued with refugee cards valid for one year, and after this they were able to acquire Turkish nationality and to become Turkish citizens with a right to vote (Poulton, 1993:119-120).

Reverse trends were also observed. By mid-September 1989 13,000 Turks had returned to Bulgaria, by January 1990 this number grew to 130,000. This must have been conditioned by the hardships the refugees encountered in Turkey (Poulton, 1993:159-160; Hoepken, 1997:55-56). Back in Bulgaria, many of them found their homes destroyed (over 1,000 such homes in Haskovo). Some 1,000 people started hunger strikes because of that and in April 1991 the Bulgarian Justice Minister announced that 2,080 such housing complaints was being filed, with 1,035 already considered. A lot of the claims were found justified. In August 1991 a compensation fund of 170-180 million leva was established (Demokratiya, 2/8/91).

Notwithstanding massive emigrations, the total number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria did not decline and it even grew. This can be explained by the birth rate which is higher among Muslim groups (including Pomaks and Gypsies) than among Christian Bulgarians (Minority Rights Group International, 1991:126). Estimates vary from 800,000-1,000,000 to 1,700,000 (Szajkowski, Niblock, 1993:172-173).

Economic data: Along with other minorities (e.g. Tatars, Gagaouzi) most ethnic Turks live in the countryside (253,119 Turks live in the urban centers and 546,933 live in rural centers) (OSI/King Baudouin, 1997:108). As rural inhabitants, they have much less access to infrastructure, work opportunities, better educational, cultural and health-care facilities than town-dwellers.

They constitute from 15 to 20 per cent of the work force and have been increasingly dominant in the tobacco growing areas in the south and wheat growing areas in the northeast for the last few decades (Minority Rights Group International, 1991:126). It was these branches of agriculture that suffered the most from the massive emigration of Turks to Turkey in 1989. In addition, the same branches are affected the most during the transition period -- a phase that Bulgaria is still experiencing at present. Consequently, ethnic Turks are more exposed to the hardships of the transition to market economy than are the other Bulgarian citizens. Thus, according to the 1992 census data, 14.4 per cent of Bulgarians were unemployed, whereas the figure for Turks reached 25.2 per cent and in some areas it reached 40 per cent (Hoepken, 1997:80; Karpat, 1990:14-15; Mollahuseyin, 1984:74).

There have been occasional serious conflicts between Turkish tobacco producers and the state monopoly for tobacco (Bulgartabak) over the low price paid to the producers. The ethnic Turkish party, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), and especially its rather independent regional branch at the provincial center of Kurdzhali, have intervened in this conflict by negotiating higher prices with Western tobacco firms such as Philip Morris and Reemtsma (Troebst, 1994).

The collapse of many industrial enterprises built in the Turk-populated areas, the dissolution of collective farms, as well as the lower qualification of Turks in comparison to Bulgarians, have also had their influence on the high number of Turks being unemployed. This resulted in a new wave of emigration to Turkey. According to some estimates, notwithstanding new visa requirements introduced by Turkey, the number of these new economic emigrants reached 50,000 in 1991-1992 (Hoepken, 1997:80).

The law on land restitution, passed on February 5, 1992 and the amended law on the privatization of farmland (March 20, 1992) also have had negative effects on the Bulgarian Turks. This is because after the Second World War, at the time when the Communist regime nationalized properties, there were only a few Turkish landowners. Two sections of the laws may have particularly damaging consequences on the Turks. These are the new regulations on the restitution of land in its original boundaries, which limit the possibility for the re-distribution of land to the people who have little or no land (Arts. 20 and 21), as well as the article which asks people to give up land that the Communist regime had placed at their disposal (Ragaru, 1994:191-192).

As a result from this unhappy economic situation, a new wave of emigration started in the summer of 1992. These economic immigrants were estimated to be about 70,000 (Bulgarian sources) and 160,000 (Turkish sources) people. This trend is perceived with alarm by the MRF --the party of the Bulgarian Turks-- due to its fear of losing a large fringe of its electorate through emigration. Turkey is not happier either.

Nowadays, the former Bulgarian enemy --for both economic and political reasons-- would prefer the Bulgarian Turks to remain in their country. Finally, this is also a signal to the Bulgarian government that something has to be done in the Eastern Rhodopes and the other Turkish-dominated regions, so that economic dissatisfaction does not bring ethnic tension (Ragaru, 1994:192).

1.3. Defense of identity and/or of language, and/or of religion

As mentioned above, religion was a crucial factor in constituting Bulgarian Turkish identity in the inter-war period. Despite the persecution of religion in the Communist period, Bulgarian Turks were more religious than the majority of the Bulgarians. Even the Communist polls showed figures close to 50 per cent regarding the number of believers among ethnic Turks. A 1992 survey indicated that 73 per cent of ethnic Turks were religious compared to 37 per cent among Bulgarians, 66 per cent among Pomaks and 59 per cent among Gypsies, which makes the Turkish minority the most religious minority in the country (Hoepken, 1997:74-75).

During the Communist period, the Bulgarian government encouraged the Turkish minority to shift its identity from a religious to a secular ethnic one. "The Bulgarian Communists first created, or at least significantly enhanced, Turkish national identity among the Turkish population. However, from the late 1950s they attempted step by step to reduce it, and during the mid-1980s endeavored to eliminate it completely" (Hoepken, 1997:64). In the first years of Communism, however, important things were done for the improvement of secular education of the Turkish minority (See 6.1. for details). On the other hand, religious education was forbidden and religious students had to be educated in the Muslim republics of the Soviet Union and the number of *hodzhas* was considerably reduced (See 4.2.3. for details).

In the 1970s, there were reports of imprisonment of Turkish teachers and prominent Turkish intellectuals for protesting against the closure of the Turkish language schools. In 1976, there were reports of joint demonstrations of Turks and Bulgarian Muslims in the Plovdiv area. They protested at the alleged discrimination against the Muslims in employment and at the closing of mosques (Amnesty International, 1986:6).

In September 1981, Halil Uzunoglu, a former Bulgarian citizen who had immigrated to Turkey in the 1950s, was arrested while visiting relatives in Bulgaria. He was tried in January 1982 under Arts. 108 and 109 of the Bulgarian Criminal Code, dealing respectively with "anti-state agitation and propaganda" and "forming or leading an organization aimed at committing crimes against the People's Republic of Bulgaria." The charges were based on a booklet on the Turks of Bulgaria published by him, and on the fact that he was the Head of the Rhodopi-Danube Turks Culture and Solidarity Association which was regarded as "hostile" in Bulgaria. He was sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment and was adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience. He was released in January 1985 and sent back to Turkey (Amnesty International, 1986:7).

With the beginning of the name-changing campaign, a number of demonstrations were organized by Turks in Bulgaria. On December 24, 1984 in the town of

Benkovski (Kurdzhali district) and on December 27, 1984 outside the Momchilgrad Town Hall, thousands of ethnic Turks (including women and children) reportedly gathered in protest to the changing of their names. The demonstrators were met by army units and then by members of the elite special security force (i.e. the “red berets”). Even though there is hardly any reliable information on these violent incidents, it seems that most of them took place in the Southern parts of Bulgaria (Poulton, 1993:139-140). In late January-early February 1985 “the most spectacular event of the whole campaign took place -- the three day siege of [the town of] Yablanovo in eastern Stara Planina” (Poulton, 1993:140). The number of the victims from the ensuing bloodshed cannot be determined. Some reports claim “that 34 were killed and 29 or 30 were taken to the Kotel hospital . . . with gunshot wounds” (Poulton, 1993:140).

There were also many Turkish activists who were arrested and detained in the prison camp in Belene. Although their exact numbers cannot be stated, estimates range from 450 to 1,000 ethnic Turk prisoners in connection with the Revivalist Process (Poulton, 1993:142; Amnesty International, 1986:14).

Resistance continued throughout the 1980s. Some ethnic Turks resorted even to terrorism. On August 30, 1984 there were two explosions: one in the waiting room of the Plovdiv railway station and another at Varna airport. Attacks like these --the last one of which was on March 9, 1985-- took the lives of eight people (including two children) and injured 51 more. “On April 25, 1988 three men were sentenced to death and four others, including a woman, received sentences of between one and five years for being responsible for a series of bomb attacks” (Poulton, 1993:148).

Mass protests and hunger strikes began in Silistra, Shoumen and Razgrad again in May 1989. By the end of the month, many ethnic Turkish activists were expelled from Bulgaria, while by late August the figure reached over 300,000. The mass exodus which followed was dubbed “the Big Excursion” (See 1.1. for details) (Poulton, 1993:157-159).

After the 1989 democratic changes, “the [Turkish] minority’s actual status is much more favorable in political than in legal terms . . . for the first time since the emergence of the modern Bulgarian state in 1878 they are in a position to articulate their interests effectively” (Hoepken, 1997:79).

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Dvizhenie za prava i svobodi, MRF) is the most influential Turkish minority party. It publishes the *Prava i Svobodi (Rights and Freedoms)* newspaper. MRF’s own sources claim to have about 100,000 members (by the beginning of 1991), making it the second largest party after the Bulgarian Socialist Party (Hoepken, 1997:72 quoting Ahmed Dogan in *Demokratiya (Democracy)*, February 12, 1991).

The MRF is essentially a party of the Bulgarian Turks, though it has never admitted it openly in official documents or in its public activity. Almost 90 per cent of its membership and more than 90 per cent of its voters are ethnic Turks. There are other Turkish parties, which are not so successful and have ideological and political arguments with the MRF. The moderate attitude of the MRF has helped strike the

balance between the BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) and the UDF (Union of Democratic Forces). It has always held an emphatically critical opinion on the outbursts of Greater Turkey nationalism among the minority, while fighting for its cultural and religious autonomy. However, it got involved in the adoption of some draft legislation which adversely affected the socioeconomic interests of that community (Mitev, 1994:203).

In the 1990 elections, the MRF got 23 seats in the Bulgarian Parliament. In 1991, it received 7 per cent of the vote (24 seats), 1,000 local representatives, and 650 local and communal Mayors. In 1994, (despite the splits within the Party and the fact that five of its MPs left the parliamentary group) it still got 5.4 per cent of the vote (15 seats). In 1997, the MRF entered the *Union for National Salvation Coalition* that included also the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union-Nikola Petkov, the Green Party, the Party of the Democratic Center, New Choice, and the Kingdom of Bulgaria Federation (Obedinenie za natsionalno spasenie, ONS). Jointly, they got 7.9 per cent of the vote, i.e. 19 seats in Parliament (Hoepken, 1997:73).

It is important to point out that from October 1991 to October 1992, the MRF supported the UDF (Union of Democratic Forces) minority government and later on it had contributed to the downfall of this same government. After that, together with the BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) and a dissident faction of the UDF, it supported a non-partisan expert government where the MRF got one ministerial seat which was given to one of their very few ethnic Bulgarians. All this shows that the MRF is a very cautious party, with restricted political ambitions in both its program and policy "to avoid providing any excuses for uproar from Bulgarian nationalist forces" (Hoepken, 1997:73).

The MRF has consistently distanced itself from demands for territorial autonomy and federalization. It has stressed its secular character and its demands for cultural rights. It has assumed a conservative tone. In the early 1990s, when the first post-Zhivkov government tried to reverse its policies, there was an overt danger of nationalistic conflicts. However, "antagonisms were reduced before reaching the level of large-scale violence, thanks partly to the MRF's practice of political self-restraint" (Hoepken, 1997:78).

2. ETHNIC OR NATIONAL IDENTITY

2.1. Describing identity

Turkish identity in Bulgaria results from a combination of linguistic, religious, cultural and historical factors. At different periods, one of these factors has been highlighted by the state. Immediately after 1944, the new Communist government stressed the national identity of the Turkish minority. In the last years of Communism, exactly the opposite approach was undertaken: the complete denial of the existence of a separate Turkish minority and the insistence on the hypothesis that all ethnic Turks in Bulgaria are actually ethnic Bulgarians converted to Islam (See 1.1. and 1.3. for details).

