The Making of a Nation in the Balkans

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Historiography of the Bulgarian Revival

by

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CEU PRESS
Central European University Press
Budapest New York

Published in 2004 by

Central European University Press
An imprint of the
Central European University Share Company
Nádor utca 11, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000
Fax: +36-1-327-3183
E-mail: ceupress@ceu.hu
Website: www.ceupress.com

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ISBN 963 9241 83 0 cloth

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Daskalov, Roumen.
The making of a nation in the Balkans: Bulgaria, from history to historiography / by Roumen Daskalov.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 9639241830 (hbk.)
1. Bulgaria–History–1762-1878–Historiography. 2. Nationalism–Bulgaria–History–19th century. I. Title: Bulgaria, from history to historiography. II. Title.

DR83.D37 2004
949.9'015–dc22
2004000869

Printed in Hungary by
Akaprint Nyomda

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Preface

A few paragraphs to explain the motivation behind this work would seem to me appropriate. Generally speaking, the book contains a presentation and critical consideration of the ideas of historians on the major problems, processes, events, and personalities of the era of the Bulgarian (national) Revival. I trace how the Bulgarian Revival was viewed by historical scholarship, and how notions and representations have changed over time. In so far as historical scholarship is meant to reveal, and so help towards an understanding of, historical events, a representation of the movement of ideas and of the debates on various problems inevitably has a bearing on the past itself. The epoch is "contained" in the attempts to conceptualize, represent, and make sense of it. The various notions and narratives are mutually complementary or mutually corrective, and even entirely wrong ideas have some (negative) usefulness in showing what the Revival was not. The "truths" of the Bulgarian Revival can be glimpsed through the conflicting ideas about it, and through their evolution. My own views and opinions, where not stated directly, may be inferred from the manner in which the various authors' views and the polemic surrounding them are introduced and represented, and from certain general reflections, etc.

The Revival is often approached—and understood—by way of comparison with other regions, epochs, ideological trends, or events. The various analogies and more elaborate comparisons employed in making sense of the Bulgarian Revival are based on phenomena (and mental constructs) from two major areas that were, in fact, the source of the actual influences: Western Europe ("Renaissance," "Reformation," "Enlightenment," "Romanticism," the French Revolution, national liberation movements, and capitalism) and Russia (the "agrarian question," "populism" and "utopian socialism," "revolutionary democratism," and the Russian revolution of 1905. These analogies or parallels between developments in Bul-

garia and other historical phenomena may be revealing, but, as we shall see, they may also be misleading.

In realizing my initial intention, I was also led in other directions. To begin with, it was fascinating to trace connections between the ideas of historians, on the one hand, and the social context and political power on the other. This revealed how historical facts about the Revival were instrumentalized for ideological purposes, such as the fostering of national and state loyalties through the reproduction of identities and their reinforcement by an image of the enemy, or for directly political purposes, such as the legitimating or contesting of a current political regime under the guise of disputes over historical legacy. Bulgarian historical scholarship, including that which passes for "serious" or "scientific," offers plenty of material of this kind, accumulated in successive epochs of ideological mobilization under the banners of nationalism, right-wing authoritarianism (shading into Fascism), and Communism. In fact, it is difficult to draw the line between professional historical scholarship, as represented by many scholars, and the more popular versions of historical writing, where the biases stand out more graphically. Still, I hope that the present work is not dominated by ideologo-critical negativity but rather by the hermeneutic effort to understand how the Bulgarian Revival has been conceived of and imagined, and by the keeping of a certain distance from the various views presented—whether critical, ironic, or simply that inherent in the presentation of another person's view. In this respect I have been greatly inspired by François Furet's book on the French Revolution.

Particular attention is paid to the way that the Bulgarian Revival has been narrated, with respect to selectivity, the principal meanings, protagonists and plots, continuities and breaks. Without presenting a radical deconstruction of the grand narrative of the Bulgarian Revival, or, to be more precise, of the two grand narratives under the banners of nationalism and of Marxism, the present work sets in relief some of their mechanisms, logic, fictions, etc., and thus to some extent relativizes them. The very demonstration of the "movement of ideas" in historical scholarship, through theses and their revisions, has a sobering and humbling impact. This is due not least to the fact that it demonstrates the indelible impact of standpoints, values, and theoretical frameworks. (According to some postmodern historians, theoretical reasoning itself proceeds by way of likening in the generation of "true knowledge.")

Finally, and somewhat in the spirit of the "history of concepts" (*Begriffsgeschichte*), I briefly address such issues as the semiotic reworking of the

historical happening into a "Revival epoch," the participation of phenomenological (life-world) experiences and the role of secondary reconstruction in this process, and the specific temporality of this epoch and its delimitation from (and contrast with) what preceded and succeeded it, etc.

It should be added that the Bulgarian Revival has been a privileged period within Bulgarian historical scholarship. Enormous interest has been shown towards it, and understandably so, as an epoch of national formation (in which the national foundation myth is embedded), as the beginnings of modern Bulgarian development, and, as such, as having a crucial impact on the subsequent history of the country. Various views have been set forth over the years and a number of comparatively free debates and discussions were held even during Communist times. One might say that the specific intensity and sharpness of the debates on the Revival reveal them as an indirect expression of a (dissident) stand on actuality and reflect the absence of free political life under Communism that made the past into an arena of *Ersatz* politics.

A venture of the kind undertaken here is quite novel for Bulgarian historical scholarship and entirely absent in the sparse foreign writing on the Bulgarian Revival. The (historiographical) systematization and stocktaking carried out by scholarship on the Revival epoch so far has dealt mostly with particular issues with limited goals, and it has been less critical as to fundamentals. For that reason I hope that this work will arouse the interest of many students of modern Bulgarian history, and, beyond that, of those involved in national (and nationalist) historical scholarship more generally. In a way, my effort is inscribed within the post-Communist rethinking of history and historical scholarship, but hardly as straightforward and negative revisionism.

Given the immense number of historical monographs, studies, papers, and general courses on the Bulgarian Revival, omissions and gaps—even important ones—are almost inevitable here. But in pursuing the kind of conceptual review of historical writing (or "conceptual historiography") that I have in mind, exhaustiveness is less important than establishing conceptual continuities and changes. However, even here there may be lacunae, and some ideas may not be traced to the source.

