

# **Between Politics and Objectivity: The *Non*-Remembrance of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing of Turks in Communist Bulgaria**

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## **Bio**

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### **Abstract**

Cold War Europe's largest and most intensive act of ethnic cleansing, namely, the 1989 expulsion of Turks from communist Bulgaria, remains a neglected subject three decades on after the event. When it took place, the term "ethnic cleansing" had not been invented yet, so in light of international law this expulsion was a "population transfer." Population transfers (even unilateral) were deemed legal until the mid-1990s. Subsequently, under the influence of the atrocities committed during the wars of Yugoslav succession, population transfers were criminalized and relabeled as "ethnic cleansings." For a variety of reasons, the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing has been also neglected by scholars and politicians in both, Bulgaria and Turkey. The neglect continues to this day, despite the Bulgarian Parliament's momentous 2012 Declaration, which officially recognized the expulsion as an act of ethnic cleansing. This Declaration – which could become a basis for successful Turkish-Bulgarian reconciliation – largely remains unknown in both countries, while the propagandistic terminology employed for referring to the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing deepens the oblivion and obfuscates the nature of this tragic event. Both, in Turkish and Bulgarian, official and scholarly terminology employed suggests – *incorrectly* – that it was a "kind of emigration."

**Keywords:** 1989 Ethnic Cleansing, Bulgaria, Bulgarian Turks, Bulgarian Muslims, expulsion, terminology, Turkey

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## **Introduction**

The reflection gives a brief overview of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing of communist Bulgaria's Turks. This tragic event is curiously left unmentioned and unanalyzed in literature, be it internationally or in Bulgaria and Turkey. Yet, without remembering about this ethnic cleansing, it is next to impossible to explain the fall of communism and the subsequent emergence of democracy in Bulgaria. Whatever scant reflection on the tragedy is hidden within the broader Bulgarian discourse on the 1984-1989 Forced Assimilation Campaign. This brings to the for the methodological question why thus far scholars have preferred *not* to treat and probe into the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing as an event in its own right. Especially so, because such an evading approach has been responsible for concealing or belittling this tragedy be it in Bulgaria or at the international level. Likewise, the use of communist propaganda's euphemism "Big Excursion" for this ethnic cleansing mendaciously denies the tragic character of the event. Hence, using an explicit name for the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing and researching this event in its own right seem to be the right way forward, as also pointed out by the Bulgarian Parliament's momentous 2012 Declaration. This groundbreaking Declaration unequivocally recognizes this tragedy as an act of ethnic cleansing. Unfortunately, neither international scholars, nor their counterparts in Bulgaria and Turkey seem to have noticed of this Declaration at all.

## The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Forgotten 1989 Ethnic Cleansing

Three decades ago, in the summer of 1989, about 360,000 Turks (including some Slavophone Muslims, or Pomaks) were expelled from communist Bulgaria to capitalist Turkey.<sup>1</sup> It was the largest and most intensive act of ethnic cleansing in Cold War Europe after the late 1940s, which saw the wrapping up of the Potsdam-agreed expulsions (“population transfers”<sup>2</sup>) of ‘ethnic Germans’ from central and eastern Europe to the Allies’ occupation zones of the Third Reich (that later morphed into Austria, East Germany and West Germany). This 1989 Ethnic Cleansing pushed hundreds of thousands across the presumably impenetrable Iron Curtain, from the Warsaw Pact member state to the NATO member.<sup>3</sup>

This fact points to some secret negotiations between Moscow and Washington, which prevented treating such a unilateral breach of the NATO-Warsaw Pact military frontier as a *casus belli*.

Researchers know nothing about these negotiations as the relevant documents still classified and sealed off in military archives in Russia and the United States.<sup>4</sup> Because no global war broke out as a result of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing, the study of this expulsion has been neglected. It fell under the proverbial

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<sup>1</sup> Tomasz Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War: The Forgotten 1989 Expulsion of Turks from Communist Bulgaria* (London: Routledge 2018), 56-57.

