

Transformation of the Republic of Bulgaria and politicization of the society's ethnic awareness

The paper deals with politicization of ethnic awareness of the society over the period of transformational changes, what especially negatively revealed in the Balkans. Permanent, relentless conflicts, which loomed large in the region in the 90s of the previous century, occasionally emerge nowadays. However, the state despite all events which take place in the neighboring countries and complexity of internal political, social and economic situation managed to avert apparent social confrontation. The analysis of the transformational process in Bulgaria gives us reasons to conclude that the state lacks a clear program of ethnic policy development, while manifestations of nationalism were enough to commence the changes. After joining the EU and NATO situation in the country experienced a vast improvement.

Keywords: the Republic of Bulgaria, politicization of the society, transformation, political parties, coalitions, ethnic awareness, confessions.

ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ РЕСПУБЛІКИ БОЛГАРІЯ ТА ПОЛІТИЗАЦІЯ ЕТНІЧНОЇ СВІДОМОСТІ СУСПІЛЬСТВА

У статті досліджено політизацію етнічної свідомості населення в період трансформаційних змін, що особливо негативно проявилася на Балканах. Перманентні, незатухаючі конфлікти, які нуртували в регіоні впродовж 90-х рр. минулого століття, періодично виникають і нині. Але державі, незважаючи на події у сусідніх державах і складність внутрішньої політичної, соціальної та економічної ситуації, вдалось уникнути явної суспільної конфронтації. Аналіз процесу трансформації в Болгарії дає підстави для висновку, що в державі відсутня чітка програма розвитку етнічної політики, а проявів націоналізму, особливо на початку змін, було достатньо. Після вступу в ЄС та НАТО ситуація в державі суттєво покращилася.

Ключові слова: Республіка Болгарія, політизація суспільства, трансформація, політичні партії, коаліції, етнічна самосвідомість, конфесії.

Transformational processes which have been taking place in Bulgaria for over a quarter of a century greatly influenced politicization of the society. Being “stable” in its political meaning

until 1989, in the years of changes Bulgaria demonstrated absolutely different patterns of behavior. Dissatisfaction with the state of political, economic and social policy of the government made Bulgarians come out in the streets and squares with mottos, banners etc. stating their negative attitude to the policy of the government in force, and various social phenomena. Besides, enhancement of social politicization in Bulgaria was largely influenced by the growth of the society's ethnic awareness in the course of the transformational period, which was especially supported by the conflict oppositions in the Balkans. However, permanent, relentless conflicts which loomed large in the region in the 90s bypassed Bulgaria. It evidently managed to avoid apparent social confrontation, despite all events which took place in the neighboring countries and complexity of internal political, social and economic situation.

The aim of the paper is to give coverage to the dynamics of changes in the Bulgarians' ethnic awareness in the period of its transformation and prospects of its development.

Recent studies and publications. The analysis of the recent studies shows that in Ukrainian political science these problems have been studied in the works by V. Burdiak, M. Milova, I. Osadtsa and others. Significant interest has been demonstrated by the Bulgarian scientists S. Antonov, I. Miglev, M. Yelchinova, A. Zheliazkova, S. Radoslavov, Ye. Radushev, V. Stoianov. However, we believe that the problems of ethnic politicization of society have not been fully analyzed. This motivated the author to carry on the studies in the given field.

Findings and discussion. Promotion of democracy in the Republic of Bulgaria (RB) started on November 10, 1989 when the Central committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party superseded its secretary general T. Zhyvkov. New leaders did not have a clear idea of the future of the state and ways of its development. Over the course of several days in Bulgaria appeared dozens of political parties. Their leaders after emotional public speeches at the political meetings, which at that time constantly took place in the center of Sofia felt themselves national heroes. And the Bulgarian society fell into euphoria.