2.1.1. Cultural characteristic(s) differentiating it from the dominant group

The Turkish language, the Muslim religion, culture (in general, including folk costumes, dances, songs, way of life, etc.) and history differentiate the Turkish minority from the rest of the population. Some of the most specific Turkish traditions and rituals are related to the practice of Islam. Circumcision of Muslim boys was banned by the authorities in the mid-1980s. If the ban were found to be violated, both the parents and the person who had performed the ritual would be punished. The special religious practices related to “the traditional Muslim burial rituals were characterized as contrary to socialist practice and were replaced with a ‘socialist’ burial ritual” (Eminov, 1997:59).

2.1.2. Development of the minority’s awareness of being different

There are a number of obvious differences between the titular Bulgarian nation and the ethnic Turks: language, religion and culture. These factors have always determined the awareness of the minority of “being different.” However, this awareness has changed and evolved through the years. To a great extent, this change is due to the manipulation from the Bulgarian state (See 1.1. and 1.3.).

2.1.3. Identifying this difference as ethnic or national

Turks in Bulgaria have a Turkish ethnic --if not national-- identity, and they are Muslims in terms of religion. However, this does not mean that Bulgarian Turks completely identify themselves with the Turks in Turkey or aspire to join that state. Even the political party representing the interests of the Bulgarian Turks --the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)-- has stressed many times that it fights for the cultural and political rights of the minority and is against any secession or autonomy (Hoepken, 1997:74).

2.2. Historical development of an ethnic or a national identity

The identity of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria has undergone serious changes over the past 100 years. Until the end of the Second World War, with some exceptions, its identity was largely focused on the Islamic religion. An organization of Muslim teachers (*Bulgaristan Muallimin-I Islamiye Dzhemiyeti*), formed in 1897 was the first form of self-organization of the minority. This, as well as a 1911 charity organization (*Ittifak-I-Islam*), were based on religion and did not promote a secular identity. Furthermore, the role of the religious leaders within the community was very prominent. Especially until 1918-1920, the schools of the Turkish minority were almost exclusively Muslim, and teachers in those schools were mostly the *hodzhas* who did not have any prior secular education (Hoepken, 1997:57-58).

The domestic and international environment at the time further exacerbated the predominance of the Muslim identity in that period. Although the Bulgarian state has been ruled according to the secular principle of division between state and religion since its liberation in 1878, the institution of marriage, for example, remained under the jurisdiction of the religious denominations (Cohen, Kanev, 1998). The 1878 Berlin Treaty defined the terms of Bulgaria’s liberation internationally and spoke for the defense of minority rights in Bulgaria. Minorities in this context were treated

mainly according to the religious principle, although there were also some clauses for the defense of their “ethnicity” (Kanev, 1999a:70).

Furthermore, Muslims in Bulgaria lived under the regulation of the Statute on the Spiritual Organization and Regulation of the Muslims in the Kingdom of Bulgaria, adopted by the National Assembly in 1919. This legislation created a rigid pyramid structure, which had the Muslim communities as “fundamentals” and a Chief Mufti, approved by the Tsar, at the “top” (Ivanov, et al., 1998:566-567).

In addition to the domestic factors, the minority did not have any international stimulus to change its identity, since its kin-state, the Ottoman Empire, was ruled according to the theocratic principle until its very end in 1923. This external environment changed with the accession to power of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who introduced drastic secular reforms within only a decade – between the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s -- aiming at the country’s “Westernization” (Hoepken, 1997:61).

The impact of Kemalism in Bulgaria is not quite clear due to the lack of unbiased research. Turkish historiography is inclined to support the thesis that Bulgarian Turks adjusted rapidly to Kemalism. On the other hand, Bulgarian historians, mainly during the Communist-time, stress the exaggerated influence of Kemalism. They claim that the Panturkist policy was making the minority into Ankara’s political tool (Hoepken, 1997:61). One way or another, there is no doubt that in the late 1920s and early 1930s important ideological changes occurred among the Turkish population in Bulgaria.

Kemalism found some roots in Bulgaria, and especially among urban teachers and few intellectuals living in the towns of Varna and Shoumen in Northeastern Bulgaria. This was not the case with the rural and socially disadvantaged Turkish population of Southeastern Bulgaria (Hoepken, 1997:61).

Around the end of the 1920s, the first secular Turkish organization *Turan* was set up. Officially, it was promoted as a youth sport and cultural organization but it was clearly under Kemalist influence. It fought against assimilation by the Bulgarians and for the transformation of the Turkish population into a “national Turkish minority” (Hoepken, 1997:61).

Some 17 mainly regional and short-lived newspapers, published between the mid-1920s and mid-1930s, supported Kemalism. Among them were *Deliorman* and *Turan*, the latter named after the above-mentioned organization. *Turan*, and to a certain extent, *Deliorman* fully embraced the Kemalist principles and propagated against the Islamic spiritual leadership and the concepts on which the *Umma* was based. They insisted that the Muslim communities be transformed into national ones, and sometimes supported Panturkist trends. The *Rehber* newspaper was much more moderate in its Kemalism line, and supported a combination of national and religious principles. However, there were other media that were openly hostile to Kemalism. The leader among those was *Medeniyet (Civilization)*, which was founded in 1933 and became the organ of the Association of the Defenders of Islam in Bulgaria. It was dominated by conservative religious circles (Ivanov, et al., 1998:567-574).

The Association was established in 1931 and had a central leadership and branches in the regions compactly populated by Muslims. The Bulgarian government that came to power with the 1934 coup supported the Defenders of Islam in Bulgaria, while banning all other parties, including Turan and other minor Turkish sport and cultural associations in Bulgaria (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:385; Tatarli, *Prava i Svobodi*, 12/01/1996:3). Thus, attempts to turn Turan into the secular political representation of the Bulgarian Turks, which were earlier rejected by the state, ultimately failed after 1934 (Hoepken, 1997:62).

The government supported mainly anti-Kemalist forces, since it had political interest in maintaining a traditional Muslim identity and not in supporting the development of a newly rising Turkish national identity. In addition to its support for the Association of the Defenders of Islam, the Bulgarian government gave occasional residence to anti-Kemalist “refugees” from Turkey. The government’s attempt to replace the Arabic alphabet (a symbol of the Muslim identity) in the late 1920s with the Latin one (a symbol of Turkish identity) failed. The new alphabet was ultimately introduced in 1938 after serious diplomatic activities by Turkey and due to the personal involvement of the Bulgarian Tsar Boris III. After 1934 the number of Turkish newspapers decreased and the number of Turkish schools was reduced (Hoepken, 1997:62).

The Communist take over in 1944 ensued a short period of state efforts to support the development of the ethnic Turkish identity. It was based on the Stalinist pattern that ethnic identity of the minorities should be respected within the whole Soviet-styled system (Hoepken, 1997:64).

Some Bulgarian scholars (e.g. Zhelyazkova) go even so far as to make the following assumptions that are not accepted by all in the wide academic circles (e.g. Kanev, 1999b). According to Zhelyazkova’s thesis, the surprising toleration on the part of the Bulgarian Communists was connected to the Communist idea of a worldwide “export of revolution.” Under the pressures of the Soviet secret services, the regime in Bulgaria decided to win the trust of the Turkish population in order to create its own Communist cadres, which would work towards the goal of exporting revolution. The supposed “technology” for the export of the revolution was quite simple -- through periodical resettlement of Bulgarian ethnic Turks to Turkey (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:386).

In the early years of Communism, ethnic Turks were given room to develop their secular identity. New Turkish schools and media emerged, colleges to improve the qualifications of Turkish teachers were set up, privileged access was given to their entrance to the university, and theaters and libraries were established (Hoepken, 1997:64). However, this secular identity was supposed to develop alongside a “socialist” identity, which had to be imposed also on the rest of Bulgaria’s citizens.

Throughout the years, this strategy won over part of the Turkish elite. After 1985, loyalism was extremely visible through some declarations of Muslim clerics that Muslims in Bulgaria enjoy enough religious freedom. A Resolution of an Imam Meeting in 1985, for example, went even further by saying that the “Muslim Bulgarians have never belonged to the Turkish nation” (BTA, 2/4/1985). Some

Bulgarians claim that the ethnic Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms has been created by the secret services of the Communist party. The MRF's real contribution to democracy in Bulgaria after 1989 shows that even if this has been the case, the party has effectively escaped from the control of its initiators (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:396).

A 1958 plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party marked a reversal of the policy towards the ethnic Turks; their rights were gradually diminished. The propaganda and the respective measures against the Turks exacerbated in the 1960s such as the closing down of schools and Turkish-language media. It was especially so in the beginning of the 1970s when a new party program changed the policy towards "Communist nationalism" (Hoepken, 1997:67). This nationalist content was incorporated in the new 1971 Constitution. Bulgarian nationalism peaked ultimately in the assimilation campaign, which changed the names of the Bulgarian Turks in 1984-1985 (Hoepken, 1997:67-68).

The Turkish community mobilized immediately all its internal resources to preserve its ethnic identity by adopting a strategy of self-capsulation within the family and the kin. The family preserved the rites, legends, language and folklore. The younger people, who had already become partially integrated or assimilated, started consciously going back to the roots of their history and culture. They were visiting illegal places where they studied Turkish and the Koran. Even students, who were indifferent to Islam until 1985, started learning the Koran by heart as to be able to cite the holy book (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:381-382).

2.2.1. The minority's resistance to or acceptance of assimilation

Turkish minority resistance to assimilation dates as far back as 1897 when the *Organization of Muslim teachers (Bulgaristan Muallimin-I Islamiye Dzhemiyeti)* was founded. It did not achieve much and in 1911, the benevolent organization *Ittifak-I-Islam* came into existence. It was based on religion and did not promote the ethnic interests of the minority. In these years, Bulgarian state policy was characterized by social neglect of the problems of the minorities. However, various international treaties, the 1878 Bulgarian Constitution and other Bulgarian laws guaranteed the right to religious and educational autonomy (Hoepken, 1997:56-58).

Around the end of the 1920s, the first secular Turkish organization *Turan* was set up. Officially, it was promoted as a youth organization dealing with sports and culture but it was clearly under the Kemalist influence. It fought against assimilation by the Bulgarians and for the transformation of the Turkish population into a "national Turkish minority." However, the small size of the secular elite, the high rate of illiteracy, the prominent role of religious leaders, together with the Bulgarian government's resistance to Kemalism impeded the development of such national minority. Actually, the government supported anti-Kemalist forces and helped in the publication of the Muslim paper *Medeniyet*. After the 1934 coup, *Turan* was banned along with other Bulgarian organizations and parties (Hoepken, 1997:61-62).

2.2.2. The minority's resistance to or acceptance of integration

The consolidation of power by the Communist party in Bulgaria did not bring considerable changes in the policy towards ethnic Turks. In fact, the Bulgarian government tried to integrate more and more minority members into the Communist party. This stage lasted from 1947 to 1958 and it was characterized by the pressure on religion. At the same time, education and modernization was encouraged. Basically, all religious communities in the country were exposed to the same amount of atheist pressure from the secular government (Hoepken, 1997:64-65). Even though freedom of conscience and religion was an integral part of the Dimitrov Constitution adopted in 1947, the new government made a conscious effort to undermine the religious practices of both Muslims and Christians in Bulgaria (Eminov, 1997:51). This policy had a limited success. For example, even in the early 1950s, after a massive campaign for Communist Party membership among Turks in Bulgaria, the latter made up just five per cent of Party members (Hoepken, 1997:66).

“During 1958 the Central Committee of the party approved the ‘Theses for work among the Turkish population’ . . . these programs trained tens of thousands of young, ideologically committed cadres who were expected to lead conferences and seminars on scientific atheism among the Muslim population; they were also instructed to carry out propaganda against Islamic beliefs and practices” (Eminov, 1997:54).

In the mid-1980s, however, religious practices were further impeded; store and restaurant managers and clerks were ordered not to serve Turkish and other Muslim women wearing traditional clothes. The authorities also began strictly enforcing the ban against circumcision of young Muslim boys (Eminov, 1997:60-61).

The Bulgarian authorities made no official statement about any resistance to the Revivalist Process, even though there were reports of such resistance taking place. In December 1984 Turks in Bulgaria organized demonstrations. The demonstrators were met by army units and then by members of the elite special security force (i.e. the “red berets”) (Poulton, 1993:139-140).