<sup>2</sup> Under international law population transfer was a legal instrument of statecraft (that is, state building and maintenance) in the twentieth century: Jennifer Jackson Preece, “Ethnic Cleansing as an Instrument of Nation-State Creation: Changing State Practices and Evolving Legal Norms,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 20 no. 4 (1998): 819. However, its use was increasingly limited and gradually criminalized in the second half of the twentieth century, and especially after the fall of communism: Vincent Chetail, “Is There Any Blood on My Hands? Deportation as a Crime of International Law,” *Leiden Journal of International Law* 29, no. 3 (2016): 917-943; Preece, “Ethnic Cleansing as an Instrument of Nation-State Creation,” 832, 935, 840. Beginning with the mid-1990s population transfer was relabeled as “ethnic cleansing,” and is considered a crime against humanity: Robin Geiß, “Ethnic Cleansing; 3. International Criminal Law; (b) Ethnic Cleansing as a Crime against Humanity,” in *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law* (Platform: Oxford Public International Law, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, <http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e789> (Accessed 30 April 2019); Preece, “Ethnic Cleansing as an Instrument of Nation-State Creation,” 819.

<sup>3</sup> Sofia’s unilateral move amounted to a *casus belli*, which should have resulted in a third world war. The army of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria would have stood no chance against the largest standing NATO army in Europe (See: Senem Aydın-Düzgüt and Nathalie Tocci, *Turkey and the European Union* (London: Palgrave, 2015), 117). Hence, the Soviet Union’s Red Army would have needed to intervene in order to protect Bulgaria. In turn, this move would have necessitated involvement from the United States, thus ensuring that the conflict would have spiraled into a worldwide conflagration. But *no* third world war occurred in 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Obviously, this proposition about the possibility of a third world war, and the prevention of its outbreak by some, as yet unknown, United States-Soviet secret negotiations, is just a working hypothesis. It still needs to be researched, and does not preclude another explanation of the largely pacific character of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing, without any military confrontation between Bulgarian and Turkish forces. I thank Konstanty Gebert for this important qualification.

radar of world public opinion, including scholars. Although the western press covered this 1989 Ethnic Cleansing extensively, all the reports were buried in the midst of the *Guardian*, the *Times*, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, or *Le Monde*. The story made it to the front pages only in Turkish and Yugoslav newspapers.

Numerous contemporary events deemed as “more momentous” by the western press pushed the 1989 expulsion of Bulgaria’s Turks (and Slavophone Muslims, or Pomaks) out of the view of Europe’s public opinion. Such events included, for instance, the Round Table negotiations between the communist government and the anti-communist democratic opposition in Poland, followed, on 4 June 1989, by the first-ever (partially) free democratic elections in this country. This initial breach in the Soviet-style communist system shortly led to the fall of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet bloc. On the same day, the totalitarian regime of communist China bloodily suppressed the student pro-democracy demonstrations in the Tiananmen Square Massacre. A day earlier, on 3 June 1989, the Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, had passed away. These were the newsworthy stories which overshadowed the beginning of the expulsion of Turks (and Slavophone Muslims, or Pomaks) from communist Bulgaria. On 29 May 1989, the communist dictator of three decades and a half, Todor Zhivkov, delivered a televised speech that obliquely announced this ethnic cleansing.<sup>5</sup> It was a reaction to the mass protests and hunger strikes staged by 60,000 Turks and Muslims in the last two weeks of May 1989.<sup>6</sup>

These aforementioned May Protests of 1989 falsify the rife myth, repeated in numerous publications, that Bulgaria was the sole member of the Soviet bloc where no anti-communist mass demonstrations were ever observed. Furthermore, it is important to note that the sole mass dissident

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<sup>5</sup> Todor Zhivkov, “Edinstvo na bulgarskiiia narod e grizha i sudba na vseeki grazhdanin na nasheto milo otechestvo” [The Unity of the Bulgarian Nation is the Responsibility and Fate of Each Citizen of Our Dear Fatherland], *Rabotnichesko delo*, 30 May 1989, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Veselin Angelov, ed., *Protstitute na turtsite v Bulgariia sreshtu vuzroditelniia protses, 20–30 mai 1989 g. Dokumenti* [The Protests of Bulgaria’s Turks Against the Revival Process, 20–30 May 1989: Documents] (Sofia: At author’s expense 2015).

movement in communist Bulgaria was almost exclusively Turkish and Muslim from the ethnic (ethnoconfessional) perspective. Unfortunately, in today's democratic Bulgaria, this ethnic character of the movement prevents remembering about its pivotal role in causing the fall of the communist system in this country.

Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov propose that it may be inappropriate to label the May Protests of 1989 as “anti-communist,” because the protesters wanted an end to anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim measures, *not* to overthrow the communist (socialist) system in Bulgaria. However, neither the Prague Spring of 1968, nor the Solidarity movement of 1980-1981 aimed at overthrowing the communist system, either. The protesters in Czechoslovakia and Poland desired a reform of the communist system, which would better take into account individual human needs (hence, the Czechoslovak slogan of “socialism with a human face”). However, the aforementioned events in Czechoslovakia and Poland are now commonly interpreted as ‘anti-communist.’ It is so on the account of the fact that their participants attempted to breach the main pillar of this system, namely, the communist party's monopoly of politics and power. Hence, from this perspective and with today's advantage of comparative hindsight, I believe, the May Protests of 1989 in Bulgaria can and should be qualified as “anti-communist.”

The ethnic cleansing announced by Zhivkov's speech lasted unabated until 22 August 1989, when Turkey closed the border with Bulgaria to expellees, namely, to “Bulgarian citizens without a Turkish visa.”<sup>7</sup> More Bulgarian Turks and Slavophone Muslims (Pomaks) followed shortly, supplied with now required Turkish visas in their passports, but even more began returning from Turkey (about 3,000 in July-August 1989, around 70,000 by late 1989, 130,000 by August 1990, and as many as around 200,000 by late 1991<sup>8</sup>). It was the first-ever case of a mass return of expellees recorded in

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<sup>7</sup> Kemal Kirişçi “‘Coerced Immigrants:’ Refugees of Turkish Origins since 1945,” *International Migration* 34, no. 3 (1996): 385-412.

<sup>8</sup> Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War*, 61-2.

modern European history.<sup>9</sup> However, the administrative pro-expulsion pressure continued in communist Bulgaria until 29 December 1989, when the Communist Party of Bulgaria promised to return all human, civil and minority rights to the country's Turks and Slavophone Muslims (or Pomaks).<sup>10</sup> It took two long years to fulfill this promise in the face of mass protests staged by Bulgarian nationalist communists-turned-nationalists against this decision.<sup>11</sup> In this way a "Yugoslav-style" ethnic civil war or a breakup of the country was prevented a couple of years before the actual commencement of the wars of Yugoslav succession.

During the second half of 1989, other developments were deemed more worth featuring on the front pages of the western press than the ethnic cleansing in Bulgaria and its domestic and international ramifications. During the summer, tens of thousands of East German tourists, instead of returning home from the Black Sea beaches of Romania and Bulgaria, streamed to the grounds of the West German embassies in Budapest and Prague, from where they eventually were allowed to leave for West Germany. In October 1989, the Round Table talks in Hungary concluded in a compromise, thus opening the way for the democratization of this country. On 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, and was shortly followed by the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia. In December 1989, the bloody revolution toppled the communist dictator in Romania. These iconic events pushed out of world public opinion's view the tragedy of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing in Bulgaria, alongside the tribulations of the expellees in Turkey or of the returnees in still communist Bulgaria. Even the fall of communism in 1990 in autocratic Albania (including ships with Albanian refugees in Italy) gained more attention from the global mass media than the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing. However, it was this 1989 Ethnic Cleansing that

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<sup>9</sup> Veselin Angelov, ed., *Obratnata vulna. Vrushtane grazhdanskite prava na bulgarskite turtsii (septembri 1989-ianuari 1990)* [The Returning Wave: Reinstating Civil Rights to Bulgarian Turks (September 1989 – January 1990)] (Sofia: At author's expense 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Aleksandar Lilov, 1989 "Za preodoliavane na dopusnatite izvrashteniia sred tiurkoezichnoto i miusiulmansko naselenie v stranata" [To Overcome the Atrocities Committed Against the Turkic-speaking and Muslim Population in the Country], *Rabotnicheskoto delo*, 30 December 1989, 3 [https://bulgaria1989.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/364\\_3.jpg](https://bulgaria1989.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/364_3.jpg) (Accessed 1 August 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Maria Bakalova, "The Bulgarian Turkish Names Conflict and Democratic Transition," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 19, nos. 3-4 (2006): 238-9.