A comment should be made regarding the considerable imbalance in favor of views that go under the banner of Marxism, or, in fact, of certain Marxist vulgates (Leninist, Stalinist, Chervenkov-Todor Pavlovist) and of their subsequent implicit or explicit revisions by nominally Marxist authors. This results from the fact that the field of the Bulgarian Revival

was most intensively cultivated during the state socialist period, which saw a characteristic increase in the number of "scholarly workers" (historians), many of whom took refuge in the Revival period from the even more ideologized more recent history, and some of whom used the opportunity to smuggle in dissident views of their own. More substantially, as we shall see, some of the fundamental thoughts on the Bulgarian Revival then established have been preserved in some guise until today, after "overcoming" so much.

A note is needed in order to justify my returning to a given problem (or a certain author) in a different context and from a different perspective. The necessity for this comes from the thematic method of presentation, where the same thing recurs in various contexts, for example, the bourgeoisie as social class, in connection with capitalism, as bearer of certain political ideas, as leader of a bourgeois revolution, etc. Thus apparent repetitions are not in fact repetitions.

Finally, a word of thanks to the Humboldt Foundation and the Central European University for their generous support in the carrying out of this research. My thanks go also to Rachel Hideg for the careful copy-editing of the manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

From Metaphor toward Historical Epoch

The Bulgarian Revival[1] is commonly understood as an epoch in Bulgarian history comprising the last century or so of Ottoman rule, which ended in 1878. Its interpretation as a process of the formation of the Bulgarian nation—or, in contemporary parlance, its revival, awakening, coming to its senses, being brought back to life, resurrection, etc.—began while the Revival was still under way (not, admittedly, from its outset, but in its final phase). This self-consciousness can be explained by the reflexive and ideational (or ideological) character of the process by which a group of people becomes aware of itself as separate and different from others, and begins to mobilize itself in the struggle for national recognition.

The term "revival" (*vŭzrazhdane*), which literally means "rebirth," and the related terms, were first employed metaphorically to designate the sudden and profound change experienced by the Bulgarian people, much like a magical return to life (after having been asleep or dead). At the same time, the Revival was thought of as a process with a certain duration, which led the Bulgarians to a state of being "awake," "returned to its senses," "alive again," etc. The conception of it as a historical epoch is potentially present here. In describing what was going on around them, observers of and activists in the unfolding processes in the 1860s and 1870s were actually writing "history of the present," and were imbued with a sense of its historical significance. The meanings of this experience were still open to the surrounding world with its shifting horizons, since the process was not complete. But observers already had a certain "historical" perspective at their disposal. Especially in the 1860s, when the struggle for an independent Bulgarian Church was entering its crucial phase, and with the establishment of a Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 (which in practice meant the recognition of the Bulgarian nationality), one could look back to the beginnings of the process and trace its turns. The first historians of the Bul-

garian Revival to be regarded by later scholars as their "predecessors" were thus involved in its "making."

The initial elaboration of the Bulgarian Revival into a historical epoch is signaled by attempts to define its chronological boundaries and to pay tribute to its first leading personalities. Vasil Aprilov (in 1842), Georgi Rakovski (in 1860), and Marko Balabanov (in 1870) all dated back the beginning of a Bulgarian revival to 1826, with the reforms in the Ottoman Empire initiated by Mahmud II and continued by his son Abdul-Mecid. In their view, the Revival was signaled by the literary activities of Vasil Aprilov, Neofit Rilski, and the Ukrainian scholar Yuri Venelin.[2] In his influential article in the *Periodical Journal* of the Bulgarian Literary Society (1871), Marin Drinov, regarded as the first professional Bulgarian historian, moved back the initial date to the middle of the eighteenth century (with Paisii Hilendarski as the first "awakener"), and this view became widely accepted.[3] The two principal trends of the Bulgarian Revival—the scholarly-educational (connected with Vasil Aprilov, who lived in emigration in Russia) and the revolutionary (initiated by Georgi Rakovski in emigration in Serbia and Romania)—are mentioned in the foreword to the first issue of a newspaper characteristically named *Revival* (in 1876).[4] One can observe how a spontaneous interpretation of the process by its participants was being gradually shaped into an awareness of a historical "epoch" in Bulgarian development. It is worth noting that the national process gave the epoch its name. The term "revival" (*vŭzrazhdane*—"rebirth") imposed itself as a technical term in competition with "awakening" (*probuzhdane*) and Dinov's "resurrection" (*vŭzkresenie*).

The Revival remained part of the biography and memories of several generations, as something experienced personally. The liberation that followed the Russo-Turkish war in 1877–78 does not present a boundary in this respect, since many activists of the epoch lived long afterwards and some wrote memoirs and historical works late in their lives. Soon after the liberation there began an urgent gathering and publication of materials about the preceding epoch from personal archives—letters, notes, proclamations, projects, telegrams, etc., which were usually introduced as "materials from the Revival."[5] The writing of memoirs continued until after World War I.[6] Such efforts were motivated by the idea that the deeds of the past must be rescued for future generations, and for history. They were regarded as "building blocks" (*gradiva*), the very word attesting to the fact that the authors imagined their contribution as something to be used in erecting an entire edifice.

The memoirs are narrated from the standpoint of the author and they are typically local and loosely structured, containing gaps in time and often relating trifling everyday events. Generalizations are rare, and at best they add details to the struggle for a modern educational system or an independent church. But it is exactly because of these peculiarities that the memoirs present a specific picture of the years under Ottoman domination, quite at odds with the grand national narrative constructed by professional historians. They abound in colorful descriptions of places and persons, and of events with local significance. They are low-pitched in tone, and the actors act mainly out of pragmatic motives rather than being driven by great ideals. As to language and style, theirs is a concrete and particularistic language, replete with words from the material sphere (and Turkish words) as opposed to the abstract terms and general assertions of the professional historical narrative. Only here and there do the memoirs refer to the central meaning of the grand narrative, then known as the "people's affairs" or "Bulgarian affairs."

The Bulgarian historians of the Revival generally play down the value of the memoirs as historical evidence by pointing to the gaps and errors that result from memory failure or attempts at self-justification. While this may be true, the often condescending attitude towards the memoirs conceals something more important. The point is that they actually subvert the grand ("high") historical narrative of the nation, which is unitary, coherent, teleological and emotionally tense. In reading the "debasing" testimonies of the times, one becomes aware of the all too active role played by the historian in constructing a historical narrative with a supra-local (national) meaning, and in making generalizations in terms of factors, forces, processes, tendencies, etc. With their localism, particularism, disparateness, pragmatic lowering and personalism, the memoirs generate skepticism toward the encompassing narrative with its generalizations, continuities, and the ascription of attitudes or actions to collective protagonists such as "the people," "the nation," or a certain class.