There were also many Turkish activists who were arrested and detained in the prison camp in Belene. Estimates suggest that between 450 to 1,000 ethnic Turk prisoners were in connection with the Revivalist Process (Poulton, 1993:142; Amnesty International, 1986:9-14).

Resistance continued throughout the 1980s. Some ethnic Turks resorted even to terrorism. In May 1989, there were new mass protests and hunger strikes in Silistra, Shoumen and Razgrad. By the end of the month, many ethnic Turkish activists were expelled from Bulgaria, while by late August the figure reached over 300,000. The mass exodus which followed was dubbed “The Big Excursion” (See 1.1. for details) (Poulton, 1993:157-159).

2.2.3. Awareness of having an ethnic or a national identity

Turks in Bulgaria have a Turkish national identity and a Muslim religious one. As mentioned, many of them have immigrated to Turkey because they felt culturally affiliated to the people there, and they felt isolated and threatened by Bulgaria. However, even nowadays Turks in Turkey think of their ethnic “brothers” in Bulgaria

as different to themselves because Bulgarian Turks have many Bulgarian words in their Turkish dialect, and they share some other cultural features with Bulgarians. It is important to keep in mind that the political party representing the interests of the Bulgarian Turks --the MRF-- has frequently stressed that it fights for the cultural and political rights of the minority, and is against any secession or autonomy (Hoepken, 1997:72-73).

The restoration of the Muslim/Arabic names was an important act for the revival of the Muslim identity of the ethnic Turks. After the "Big Excursion" of the spring-summer of 1989 and the following political changes (See 1.1. and 1.3.), the names of the ethnic Turks, along with those of Bulgarian Muslims and Roma, were restored by a decision of the Communist State Council on December 29, 1989. Massive protests by Turks and Bulgarian Muslims in Sofia in late 1989 and early 1990 gave a further impetus, so that the content of that decision was embodied in two 1990 governmental acts. The first was from March 1990, and the second, from November, amending the first one. As a result, by the spring of 1991, there were already 600,000 Muslims with names changed (Zhelyazkova, 1998b:22).

The revival of Islam in the present-day Bulgaria also plays an important role for the preservation of the Muslim identity of the ethnic Turks. Between 1989 and 1997 around 100 new mosques were built and many of the older ones were restored (BTA, 28/11/97), although many of them still have to be restored. At present, there are between 900 and 1,000 actively functioning mosques in Bulgaria (*24 Chassa* 9/1/96, Krastev, 1998).

Unlike the Bulgarian Muslims or the Roma, who are ethnically or religiously heterogeneous, the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria are a compact group with clear-cut ethnic Turkish and Muslim identity (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:380). In the 1992 census, 39.2 per cent of the 313,396 Roma in Bulgaria identified themselves as "Muslims," and some of them as "Turks", even though both Bulgarians and Turks view them as Roma (Eminov, 1997:113-114). Around 25,000 Bulgarian Muslims speak Bulgarian as their mother tongue and identified themselves as "Turks." Furthermore, around 35,000 Bulgarian Muslims of the Western Rhodopes, speaking also Bulgarian, were mistakenly registered by the census as "Turks" (Ivanov, et al., 1994:23). In 1993 the Bulgarian Parliament said that the latter results did not correspond to the actual ethno-demographic structure of the region and the result should be annulled (Kanev, 1999b). It follows that the number of 800,052 Turks registered in 1992 does not directly correspond to the real number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria.

Within the Muslim identity of the ethnic Turks, there is a division between the Sunni and the Shiite Muslims. Although the Sunni Turks look with superiority towards some of the rituals and the everyday life of the Shiite Turks, this division is mostly based on historical reasons (the age-old enmities between the two main branches of Islam) rather than on any present-day tensions. The suppression of both Sunni and Shiite Islam during Communist times have even led to an almost "idyllic" coexistence between the representatives of the two Muslim branches (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:382).

Another identity division among the ethnic Turks is their orientation towards the mother country. Part of the Turkish community views Turkey as its mother-state and

Bulgaria as a temporary one, although the community has been in Bulgaria for more than a century. Another part of it views Bulgaria as its mother-state and Turkey as an alternative one, which could provide them refuge from violence, economic or other crises in Bulgaria (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:383).

Finally, ethnic Turks in Bulgaria have different views on the issue of emigration to Turkey. While those of Northeastern Bulgaria are more inclined to have business contacts in Bulgaria, to pay visits to their relatives in other countries and to have their relatives to invite them in Bulgaria, Turks of Southeastern Bulgaria prefer emigration and resettlement (Ivanov, 1998a).

2.2.4. Level of homogeneity in the minority's identity

Most of the people in the Turkish minority areas identify themselves as Turks. However, the Turkic-speaking population in Northeastern Bulgaria is comprised of indigenous Alians and Kazulbashi (Shiites), on the one hand, and of Gagaouzi, on the other. These people are usually regarded as settlers from the Seljuk part of Iran of the temporarily re-Christianized Anatolia, while other scholars claim that they were Turkic Proto-Bulgarians who were Islamicized after the Ottoman conquest (Kowalski, Mutafchiev, Dimitrov). One thing is known for certain: both Alians and Kazulbashi had kept the memory of their distant re-settlement and usually identify themselves as being different from the Turks of the same area (Mutafchieva, 1994:8).

2.3. Actual political and social conditions

2.3.1. Relations with the state

On October 18, 1925, Bulgaria signed the Treaty of Friendship with Turkey in Ankara. The two countries undertook Eternal Peace and Friendship in their relations. Bulgaria agreed to “ensure the full enjoyment of the Muslim minority in Bulgaria from the provisions on the protection of minorities of the 1919 Treaty of Neuilly, while Turkey reciprocally shall ensure the full enjoyment of the Bulgarian minority in Turkey from the provisions of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne” (Saray, 1988:191).

The first years after the Communist take over were marked with the government's rather benevolent attitude towards the Turkish minority. This, however, was gradually changed to a more nationalistic policy, reaching its peak in the mid-1980s when all historical works were revised so that all mentioning of the Turks, except as Ottomans, be taken out (Karpat, 1990:8). In 1981, the Bulgarian Head of state at the time, Todor Zhivkov, said in an interview that Turks “are considered absolutely equal with all remaining citizens of the Republic and are free to profess their faith” (Saray, 1988:190, quoting from the interview with H.E. Mr. Todor Zhivkov by Mr. Robert Maxwell, President of the Pergamon Press). Zhivkov then went on saying that there were 1,300 mosques, eight district Mufti Offices with a Chief Mufti Office and 570 district Imams in Bulgaria (Saray, 1988:190).

In 1984, the Bulgarian government undertook a long campaign of eliminating anything that can be related to the Turks and their ethnic identity (Amnesty International, 1986:20). “The move of the Bulgarian Communist Government to

liquidate the Muslim Turks in Bulgaria . . . is a crime against the most elementary principles of human rights, of world civilization and culture . . . a policy of an ethnic, cultural and political genocide” (Saray, 1988:183).

Bulgarian army units and members of the elite special security force reportedly suppressed the demonstrations, organized by Turks in Southeastern Bulgaria (Poulton, 1993:139-140). In late January-early February 1985, there was a three-day siege of the town of Yablanovo in Eastern Stara Planina. The number of the victims from the ensuing bloodshed is still unknown and cannot be determined. Some reports claim “that 34 were killed and 29 or 30 were taken to the Kotel hospital . . . with gunshot wounds” (Poulton, 1993:140).

Between 450-1,000 Turkish activists were arrested and detained in the prison camp in Belene. By the end of August 1989, some 300,000 ethnic Turkish activists were expelled from Bulgaria (Poulton, 1993:142; Amnesty International, 1986:14).

After 1989, the Turkish minority attained new political freedoms. The MRF, although it is predominantly Turkish, has never admitted this openly in official documents or in its public activity. This is because the Bulgarian Constitution does not allow the formation of parties based on ethnic or religious grounds. Article 11 of the Constitution states that “political parties may not be founded on ethnic, racial or religious basis.” Enforcement of this provision led to the disqualification of several minority parties from participation in the electoral process. This article has been criticized both domestically and internationally due to its discriminatory and restrictive character (BHC, 1992; BHC, March 1995; BHC, January 1996:6-7; BHC, January 1997:5-6; BHC, February 1998:10-11; US Department of State, 1993; Parliamentary Assembly, 1992; Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1992) (See also 5.2.).

2.3.2. Relations with the dominant ethnic/national group in society

In the years of the Revivalist Process, most Bulgarians passively supported the Communist authorities in their activities to change the names of the Turks. The history lessons in Bulgarian schools contributed to the existence of a dormant negative attitude towards the Turks. The latter were almost subconsciously associated with “the five ages of Turkish Yoke” (Zhelyazkova, 1998b: 13). Thus, most Bulgarians were silent, due to the lack of information and freedom of expression in the totalitarian society. Other Bulgarians, though, approved of the campaign, supporting the romantic view of the enlightening mission that the state was helping the “lost brothers” (Kanev, 1999b). There were also occasional protests of Bulgarian intellectuals via foreign radio stations (e.g. BBC forecast “Centuries ago the Turks enslaved Bulgaria, now they shall liberate it”) (Mutafchieva, 1994:38).

However, the “Big Excursion” of the Bulgarian Turks changed the attitude of some Bulgarians, especially the ones living in the Turkish-dominated regions. Nationalist Turkish sources claim that many Bulgarians “stoned cars, buses, and trains carrying the refugees, robbed thousands of them, and committed rape against women and even young girls of eight or ten” (Karpal, 1990:20).

In the beginning of 1990 there was a Bulgarian nationalistic car rally which raised the following slogans: "Turks Go to Turkey!" and "Bulgaria - for the Bulgarians." This hostility was provoked by the first draft of the Law on the Restoration of Names (passed on March 5, 1990, after a long struggle and night rallies of Turks and Bulgarian Muslims in front of the Bulgarian Parliament, which had started on December 29, 1989). Apart from the Bulgarian car rallies, there were hunger strikes of Turks who came back from Turkey and found themselves without houses. There were also Bulgarian protests against the MRF's presence in the Grand National Assembly, and the citizens' non-submission in Kurdzhali and Razgrad (i.e. the Razgrad Republic). Turkish language class at schools was deemed a huge problem. In the beginning of 1991, nationalistic Bulgarian groups blocked schools in different areas in the Kurdzhali and Razgrad districts to teach the Turkish language. In the fall of the same year, there was an MRF-supported boycott on schools with claim to have mother tongue classes in Turkish (Ivanov et. al., 1994:26).

Nowadays, the relations of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria with the representatives of the titular nationality are rather peaceful. Against the backdrop of ethnic hatreds and conflicts currently riving the Balkans, Bulgaria does look peaceful. However, there have been some troubling signs of mounting ethnic tensions. Thus, 83.8 per cent of Bulgarians in 1992 and 72.3 per cent in 1994 regarded ethnic Turks as "religious fanatics" (Hoepken, 1997:77, Table 4.2). More than 80 per cent of Bulgarians would not marry a Turk (Hoepken, 1997:77, Table 4.2.).

In January 1990, following the return of some emigrants from the "Big Excursion," anti-Turk manifestations took place first in Kurdzhali, then in Sofia, Plovdiv, Smolyan, Shoumen, Rouse, Turgovishte, Haskovo and in other towns of Bulgaria (Poulton, 1993:164). Some demographic characteristics of the ethnic Turks, notably their high birth rate and domination in the areas where ethnic Bulgarians have been migrating from, contribute to the build-up of anti-Turk sentiments (Minority Rights Group, MRG, 1996:47).

Sociological surveys show that Bulgarians see Turks as religious fundamentalists (even though this is true of only a very small part of them) and live among themselves in a conservative closed society. "Increasing ethnic and religious self-confidence and political mobilization among Bulgarian Turks have contributed to a significant distance developing between ethnic Turks and ethnic Bulgarians . . . In Bulgarian eyes only Roma have a worse image than Turks" (Hoepken, 1997:76-77).