triggered the collapse of communism in Bulgaria and decisively conditioned the postcommunist transition in this country.<sup>12</sup>

Following the end of communism in Bulgaria in 1990/1991, many returnees and Bulgarian citizens of all ethnic origins began leaving for Turkey in search of gainful employment due to the collapse of the economy during the period of systemic transition. Unemployment was rife and salaries were insufficient to cover basic living costs.<sup>13</sup> This free movement of people from Bulgaria to Turkey for work overlapped with the continuing return of expellees. As a result, in many observers' eyes, the difference between ethnic cleansing and work migration became blurred, and seemed to vindicate the zhivkovite communist propaganda, which until early 1990, mendaciously proposed that the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing was a case of "mass tourism."<sup>14</sup> The international mass media paid no attention to the aftermath of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing, including this crucial distinction between work migration and expulsion, because the political and economic upheavals of the systemic transition from planned to market-oriented economy and from totalitarianism to democracy had already grabbed headlines. On top of that, the absorption of East Germany by West Germany ('German reunification'), the shocking breakups of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, alongside the ethnic wars of Yugoslav succession and the First Iraq War (Gulf War) effectively overshadowed *any* developments in Bulgaria.

### **The Methodological Question of Dis/Continuity**

Subsequently, *no* scholarly articles in any language, let alone a monograph, has been devoted to the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing of communist Bulgaria's Turks (and Slavophone Muslims, or Pomaks), until 2018, when the first-ever study on this subject was published.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, literally tens of thousands

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<sup>12</sup> Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Zeynep Kasli and Ayse Parla, "Broken Lines of Il/Legality and the Reproduction of State Sovereignty: The Impact of Visa Policies on Immigrants to Turkey from Bulgaria," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 34, no. 2 (2009): 207.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Van' o Stoilov, "Za vas tuk miasto ne ma" [There Is No Place for You {Expellees} Here {in Turkey}], *Rabotnichesko delo*, 18 June 1989, 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War*.

articles and thousands of books have been devoted to the post-Yugoslav wars on account of numerous cases of ethnic cleansing and genocide committed in their course. However, Bulgarian scholars tend to propose that the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing in Bulgaria was already covered in detail<sup>16</sup> by Bulgarian researchers,<sup>17</sup> including Roumen Avramov's most extensive and authoritative study.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, in all these books the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing is touched upon to a greater or lesser extent, but only as the endpoint of the 1984-1989 Forced Assimilation Campaign (usually referred in Bulgarian-language literature with the zhivkovite propaganda term Възродителен процес *Vuzroditelen protses* 'Revival Process'). Ergo, the aforementioned book by Kamusella<sup>19</sup> still stands as the first and (for the time being) sole study devoted exclusively to the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing. Yet, Bulgarian scholars<sup>20</sup> propose that from the methodological standpoint of historiography, it is incorrect to research and analyze the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing as an event in its own right. They see it is an inalienable part of the aforementioned Forced Assimilation Campaign, which lasted for half a decade in the latter 1980s. Some even want a further flattening of the story by retelling it exclusively in the *longue durée* context of the series of expulsions (or 'emigrations' agreed with Turkey) from Bulgaria to Turkey during the entire communist period.

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<sup>16</sup> *Round Table on the "Revival Process" in Bulgaria (1984-1989): Looking Back* (Sofia: Center for Advanced Studies 2019).