The "genre" of local histories, most often of a town and its surroundings, should also be mentioned in this context. These were written, in most cases, by local amateur historians who sympathized with all things local and did research using various materials: personal, community, and parish archives, oral testimonies, and sometimes personal recollections. In fact, some do conform to the highest scholarly standards of exactness. The intriguing thing about them is the comparatively rare mention of the term "revival," which occurs mostly when speaking of certain personalities who

made contributions toward it; normally they prefer to date events as happening "before" or "after" liberation, "under the Turks," etc. One can infer from this that revival is not meant in a comprehensive epochal sense but in the sense of particular aspects and processes, especially educational and church struggles, situated within a broader profane, that is, nationally non-accentuated, time. This can be contrasted with works of professional historical scholarship, in which the Revival spans all aspects of life and imbues them with its meanings. One can also note, in relation to the previous point, the existence in the local histories of breaks and displacements between the local and the national, with little "communica-tion" between them.[7] No encompassing narrative is developed to bridge them and raise the local to the level of the national.

Some works about the Revival written shortly after the liberation belong to a peculiar hybrid "genre" between memoir, historical scholarship, journalism, and historical fiction. The broadness and significance of the events depicted, the presence of general reflections, and the retreating of the personality of the narrator to the background impart such writings with a scholarly quality even when they are based primarily on personal experience, memories, and imaginative writing. On the other hand, they are strongly rhetorical and strive to impart to the readers the opinions and biases of the author. The most powerful work of this type is Zakhari Stoyanov's *Notes on the Bulgarian uprisings* (published between 1884 and 1892).[8] Similar, though of less artistic value in spite of its perhaps more solid historical qualities, is Stoyan Zaimov's *The Past* (1884–1888).[9] Both authors were among the organizers of the April uprising of 1876, and their works focus on the revolutionary struggles of the receding past with the clear objective of glorifying and immortalizing the revolutionaries. Zakhari Stoyanov, especially, points out in the introduction to his famous *Notes* (and in the introductions to his biographies of Levski and Botev) that he was guided by the purpose of showing that "we Bulgarians," too, have heroes, who would do credit to any nation.[10] These honest, pure, and ideal heroes are contrasted with the times after independence, when disinterested patriotism gave way to job hunting and the all-engrossing pursuit of things material.[11] One can see the elaboration of national heroes at work, as well as the accumulation of a symbolic capital of heroism. The heroes and heroism thus extolled would subsequently be used to various purposes—nationally affirmative and state-building, or subversive and revolutionary.[12]

The establishment of a cult of heroes and of the entire Revival epoch was helped enormously by the great Bulgarian national poet and novelist

Ivan Vazov, and especially by his collection of poems *The Epic of the Forgotten* (1884) and the novel *Under the Yoke* (1894).[13] Vazov became a true "ideologue of the nation," as the title of a recent book about him puts it. As pointed out by the author, he selected a glorious, heroic image of the past and projected it onto the collective consciousness in such a powerful way that it came to be accepted as the "sacred truth" by future generations. In various ways he imparted the impression of authenticity and historical truth to his works of fiction and blurred the boundary between poetry and history. All in all, Vazov succeeded in creating a positive self-portrait of the nation, a reassuring one with which the individual could readily identify.[14] He also made an enormous, though non-avowed (coming from fiction, as it does), impact upon the scholarship of the Revival. Together with Zakhari Stoyanov, he sanctified the epoch and its personalities and inspired a strongly emotional, truly pious attitude that excluded a distanced, many-sided, and critical treatment, that is, a scholarly approach. Both authors promoted a vision of Bulgarian history in black and white, consisting of treason or heroism (or martyrdom), that goes together with strong partisanship for one's own "kin" and hatred towards one's enemies.

In parallel to the memoirs and historical fiction, there began the systematic treatment of the Revival epoch by the nascent historical and literary scholarship.[15] The first professional historians actually spanned the times before and after the liberation. With the passing of time, the Revival receded from actuality and from the memory of the living, and the perspective changed. Attitudes toward the past could now be more neutral and theoretically distanced. Not possessing a personal experience of the epoch, later historical scholarship reconstructed it entirely from documents and earlier testimonies.

Three main points of concentration of scholarly interest in the Revival may be distinguished thematically, corresponding to the major public movements of the epoch. The key words are church, that is, research on the struggle for an independent Bulgarian Church; culture, that is, research on education, literature, the printing press, art, etc.; and revolution, that is, interest in national revolutionaries and their organizations, conspiracies, and revolts. To these, one should add specialized works on the economy.[16] There was also the great interest in the Bulgarian compatriots in Macedonia, most of which was lost in the wars.[17] There follows a brief and simplified outline of the dynamics of the scholarly field.

The first "strictly" scholarly work—Todor Burmov's *The Bulgarian–Greek Church Controversy* (1885)—is dedicated to church struggles to estab-

lish a national church separate from the Greek patriarchy in Constantinople (Istanbul), which were, for a long time, the driving force of the national efforts.[18] During the interwar period the church movement was researched by Petur Nikov, who considered it to be the most important part of the Revival, being, in effect, a movement for the recognition of the Bulgarian nationality.[19] Ivan Snegarov is another well-known historian from the same period, whose research centered on the evolution of the Bulgarian Church from the Middle Ages to Modernity.[20]

For a long time, under the Communist regime, the church's struggles were eclipsed as the center of interest shifted to the more heroic revolution. The neglect and underestimation of the church movement and of its activists reached such a degree that their vindication in the 1970s by the literary historian and critic Toncho Zhechev, in a widely read and much talked about book, made the impression of revisionism and even of dissidence.[21] In a detailed study of the church movement before the Crimean War (1853–1856) the historian Zina Markova legitimized it as a valid manifestation and a necessary stage of the liberation (and bourgeois-democratic) struggle.[22] The author further developed her breakthrough in a monumental book on the Bulgarian Exarchate between 1870 and 1879, in which she vindicated the legal "evolutionist" national efforts in general.[23] Soon after 1989, Iliya Todev coined the neologism "church nation," in recognition of the formative role of the church struggles in building up the Bulgarian nation.[24]

The revolutionary struggles also became an object of scholarly inquiry at an early date. Alongside the semi-scholarly, semi-journalistic works mentioned, there appeared heroized biographies of national revolutionaries. Dimitur Strashimirov is the first great historian of the revolutionary struggles, with his monumental work on the April uprising of 1876 (published in 1907).[25] Several Communist historian-ideologues (Georgi Bakalov, Mikhail Dimitrov, Ivan Klincharov, etc.) wrote about the great revolutionaries of the Revival during the interwar period. In a more academic vein, historical research on the national revolution was conducted by Aleksandŭr Burmov, whose first work, "The Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee," appeared in 1943.[26] Under Communism there followed a profusion of works on revolutionary organizations, activists, and ideas. A numerous group of researchers studied the revolutionary movement and its ideology, which became the privileged (and strongly encouraged) topic of the regime.[27]