The massive labeling with negative intellectual and cultural characteristics of the Turkish community provides a subconscious "excuse" for any discrimination which the minority faced. For example, sometimes the statement that "education is not valued very much by Turks" is used as an excuse for the lack of education in Turkish. The lack of a sufficient number of Turkish political figures, on the other hand, is grounded on the assumption that "Turks have to be governed by the highly cultural Bulgarians" (Tomova, 1994:295). On the other hand, Turks see Bulgarians as intelligent, insightful, cultural, but tend to say that interpersonal relations, family relations, etc. among Turks are much more sophisticated than among Bulgarians (Tomova, 1994:300).

There is rarely any information implying that the Bulgarian majority infringes the rights of the minority. Lyutfi Mestan, an MP of the ethnic Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms, told a rally in Momchilgrad that Bulgaria's respect for minority

rights “is still below the European standards.” This statement was provoked by the desecration of a monument in Momchilgrad commemorating the victims of totalitarianism and of the enforced assimilation of Bulgaria’s ethnic Turkish minority in the 1980s (“RFE/RL Newswire,” December 28, 1998, quoting from BTA December 27, 1998, “Turkish Commemoration Monument Defaced in Bulgaria”). However, such information is not very reliable. In the case mentioned above, the incident was denied by a spokeswoman for the Kurdzhali regional police department Momchilgrad two days later, while Mayor Sebahatin Ali was quoted as having no knowledge of the monument’s desecration (“RFE/RL Newswire,” Vol.2, No.249, Part II, December 30, 1998, quoting from BTA December 29, 1998, “Bulgarian Official Denies Turkish Monument Desecrated”).

2.3.3. Relations with other minorities if any

The relations between Turks and Pomaks merit special attention. These two minorities have often been confused, be it deliberately or not. This fact was used by the Bulgarian Communist authorities during the name-changing campaign of 1984-1985 when they consistently claimed that all ethnic Turks are Slav Bulgarians by descent who had been forcibly Islamicized by the Ottoman authorities, i.e. all of them are Pomaks. This confusion often led to the Pomak’s attempts to distance themselves from the Turks. The relations between the two minorities have constantly oscillated: sometimes the Pomaks relate to the Turks based on their common religion while other time based on language. Pomaks sometimes claim that the Turks are manipulating them. However, in some districts they show close affinity to Turks and some even claim Turkish to be their native tongue despite their inability to speak even a word in Turkish. Sometimes there are calls for the establishment of a separate Pomak identity. This is identical to the line adopted by Bosnian Muslims. For instance, at times Pomaks claim to have adopted Islam before the advent of the Ottomans to the Balkans, which makes them the oldest Muslim community in the region. In the majority of cases, Pomaks are clearly inclined to distance themselves from the ethnic Turks and oppose any confusion between the two groups, be it intentional or not (Hoepken, 1997:76).

2.3.4. Relations between the regions inhabited by the minority and the central authorities

In the first years of Communism, the goal of the central authorities was to create a “socialist Turkish minority.” The rights of the minority were to be respected in the name of proletarian internationalism and solidarity espoused by the Marxist-Leninist ideology. “The Communist Party thus attempted to create a secular elite among the Turks, which would work towards the achievement of the party’s ideological and social goals . . . One of the first steps was to improve educational and cultural conditions” (Hoepken, 1997:64). To achieve all this, the central authorities used to concentrate a lot of resources and efforts to improve the living standards of the Turks. There were even special quotas for Turkish students who wished to continue their education within the university system. However, things changed abruptly with the beginning of the Revivalist Process. Within a few years, Turks lost their Arabic names and a lot of their rights. The publication of Turkish language newspapers and books

was banned, and the religious activities of the minority were severely limited (See 1.1.).

3. LANGUAGE

3.1. Describing the language

3.1.1. Linguistic family

Turkish belongs to the Turkic languages of the Southwest group of the Ural-Altai linguistic family. It is in the same group as the Azerbaijani, Turkmen and Gagaus languages. All members of the bigger linguistic family have common features in grammar and vocabulary. Besides the four languages of the Southwest group, the big linguistic family includes other 23 languages. Among them are Kazakh, Kirgiz, Chuvash and Mongol. Each of these languages is spoken by more than one million people (Mutafchieva, et al., 1998:110; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.22, 1992:711).

Unlike Bulgarian, which is an Indo-European language and, consequently, is inflectional, Turkish is consistently an agglutinative language, which makes it sometimes a favorite of linguists as the brightest example of agglutination. In the 19th century, prominent German linguists thought agglutination to be a sign of inferiority of the Turkic languages to the highly inflectional Indo-European ones, and this was also taken to mean that their speakers were inferior to the speakers of Indo-European languages. Curiously enough, the same view was revived in Bulgaria in the 1970-1980s. Turkish was considered an Asiatic tongue, which resisted the modernization carried out in Bulgarian as an Indo-European language (Poulton, 1993:126-127).

3.1.2. Dialects and unity; linguistic awareness

Modern Turkish is not a homogeneous language. It is a compilation of the Istanbul, Ankara, Karaman, East-Anatolian, Konian and Balkan dialects. There are many differences between these dialects. Foreign diplomats and travelers noticed these differences as early as the 19th century. During that century, the Istanbul dialect gradually attained a privileged status since it was spoken by the high officials, the intelligentsia and the top military management in the Ottoman Empire. It was also spoken by the elite of the ethnic Turks living in the Bulgarian territories and in the Sharia Courts of the Empire (Zhelyazkova, 1998a: 380).

3.1.3. Instruments of knowledge: description of the language and norms (history of the written form and of its standardization)

3.2. The history of the language

3.2.1. Origins

The historical changes of the Turkish language took place in three general periods. The first two of them are considered to have developed evolutionarily, the third one -- revolutionarily. These are the Old-Anatolian Turkish, or Old-Ottoman Turkish (13th-

14th century), the Ottoman Turkish (16th-19th century) and the Modern Turkish (20th century) (Mutafchieva, et al., 1998:110).

In the 14th-15th century, Turkish was used for the writing of chronicles and other high-class literature. With the enlargement of the Ottoman Empire, it was spread from the immediate surroundings of the elite to the ordinary people and gained the status of a vernacular. The Ottoman language became the official and literary language. It was written in the Arab script and contained a predominantly Arab and Persian vocabulary. The grammatical structures of the language were partly Arab and Persian, partly Turkic. Thus, due to the big discrepancy between the official Ottoman and the vernacular Turkish language, the lower strata of society had difficulties understanding the Ottoman language (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:379).

Modern Turkish evolved from the Ottoman Turkish through a long nationalistic effort to purify it from the Arab and Persian vocabulary. The initial attempts to turn the Istanbul dialect, which was at the time used as vernacular, into the national language of the Ottoman Empire took place during the late reformation period in the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. The reform-minded New Ottomans, a secret society aimed at the establishment of Constitutionalism in the Empire, were the first intellectuals who tried to purify the dialect from Arab and Persian words and to propagate the idea of simplification of the Turkish language. Ibrahim Shinasi (1826-1871) was the first to propose the Latin script to replace the Arab script. These first efforts were followed by some writers working during the Young Turks period after 1889 and especially after the Young Turks revolution of 1908. Their works were written in a language much closer to the vernacular than to the language of the New Ottomans (Mutafchieva, et al., 1998:42-113; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.26, 1992:895).

The revolutionary reform of the Turkish language took place along with a number of drastic secular reforms launched by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The Law on the Reform of the Turkish Language, adopted in 1928, replaced the Arab with the Latin script. In practice, the new script became compulsory for all Turks only in 1930. The new alphabet, containing 29 letters, was based on the phonetic principle, i.e. the words are written the way they are pronounced. Parallel to the adoption of the new script, there was an ongoing process of purification of Arab and Persian words. They were replaced either by Turkic words found in archaic texts, or were artificially created based on some Turkic roots. The implementation of these changes in the language were personally supervised by Atatürk (Mutafchieva, et al., 1998:113-114).

The Turks did not accept the new Turkish language very easily. Due to the changes in its script and the invention of many new words, it differed drastically from the language used in the 1920s and the 1930s. It was common that the older generations did not understand the new language. In some families, the different generations spoke different versions of the language among themselves (Mutafchieva, et al., 1998:114).

In Bulgaria, the anti-Kemalist forces were very strong at the governmental level especially after the coup in 1923 and 1934, which led to the accession to power of the

junta regimes. That is why an attempt of the late 1920s to replace the Arab with the Latin script failed. The Latin script was ultimately introduced in 1938 due to the strong diplomatic involvement of Turkey and the Bulgarian King Boris III (Hoepken, 1997:62). Before the Communist take over of 1944, there were around 740 Turkish schools in Bulgaria with some native Turkish speakers coming directly from Turkey (Zhelyazkova, 1998:384, citing Stoyanov and Eminov; Zhelyazkova, 1999). Furthermore, Turkish press was distributed regularly to the regions inhabited by ethnic Turks until 1944 (Zhelyazkova, 1999).

The language of the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria changed after 1944 due to a number of reasons. First, along with the whole Bulgarian society, the Turks in Bulgaria underwent major social changes under the influence of the Communist ideology. These changes had no equivalent in Turkey. Thus, the language of the Bulgarian Turks started incorporating some “socialist” vocabulary (Zhelyazkova, 1999). Typical words were “TKZS” [collective farm], “glaven agronom” [chief agronomist], “drugarka” [teacher, Mrs.], “diyado Mraz” [the Soviet Russian equivalent of Santa Claus], “deveti septemvri” [9th of September, the day of the Socialist Revolution in 1944] and “purvi may” [1st of May, International Workers’ Day] (Eminov, 1997:151-152).

The rise of Bulgarian nationalism, the closure of Turkish schools between 1959 and 1970, the banning of the Turkish media and the usage of the Turkish language in private and public in 1984-1989 were the basis of the change of the locally spoken Turkish language. Ethnic Turks could no longer incorporate Turkish words in their language that corresponded to many spheres of their life. Bulgarian words filled in that gap. This is very visible in the vocabulary expressing concepts of modern technology. These are, for example, “hladilnik” [refrigerator], “ruchna spirachka” [hand brake], “radiostantsiya” [radio-station] (Eminov, 1997:151-153).

Other words are simple lexical borrowings from the Bulgarian environment: “magaziner” [storekeeper], “izpit” [exam], “globa” [fine], “otpusk” [vacation], “butilka” [bottle], etc. The next group comprises of Bulgarian words, which have their Turkish equivalents, but the latter are not used. These are, for example, “zapad” [west], “shum” [noise], “brat” [brother], “bratovched” [cousin]. The Bulgarian language influenced also the use of the Turkish suffix system and grammar (Eminov, 1997:151-153).

Research in the predominantly Turkish village of Polyanovo near Aitos in East Bulgaria showed that the changes in educational policy after 1944 resulted in different levels of knowledge of the Turkish language among the different generations and genders in the early 1980s. Older women spoke only Turkish, but even among them the use of a few borrowings words from Bulgarian were not unusual. Men who had completed their education before Bulgarian language education became compulsory in the 1950s spoke Turkish well and Bulgarian very badly. Another group of middle-aged men, born some 10-15 years before the start of compulsory education, was fluent in Bulgarian at the level of non-native speakers. The women of the same group were not that fluent in Bulgarian, since, unlike men, not many of them studied beyond the primary school level, and they studied in Turkish. Although they did not study as much as the men did, they were fluent enough in Bulgarian, since they had learned

Bulgarian as small children and later on they had enough opportunities to use it in their social environment. The youngest group, the ones born after 1950, regardless of their gender, spoke Bulgarian as their native language and sometimes felt more confident with Bulgarian than with Turkish. The small children did not know Bulgarian, but learned it when they entered school. The differences in the language skills of the genders could be attributed also to the patriarchal culture before 1944, where men had more social responsibilities than women did. The latter stayed home and were less socially involved. This social pattern changed with the modernization process, which was pursued by the Communist regime in Bulgaria (Eminov, 1997:147-163).

3.2.2. Evolution

“Despite the centuries separating them from their Anatolian and Asia Minor origins, these Turks have not become assimilated into the surrounding Bulgarian culture but have preserved their own language and culture -- slightly different from that of modern Turkey but nonetheless distinctly Turkish” (Eminov, 1997:144). Over the last several generations, a trend towards more fluent use of the Bulgarian language has been observed. There is also a significant lexical and grammatical interference from Bulgarian in the native Turkish dialect (Eminov, 1997:144).