<sup>17</sup> For instance, Ali Mekhmedov Aliev, *Natsionalizmut i "vuzroditelniat protses"* [Nationalism and the "Revival Process"] (Razgrad: Poligraf 2001); Iskra Baeva and Evgeniia Kalinova, eds., "*Vuzroditelniat protses*" ["The Revival Process"] (Vol 2: *Mezhdunarodni izmereniia* (1984-1989)) ["The Revival Process"] (Vol. 2: *International Relations* (1984-1989)) (Ser: *Arkhivite govoriat*, Vol. 61) (Sofia: Durzhavna agentsiia Arkhivi 2009); Mikhail Gruev and Aleksei Kalionski, *Vuzroditelniat protses. Musulmanskite obshtnosti i komunisticheskiat rezhim* [The Revival Process: The Muslim Communities and the Communist Regime] (Sofia: Ciela 2012); Vasil Vasilev, *Nationalismus unterm Roten Stern: Vorgeschichte, Durchführung und Auswirkungen der Namensänderungskampagne 1984-89 gegenüber der türkischen Minderheit in Bulgarien* [Nationalism under the Red Star: Origins, Implementation and the Aftermath of the 1984-89 Name Changing Campaign, Which Targeted the Turkish Minority in Bulgaria] (Ser: *Studien zur Geschichte, Kultur und Gesellschaft Südosteuropas*, Vol 8) (Zürich and Münster: Lit 2011); Orlin Zagorov, *Vuzroditelniat protses. Teza, Aniteza, Otritsanie na otritsanieto* [The Revival Process: Thesis, Antithesis, Negation of the Negation] (Sofia: Ares pres 1993).

<sup>18</sup> Roumen Avramov, *Ikonomika na ,Vuzroditelniya protses'* [The Economics of the 'Revival Process'] (Ser: *Izslodovatelski forum*). (Sofia: Tsentur za akademichni izsledvaniia / Centre for Advanced Study and Izdatelstvo Riva 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War*.

<sup>20</sup> *Round Table on the "Revival Process" in Bulgaria*.

In a nutshell, this methodological disagreement centers on what constitutes a historical fact and when it is appropriate to apply cesuras to the continuum of the human past for the sake of extracting such a fact for the purpose of description and analysis. To a degree, the procedure is always subjective as it is dependent on human choices. I propose, however, that the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing on many counts is a sufficiently distinctive and temporally self-contained event that can be easily and usefully studied in its own right. First of all, this ethnic cleansing has the undisputed clear-cut commencement date of 29 May 1989 and the equally well-defined (though more often debated) end date of 22 August 1989. Second, unlike in the case of the forced emigrations of Bulgarian Turks (1950-1951 and 1969-1978) negotiated with Turkey, the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing was Bulgaria's unilateral imposition on Turkey. Third, the intensity of expulsion per unit of time during the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing was much higher in numerical terms than whatever was observed during the earlier forced emigrations from communist Bulgaria. The highest number of forced emigrants (expellees) per week amounted to 5,351 persons in December 1950 and 1,284 persons in 1978, while to the staggering 31,182 persons in July 1989.<sup>21</sup> Fourth, the total number of expellees in 1989 was two and a half to three times higher than the total numbers of forced emigrants either in 1950-1951 (154,000), or in 1969-1978 (115,000).<sup>22</sup> Last but not least, in the context of entire Cold War Europe in the period between 1949 and 1989, the 1989 expulsion was the *largest* and *most intensive* ever during this time.

Hence, the Bulgarian insistence on treating the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing only as the endpoint of the 1984-1989 Forced Assimilation Campaign, or of the communist period's forced emigrations, appears to be dubious on any methodological ground. I propose that the main motivation behind this insistence may be political in its character, namely, the intentional perpetuation of the observed neglect of any research, let alone the remembrance and commemoration, of this ethnic cleansing. The current national master narrative as taught in Bulgarian schools is steeped in the paramount myth of half a

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<sup>21</sup> Rumens Avramov, *Ikonomika na ,Vuzroditelniya protses,* ' 713-714.

<sup>22</sup> Rumens Avramov, *Ikonomika na ,Vuzroditelniya protses,* ' 713.

millennium of “Turkish yoke (slavery, occupation; турско робство *tursko robstvo*),” when, presumably, the Ottomans<sup>23</sup> all the time repressed Orthodox Christianity, forced Bulgarians (that is, Slavophone Orthodox Christians) to convert to Islam, and killed anti-Ottoman rebels and their rural sympathizers.<sup>24</sup>