The cultural history of the Revival was the province of the highly re-

spected Bulgarian "bourgeois" scholarship, represented by literary historians such as Ivan Shishmanov and Boyan Penev, historians such as (the early) Mikhail Arnaudov, (the early) Hristo Gandev, etc. In fact, the Revival was regarded by them as a primarily cultural (spiritual) phenomenon. They published extensively on individual men of letters, on foreign literary and ideological influences and cultural relations, and on the general pattern of literary and cultural evolution and world-view changes at the threshold of modernity. Some authors (Nikola Vankov, Stiliyan Chilingirov) specialized in the history of education.[28]

The initial concentration of the efforts of the "general" (i.e., mostly political and social) historians after World War II mainly on the revolutionary struggles left research on the cultural history of the Revival entirely to literary and art scholars and linguists. Petŭr Dinekov, Emil Georgiev, Toncho Zhechev, Docho Lekov, Nikola Mavrodinov (an art historian) and others studied literary trends and styles, personalities and ideas. During the last Communist decades there occurred a characteristic reorientation of an increasing number of historians toward cultural themes, which continued after 1989. The variety of interests is attested by the following list of names and topics: Nikolai Genchev (cultural relations with France and Russia, the intelligentsia, general patterns of Bulgarian culture[29]), Rumyana Radkova (the intelligentsia, various cultural phenomena, changes in morality[30]), Nadya Danova (cultural trends, pilgrimage to the Holy Lands[31]), Angel Dimitrov (education[32]), Ani Gergova (books and printing, the book trade[33]), Krassimira Daskalova (teachers, readers and reading[34]), Miglena Kuyumdzhieva (the intelligentsia[35]), Nikolai Zhechev (Bulgarian cultural centers in Romania), Virdzhiniya Paskaleva (Bulgarian women during the Revival[36]), Raina Gavrilova (the history of everyday urban life, historical anthropology[37]), Nikolai Aretov (representations of other lands and peoples[38]), Ivan Ilchev (advertising in the Revival press[39]), etc. Literary scholarship changed, too, as a younger generation of literary scholars (Svetlozar Igov, Inna Peleva) explored the texts of the Revival in innovative ways.

One might say that after social-economic history (to be discussed at length later) and the revolutionary struggles were subjected to dogmatic hardening, the cultural (and literary) history of the Revival proved to be an especially productive, dynamic, and innovative field. It generated new topics, legitimated new directions of interest, and served to advance revisionist views under the rubric of culture.

Notes

1 "Revival," as the designation of an epoch, will be written with a capital letter when standing for "Bulgarian Revival," and with a small letter when meant as a process.

2 Vasil Aprilov, "Dopŭlnenie kŭm knigata 'Dennitsa na novobŭlgarskoto obrazovanie'." In Vasil Aprilov, *Sŭchineniya*. Sofia: Bŭlgarski pisatel, 1968, 148–189, esp. 152–153. (Originally in Russian: "Dopolnenie k knige 'Dennitsa novo-bolgarskago obrazovaniya'." In Vasil Aprilov, *Sŭbrani Sŭchineniya*. Sofia, 1940, 165–198.); Georgi Rakovski, "Bŭlgarskii za nezavisimo im sveshtenstvo dnes vŭzbuden vŭpros i nikhna narodna cherkva v Tsarigrad." *Dunavski lebed* 1, no. 2 (22 September 1860); no. 3 (29 September 1860); Georgi Rakovski, "Bŭlgarskii naroden vŭpros pred otomanskata porta." *Dunavski lebed* 1, no. 9 (18 November 1860); Marko Balabanov, "Bŭlgarskii napredŭk." *Chitalishte* 1, no. 11 (1870/71), 323, 327–329; no. 12 (1870/71): 358, 360. Reprinted in Marko Balabanov, *Filosofski i sotsiologicheski sŭchineniya*. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1986, 108–124.

3 Marin Drinov, "Otets Paisii, negovoto vreme, negovata istoriya i uchenitsite mu." *Periodichesko spisanie na Bŭlgarskoto Knizhovno Drŭzhestvo* 1, no. 4 (1871), 3–26, esp. 25–26. Reprinted in Marin Drinov, *Izbrani sŭchineniya*. Vol. 1. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1971, 163–185.

4 *Vŭzrazdane*, edited by Svetoslav Milarov, Todor Peev, and Ivan Drasov. 1, Braila: 1876.

5 Dimitŭr Strashimirov, ed. *Arkhiv na Vŭzrazhdaneto*. Vol. 1, Sofia: 1908; T. Panchev, ed. *Iz arkhivata na Naiden Gerov*. Sofia: BAN. Vol. 1, 1911; Vol. 2, 1914; Ivan Georgov, "Materiali po nasheto vŭzrazhdane." *Sbornik narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhnina*, 24 (1908): 1–47; Yurdan Ivanov, "Dokumenti po nasheto vŭzrazhdane." *Sbornik narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhnina*, 21 (1905): 1–111; E. Sprostranov, "Po vŭzrazhdaneto na grad Ohrid." *Sbornik narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhnina*, 13 (1896): 621–681; Marko Balabanov, "Po narodnoto probuzhdane." *Periodichesko spisanie na Bŭlgarskoto Knizhovno Druzhestvo*, 16 (1905): 577–598.

6 Vasil Manchev, *Spomeni. Dopiski. Pisma*. Sofia: Otechestven front, 1982. (The memoirs were written in 1904.); Ioakim Gruev, *Moite spomeni*. Plovdiv, 1906; Dimitŭr Fingov, arkhimandrit Sofronii, Asen Kisiov, "Spomeni." In *Sbornik Kaloferska druzhba*. Vol. 1, Sofia, 1908; Iliya Bluskov, *Spomeni*, edited by Docho Lekov. Sofia: Otechestven front, 1976. (The memoirs were written between 1907 and 1917.); Panteli Kisimov, *Istoricheski raboti. Moite spomeni*. Vols. 1–4, Plovdiv, 1897; Petŭr Peshev, *Istoricheskite sŭbitiya i deyateli ot navecherieto na Osvobozhdenieto ni do dnes*. Sofia: BAN, 1993 (first edition in 1925); Efrem Karanov, *Spomeni*. Sofia: Otechestven front, 1979. (The memoirs were written in 1920.); Arseni Kostentsev, *Spomeni*. Sofia: Otechestven front, 1984 (first edition in 1917); Nikola Lazarkov, *Spomeni. Iz robskoto minalo na Dupnitsa*. Dupnitsa, 1924; Hristo Stambolski, *Avtobiografiya. Dnevnitsi. Spomeni*, edited by Strashimir Dimitrov. Sofia: Bŭlgarski pisatel, 1972 (first edition in 1927–1931); Ivan Andonov, *Iz spomenite mi ot tursko vreme*. Plovdiv, 1927; K. Bozveliev, *Spomeni*. Vol. 1, Kazanlŭk, 1942; Ivan Kasabov, *Moite spomeni ot Vŭzrazhdaneto na Bŭlgariya s revolyutsionni idei*. Sofia, 1905; Mitropolit Simeon Varnensko Preslavski, Stoyan Chomakov, "Spomeni." In *Yubileen sbornik Koprivshtitsa*, edited by Archimandrite Evtimi. Sofia, 1926, 15–24.