Over the years of transformation political pluralism found expression in activity of 200 parties, unions, movements and other organizations, which on the eve of the elections formed four-five coalitions: with the Bulgarian socialistic party (BSP), the Union of democratic forces (UDF), the Movement for Rights and Liberties (MRL), the parties "Ataka", GERB (Coalition for Bulgaria, the Union of democratic forces, the Bulgarian agrarian national union (BANU), the National movement Simeon the Second (NMSS). In fact, the political model of the Republic of Bulgaria till 2001 had been bipolar, and suffered changes with the appearance of new political forces¹.

In addition to the scheduled parliamentary elections three times in Bulgaria took place pre-term elections and all new governments declared introduction of liberal methods of management. Generalizing main political features of the development of the Republic of Bulgaria it is necessary to state the following: democracy and pluralism of political life; restoration of

¹ Burdiak V. I. Respublika Bolharia na zlami epoch: politychna transformatsiia suspilstva. Monography. Chernivtsi: Ruta, 2004. P. 219.

basic liberties of the society – freedom of speech, freedom of movement inside the country and abroad; democratization of working relations with a right for social and political protests; active, but one-vector pro-western foreign policy; dynamic changes of leaders in politics, caused by a quick pace of changes, mistakes, and even interpersonal intrigues; joining the EU and NATO and adaptation to the conditions of further development within these organizations.

Transformation included many deformations in political relations: without any critical evaluation different foreign models of management non-effective for the specific nature of the Republic of Bulgaria were introduced in the institutions and public authorities; liberalism, which was taken rather slowly and termination of significant functions of the state hardened the state of main national institutions – army, police, courts; introduction of western loyalty of public administration into the state and population affected Bulgaria and caused pathological corruption; weak financial and administrative control created conditions for an excessively high influence of the shadow economy; weakness of authority contributed to emergence of organized crime; unprincipled and amoral redistribution of property, illogical banking supervision formed another social protection of the society. Thus, the way to the final end was not easy, and included rollback and struggle.

The Republic of Bulgaria made a number of mistakes in human resourcing as well. Theoreticians, who did not have managerial experience, were nominated to high state positions. They quite well knew foreign models of democracies, but did not realize what to do with Bulgaria as an object of management and reformation. A big mistake of the period of changes was permanent confrontation of managers and opposition; the Rights' and the Lefts' views on the main political problems usually were just opposite.

In the course of the economic changes the Republic of Bulgaria also made a range of political, conceptual, principal managerial mistakes: economic reforms were excessively hot-buttoned. Reforms were developing not on the basis of correction, but on the grounds of disorder; without national strategy and organizational planning of changes in the course of the implementation; the framework of reforms was monetarism, which at that time was outdated, banking and real sectors opposed each other; interference of the international financial institutions into financial-economic activity of Bulgaria was higher, than it was prohibited by the official agreements; privatization was conducted just to form a new structure of ownership; many mistakes were made while choosing new owners – competitors from the neighboring countries, investors from off-shore zones; cooperative agricultural system was liquidated by an organizational and legal order, agricultural production was developed without subsidiaries.

Thus, from the very beginning of the transformation the Republic of Bulgaria found itself in a quite hardened situation. Along with economic and social realia of Bulgaria, significant tense was caused by ethnical problems, crippling social development of the country. To our mind, traditionally known syndrome of "Balkanism"² retains its relevance even today. Therefore,

² *Allport G. W.* The Nature of prejudice. New York: Doubleday, 1958. P. 81.

politicization of ethnical awareness in the Republic of Bulgaria during the period of transformation, formation of the state ethnic policy, its meaning for development of democracy, has a significant influence on modern political process, and without any doubts will carry impact on the future.

In addition to the Bulgarians who compose 85% of the population in the Republic of Bulgaria live representatives of other ethnic groups. Traditionally, in Bulgaria emphasis of social communication is connected not only with ethnicity but also confessionalism. Religious Bulgarians (mainly), Russians, Greeks, Romanians are Eastern Catholic Christians, while Turks, a part of Roma, Bulgarians and Tatars are Muslims. The biggest ethnical minority in the Republic of Bulgaria is a Turkish one, which worship Islam since the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans. Orthodox version of Islam or Sunnism was established in Bulgaria due to the Ottoman administration, religious activists³ and due to migration of the Turkmen from the Minor Asia, who were settled peasants and handicraft workers⁴.