In Bulgarian school textbooks the period of Ottoman rule is teleologically presented as the time of never-ending national uprisings of the Bulgarians against the Islamic empire, “inescapably, leading to the founding of the ethnolinguistic and ethnoreligious in its character Bulgarian nation-state, with Russia’s ‘fraternal help.’”<sup>25</sup> Yet, such rebellions could not be “national,” since the concept of the nation was invented only in eighteenth-century western Europe, and implemented in the Bulgarian lands during the late nineteenth century. Second, such rebellions were short-lived and localized, typically triggered by irregularities in administration, perceived as injustice on the part of the concerned. Third, participation in these rebellions was not limited to Christians, wronged Muslim peasants often joined, too. Fourth, what is lauded as хайдуски дружини *khaidushki druzhini* “groups of hajduks” (from Hungarian *hajdúk* “brigands, mercenaries,” singular *hajdú*, stems from *hajtó* “cattle drover,” in turn from the Hungarian verb *hajt* “to drive [cattle];” yielded the Turkish word *haydut* “bandit, brigand, thug, outlaw”) were none other than robbers and highwaymen, who stemmed from outlaws of a variety

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<sup>23</sup> In the European stereotypical perception, the Ottomans were labelled as ‘Turks,’ though in reality the Ottomans were ethnolinguistically highly variegated, in the meaning of the population of the Ottoman Empire, the members of the millet of Islam, or this empire’s elite (cf Božidar Jezernik, ed., *Imagining 'the Turk,'* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2010)). A similar stereotypical ethnonym of ‘Frank’ developed in the Ottoman Empire and across Muslim south Asia for referring to (Christian) Europeans, irrespective of their ethnolinguistic and confessional differentiation (cf. Farang in *Wikipedia* (2019) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farang>. (Accessed 30 April 2019); Frankokrasi [Frankokratia] *Vikipedi* (2019) <https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankokrasi> (Accessed 30 April 2019)).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Bernard Lory, “Razsazhdenia varkhu istoricheskia mit ‘Pet veka ni klakha’” [Reflections on the Historical Myth ‘Five Centuries We Were Slaughtered’] [translated from the French by Georgi Peev]. *Istorichesko badeshte* no. 1 (1997); Rumens Petrov, *Oburkani v bolkata. Sotsialna travma i sotsialna otgovornost* [Confused in Pain: Social Trauma and Social Responsibility] (Sofia: Paradoks 2018): 115-125.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Aleksandur Fol, ed., *Bulgarite. Atlas / The Bulgarians: Atlas* (Vol 3: Bulgariia pod osmansko vladichestvo. Bulgarsko vuzrazhdane / Bulgaria Under Ottoman Rule: Bulgarian Revival, edited by Khristo Matanov) [special edition of the company Standart Niuz / Standart News; approved for school use by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science] (Sofia: TANGARA and TanNakRa 2008); L. Tsvetkov, ed., 1995. *Atlas po istoriia za 5 klas* [History Atlas for the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade] (Sofia: Kartografiia 1995): 2-3, 7, 12-15, 17).

of ethnoreligious backgrounds.<sup>26</sup> Fifth, in order to make unwilling peasants join an uprising, ringleaders often resorted to burning the former's houses and to killing local Muslim officials. Because of the latter peasants joined, since they feared Ottoman reprisals conducted in line with the logic of collective responsibility.<sup>27</sup> Sixth, the Russian involvement in the Balkans during the nineteenth century introduced anti-Semitism and pogroms of Jews into a permanent element of the then coalescing Bulgarian and other Slavic national movements.<sup>28</sup>

Had the Ottomans really applied the type of assimilationist repressions (alluded in Bulgarian history textbooks) unceasingly for half a millennium in the Balkans, no Orthodox Christians (or even Slavophones) would have remained in the Bulgarian lands. For instance, during the Caucasian War (1817-1864), it took the Russian Empire only half a century to expel and eradicate the Muslim Circassians from Circassia (today's Krasnodar Region).<sup>29</sup> The Bulgarian myth of "Turkish yoke" stems from the Russian slavist and ethnographer (of Rusyn origin), Iurii (Yuriy) Venelin's, three-volume study *Drevnie i nyneshnie bolgare v politicheskom, narodopisnom, istoricheskom i religioznom ikh otnoshenii k rossiianam* (Bulgarians in Their Political, Ethnographic, Historical and Religious Relations to the Russians, 1829-1841). An abridged edition, titled, *Kriticheskie issledovaniia ob istorii bolgar* (Contributions to the History of the Bulgarians) came off the press in 1849, and subsequently was published in a Bulgarian translation (*Kritichesky izdyrianiia za Istoriia-ta blugarska* [sic]) in 1853 in Semlin, Austrian Empire (today's Zemun in Serbia).<sup>30</sup> This negative stereotype was internalized and