7 An example of a rather awkward linkage between local and national is provided by Simeon Tabakov, *Opit za istoriya na grad Sliven*. Vol. 2, Sofia, 1924, 392, 414.

8 Zakhari Stoyanov, *Zapiski po buŭlgarskite vustaniya. Sŭchineniya*. Vol. 1. Sofia: Bŭlgarski pisatel, 1983 (first edition 1884–1892).

9 Stoyan Zaimov, *Minaloto. Ocherki i spomeni iz deyatelnostta na bŭlgarskite taini revolyutsionni komiteti ot 1869–1877 g*. Sofia: BZNS, 1986 (first edition in 1884–1888).
10 Zakhari Stoyanov, *Zapiski*, 29–33; Stoyanov, *Biografii. Chetite v Bŭlgariya. Sŭchineniya*, Vol. 2, Sofia: Bŭlgarski pisatel, 1983, 109–110, 116–118, 289–298. (The biography of Vasil Levski appeared in 1883, that of Lyuben Karavelov in 1885, and that of Hristo Botev in 1888).
11 Zakhari Stoyanov, *Zapiski*, 31.
12 Zakhari Stoyanov anticipated this himself when pointing out that Botev was a combatant against foreign domination, and that had he lived after the liberation he would not have acted against his own nation state. See Zakhari Stoyanov, *Biografii*, 297.
13 Ivan Vazov, *Under the Yoke* (translated by M. Aleksieva and T. Atanasov). Sofia: 1955.
14 Inna Peleva, "Epopeya na zabravenite—istoriya, mit, ideologiya." In Inna Peleva, *Ideologŭt na natsiyata. Dumi za Vazov*. Plovdiv: Plovdivsko universitetsko izdatelstvo, 1994, 5–88, esp. 8–20, 79–80.
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34 Krassimira Daskalova, *Bŭlgarskiyat uchitel prez Vŭzrazhdaneto*. Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Kliment Ohridski," 1997; Krassimira Daskalova, *Gramotnost, knizhnina, chitateli i chetene v Bŭlgariya na prekhoda kŭm modernoto vreme*. Sofia: LIK, 1999.

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CHAPTER ONE

Meanings of the Revival I: National and Cultural

The men of the Bulgarian Revival thought of it in a national sense as the coming of the people to self-consciousness, or, as one might put it today, as the forging of a nation by arousing a sense of belonging. Two other meanings were evolved in historical scholarship, which have sometimes been put forward as basic, and sometimes as complementary to this first one. One is the interpretation of the epoch in spiritual–cultural terms—as a spiritual transformation, a transition from a medieval (religious, traditional, folklorist) world-view toward Modernity, with its secular spirit, positive knowledge, etc. Hence the comparisons of the Bulgarian Revival with the great European cultural epochs, especially the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. One can note the bias of the earlier great authors of the "old school" (Ivan Shishmanov, Boyan Penev, the early Mikhail Arnaudov, Ivan Snegarov, etc.) toward the issues of the cultural (spiritual) and national revival, and foreign cultural influences in particular.[1] The other interpretation, elaborated mostly by Marxist authors, is couched in economic and social (class) terms—as a transition from (Ottoman) feudalism toward capitalism, from a feudal society toward a society under the dominance of the bourgeoisie. I will consider the various interpretations/meanings and elucidate the connections between them.

The National Interpretation

The national interpretation/meaning of the Revival gained widest currency. As already pointed out, it derives from the understanding of the activists of the Revival epoch. The uses of the word "revival" (and of related words such as "awakening," "resurrection," etc.) leave little doubt about this. The term "revival" (*vŭzrazhdane*) was first used in 1842 by the

Bulgarian émigré merchant and pioneer of the Revival Vasil Aprilov, in a pamphlet published in Russian in St. Petersburg, in which he referred to the revival of Bulgarian literature and education but also to the revival of the Bulgarian people.[2] Aprilov may have borrowed the term from the Ukrainian Slavist scholar Yuri Venelin, who wrote (in the 1820s and 1830s) about a "nascence" or "new birth" of Bulgarian literature.[3] Its use was still occasional in the 1840s but became more frequent in subsequent decades, especially in the periodical press. The idea expressed metaphorically in so many variations is that the Bulgarian people were "slumbering," had "lost consciousness," "lost memory," "become numb" or even "died" until, all of a sudden (and thanks to the efforts of "awakeners"), they were "roused," "awakened," and "brought to their senses," "recovered from their amnesia," "regained consciousness," were "resurrected," "came to life," "got up," etc. The term "revival" occurs in phrases such as "spiritual revival," "revival of the people's spirit (or genius)," etc.[4] The word "nation" was not used at the time, but references were rather made to "people" (*narod*) and from this "nationality" (*narodnost*) was derived.