Development of ethnical politics in Bulgaria is now on the third stage, which commenced after the collapse of socialism in Central Eastern Europe, when the communist theory and practice lost their value, and democracy, which changed them have not yet obtained required force and experience. Thus, in ethnical politics appeared a so-called vacuum, which is to be filled with two forces, either democracy with an internationally established human rights, or nationalism, both right and left. The main scene for manifestation of nationalism in the Republic of Bulgaria is represented by two topics: right for education in the native language and political organizations on the ethnic grounds. In both cases the political space is full of arguments, both on the side of the left and of the right. The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria prohibits formation of parties on the ethnic grounds and declares the ideas of the national unity. Article 2 states that "The Republic of Bulgaria is a unified state with local self-administration. No autonomous territorial formations are allowed"⁵.

However, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia showed how fragile can be traditional forms of co-existence in various extreme situations, as if proving S. Huntington's thesis, concerning the clash of civilizations⁶. It mattered for Bulgaria with its different ethnic, religious and language minorities. Transformation of social system in the Republic of Bulgaria aggravated the feeling of ethnic awareness of people, and therefore this period is sometimes called the time of "rebelled" ethnicity, "mobilized" ethnicity and sometimes even a period of new national restoration. That is why, attitude of the civil society in Bulgaria is closely connected with growing ethnicity, and important social processes of reformation of various spheres of life have ethnic variability. In

³ *Zheliakova A.* Mezhdunarodni tursiti i nostalgijata: Bylgarskite turtisi v Turtsiia / Syst. A. Zheliakova. Sofia: Mezhdunarodny tsentr po problemite na maltsinstvata i kulturniata vzaimodeistviia, 1998. P. 7.

⁴ *Radushev Ye.* Demograficheski i etnoreliiozni protsesy v Zapadnite Rodopi prez XV-XVIII (Opyt za preosmysliane na ustoiichivi istoriohraficheski modeli) // *Istoricheskoe bdeshe*. 1998. № 1. P. 61.

⁵ *Konstitutsiia na Respublika Bylharii.* Prieta ot Velikoto narodno sybranie 12 yuli 1991 Sophia: Nova zvezda, 2002. P. 3.

⁶ *Huntington S.P.* After Twenty Years: The Future of the Third Wave // *Journal of Democracy*. 1997. Vol. 8. № 4 (October). P. 9-10.

the Republic of Bulgaria ethnicity often takes declarative, manifested forms, becoming a mobilizing factor for acquiring dignity, collective strive for advantages on the political arena and determines social behavior of the society.

In 1965-1985 a rapid growth of population (from 8.2 to 8.9 mln.) was registered in Bulgaria, while to 2002 it reduced by 11% in comparison with 1985. In its ethnic composition the majority belongs to the Bulgarians (almost 84%). Among other ethnic groups are the Turks (9.5%), the Roma (4.6%). According to the data of the 2001 population census for 84.5% the Bulgarian language is native, for 9.6% it is the Turkish language and for 4% – the Gipsy language.⁷

As the Turks makes the biggest ethnic group, than the question of the minority status is traditionally connected with the rights and liberties of the Turks. The notion ethnic Turks is precedent-setting in scientific relation both in Bulgaria and Turkey⁸. In 1992 the number of the Bulgarian Turks (for whom the Turkish language is native) was 800 052 or 9,43% of the population in the state. But not all agree with this statistics and consider that at that time there were not more than 500 000 – 600 000 “real” Turks, while the rest 800 000 were “supplemented” by Roma and Bulgarian-Muslims, who were registered as the Turks. However, certain circles in Turkey speculate on the exaggerated data as to the Turks in the Republic of Bulgaria. In 1994 a deputy of Majlis and a member of the Party of national activity S. Shakhin stated that in the Republic Bulgaria lived 3 mln Turks, including pomaks (people from intermarriages between the Bulgarians and Muslims), Turkish-speaking Roma⁹, and later the Movement for Rights and Liberties (the party of ethnic Turks) insisted on this statistics in its election programme.