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<sup>26</sup> Fikret Adanir, "Heiduckentum und osmanische Herrschaft. Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Diskussion um das frühneuzeitliche Räuberwesen in Südosteuropa" [Hajduks and Ottoman rule: Socio-Historical Aspects of the Phenomenon of Brigandage in Early Modern Southeastern Europe] *Südost-Forschungen* 41 (1982): 43-116.

<sup>27</sup> Brendan William Larkin [Honors dissertation], *The Times and the Bulgarian Massacres*. Middletown: Wesleyan University 2009), 62-63 <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.895.7166&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (Accessed: 4 May 2019).

<sup>28</sup> Bartłomiej Rusin, "Ekscesy antyżydowskie na ziemiach bułgarskich Imperium Osmańskiego w czasie wojny rosyjsko-tureckiej 1877–1878" [Anti-Jewish Excesses in the Bulgarian Lands of the Ottoman Empire During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878] *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* 51, no. 1 (2016): 5-21.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Walter Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide* (Ser: Genocide, Political Violence, Human Rights) (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 2013); Manfred Quiring, *Der vergessene Völkermord. Sotschi und die Tragödie der Tscherkessen* [The Forgotten Genocide: Sochi and the Tragedy of the Circassians] (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Krzysztof Popek, "Afera Brunnbauer-Balewa a współczesne nurty historiografii bułgarskiej wobec zagadnienia panowania tureckiego w Bułgarii" [The Brunnbauer-Baleva 'Scandal' in the Context of the Schools of Contemporary

propagated via a few popular Bulgarian-language novels published from the 1860s to the 1880s, the ‘crowning achievement’ in this regard being Ivan Vazov’s novel *Pod Igoto (Under the Yoke)*. The author wrote it in Odessa, Russian Empire (today’s Odesa in Ukraine); this novel was published in 1889-1890, and the English-language translation came off the press in 1894 in London.<sup>31</sup> For better or worse, Vazov’s novel remains the main point of reference for Bulgarian literature and culture, and also the symbolical foundation of the Bulgarian national master narrative. Until the turn of the twentieth century, half of secondary school leavers and university graduates in Bulgaria received their education in Russia, which came together with the default anti-Ottoman and anti-Muslim (“anti-Turkish”) attitude.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Russian and Russian-educated officers ran the Bulgarian army until 1887, when its language of command was finally changed from Russian to Bulgarian.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, in the Bulgarian national master narrative, the myth of “Phanariot (Greek) yoke” (фанариотско [гръцко] робство *fanariotsko [grutsko] robstvo*) was more potent than that of the “Turkish yoke” until the Balkan Wars, in the wake of which Greeks left or were expelled from Bulgaria.<sup>34</sup>

However, the myth of “Turkish yoke” stands in sharp contrast to the recorded reality of Pax Ottomanica, which ensured peace, stability and economic prosperity – also in Rumelia (‘Roman lands,’ that is, the Balkans) – between the sixteenth century and the late eighteenth century, or at the time

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Bulgarian Historiography on the Question of Turkish {Ottoman} Rule in Bulgaria] *Studenckie Zeszyty Naukowe Instytutu Filologii Słowiańskiej UJ 2*, no. 2 (2013): 118.

<sup>31</sup> Krzysztof Popek, “Cruel Tormentor or Good Neighbour? Stereotype of the Turk and Bulgarian State Policy Towards the Muslim Minority in 1878–1912,” *Slovanský přehled* 103, no. 2 (2017): 263-265.

<sup>32</sup> Nikolai Genchev *Bulgarskata kultura XV–XIX v.* [Bulgarian Culture in the 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries] (Ser: Za i protiv) (Sofia: Universitetskoto izdatelstvo Kliment Okhridski 1988): 265-266.