The understanding of the Revival as a nationalizing process has been widely shared by professional historical scholarship as well, from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day. One can cite numerous examples, but I will limit myself to some of the more prominent historians. In his early *History of the Bulgarians*, published in Czech and German in 1876 (and translated into Russian in 1878), the Czech historian Konstantin Jireček describes the Bulgarian Revival as the awakening of national feeling "from deep lethargy"; this was accomplished by a "handful of enlightened patriots" by means of education and books in the native language.[5]

The greatest Bulgarian "bourgeois" literary historian, Boyan Penev, regards the period as an epoch of the spiritual awakening and national (and literary) revival of the Bulgarian people.[6]

For Mikhail Arnaudov, who spanned the "bourgeois" and Communist periods, the Bulgarian Revival meant "the appearance of a new nationality on the periphery of Southeastern Europe." To cite him:

"The national element in the historical process that we call the Bulgarian Revival deserves the greatest attention. Even if this revival was due to a number of internal and external reasons, whether of an educational and political or of an economic and social nature, it is beyond doubt that at the center of this system of preconditions was a collective consciousness with considerable dynamics. This consciousness, leaning upon language, traditional material conditions, a poetic tradition, and all that experienced as

destiny, gained, slowly but surely, power over the spirit, until it was formed into a first-rate creative force."[7]

Hristo Gandev, who began his career as a historian before the Communist takeover, defined the early Revival in particular in terms of a spiritual and social transformation, that is, the rationalization of the world-view and the emergence of an urban civic society, which resulted in the shaping of the Bulgarian people into an organized society and a cultural nation.[8]

The literary historian Petŭr Dinekov wrote in one of his early books (1942) that the Revival is primarily defined by the fact that the national consciousness of the Bulgarians, which was manifested only incidentally before, "finds a clear, open, and categorical expression."[9]

The formation of the Bulgarian nation is also present as a meaning of the Revival for most Marxist authors, quite strongly before 1944, very timidly (and as a secondary meaning) during the Stalinist and post-Stalinist 1950s and 60s, and increasingly strongly in the subsequent revision until it was restored to its initial importance. We will trace this evolution later.

When the formation of the nation is posited as the principal meaning of the Bulgarian Revival, it is only natural to look at similar processes in the Balkans and in Europe, especially the national-liberation movements of neighboring peoples (Greeks and Serbs) and national unification movements (in Germany and Italy). Indeed, the first great Bulgarian literary scholar (and a prominent public figure), Ivan Shishmanov, compares the last period of the Bulgarian Revival, with its political struggles, to the Italian *Risorgimento*. Research on the ideology of the Bulgarian national revolutionaries confirmed the strong influence of foreign national movements, especially the Italian (the ideology of Mazzini) and the Greek (*Hetairia Philike*), and the more attenuated influence of the ideas of the French Revolution and of the revolution of 1848. The Bulgarian national Revival was thus shown to participate in European political ideas and trends.[10] As emphasized recently by Raina Gavrilova, the Bulgarian national Revival is inscribed within the triumphant march of nationalism all over Europe throughout the nineteenth century, that is, it was part of a pan-European process.[11] The Bulgarian Revival has been explored against the broader Balkan and South-Slav background by Strashimir Dimitrov and Krŭstyu Manchev[12], and as an integral part of the Slav and South-Slav revival by the literary scholars Boyan Penev and Emil Georgiev.[13] All this embedded the Bulgarian national Revival within the Balkan and (Central) European context by recognizing common features rather than treating it in isolation (as was characteristic of so many national historians).

Concepts of the (Bulgarian) Nation

Attempts at a theoretical treatment of the phenomenon of the nation in Bulgarian scholarship, and the application of general ideas to the Bulgarian case, deserve special attention. It is amazing to find out that, although the formation of the Bulgarian nation features as the primary meaning of the Bulgarian Revival, relatively little has been written on the nation in a scholarly, detached manner. One reason is certainly that, for a number of years, the topic was to be found either in the midst of intense nationalist agitation (which would make a scholarly debate appear rather unpatriotic), or was avoided out of the opposite fear of being labeled "bourgeois nationalist." Two issues have been central in the theoretical debates on the nation. One crucial debate (if one may so call views expressed after various intervals of time) is centered on the "objective" versus "subjective" definition of the nation, that is, whether it can be defined by some set of external features or by self-consciousness. Another issue concerns the "universality" of one or another defining trait of the nation. In what follows I will review in broad outline the evolution of the ideas on the nation in Bulgarian historical scholarship, making diversions to more essayistic (or doctrinaire) writings that give a glimpse of the ideological and political stakes of this "hot" topic.

The men of the Revival defined the nation as having an "individuality" (*samobitnost*), characterized by such features as common descent, a single language and a shared religion, a cultural tradition (of folk songs, proverbs, beliefs, arts, etc.), common material conditions of life and customs, etc. But they also emphasized in their view of "nationality" (*narodnost*) the volitional, subjective aspect, the constitutive moment of "self-consciousness" (or self-awareness) and the feeling of belonging. All the more so because they had personal experience of how difficult it was to "awaken" their compatriots to the idea that they constituted a community in its own right (and to prevent some of them from assimilating into the more prestigious Greek people). There is, in addition, the organicist notion that peoples grow and pass through various phases of life, and the idea of a fate forged in the struggle for self-preservation and through God's providence.[14] Even though in such texts the study of the phenomenon merges with national ideology, they may be very insightful.

Historical scholarship at first recognized the importance of both the "objective" and "subjective" aspects, or scarcely saw any contradiction here at all. The ideational (volitional) character of the nation—that is, the idea

that it finally comes down to self-awareness and a feeling of belonging—was stressed by the historians Petŭr Bitsilli and Hristo Gandev (in his earlier writings). During the nationalist 1930s, a number of nationalist and right-wing authors paid tribute to this concept in essays devoted to the Bulgarian nation. In contrast, Marxist authors stuck to objectivist descriptions, at first faithfully reproducing the Stalinist definition. However, revisions occurred in the course of time.

The "subjectivist" (volitional) approach to the nation is strongly emphasized in a theoretical paper by Petŭr Bitsilli, a Russian émigré who settled in Bulgaria after the October Revolution.[15] The author argues that the nation is a historically changing concept, which does not have the same contents in different epochs and different contexts. The shaping of a certain nation is the outcome of a historical process with many contingencies. In a number of examples Bitsilli shows that none of the factors that bind people into a "spiritual community"—such as common language, common territory, economic and political activities, etc.—is absolute and obligatory; the role of every factor may differ, and one feature may define more than one nation. The inference he draws is that no general and exhaustive defining formula for the nation is possible. What is crucial is the feeling of spiritual community, however it has come into being. Bitsilli's experience of emigration certainly contributed to his emphasis on the spiritual relationship between compatriots rather than on territorial–political unity.

One might mention here a number of essays on the nation from the 1930s, written in a markedly nationalist spirit, in which the spiritual unity of compatriots stands in the foreground and is often metaphysically construed as the "native spirit," "people's spirit" or "genius of the nation." But the reason why the "spiritual bond" is given priority is different—it is to provide a reminder of the unity of all Bulgarians and to rally compatriots more effectively to the national ideal of "unification" (especially with Macedonia). The national objective is rarely stated but rather implied, and not all authors are prepared to go all the way.