From the ethnic-linguistic perspective the Turks are close to the Bulgarian Tatars¹⁰, who preserved their identity and formed a modern group of Tatars in the Republic of Bulgaria. Some citizens identified themselves as the Turks and immigrated to Turkey in 1989. In 1992 4 515 (0.05%) of them registered in Bulgaria, though they believe that there are 20 000 of them here. A half lives in cities, the rest in villages in the north-eastern part of Bulgaria. The Tatars in general are Muslim-Sunnites, though they identify themselves as more moderate than the Turks in question of religion. In the language context they assimilate with the Turks and this makes revival of their identity even more complicated¹¹.

The Roma-Muslim community largely exceeds the Tatars one in the Republic of Bulgaria. Thus, in accordance with the Turkish estimations they compose almost 75% of the Roma population, according to the other estimation it is 40% from all Bulgarian Roma. In 1992 313 396 (3.69%) identified themselves as the Roma, while unofficially there are 500 000 – 800 000 Roma in Bulgaria. The majority of them are Christians, and this supports the thought that the Roma

⁷ *Naselenie Bolharii*. Perepis 2001 hoda. URL: <http://www.worcount.com/1/centrevropa.files/naselbolgar.htm>

⁸ *Stoianov V.* Turskoto naselenie v Bylharia mezhdru poliisite na etnicheska politika: Bulgaro-Turcica 2. Sophia: Publ. House Lik, 1998. P. 14.

⁹ *Tri miliona turtsii prebroi u nas deputat Medzhblisa* // Trud. 1994. 21 yanuari.

¹⁰ *Antonov S., Miblev I.* Tatarsi // Obshnosti i identichnosti v Bylharia. Sophia, 1998. P. 356.

¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 360.

adopt a religion point of view of the majority in the country they inhabit and changing their place of residence they change religion: “In Christian lands they are Christians, in Muslim lands they are Mohammedans, and among Protestants they will be Protestants¹². The same specificity characterizes them in the Republic of Bulgaria, what explains the reduction of number of Muslims among the Roma ethnos. Therefore, the Muslim society is not homogeneous, does not have common language, self-awareness and includes various ethnic groups – the Turks, Tatars, Pomaks, Roma, Gagauzes etc.

For ethnic groups existence several factors are of great importance: origin – objective historical feature; cultural peculiarities, including language and religion; ethnic self-awareness, represented in ethnic name. The category of ethnic self-awareness is determined in different ways¹³. It makes the research more complicated, as every time it is necessary to correlate methodological principles, which allow studying regularities of social development of an ethnic group and personality. Each ethnos of the Republic of Bulgaria has ethnic self-awareness, mentality, which often cause tension in social communication, complicate transition to democracy. The Bulgarian Orthodox Christians are more externally open, frank, categorical and objective in communication. Besides, the peculiarities of the national character and sense of being a part of the dominating majority are put not in the last place by the Bulgarians, as well as the essential characteristics of a person as a bearer of these peculiarities¹⁴.

Development of Islam in Bulgaria after 1989 is connected with empowerment of minorities, what concerns all Muslims, despite their division in Sunnites, Shiites, Turks, Tatars, Roma or Pomaks. Nowadays, it is difficult to imagine the state of the Turks and Muslims at the end of Zhyvkov’s ruling, when the attempts to assimilate them under pressure led to the fact that almost 320 000 Muslims (later were provided numbers of 330 000, 350 000 and even 360 000) who were expelled from the country “during the process of revival” escaped to Turkey in 1989. The difference matters, but the thing is not only in that, but more than 1 mln people were forcibly deprived of basic human rights – communication in native language, support and development of traditional culture, own names, rights to manifest themselves and the way how they felt.