Prior to Bulgarian independence, Turkish was regarded as the high-status language and Bulgarians learnt it, while Turks remained monolingual. Afterwards, a movement towards the “purification” of Bulgarian from Turkisms and the replacement of Turkish with Bulgarian and/or Russian words was started. It yielded good results in relation to the Bulgarian literary language but not to its vernacular form (Eminov, 1997:145-147).

3.2.3. Cultural production in the language (literature, oral tradition)

In the 1950s, there were a number of Bulgarian Turkish artists who achieved a rapid development in the field of poetry, drama, narration and folk music. Turkish theaters were established in Shoumen, Razgrad and Kurdzhali (1952-1953). Poetry was an especially popular art form among minority artists such as Samim Rifat, Muharrem Yumuk, Aliosman Ayrantok, Mehmet Muzekka Con, Hafiz Islam Ergin, Mulazim Chavushev, S. Bilalof, Rasim Bilazerof, Hasan Karahuseyinof, Latif Alief, Mehmet Chavushev, Ahmet Sherifof, Sabahattin Bayramof, Recep Kupchu, Niyazi Huseyinof, Sahin Mustafaof, Mustafa Mutkof, Naci Ferhadof, etc. There were also some female Turkish poets: Mufkure Mollova, Emenaz Ismailova, Havva Pehlivanova, Necmiye Mehmedova, Muzaffer Niyazieva, Saziye Hamdieva, etc. In the period 1959-1968, there were 34 books written by 24 Turkish poets. It is interesting to point out that these poets used some words from Bulgarian and Azeri in their works (Simsir, 1986:23).

There was also a great development in Turkish novels. There were three local newspapers and one monthly magazine presenting Turkish narratives. The first Turkish novel was “Gun Dogarken” by Sabri Tatov (1963). In 1967 he also published two long story called “Koyun Hamanasi” and “Iki Arada.” Halit Aliosmanof wrote

“Sacilan Kivilcimlar” in 1965 and Ishak Rashidof published his “Ayrilirken” in 1968 (Simsir, 1986:23-24).

From 1959 on, short stories were collected in anthologies. In 1961, around 50 Turkish authors published their works in separate books. For the period 1961-1968, around 30 storybooks of 23 writers were published in Sofia (Simsir, 1986:24).

In regard to Turkish minority drama, it was developed both by amateur groups known as *Heveskarlar Kollektifi* (*The Collective of Heveskarlar*) and by three professional groups in Shoumen, Razgrad and Kurdzhali. Playwright Ismail Bekir translated many dramatic works into Turkish as well as wrote seven original plays (Simsir, 1986:24-25).

In March 1964 Todor Zhivkov, Bulgarian Head of state at the time, made the following speech: “There are suitable conditions for our country’s Turks to use their culture and language freely. Children of this community should learn their own language and know it very well. This necessitates that Turkish language instruction in schools must be given importance. As it is now and in the future, the Turks will use their language and maintain their traditions, create contemporary masterpieces and sing their folk songs” (Simsir, 1986:25).

Soon after this enlightening speech, the Communist party completely reversed its policy towards the cultural development of the Turkish minority. Bulgarian Turkish artists were forbidden to publish books in their own language and the books they had already published were taken off from library shelves and were destroyed (Simsir, 1986:25).

3.3. Actual sociolinguistic data

The present day situation of the language of the ethnic Turks is not well researched from a linguistic point of view. From a historical point of view, the 15 years in which the language was not studied at school and the drastic “revivalist” measures of 1984-1985 had a detrimental effect on the Turkish language spoken in Bulgaria. The vocabulary is very poor and full of Bulgarian and other foreign language borrowings. Apart from that, grammatical forms are often misused (Zhelyazkova, 1998a:380).

3.3.1. Territory in which the language is used

In Bulgaria, the Turkish language is used mainly in the compact regions inhabited by ethnic Turks, i.e. Southeastern and Northeastern Bulgaria.

3.3.2. Number of persons using this language (in territory and among emigrants)

Internationally, the number of Turkish speakers is estimated to be around 42,204,000 people. Out of these, some 39,515,000 live in Turkey (around 90 per cent of the total population); 1,500,000 in Germany; 940,000 in the Balkan countries; 115,000 in Cyprus; 82,000 in the former Soviet Union; 30,000 in the Arab countries and around

22,000 in other countries (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, Vol.28 and Vol.22, 1992:895, 711).

In Bulgaria, there are 813,639 Turkish speakers, 263,333 in the urban centers and 550,306 in the rural ones (OSI/King Baudouin, 1997:108). The number of Turkish language speakers is not coterminous with the number of the ethnic Turks counted by the last population census in December 1992 (some 800,055 people). This figure includes a number of Roma and Bulgarian Muslims who declared themselves ethnic Turks, but do not speak Turkish. According to the estimates, there are around 200,000 Roma and around 70,000 Bulgarian Muslims in the official statistics. Bulgarian Muslims speak a Bulgarian dialect, which includes some Turkish and Greek words. Roma, on the other hand, speak a mixture of Romanes and Turkish (Ivanov, 1998a). Finally, the above mentioned figure does not include the number of Tatars in Bulgaria, who do not speak their traditional Tatar language, but have become linguistically assimilated into the Turkish language (Antonov, et al., 1998:363).

Shortly after their arrival in Turkey, emigrants from the “Big Excursion” of 1989 spoke a similar version of the Turkish language that is used by the ethnic Turks in the present-day Bulgaria. They noticed with surprise that the language they spoke was quite different from the one being used in Turkey proper. Accelerated language courses, organized by the Turkish state, helped the emigrants to overcome this linguistic differences (Zhelyazkova, 1998b:29).

3.4. Freedom of expression in the minority language

The ethnic Turkish minority is free to express itself in its mother tongue in private and in public. The Bulgarian National Radio broadcasts its Turkish programs twice a day in the regions of Northeast and Southeast Bulgaria, but there are no broadcasts on the national waves. There are no Turkish-language programs on Bulgarian National Television. With the new law passed in November 1998 concerning the electronic media, programs in Turkish could be broadcast not only by the regional radio stations of the national radio, but also on the national waves. The law also provides for programs in languages other than Bulgarian to be broadcast on the National TV. However, until June 1999, no programs have been broadcast yet. Furthermore, ethnic Turks are not yet allowed to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications in their mother tongue, as indicated by the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. The Convention was ratified by the Bulgarian Parliament on February 18, 1999.

3.4.1. Level of acceptance or resistance to the minority’s language

In the regions with predominantly Turkish population, Turkish is the everyday language of private and public communication. After 1989, Turkish language classes have been resumed on the primary and secondary school level (See also 6.5.).

3.4.2. Ways in which the state protects or impedes the use of the minority language

After 1989, the restrictions on religious, personal and educational rights of minorities were lifted. People were no longer afraid to use their mother tongue in their personal relations, as well as in public. Still, for quite some time the post-Communist Bulgarian governments were not in a great hurry to reintroduce the study of the Turkish language in Bulgarian public schools. This, however, was high on the agenda of the MRF. Thus, on October 1, 1991 the Bulgarian government prohibited Turkish language instruction, the MRF established a special corner in its newspaper, *Hak ve Ozgurluk*, devoted on language teaching. The topics alternated between Muharrem Tahsin's "Our Contemporary Turkish" and Kazim Memis' "Language Lessons in Your Home." These featured some practical lessons in Turkish syntax, morphology and pointed out the many Bulgarian words in the Turkish dialect used in Bulgaria. This language section was in existence until the end of 1991 when the government finally reintroduced Turkish-language lessons in public schools. However, the Bulgarian influence on the Turkish lexicon continues in one way or another although Turkish speakers are more conscious of this influence now than they used to be. They have reversed the trend of using only Bulgarian as a written language due to their increased exposure to standard Turkish (Eminov, 1997:157-164) (See also 6.1.).

4. RELIGION

In the first years of Communism there was concerted effort to undermine the religious affiliation of the minority. Their *vakif* property was confiscated. All this led to a substantial reduction in the number of *hodzhas*. Before the Second World War there were between four to eight *hodzhas* in every Turkish or Pomak village. In 1956 the overall number was 2,393 *hodzhas* (one per 170 Turks); in 1961 -- one per 1,397 Turks. The former theological high school "Njuvvab" in Shoumen was turned into a secular one. In 1952, teaching of the Koran was banned and an overall restriction of religious rights and practices was applied (Hoepken, 1997:65).

A 1985 survey showed that 23 per cent Bulgarians declared that they were religious, in comparison to 55 per cent Turks. Numerous administrative obstacles to discourage religious funerals were introduced and in the early 1980s, 30-50 per cent of all funerals were celebrated in the traditional "ethnically specific" way (Hoepken, 1997:69-70).

In general, the 1970s-1980s were characterized by intensive anti-religious propaganda. Circumcision was declared barbaric and pagan, and thus prohibited; fasting during the month of Ramadan was discouraged; slaughtering of lambs during the Festival of Sacrifice (Kurban Bayrami) was also deterred; women's traditional clothes was banned, because they were taken to symbolize subservience to men; traditional Muslim burial rituals was replaced with a "socialist" one (Eminov, 1997:58-59).

After 1989, the religious policies were moderated. At present, over 920 mosques are active in Bulgaria, copies of the Koran and religious instruction in the mosques are freely available (MRG, 1996:45). Religious practices among Turks and Pomaks (mostly Sunni Muslims, except for the 7.5 per cent Aliani and Kzalbashi [Kizilbahi], i.e. Shiite Muslims) have become more visible. This is partly due to the fact that restrictions enforced on religious practices from 1985 encouraged the feeling of

affinity towards the Faith. However, everyday religious activities are not strictly observed (around a quarter of all Turkish “believers” pray five times a day; 15 per cent -- only on religious holidays; 16 per cent -- never; only 40 per cent adhere to the Koranic instructions on drinking and eating) (Hoepken, 1997:74-76).

4.1. Identifying a religious minority

The largest part of the Bulgarian population are followers of the Eastern Orthodox religion -- 7,274,592 (National Institute of Statistics, 1994). The second largest religious group is Muslims. Apart from the 800,052 ethnic Turks, there are also Bulgarian Muslims and Roma who also follow the Koran. The figures regarding this religion are: 1,110,295 Muslims in total, 362,480 in urban centers and 747,815 in rural centers (OSI/King Baudouin, 1997:108). Among all the Muslims, there are 1,026,758 Sunnis and 83,537 Shiites (National Institute of Statistics, 1994).

The Bulgarian state has respected the religious rights of the minorities to a different degree, in accordance with the policy of the time. The most glaring violations of these rights occurred during the Revivalist Process in the mid-1980s (See 1.1. for details). With the advent of democracy, however, the Turks, as well as the other Muslims of Bulgaria have had their religious rights restituted and they are able to acquire additional rights.

4.2. Religious freedom enjoyed

By the end of 1991, apart from the old mosques which some were reopened for believers, eight new mosques were built and the Chief Mufti asked the Directorate for Religious Affairs for permission to establish 40 more. In 1989, there were already 300 functioning mosques and in 1992, there were 920 mosques. Restrictions on the importation and distribution of the Korans and other religious texts were lifted and in 1990, the Chief Mufti’s Office sold 10,000 Korans. A project to translate the Koran into Turkish and Bulgarian is under way. The celebration of important religious holidays, traditional funerals, marriages, and circumcisions is now permitted (Tomova et. al., 1992:7-8).

4.3. Relations with the dominant religious community and the other communities

Orthodox priests, Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, etc. are extremely active among the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims and Gypsy Muslims, and their success in converting Muslims is widely covered in the media. At the same time, Muslim missionary activity among the Orthodox population is out of the question. Christian services are broadcast on Bulgarian National TV and Radio, while Muslim ones are not. The Chief Mufti was allowed to address the faithful over TV for Ramadan in 1995, but without being able to give a short greeting in Turkish (Eminov, 1997:65-66).