In one such essay (dated 1935), the psychologist and philosopher Spiridon Kazandzhiev enumerates the contents of the national consciousness in terms of "thoughts" or notions: the notion of the spiritual unity of the people, the notion of the individuality of the people and its self-esteem (implying national independence and sovereignty), and the notion of solidarity between individual compatriots and their moral duty to serve the people and the national ideals, especially in times of war. The spiritual unity of the people derives, according to him, from "objective" features

such as blood and tribal kinship, geographical conditions, commonalty of language, history, and religion, etc.[16] As can be seen, the role of the objective traits of the nation, including most "primordial" ones, is to ground and secure the spiritual bond.

Yanko Yanev, a rightist author (philosopher and literary critic) of a fascist bent, wrote (in 1933) of the "genius of the nation" that asserts itself historically with spontaneity and will, calling it "cultural nationalism" (in contrast to "political nationalism," whose expressions he leaves the readers to guess).[17]

The nation is described in a still more elevated and spiritually "distilled" manner by Simeon Topuzanov, an ideologue of mandatory trade unionism in the authoritarian Bulgarian state after the coup d'état on 19 May 1934. A nation is not a given people in the present day, nor even the ethnic principle (because it may sweep along "alien elements" in its élan) but it is "an ideal notion, a historical and spiritual process, and an eternity." The nation is, in fact, the designation of a historical mission, carried through ups and downs along the historical path upon the shoulders of a "string of generations" who are fused by shared feelings, thoughts, and aspirations, and handed down from one generation to the next. It is a "supreme form of collective life," linking past, present, and future. The goal of this spiritually exalted definition (or, rather, metaphorization) of the nation consists, in this case, very explicitly in the rejection of class ideology to be replaced by a "healthy nationalism" and the binding of the working class to the nation. The social problem has to be solved along with the pursuit of the national good—prosperity for all (though, as indicated by the author, the partitioning of the Bulgarian nation reduces the opportunities for advance of all its members).[18]

It is worth noting that, apart from the glorification of the "national spirit" and of its historical mission, the Bulgarian nationalist Right did, selectively, emphasize "objective" criteria of the nation, understood as national markers and demarcation lines between "us" and "them." Here is an example of how "objective" features of the nation may be manipulated to one's convenience. The program of the fascist Union of the Bulgarian National Legions accentuates geography in the justification of territorial claims (the flow of rivers being likened to the "natural" striving of the Bulgarians towards the Aegean sea), while religion is denied a significant role (so that the Muslim *pomaks* may be diverted from their "religious fanaticism" and brought back to the Bulgarian nation, whose language and descent they share).[19] After this excursus into patently ideological writings we return to scholarly works.

Hristo Gandev published in 1940 a work that remains a theoretical high point in Bulgarian historical scholarship on the nation.[20] Only ideas relevant to the Bulgarian debates on the nation will be reproduced here. Gandev denies the possibility of defining the nation in the abstract and through a constant set of features such as common territory, ethnic unity, commonalty of language, literature, religion, art, economic conditions and way of life, etc. A nation may exist where some of these are absent (or shared with others). He ascribes greater importance, as a necessary condition, to a common historical life (more dramatically called historical "destiny"). Nor can the "culture" that characterizes the nation (according to the German notion) be objectively defined, and in any case it exists in the beliefs and is held in the imagination.

Gandev considers two (by now familiar) basic notions of the nation—the civic-legal notion defined through the will, of French origin, and the cultural–historical or ethnographic notion, of German provenance. He explains the emergence of these concepts according to the specific historical and social–political circumstances in the respective countries. According to Gandev, the Bulgarian concept of the nation, which received a certain theoretical elaboration during the Revival (then under the name *narodnost*), falls clearly within the German ideological sphere, partly mediated by Russia. Thus the Bulgarian Revival began by revealing a common historical fate and a distinctive individuality of the way of life that divides the Bulgarians from the Greeks and the Turks. Popular songs were collected, and customs were described as testifying to the "people's spirit." The people was conceived of as a natural community (or collectivity), and to serve it was made into the highest goal. In this view, every people has a peculiar individuality and purpose, and makes contributions to human culture and to mankind. Political independence is regarded as a precondition for the fulfilling of this predestination, hence the task of achieving it. In contrast, the French notion of the nation, which underlines individual will, equality, and an elective-representative system of government as an expression of the "common will" while rejecting monarchism in favor of a national republic, remained underdeveloped.[21]

According to Gandev, it is the similarity of the path towards national formation in Bulgaria and in Germany that explains the reception of the German notion, namely, the passing through of a "cultural nation" phase (by way of a growing awareness of "individuality" in history and of a distinctive way of life), followed by aspirations toward political sovereignty in one's own state. In Bulgaria, as in the West, this was a corollary of urban

life, of the spread of mass education, and of the creation of a literary Bulgarian language and a Bulgarian literature resulting from the activities of a Bulgarian intelligentsia of teachers and artisan-traders. The intelligentsia propagated "common Bulgarian spiritual values" and nurtured the new generations in "homogeneous knowledge" (but not earlier than the first half of the nineteenth century).

The earlier Marxist treatment of the nation invariably takes as its point of departure Stalin's formulaic and flatly objectivist definition of the nation through the notorious four features: common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up or "national character," as manifested in a common culture. The emergence of nations is accommodated within the teaching on social formations at the transition from a feudal to a bourgeois-capitalist society, thus a nation begins as a "bourgeois nation." In the case of peoples under foreign domination, the emerging national bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation becomes the organizer of all classes of co-nationals in a national movement by presenting its own class interests as the common interests of all classes; its interests consist in conquering the market from the bourgeoisie (or the semi-feudal bureaucracy) of the dominant nation.[22] From this point of view, national self-awareness, the will to belong, common representations, etc. appear as secondary in national formation (being part of the ideological "super-structure"). The process of national formation in general seems secondary (epiphenomenal) to the social–economic transition, in accordance with the Marxist primacy of class over nation.

The Stalinist definition of the nation is used in a short paper (dated 1940) by the would-be ideologue of the Communist regime (and versatile philosopher) Todor Pavlov, though understandably the source of the definition is not mentioned at that time. Rather than an application of the definition to the Bulgarian case, this is an argument for the priority of economic communality over psychic (or spiritual-cultural) unity among the features of the nation. According to the author, although all features are important, if we take the psychic outlook as the fundamental feature we risk "psychologizing" the nation, making a "pure consciousness" out of it, and ending up with a "purely mystical essence."[23] Warnings against the mystification of the nation become understandable in view of the nationalist elaboration mentioned earlier.