After the change of the regime a new government fostered all efforts on settlement of the causes and consequences of the failure of the assimilation policy. However, even the first attempts caused fierce ethnic tension. The Bulgarians took action in public meetings with nationalistic slogans: “Bulgaria for Bulgarians!”, “No to Turks in the parliament!”. The Turks’ mottoes were not better¹⁵. In some regions extremists desecrated Muslim building and even exploded

¹² *Marushyakova Ye.* Tsihanite v Bylharii i tiakhnata relihiia // *Aspekty ne etnokulturnata situatsia v Bylharii*. Sophia: TsID, 1992. P. 112.

¹³ *Drobyszheva L. M.* Natsionalizm, etnicheskoie samosoznaniie i konflikty v transformiruiushchemsi obshchestve // *Natsionalnoe samosoznaniia i natsionalizm v Rossiiskoi Federatsii nachala 90 hodov*. Moscow, 1994. Pp. 30-31.

¹⁴ *Yelchinova M.* Modelirane na etnichnaia obraz v situatsia na perekhod // *Perekhodyt v Bylharii prez pohleda na sotsialnite nauki*. Sophia, 1997. P.163.

¹⁵ *Tri miliona turtsii prebroi u nas deputat Medzhlisa* // *Trud*. 1994. 21 yanuari.

Jamis (mosques)¹⁶. In response to these actions Muslims started to demand autonomy, arm themselves and form military groups.

In the early 90s scientists accentuated on severe tension in ethnic policy of the Republic of Bulgaria: growth of ethnic self-awareness of the Turkish population in the state; irrepressible Bulgarian nationalism, which was connected with it and disguised as a reaction to the Turkish national awareness; attempts, as it was before, to neutralize conflict potential through the policy of maneuvering and retreat by both sides¹⁷.

In fact, the government had to pursue the policy of maneuvering. Similar actions were conducted by the Turks. Political representatives of minorities managed to mute differences, keep ethnic peace and order within the state and gradually revive rights and liberties of the minority. Any step in this direction caused heated debates in political circles either in connection with return of Turkish-Arabian names and the right to study the Turkish language in the educational institutions or in connection with the MRL and its constitutional legitimacy. Gradually, in the Republic of Bulgaria people started deeply realizing the complexity of the situation, understand the needs of "other" co-citizens, less react to different pseudo-patriotic appeals of certain circles. The society "matured" too painfully and durably, but there was no sense to expect something else, as changes in mental consciousness occur rather slowly, not taking into account the fact that the process was fueled by live Balkan nationalism, which violently took place in the neighboring countries.

Resurgence of the minority's rights started with restoration of Muslim names. This is the most important act, as ethnicity is most vividly expressed (and under different changes is the easiest subject to be blurred) in three moments of social and personal identification – name, marriage and funeral. A person's name relates it with the family, kin, ancestors, and consequently with the history, memories of the place of birth, community they were leaving in. A change of Turkish-Arabian names into Bulgarian ones, which was conducted by T. Zhyvkov's government over 1980-1985 caused anger and indignation among the Turks, led to protests, overt action against the government, bloodshed, as this fact, deprived people of kin and religious affiliation as well as cultural identity¹⁸. A name is a foundation of a person's identification, but special significance it acquires in life and views of Islamic people. Being deprived of their name people of faith "after their death cannot stand before Allah, who calls people by name to judge them for their living and take the righteous to heaven"¹⁹. But there were other facts that required return of the names. In a secularized society names are visible indices of the Turks identity, thus their

¹⁶ *Tri bona v zeleno dariava na madanskata dzhamia bratty na Yozal* // Trud. 1993. 1 sept.

¹⁷ *Höpken W.* Türken und Pomaken in Bulgarien // SOEM. 1992. № 32. S. 144.

¹⁸ *Stojanov V.* Ausgrenzung und Integregation: Die bulgarischen Türken nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg // Österreichische Osthefte. 1997. H.2. № 39. P.203.