4.4. Ways in which the state protects or impedes minority religious activities

The 1879 Bulgarian Constitution makes explicit reference to the protection of religious minorities. The Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs was the one responsible for supervising religious affairs at the time. The first instrument with guarantees for the main religious minorities in the country was adopted on July 9, 1880. These were the Temporary Rules for Spiritual Government of Christians, Muslims and Jews. The Rules gave a wide range of rights to the muftis in the ten Mufti Juridical Districts. It is notable that there are no clauses allowing the government to interfere in any way in the religious affairs of the minorities (Kanev, 1999a:3-4).

In 1895, the Temporary Rules for the Government of Muslims were adopted. Some of their clauses were applied till 1919. According to them, the Chief Mufti was to be appointed by a decree from the King (Art. 2). The district Muftis were to be elected by their fellow Muslims, but the elections had to be approved also by the King and the Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs (Kanev, 1999a:4-5).

The Statute for the Spiritual Structure and Government of Muslims in the Kingdom of Bulgaria (May 23, 1919) was the most long-lived statute related to the Muslim minority. In addition, it is also the most restrictive, because it gave almost unlimited rights to the Ministry of Foreign and Religious Affairs. All district muftis were state employees and were allowed to communicate with foreign public institutions only through the Ministry. This gave the Bulgarian state absolute control over its Muslims (Kanev, 1999a:5-6).

During the entire Communist period, there was a Muslim religious governing body with a Chief Mufti and regional muftis. None of them was appointed on the basis of their religious training but of their loyalty to the government. Thus, in early March 1985, the Chief Mufti and most regional muftis declared their full support for the Revivalist Process (Eminov, 1997:61).

Various governments since 1989 have interfered in the affairs of various religious communities, Muslims in particular. In the case of the Muslims, the MRF backed the actions of the Bulgarian Directorate for Religious Affairs. In a February 10, 1992 letter, the Director of Religious Affairs declared the election of Chief Mufti Nedim Gendzhev invalid, "because of improprieties of the election assembly, and because he did not have the required term in office as a regional mufti at the time of his election" (Human Rights Without Frontiers, 1996:26). In a second letter (February 21, 1992) all other seven muftis were declared illegitimate because of violations of the statute and of the Denominations Act during their election. Muslim leaders filed a case against the decision for the removal of the Chief Mufti, which was disallowed by the Supreme Court (Human Rights Without Frontiers, 1996:24-29).

The struggle for leadership went on with the occupation of the Chief Mufti's Office in March 1992 by a pro-government group. People appointed by the Directorate for Religious Affairs replaced Nedim Gendzhev and most regional muftis. However, since the former Chief Mufti had very powerful support from the Bulgarian Socialist Party, the latter restored him to power as soon as it won the December 1994 elections. A protest demonstration against that decision was organized in Sofia in September 1995 and the government's act was appealed before the Supreme Court. With its

Ruling No.566 (July 27, 1995), the Supreme Court rejected the complaint of the former Chief Mufti Fikri Sali against the Order issued by the Council of Ministers on February 22, 1995. This Order recognized the legitimacy of the Supreme Religious Council chaired by Nedim Gendzhev and Basri Hadjisherif (Human Rights Without Frontiers, 1996:24-29).

In general, after January 1995, the BSP government encouraged factionalism within the Muslim community. Now there are two parallel Supreme Muslim Theological Councils, two Chief Muftis, parallel regional muftis and imams at the local level. Another gross government interference was the 1995 decision of the Directorate of Religious Affairs to prohibit students from the Islamic High School in Shoumen from going to villages during religious holidays to act as *muezzins* and help in marriage and funeral rituals (Eminov, 1997:64-65).

5. GENERAL LEGAL STATUS

5.1. Past

Bulgarian state policy towards the various minorities in the country has always been more emotional than rational. This may give an explanation as to why the grave abuses of minority rights have been short-lived and have appeared mainly in wartime. This policy has often been self-contradictory, and the result turns out good or bad depends on outside forces (Kanev, 1999a:2).

Throughout Bulgarian history, the state has recognized the incredible ethnic and religious variety in its territory. The period from the Russo-Turkish War until the Second World War is the most uneven one in regard to the legal status of the different minorities. With the Berlin Treaty of June 1878, Bulgaria took the responsibility to safeguard the rights of religious minorities and some “nationalities” (e.g. Romanians, Greeks, and Turks). The November 27, 1919 Neuilly Peace Agreement made explicit references to the protection of the different races, languages and national identities. In 1879, the Kingdom of Bulgaria adopted its Constitution. The latter took the principle of protection of religious minorities as its basic one (Kanev, 1999a:3; Simsir, 1986:19).

Until 1938, Muslim Courts had jurisdiction over the personal status of the believers (e.g. marriage, divorce, custody of children, etc.). Other religious courts, such as the Jewish and the Orthodox Christian ones, have similar jurisdiction. However, the Muslim Courts had a wider jurisdiction, because in comparison to the other religious courts, they were able to hear cases on division of property after divorce and inheritance disputes. In 1938, the jurisdiction of the Muslim religious courts was narrowed down to the scope of the jurisdiction of the other main religious courts in the country. Thus, religious affairs and personal status cases could still be heard by the religious courts, while everything else was transferred to the civil courts (Kanev, 1999b).

The first Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria, adopted on December 4, 1947, followed the line of Marxism-Leninism for minority rights protection. According to Article 71 “national minorities have a right to be educated in their

vernacular, and to develop their national culture” (Amnesty International, 1986:4; Minority Rights Group International, 1991:125).

The 1971 Constitution (unlike the previous one) makes no specific references to ethnic minorities, but rather refers to the “citizens of non-Bulgarian origin” (Article 45). This basically reflects the stance of the Bulgarian government towards its minorities within the framework of the creation of a unified “Bulgarian socialist nation” (Poulton, 1993:119). This Constitution guaranteed freedom of conscience and creed (Art. 53) and “no privileges or limitation of rights based on nationality, origin, creed, sex, education, social and material status” (Art. 35(2)). It was explicitly against “the propagation of hate or humiliation of man because of race, national or religious affiliation” (Art. 35 (4)) (Eminov, 1997:52).

The new Penal Code, on the other hand, provided for the punishment of persons preaching hatred on religious grounds (Arts. 164, 165). Despite these legal norms, all religious manifestations were interpreted as anti-state and bourgeois propaganda, something especially true when Muslims were concerned (Eminov, 1997:52).

5.2. Present

After the fall of communism, Bulgaria obtained a new Constitution (adopted on July 13, 1991), which was the result of ethnocentric agitation. This document defines Bulgaria as the “nationally and politically unified” state of the “Bulgarian people” and grants only very limited rights to what are called now not ethnic minorities but “citizens, for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother-tongue” (Troebst, 1994:33). These citizens are given the right to study and use their language, while the studying of the Bulgarian language is obligatory (Art. 36 (2)). They may develop their own ethnic culture (Art. 54 (1)). Article 13 (1), (2), (4) establishes the state’s role in regard to the religious communities. Article 37 (1) obliges the state to work for tolerance and respect among believers from different religions (Kanev, 1999a:25).

Article 13 states that “(1) The practicing of any religion shall be free. (2) The religious institutions shall be separate from the state . . . (4) Religious institutions and communities, and religious beliefs shall not be used for political ends” (Eminov, 1997:62). There has been some uneasiness, provoked by Art. 13 (3). The latter explicitly recognizes Eastern Orthodoxy as the traditional religion of the country, which may lead to its establishment as the official religion in the state. Article 44 (2) prohibits the formation of organizations for the purpose of inciting “racial, national, ethnic, or religious enmity or an encroachment on the rights and freedoms of citizens” (Eminov, 1997:63).

Although the 1991 post-Communist Constitution has done a lot to safeguard the rights of the members of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria, this is predominantly in the field of individual rather than collective rights. “Unlike most other post-Communist constitutions in Eastern Europe, that of Bulgaria does not mention collective minority rights, and they do not appear in any legislation” (Hoepken, 1997:78). The Constitution guarantees cultural rights and freedom from discrimination for all ethnic and religious groups but it bans anything which could be interpreted as collective political rights for minorities. Territorial autonomy and political parties on

ethnic/religious basis are prohibited. On the other hand, the Political Parties Act states that all parties must execute their activities in the Bulgarian language (Hoepken, 1997:79).

Article 6 of the Constitution declares the principles of equality and non-discrimination, but these principles are not consistently implemented (MRG 1996:45). Article 11 states that “political parties may not be founded on ethnic, racial or religious basis.” Enforcement of this provision led to the disqualification of several minority parties from participation in the electoral process. This article has been criticized both domestically and internationally due to its discriminatory and restrictive character (BHC, 1992; BHC, March 1995; BHC, January 1996:6-7; BHC, January 1997:5-6; BHC, February 1998:10-11; US Department of State, 1993; Parliamentary Assembly, 1992; Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1992).

This article concerns mainly the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), which represents predominantly the interests of the Turkish minority and is the fourth most influential political party in Bulgaria (MRG, 1996:45). Notwithstanding MRF’s cautious behavior and its claims of representing the interests of not only Turks, but also of Pomaks and Muslim Gypsies (which is partly true, due to the above-mentioned provision), the party was twice on the brink of being barred from participation in the national elections.

In September 1991, 54 deputies, mostly from the BSP, launched a campaign to prevent the registration of the MRF in the upcoming elections. This attempt failed since the Supreme Court overturned the judgment earlier cast by the Sofia City Court. The constitutional restrictions were overcome by using the subtle distinction of “party v/s movement.” The MRF was registered as a movement. In April 1992, a second attempt at the banning of the movement had started. In both instances, the MRF came out as the winner. This, however, is not attributed to any in-depth reconsideration of the traditional views Bulgarians hold regarding Bulgarian Turks. Most analysts agree that external factors were the leading force behind these democratic decisions (e.g. the 1991 CSCE Moscow Summit where Bulgaria was criticized by the US and most EC member states’ delegations) (Ragaru, 1994:194).

6. AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATION FOR THE MINORITY

6.1. Brief history of the education system in relation to the minority

In the period 1878-1944, education was the main sphere to exercise minority rights. The People’s Education Act recognized the private schools of the Muslims, Jews and Armenians. The Muslim schools were further divided into Turkish, Bulgarian-Muslim, Tatar and Gypsy. Most of the subjects in these schools were studied in the mother tongue of the minority. It was only with the People’s Education Act of 1885 that the compulsory study of Bulgarian was started, and in 1909 compulsory study of Bulgarian history and geography was introduced. There were minority private schools at all levels of education, the greatest number being the primary schools (Kanev, 1999a:8-9).

In the early 1920s, a Turkish religious college was established in Shoumen. In spite of Bulgaria's independence, its Muslims were still under the authority of the *Sheih-ul-Islam*, an Ottoman official, responsible for everything related to canon law and religious schools (Eminov, 1997:50-51).

Between 1928 and 1934, the Turkish schools introduced the new Turkish alphabet (with Latin characters) that had already been employed in Turkey. After the May 19, 1934 coup, however, the new government, backed by the Muslim religious leaders, re-introduced the old alphabet (Arabic characters) (Kanev, 1999a:9). The number of Turkish schools was falling gradually. While in 1923 there were 1,300 Turkish schools, in 1928 there were only 920. In 1936, there were 605 left and around the end of the First World War they were reduced by another 40 per cent. Therefore, in 1944 there were only 367 private Turkish schools (Stoyanov, 1994:271).

Up to the Second World War, only 15 per cent of the Turkish community lived in urban centers. Illiteracy in the 1930s was 81 per cent among men and 91 per cent among women. Turks and Muslims in general sent their children almost exclusively to their "own" schools, despite the fact that the latter were in dire straits financially and in regard to the poor quality of education the schools offered. In 1930, there were only 74 Turkish pupils among the 40,000 children in ordinary secondary school. All this made the emergence of a secular elite as "national leader" almost impossible. Up to the Second World War there were some Turkish MPs within different "Bulgarian" parties (they usually made up not more than 15 people) (Hoepken, 1997:57).

One of the first steps of the Communists after their take over was to improve the education and culture of the different minorities. They opened Turkish secondary schools and teachers' colleges. Turks had privileged access to university (e.g. special quotas for admission of Turkish minority students), and their own theaters, libraries, press, literature (Hoepken, 1997:64).