Stalin's ideas were first applied to the Bulgarian case by the Russian historian and academician Nikolai Derzhavin (in a work on Paisii in 1941). He described the formation of the Bulgarian nation as the struggle of the

Bulgarian bourgeoisie against the semi-feudal ruling bureaucracy of the Turkish "nation," as well as the struggle against the rival Greek national bourgeoisie for the market; the Bulgarian bourgeoisie conducted the struggle by organizing the lower strata with slogans for nation and fatherland.[24] The Bulgarian historian Yono Mitev followed suit in the literal application of Stalin's ideas. He also linked the formation of the Bulgarian nation to the development of capitalism (in its lower stage of crafts and putting-out industries). Characteristically, the author affirmed that an autonomous Macedonian nation was formed alongside the Bulgarian one—a "concession" to the envisioned federation between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia at that time, and ironic with regard to the further developments.[25]

From the 1960s there stems a doctrinaire and rather naive attempt (by Nedyalko Kurtev) to distinguish between types of patriotism on the basis of the class status of those professing it and their "progressiveness" at a given moment. With elaborate casuistry, the author reveals a spectrum of patriotisms, lower and higher, neutral, positive and negative, peaceful and revolutionary. First comes "people's (*narodnosten*) patriotism," undifferentiated as to class, and characteristic of the stage before the nation (when it was just a "people"). This then develops into "national patriotism," which is conceived of in quantitative terms as finding expression in "a stronger love for the fatherland, the native land and the people, a higher awareness of the commonality of national traits and specifics, a greater readiness for self-sacrifice for the freedom of the fatherland, and the conscious revolutionary activity of the great majority of the working masses." At this higher level of "national" patriotism, Kurtev further differentiates between "national consciousness" as a characteristic of all, "patriotism" as the exclusive characteristic of the oppressed and progressive classes, and the "bourgeois nationalism" of the bourgeoisie. The author admits that the Bulgarian bourgeoisie as a class was also patriotic (and not nationalist) for a time and in some of its efforts, notably toward national education and in the church struggles, as this coincided with the "progressive course of the historical development directed at the destruction of the feudal order and the building up of the bourgeois order." The "progressiveness" of the bourgeoisie lasted until the revolutionary political struggles in the 1860s, which it betrayed, while the consciousness of the peasant and urban laboring classes rose to higher revolutionary forms of struggle. The patriotism of the oppressed classes thus grew and passed from educational and church patriotism to higher revolutionary patriotism, while the patriotism of the bourgeoisie deteriorated. Characteristics of the higher form of patriotism

(besides its revolutionary nature) are its democratic quality—being directed against the exploiters from other nations but not against their laboring people—and the fact that it went together with love for Russia, which became an organic component of Bulgarian patriotism.[26] (Kurtev does not speak of "internationalism" in this case.) As clearly seen, the modalities of patriotism, although made to appear "objective," are simply predicated on the attitude of the Communist ideologues toward various historical classes and their "progressiveness" at a certain point in history.

The work of historian Rumyana Radkova on the national self-consciousness of the Bulgarians in the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth presents a clear advance in relation to the Stalinist views discussed so far.[27] The very fact that a "subjectivist" category such as national self-consciousness is at the center of the research may have seemed bold at the time. But the effect is tempered by the dogmatism of the theoretical discussion (based on contemporary Soviet authoritative authors) and the mere replication of the notorious "features of the nation" on the objective and the subjective levels, that is, their being entered into the national self-consciousness. The "structure" of the national self-consciousness thus appears to be a mixture of heterogeneous (and some quite curious) components, such as the awareness of belonging to a certain ethnic community; attachment to the "national values" of territory, language, and culture; a feeling of patriotism; solidarity in national-liberation (and anti-feudal) struggles; and an awareness of belonging to a nation-state. According to the author, while national self-consciousness is just one feature of the nation among others, "there is no nation without self-consciousness." However, the author feels obliged to attack "idealistic bourgeois philosophy" for the "fetishization" of national self-consciousness (which is "just" a set of ideas) by detaching it from realities and forgetting that it is their "reflection."

Radkova also offers a more sophisticated version of the Stalinist picture (worked out in reference to subjugated peoples) of the birth and the evolution of national self-consciousness. The latter begins as quite undifferentiated, but the growing class differentiation in society results in different attitudes on the part of the various classes to national issues. The formation of national self-consciousness is initially in tune with the economic interests of the nascent national bourgeoisie in conquering the internal markets. But at a higher stage of development, national self-consciousness (now elaborated into an ideology) is combined with the tasks of social transformation, and a progressive democratic trend comes into being, which is in accord with the interests of the majority of the people.

In fact, the major contribution of the author consists in the empirical search in the literature of the Bulgarian Revival (and in the Catholic "propaganda" of the seventeenth century) for traces of national self-consciousness, especially designations of origin, the use of the ethnic eponym, phrases such as "Bulgarian people," "fatherland," "native land" and similar expressions of patriotism, descriptions of territory, praise for the Bulgarian language, pride in the historical past, and advocacy of the historical right to national independence.

The treatment of the nation (at about the same time) by Nikolai Genchev, a historian with a reputation as a dissident, is free from inconsistencies and arbitrary constructs. The author considers the formation of the nation on the basis of Bulgarian ethnicity (*narodnost*) as its "ethnic substratum," under the impact of such factors as the rise of urban life and of the urban economy, increased market exchange, and the role of the bourgeoisie as a "binding element" through its economic activities but also as a bearer of modern cultural standards and of the national idea itself. The formation of the Bulgarian nation is described as a primarily cultural process, whereas the new culture of the Revival was shaped out of three components—a literary language based on the spoken dialects, tradition (a less important component because of the "medieval conservatism of Eastern Christianity"), and the extremely important foreign influences (from modern Europe, Russia, and other Slav and Balkan cultures). The subjective aspect of the nation ("national self-consciousness") receives less attention, except for a mention that it suffered "deformities" by the assimilation of some Bulgarians among the Greeks or Turks. The author enters the rather slippery terrain of "people's psychology" under the rubric of the "cultural–psychological stereotype of the Bulgarian during the Revival," but he keeps prudently to institutional settings (the family, the commune, the church, national organizations) rather than describing problematic "national traits."[28]

Genchev's otherwise rich exposition is mostly confined to tracing the preconditions and formative forces of the Bulgarian nation, while a theoretical construct of the nation itself (or of "national consciousness") is lacking. This is hardly accidental. The (moderately) nationalist viewpoint that underlies this work makes it difficult to approach the phenomenon of the nation in a more critical or distanced manner. On the other hand, it should be noted that the predominantly cultural (historical, linguistic, ethnographic) concept of the nation, characteristic of the Bulgarian case, makes an objectivist treatment, and an explanation in terms of "cultural