¹⁹ *Zbeliazkovo A.* Turtsii // Obshchnosti i identichnosti v Bylharii. Sophia, 1998. P. 390.

change was interpreted as a rough interference in the personal world and an awful attempt to eliminate family affiliation.

In the Republic of Bulgaria it was difficult to solve the problem of the native language in the educational establishments and army; of establish Islam religious seminaries, institutes, specialization of Turkish Studies in the Center of Eastern Languages and Cultures; of preparation Muslim clergy, upbringing the younger generation on the basis of fundamental moral values of the world religion as an inseparable part of their traditional culture. In 1990 the Islamic institute under the Grand Mufti, four religious seminaries, which are funded by various Arab and Turkish funds were established.

Appearance of Turkish-speaking publications was a positive step in revival of the minority, but in the Republic of Bulgaria almost no books are published in Turkish, except the language books. Not many books are in specialized reading halls in the district of mixed residence of Bulgarians and Turks. There are no Turkish-speaking programs in on-line media either. It makes the Bulgarian Turks install their TV sets and radios on Turkey and broadcast their programs. Indifference of the state institutions of the former (socialistic) regime towards minorities' culture and fall in control over preservation of their values can explain the cases of destruction of literature in Turkish villages and theft of unique Islamic relics with the aim to sell them abroad. Nowadays, development of ethnic groups' culture in the Republic of Bulgaria is the very minorities' concern without limitation, however without any assistance from the state. It makes the Turkish Movement for Rights and Liberties turn for help to Turkey and the latter provides it.

The MRL used a Constitutional right to organize unions. In 1992 in Shumen was registered a Union of the Turkish Language and Culture, which contributes to development of minorities and encourages studies of dialects, folklore, traditions and ethnography of the Turkish population in the Republic of Bulgaria. Such unions also function in other regions. In 1993 the union in Kardzhali held the first special event of local Turkish folklore joining together 18 groups, including guests from Turkey. In 1995 in Stambolovo took place the first festival of Turkish folklore, where participated 14 groups from different regions of Bulgaria. It positively influences cultural life of minorities and social-political process in general. National festival in Haskovo coincided in time with local elections and the literary evening "Dumka" (Thought) held on the eve of the students' festival in Shumen in 1995 was recognized a first step to creation of the MRL youth organization²⁰.

Minorities' rights are best displayed in the sphere of religion, though even here there are some contradictions, caused by the desire of government to establish political control over their activity. Muslims support charitable funds and unions, in particular provide financial aid. The Bulgarian national fund for Islamic culture development established by N. Gendjev and Saudi Arab-funded supports private school in village Glodjevo, assists in building temples, publishing Islamic literature, sends products and medicines to Muslims in Macedonia and Albania. In

²⁰ *Syzdava akademichna struktura // Trud. 1992. 19 yuni.*

1993 a group of foreigners tried to establish a charitable General Islamic Union in the Republic of Bulgaria, but did not provide addresses of the members, and that was the reason for further refusal from Sofia's city prosecutor's office²¹. At that time was founded the fund Hair in Plovdiv, aimed at training personnel upon the special program of Marshall's fund from the USA. After graduation alumni were to take roots in the political system of the Republic of Bulgaria and deal with Muslims' problems. The chairman of the fund S. Merdjan, who came to the Party for democratic changes from the MRL and M. Hodji expected for the state support. Not having received it they accused the government, president's adviser in ethnical minorities' issues M. Ivanov and the head of the international center for minorities' problems and cultural cooperation A. Zheliazkova of spending in their own discretion money received from the embassies to solve ethnic issues in Bulgaria. In 1994 Muslims schools in Shumen and Ruse were funded by the Saudi Arabian fund Al-Uakfal-Islam from the Netherlands. It had references from Grand Mufti F. Sali, but the fund was not registered, as such organization was not found in the Netherlands²². And such examples are numerous.