However, in 1949 all Koranic schools were closed and after 1952 religious teaching in public schools was banned and the teaching of Islam in private was discouraged. In the late 1940s, all private Turkish schools were nationalized and a unified "patriotic, internationalist, atheistic" curriculum was imposed on them. The aim was to replace the Islamic worldview with a scientific-atheistic worldview. The government believed that the increase of young Muslim intelligentsia would replace the superstitious ideology of the older people with scientific Marxist-Leninist ideology. However, by the mid-1950s it was apparent that Turks and other Muslims had a much firmer hold on religion. In 1958, the policy towards Turks was revised and was followed by the closing down of Turkish schools and the ban on Turkish education in the late 1970s (Eminov, 1997:52-53).

In the years when the Communist party ruled Bulgaria, 97 per cent of the Turkish children attended school. The April 1956 Plenum of the BCP proclaimed that the Bulgarian Turks are an inseparable part of the Bulgarian nation. Consequently, their cultural autonomy had to be reduced so that they could fuse with the socialist nation. In his October 1958 theses, Todor Zhivkov declared war on "all manifestations of nationalism and religious fanaticism" among the local Turks (Mutafchieva, 1994:33).

Before 1974 there existed a Turkish Department at the St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, where about 70 per cent of the students were ethnic Turks (Minority Rights Group International, 1991:125; Poulton, 1993:122). In 1974 the department was shut down and replaced by the Department for Arabic Studies, where a small number of students, mostly children of the Bulgarian diplomatic corps working in the Arab countries, had the opportunity to study. In the 1980s, even the speaking of Turkish was forbidden. State officials justified the repression against the Turkish language with the need for modernization. The state claimed that one must replace the traditional ways of life that the Turkish language helped to conserve. The inability of many Bulgarian Turks to speak Bulgarian properly also led to the drastic measure of the state (Poulton, 1993:127).

On October 14, 1985 at the 23rd session of UNESCO's general conference, the Academician of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Blagovest Sendov replied to a statement by a member of a Turkish delegation that the emigration of ethnic Turks to Turkey had "objectively eliminated the need for instruction in a language [Turkish], which is alien to the Bulgarian nationals" (Poulton, 1993:136).

6.2. Availability of teaching material for the minority

In 1992, 290,000 primers, readers and grammar books were printed free of charge in Turkey under the proposal of the Turkish Educational Ministry. The teaching material was prepared in Bulgaria and was approved by the Bulgarian Educational Ministry. The authors, with a Turkish philology background, used some Turkish textbooks as a foundation and adapted them to the "Bulgarian realities." "Panturkist and panislamist" elements were taken off along with the Turkish hymn, the flag, portraits and statements of Kemal Ataturk. Content of Turkish history, which were incompatible with the Bulgarian educational programs, was eliminated. They were substituted by texts of classical authors of the Bulgarian literature. The textbooks were supposed to be distributed free of charge (*Tanjug*, quoted by BTA, *Svetut za Bulgaria*, 27/11/1992, *Kontinent*, 26/11/1992). Representatives of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria considered this teaching material insufficient for the needs of the minority. It was "morally" outdated, poor in the Turkish language vocabulary and did not provide a modern interdisciplinary approach (Mestan, 1998).

Since 1992, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, on the offer of the Turkish Embassy in Bulgaria, has been sending teachers to Turkey for summer specialization. The courses are usually 15 days long, and are either only for ethnic Turkish teachers from Bulgaria, or for teachers from all over the world. The Ministry of Education offers no exchange programs for pupils and university students (Chakir, 1999).

The department of Turkology at St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University does not prepare Turkish language teachers. It does not offer any courses in Pedagogical Studies. The universities, which prepare Turkish-language teachers, are those in Shoumen and of Kurdzhali. The latter is a branch of the University of Plovdiv (Chakir, 1999).

6.3. Official position

During the Communist years of Bulgaria, legislation had numerous clauses referring to minority rights. These, however, were not always applied in practice. Thus, Art. 79 of the 1947 Constitution of the People's Republic of Bulgaria stipulated that "the national minorities have the right to study in their native tongue and to develop their national culture, while compulsory studying the Bulgarian language" (Chakurov, et al., 1976:100).

Another important legislative instrument of the time is the People's Education Act of 1948, which allows the introduction of minority schools (Art. 4), where subjects would be taught in both the minority and the Bulgarian language (Art. 9). This Act laid the foundations for the further development of education in the spirit of "proletarian internationalism . . . and people's patriotism . . . To denounce the reactionary and traitor's character of nationalism and cosmopolitanism" (Chakurov, et al., 1976:113).

After 1989, restrictions on the Turkish language were lifted. In 1991, the National Education Act was passed in Bulgaria. It allowed the teaching of minority languages at school, but it was not implemented evenly. Thus, teaching of Turkish does not go beyond an extra-curricular activity amounting to four hours of tuition per week (MRG, 1996:46). It is done on an optional basis (it depends on the parents' application and on a minimum demand requirement). There is often either lack of teachers, or the minimum level of demand is not satisfied. In 1993, 92,166 applications for mother-tongue education were filed. Some 17,000 of them were turned down (Hoepken, 1997:79).

Since the 1991 governmental decree allowing Turkish language education in the municipality schools, there is a shortage of teachers to teach in the Turkish language. It was in 1969 when minority languages were last mentioned in the educational plans (Ivanov, 1998b).

A 1994 Act of the Council of Ministers allows children to study their mother tongue as an optional subject from the first until the eighth grade of the municipal schools. The wish to study their mother tongue should be explicitly stated in an application submitted by the student or by the parents if the student is underage (State Gazette, 1994, Vol.73:3).

Around the end of 1995 some Turkish minority activists expressed their desire to improve mother tongue teaching by including it in the regular school curriculum and also by teaching some subjects in Turkish. In January 1996 the then Minister of Education, Ilcho Dimitrov --who had held the same position during the Revivalist Process-- declared that "Turkish schools won't be allowed to exist in Bulgaria, this should be clear to them. If they want Turkish schools, they are free to go to Turkey" (BHC, 1997:10).

The situation was more or less the same in 1998. The minority-state relationship in regard to education is based on the principle that the Bulgarian state grants the minority certain rights and thus, the minority should be grateful, without demanding more. This relationship is discriminatory (Ivanov, 1998b:13).

In academic year 1997/1998, there were around 40,000 Turkish students taking Turkish language classes as an optional subject in the Bulgarian municipal schools. Altogether, there were around 694 teachers. For academic year 1998/1999, the figures were almost the same. Most of the students live in Kurdzhali (13,000), Razgrad (5,200), Shoumen (4,900), Silistra (4,500) and Bourgas (4,000). Fewer students study in Targovishte (2,500), Rouse (1,200), Dobrich (1,000), Varna (500-600), the Plovdiv region (1,350), the Haskovo region (1,160) and others (Chakir, 1999).

A law is being drafted right now. It is going to change the options for mother tongue education from an “optional-to-be-chosen” subject to a “compulsory-to-be-chosen” subject (from *SIP* - svobodno-izbiraem - to *ZIP* - zadulzhitelno-izbiraem predmet). Turkish would be studied again between the first and the eighth grade of school. It is not yet clear how many classes would there be weekly, since the bill envisages that the percentage of the compulsory-to-be-chosen subjects will be extended -- from 10 per cent of the first grade curriculum to 45 per cent of the eighth grade one. In practice, this may reduce the **mother tongue classes** to be taken by ethnic Turkish pupils in the first and second grade of primary education. Now they take four hours of mother tongue classes weekly as an optional subject. However, there might be an opportunity for compensation for this during the next years of study. The foreign language dilemma i.e. the fact that ethnic Turks prefer to take English or Russian instead of Turkish, will be eliminated, since the same draft law envisages the foreign language to be also a compulsory-to-be-chosen subject. The draft law is still at the stage of discussion within the Ministry of Education. It is going to be presented to the Bulgarian Parliament, but the time for that move has not come yet (Chakir, 1999).

6.4. Activists' initiatives

The Movement for Rights and Freedoms has been the main advocate for Turkish language study within the Bulgarian educational system. In the beginning of 1991, nationalistic Bulgarian groups prevented schools from teaching minority languages in different areas in the Kurdzhali and Razgrad districts. In the fall of the same year, there was an MRF-supported boycott on the schools, which was aimed at the institution of the study of Turkish as a mother tongue (Ivanov et al, 1994:26).

One of the main lines of activities of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Parliament was to introduce the Turkish language as compulsory subject in the municipal schools. There have been no major attempts to open up private Turkish schools. This is due to at least two factors: first, the poor economic situation of the Turkish minority does not allow that, and second, it was well perceived among the elite of the minority that private Turkish education would put the minority in an “ethnic ghetto” (Ivanov, 1998b).

A 1991 governmental decree allowed the teaching of the Turkish language in the municipal schools as an optional subject. A 1994 decree specified that this educational activity could be carried out from the first through the eighth grade. The right to study one's mother tongue is defined by Art. 36 (2) of the Bulgarian Constitution and Art. 8 (2) of the National Education Act. However, they do not specify the form of this educational activity (Ivanov, 1998b).

The MRF views the optional form of studying the Turkish language as discriminatory. Moreover, according to them, it contradicts the right to mother tongue education provided for in the Constitution. The Regulations for Application of the National Education Act state that classes in the optional subject of mother tongue education are to be formed if there are enough children (thirteen being the minimum) who have expressed their desire to study the language. The rhetorical question posed by the MRF is what happens in the cases when in a given area there are only 12 pupils who are willing to take that class (Mestan, 1998)?

Furthermore, the optional classes could be incorporated into the weekly educational program if they are “outside the mandatory hours”, i.e. out of the regular curriculum. Exceptions are made with a decision of a pedagogical council, but usually mother tongue classes take place before or after regular school hours. Finally, students are given a grade on their certificate upon completion of their studies of the mother tongue, but the grade is not included in the student’s GPA. All this undermines mother tongue studies (Ivanov, 1998b:13).

The Ministry of Education announced that in 1992 there were 90,000 ethnic Turkish children studying their mother tongue (BTA, *Svetut za Bulgaria*, 27/12/92). At present they are around 55,000 (the MRF, quoting Educational Ministry Statistics). The MRF considers this to be less than half of those who have that constitutional right (Mestan, 1998).

The rest of the children prefer to take classes mainly in English and Russian, instead of Turkish as an optional subject. English is the new *lingua franca*, while Russian is very useful in Turkey due to Turkey’s trade relation with Russia and some of the neighboring former Soviet republics (Ivanov, 1998b). Thus, the departure from taking the Turkish language as an optional subject is because of the educational model, not the minority’s disinterest in the Turkish language itself (Mestan, 1998, *Troud*, 9/9/96).

The Bulgarian Parliament is currently preparing a draft law amending the National Educational Act. The draft law envisages that the Turkish language would be a mandatory subject in the municipal schools. There were discussions in Parliament in the summer of 1998, but the law is still to be adopted (Ivanov, 1998b).

6.5. Present situation on different levels:

Most of the previously existing Islamic schools were reopened after 1989. New ones were founded as well. Between the summer of 1990 and the end of 1991, more than 80,000 Muslim children learnt the Koran (Eminov, 1997:63) (See also 6.1., 6.2.).

6.5.1. Nursery school and primary education

There is no education in Turkish at the nursery school level. In primary schools, children can have Turkish language education as an extra-curriculum subject. Classes are held four times a week. The norm is to have the modern Turkish language taught in the Bulgarian schools (Ivanov, 1998b) (See also 6.4.).

6.5.2. Secondary education

On the secondary education level, children are allowed to take Turkish classes as an optional subject in the municipal schools, similar to the arrangement regarding primary schools. Classes are held four times a week.

Starting in academic year 1997/1998, a private college at the high school level was opened in the village of Glodzhevo in Northeastern Bulgaria. This is a private English language school where Russian is also taught. At present, there are two classes: a preparatory class consisting of 15 children and an eighth-grade class of 18. All these children are Muslim, including three Muslim Roma children. The school authorities claim that there is no restriction on the origin of the students. They just have to demonstrate a Very Good cumulative GPA [above 5 (out of 6), according to the Bulgarian educational system] in order to be admitted by the school. The children receive food and teaching materials free of charge. All this is financed by a foundation of former Chief Mufti Nedim Gendzhev (Salimova, 1999).

6.5.3. Higher education and Research

St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University preserved its Turkology Department even during the years of Communism. After 1989, two pedagogical schools were opened. These schools --based in Shoumen (Northeastern Bulgaria) and Kurdzhali (Southeastern Bulgaria), in regions with dense Turkish population-- prepare the teachers in Turkish for the municipal schools.

7. COMMUNICATION AND AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA

7.1. Legal situation

The Radio and Television Act, adopted in November 1998, stated in its Art. 12 that radio and TV programs should be broadcast in the official language stipulated in the Bulgarian Constitution unless they are designed for Bulgarian citizens for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue, among other exceptions. Art. 49 states that the Bulgarian National Radio and TV create national and regional programs, programs for audiences abroad, for Bulgarians of the Diaspora, as well as for Bulgarian citizens, whose mother tongue is different from Bulgarian. These two articles allow the Turkish minority to have programs not only regionally, but also nationally. However, the law does not specify who is responsible for the regulation of the programs. Thus, most probably, either the National Council on Radio and Television (NCRT) (the monitoring body of the Bulgarian National Radio and Television) or the boards of directors of the two major media, or both will decide on the concrete dimensions of the programs in Turkish. There is no special legislation on the print media in Bulgaria (Ivanov, 1998b).

7.2. Press

The history of Turkish media in Bulgaria goes back to the Ottoman Empire. Mithat Pasha, the ruler of the old Danube Province (today's Northern Bulgaria), started up the Provincial Printing House in 1865 in the town of Rouse. The same year the *Tuna* (*Danube*) newspaper was published and existed until June 13, 1877. Rouse was again

the place chosen for the publication of the *Mecrai Efkar* (*Social Adventures*) magazine (1867) and the *Gunes/Le Soleil* (*The Sun*) newspaper, which came out in both Turkish and in French (Simsir, 1986:21-22).

Surprising as it may be, after the liberation of Bulgaria, Turkish media became even more widespread and active. This was actually the time when the Turkish population started viewing itself as an ethnic minority and tried to adapt itself to the new social-economic and cultural reality (Yalimov, 1998:6). Many new Turkish papers and magazines emerged at the time of the Bulgarian Kingdom (1908-1944). There were 26 papers in Sofia, 16 in Plovdiv, 10 in Kurdzhali, nine in Shoumen and in other Bulgarian towns, making up a total of 67 Turkish papers and 13 magazines (Simsir, 1986:22).

Between the two World Wars, there were more than 60 Turkish newspapers and magazines (Stoyanov, 1994:271). When the Bulgarian People's government was formed in 1944, the following Turkish newspapers were still in print: *Vatan* [*Fatherland*, 1945; in Turkish and in Bulgarian]; *Isik* [*Light*, 1945-1947; in Turkish]; *Yeni Isik* [*New Light*, 1948-1985; in Turkish and in Bulgarian]; *Dostluk* [*Fraternity*, 1947; in Turkish]; *Halk Gencligi* [*People's Youth*, 1948-1969; in Turkish] and the monthly *Yeni Hayat* [*New Life*; 1954-1969, in Turkish] (Simsir, 1986:22; Yalimov, 1998:55-66).

Several newspapers of the Turkish minority have come into existence since 1989. In 1991, *Isik-Svetlina* resumed publication. It used to be published under the name *Nova Svetlina*, which was apologetic of the Revivalist Process and propagated against everything ethnically Turkish and against Turkey itself. By the beginning of 1990, there were already texts in this publication that voiced the interests of the Turkish minority. In the meantime, the "Big Excursion" had taken place and the inter-ethnic conflict was exacerbated. After 1991, the newspaper distanced itself from the Revivalist Process and criticized the policy of totalitarianism during the "Big Excursion" of 1989. It paid attention to the necessity to improve inter-ethnic relations and criticized the program documents of some nationalistic parties in Bulgaria (Yalimov, 1998:37-42).

In April 1992, the *Isik-Svetlina* newspaper was further transformed into the *Gyuvén-Doverie* newspaper, which, like the previous one, was published in both Turkish and Bulgarian. The latter publication extended the coverage of cultural issues of national and regional importance. It attributed the problems of inter-ethnic relations mainly to the Revivalist Process, putting an emphasis on the good relations between ethnic Turks and Bulgarians in the past. *Gyuvén-Doverie* had smaller circulation than *Isik-Svetlina* and it ceased to publish in 1996 (Yalimov, 1998:43).

Prava i Svobodi (*Rights and Freedoms*) is the organ of the MRF. Its first publication was in February 1991. In the first months, the publication in Turkish mirrored the Bulgarian variant, but in the next issues, texts that were written only in Turkish started to appear. As an organ of the MRF, the newspaper discussed issues of political importance to the Movement such as the different election campaigns. It also gave publicity to the questions concerning the collective rights of the ethnic minority and their right to develop their own culture. It gave a lot of space to the coverage of

national folklore festivals and religious festivities. It supported Bulgaria's policy on accession to the European Union and NATO and on the improvement of relations between Bulgaria and Turkey. However, this publication did not manage to win many readers among the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. Its circulation is no more than 10,000 copies. Due to financial difficulties, the publication had to stop for a few months in 1994, as well as between April 1996 and October 1997 (Yalimov, 1998:44-45).

The children's newspaper *Filis* has been published only in Turkish since 1992. To a certain extent, it is the successor of the eponymous publication of the 1960s, which at the time was published by the youth organization of the Communist party (Yalimov, 1998:45). The newspaper was published by the Movement for Rights and Freedoms until March 1996, and it became independent afterwards. It offers science fiction, games, crossword puzzles, and jokes. It also has a column on the "knowledge of the Turkish language" (Ivanov, et al., 1998:598).

Another youth newspaper was the *Chir-Chir-Shturche*, which was published by the Gyuvén-Doverie Foundation. This publication was supportive of the education in "love for our fatherland, the Republic of Bulgaria." It also had a column on "Lessons in Turkish." Due to financial difficulties, it stopped its activities in 1996 (Ivanov, et al., 1998:598, Yalimov, 1998:46).

The *Balon (Balloon)* magazine, started in 1994, is the most important children's publication of the 1990s. Articles of ethnic Turks are published along with works of Bulgarian and world-famous authors. There are sections on literature and art, columns such as "Children Stars," "The Businessmen of Tomorrow." Scientific topics are also discussed (Yalimov, 1998:46-47). This magazine is published only in Turkish and is recommended by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education (Ivanov, 1998a).

There are two other publications dedicated to the members of the older Turkish minority: the *Zaman* and *Yumit*. Both show the religious, socio-political and cultural orientation of a religious branch of Sunni Islam in Turkey whose spiritual leader is Fertullah Giolen (Ivanov, et al., 1998:598). The *Zaman (Time)* weekly is the Bulgarian edition of the eponymous publication in Istanbul and the monthly magazine *Yumit (Hope)* is published by the Balkans Foundation, which is chaired by a Turkish citizen (Yalimov, 1998:49). *Zaman* has been published since 1992 and *Yumit*, since 1995. Currently, *Zaman* has six pages in Turkish and six in Bulgarian, while *Yumit* has eight pages in Turkish and four in Bulgarian (Yalimov, 1998:50). Both publications are the unofficial voices of a religious stream in Turkey. It expressed its social and religious viewpoints. They pay attention to socio-political developments among the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria and in Turkey, as well as to religious affairs (Yalimov, 1998:49).

7.3. Radio

There are no Turkish private radio stations in Bulgaria. No attempts have been made for the creation of such stations. The main reason is that the Turkish minority lacks finances. There are also no Turkish or international investors interested in such venture (Ivanov, 1998a).

There are broadcasts in Turkish on the national radio twice a day for half an hour. The programs are produced in Sofia and the signal is transmitted to the regional radio stations. With the new electronic media law of November 1998, it is expected that Turkish language programs on the national radio will increase, yet it is unclear how they would be shaped and by whom. The policy on that will most probably be designed either by the National Council on Radio and Television or by the leaderships of the two media, or jointly by both (Ivanov, 1998a).

7.4. Television

There are no private ethnic Turkish TV stations in Bulgaria due to the same reasons pointed out in 7.3.

7.5. Internet

There are no Internet sites of ethnic Turks from Bulgaria due to the same reasons pointed out in 7.3. However, some foreign web sites offer information and discussions on the Turks of Bulgaria:

http://arabiaradio.com/content/culture/5_98/turks17.5.98.shtml

<http://www.tsolak.u-net.com/bibl/bib4.html>

<http://www.soros.org/tajik/cenasia/0251.html>

8. CONCLUSION

Ethnic Turks have always shared the burden of life in Bulgaria with their Bulgarian compatriots. However, during the period of Communism, when Bulgarians suffered from the absence of freedom as any other nation in Eastern and Central Europe, ethnic Turks suffered additionally from being Turks and saw their religion, language and culture destroyed gradually and methodically. When their collective identity expression were prohibited, the government targeted on their individual identity in the infamous Revivalist Process. Despite all the hardships ethnic Turks had to face in Communist Bulgaria, they retained their separate identity as Turks; and after the collapse of Communism, their identity was revived quickly.

However, this revival is difficult as Turks are among the most affected by the current economic crisis in the country. Although anti-Turk sentiments in Bulgaria do not run high, there are some worrisome indications of possible ethnic tensions within the crisis-ridden society. This is why hopes are laid upon Bulgaria's political and economic performance in terms of democracy and transition to market economy. The fate of Bulgaria's minorities, including ethnic Turks, thus heavily depends upon the future prosperity of Bulgaria.

A deterioration of the economic situation in the mixed-population regions --which is quite possible in the next five to ten years-- would probably fuel separatist tendencies. It is important to point out that in the years after the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s, a new set of problems has emerged for the ethnic Turks. "The liberalizing trends initiated by the transition have given a new dimension to ethnic conflict.

Politicized ethnic identities have become instruments of contesting for political power” (Eminov, 1997:177).

Serious problems in education, politics, religion, and economy still exist. However, most Muslims are more confident about themselves and feel proud in what they are. They have reclaimed most of their cultural and political rights in a non-violent manner. The catalyst for such a peaceful change is the MRF, with its moderate approach, pragmatism, and common sense. The party emphasizes the integration of all Muslim citizens into the Bulgarian society, so that the Muslims are on an equal footing with Bulgarians.

However, one can still feel insecure and uneasy because the Bulgarian governments have used the Turks as “scapegoats” in order to further their political interests, especially when the economic condition was deteriorating. “Continued discrimination against Muslims, the presence of economic inequalities between Bulgarian Christians and Muslims, and growing government interference in the religious and educational affairs of the Muslim community necessarily force Muslims to activate their unique linguistic, ethnic, and religious support system in attempts to maintain their identity and integrity” (Eminov, 1997:178).

The evolution of Turkish separatism is more difficult to predict. It will depend on the future behavior of Turkey, on the state with bilateral relations with Bulgaria, other Balkan states, on the economic situation in the mixed-population regions in Bulgaria and on the organization of the parties representing the interests of the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria. The behavior and the possible evolution of the views of the MRF are also of great importance in this respect.

ADDRESSES

1. Cultural institutions and/or associations founded by the minority

2. Minority institutions and/or associations concerning education

3. Political parties and/or associations founded by the minority

- Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)
Chairman Ahmed Dogan
address: MRF, 45 A, Al. Stambolyiski Blvd, 1000 Sofia
tel.: (00359 2) 880261
- National Movement for Rights and Freedoms (NDPS)
Registered in February 1999
Chairman Gyuner Tahir

4. Minority media

Radio Stations

Newspapers

- *Rights and Freedoms* newspaper
Mr. Ismail Chaushev, Editor-in-Chief
address:45A, Alexander Stambolyiski St., 1000 Sofia
tel.:(00359 2) 988-52-91, 981-53-13
- *Zaman* newspaper
Mr. Salih Ildici, Editor-in-Chief
address:31, Gladstone St., 1st floor, 1000 Sofia
tel.:(00359 2) 980-17-82

Magazines

- *Yumit* magazine
Yusuf Kerim, Editor-in-Chief
tel.:(00359 2) 882 881

Television Stations

Internet Web Sites

www.online.bg/politics/who/govern/parpart/dps.htm

Publishing Houses

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