A split among Muslims causes tension in the Republic of Bulgaria, affects students in religious seminaries, regularity of salary payment for teachers and religious workers, but does not break an everyday ritual of worshippers. According to the 2016 sociological surveys the most religious community in the Republic of Bulgaria is Muslims. The number of religious people is twice of that among Christians. Muslims accurately and certainly adhere to the religious rites. Every third Pomak or Turk (34% and 33% correspondingly) from the groups of worshippers state that they offer up 5 compulsory prayers to Allah every day. To the question "Do you believe in God?" positively answered 73% of surveyed Turks, 66% of Bulgarian Muslims and 59% of Roma against 37% of Bulgarian Christians²³. Thus, it is a fact that the Muslim community has a great need in support for religion tradition, and it explains such an intensive construction of cult buildings in the Republic of Bulgaria after 1989.

Construction of new temples and reconstruction of old ones is the matter of worshippers, but they are supported by foreign funds. Thus, in 1993 in Razgrad was established a fund of Makbul Ibrahim Pasha Jami with the aim to renovate great Jami. The fund searched for sponsors in the Arabian world and the World Islamic Bank gave \$1 mln for restoration Muslim temples in the Republic of Bulgaria, including Shumen Tombul-Jami and Razgrad Jami Ibrahim Pasha, transferred \$25 mln for construction of the biggest Jami in the Rhodope in Madan and sent \$4 mln for the backwards regions of the Republic Bulgaria, and 500 000 of it for Madan region²⁴.

Such displays of charity concern Bulgaria, as the majority of citizens have a negative attitude towards construction of Jamis due to a potential threat for the state. In the parliament deputy

²¹ *Islamski syiu iska registratsiia u nas // Trud. 1993. 18 dekemvri.*

²² *Petima daskali ot Turtsiia idvat v Shumen // Trud. 1994. 8 septemvri.*

²³ *Bylharite khristiiane SA po-malko relihiozni ot miusulmanite // 24 chasa. 2016. 9 septemvri.*

²⁴ *Petima daskali ot Turtsiia idvat v Shumen // Trud. 1994. 8 septemvri.*

B. Sarev stated that in the Rhodope minarets are higher than trees. Self-withdrawal of the state from the process of regeneration of minorities' culture, education, construction of religious buildings etc. releases it from a number of liabilities, but creates conditions for uncontrollable penetration of potentially threatening influence into the Republic of Bulgaria, including representatives of Islamic cults and fundamentalists from Pakistan, Iran, Algeria, Syria or Egypt²⁵.

Therefore, transformation in the Republic of Bulgaria largely politicized ethnic awareness, putting demonstrative return of all important peculiarities of ethnic affiliation at the first place. The Turks renewed their names, worship, wear national clothes. The Pomaks stuck in the problems of their identity as some identify themselves as Bulgarians, while others – as Turks, and the feature of this affiliation is renewal of old names or preservation of new ones. The Bulgarians are vividly interested in their rituals and restore them. In fact, changes lead to restoration of equilibrium, which runs around the "friend or foe" division and is of high priority among the elders. Young people do not possess traits of tolerance to local people with a mixed composition and it is quite difficult for them to overcome interethnic tension. Though, homogenization of totalitarianism is perceived by the Bulgarians as unification, it led to negative due to a natural need in ethnic separation, traditions and ethnic communication.

The analysis of the process of politicization in Bulgaria shows that in the 90s the state lacks a clear program of ethnic policy development, while manifestations of nationalism were more than enough. The Constitution is evidence as according to it the Republic of Bulgaria is a single-national state. The situation changed for the better when Bulgaria joined the European Union. Trying to meet all the requirements of the EU, Bulgaria significantly improved conditions for ethnic minorities' development. Being an EU member Bulgaria is in an effort to fully adhere to the rights and liberties of the citizens. It is difficult to be done, as the main problem, like in other CEE countries, is produced by the Rome ethnic minority. However, they rather create not political, but social problems for the Bulgarian society.

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²⁵ *Satovchanskiiat raion se prevyima v Meka za emisari* // *Trud*. 1994. 30 april.

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