<sup>33</sup> Boris Cholopanov and Georgi Georgiev, eds., *Bulgariia prez vekovete. Bulgariia dnes, v slovo, dokumenti i snimki* [Bulgaria Through Centuries: Bulgaria Today, in Words, Documents and Photographs]. (Sofia: Voenno izdatelstvo 1981): 243; Vasil Delov, “Obshtina Kotel” (2019) <https://kotel.bg/vidni-lichnosti-rodeni-v-kotel/vasil-delov/> (Accessed: 28 April 2019).

<sup>34</sup> Georgi M. Grigorov, *Radeteli na bulgarshinata. Narodni buditeli, vuzrozhdentsi, knizhovnitsi, prosvetiteli, revolyutsioneri. Ochertsii i eseta* [Champions of the Bulgarian Nation: National Awakeners, Revivalists, Scholars, Enlighteners, Revolutionaries: Testimonies and Essays] (Sofia: Narodnata biblioteka "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodii" 1995): 15; Mary C. Neuberger, *Balkan Smoke: Tobacco and the Making of Modern Bulgaria* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press 2013): 25-26; Krzysztof Popek, “Między „jarzmem fanariockim” a „jarzmem jezuickim”. Polemiki wokół bułgarskiej kwestii cerkiewnej między periodykami „Bułgaria” a „Dunajski Łabędź” w latach 1859–1861” [Between the ‘Phanariote Yoke’ and the ‘Jesuit Yoke’: The 1859–1861 Polemics Between the Journals *Bulgaria* and *The Danubian Swan* Concerning the Issue of the Bulgarian Church] *Balkanica Posnaniensia. Acta et studia* 22, no. 2 (2015): 55-73.

when Christian Europe was convulsed by a series of genocidal religious wars.<sup>35</sup> Hence, it is hard to discuss Turks and Muslims as victims at the hands of ethnic Bulgarians, even if it was the latter, who overwhelmingly constituted the communist apparatus of repression. Obviously, the Ottoman Empire was not any paradise, either. Non-Muslims, despite enjoying ethnoreligious non-territorial autonomies (millets), were actually second-rank subjects of the sultan. For instance, the practice of *devşirme* “levy of boys” (دوشیرمه, literally “lifting, collecting” in Osmanlıca) from the Christian millets to the empire’s janissary forces (یېڻی چری *yeñi çeri* “new soldier” in Osmanlıca) was often heartbreaking for parents and ended in tragedy for some of these boys, though a few made a high-flying career in the imperial administration. The Ottomans preferred officials recruited through *devşirme* to “old Muslims” for the sake of limiting corruption and nepotism.<sup>36</sup> In the Russian Empire a similar practice of seizing Jewish boys and teenagers (“cantonists”) for the army was practiced between 1827 and 1854, de facto leading to their subsequent Christianization and Russification.<sup>37</sup> Western European empires also used such arbitrary and inhumane methods to seize indispensable workforce, as in the case of “impressment” for forcing boys and young adults into service in the British navy. In the case of Irish-speaking Catholics press-ganged in this manner, it meant de facto conversion to Protestantism and a switch to speaking English only, which was similar to the compulsory change in language and religion, which *devşirme* boys experienced in their janissary units.<sup>38</sup> During the last two centuries, compulsory military service,

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Kemal Çiçek, ed., *Pax Ottomana: Studies in Memoriam Prof. Dr. Nejat Göyünç* (Ankara: Sota 2001); Stephen Fischer-Galati, “Judeo-Christian Aspects of Pax Ottomanica,” in *Tolerance and Movements of Religious Dissent in Eastern Europe*, ed. Béla Király (Ser: Studies on Society in Change, Vol 1; East European Monographs, Vol 13) (Boulder CO: East European Quarterly 1975) (distributed by Columbia University Press, New York); Machiel Kiel “Konjic (Konıçe, Belgradcık), From Hamlet on the Highway to Mulsim Town,” in *Living in the Ottoman Ecumenical Community: Essays in Honour of Suraiya Faroqhi*, ed. Markus Koller and Vera Costantini (Ser: The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage, Politics, Society and Economy, Vol 39) (Leiden: Brill 2008): 347; Ezel Kural Shaw, “The Ottoman Aspects of Pax Ottomanica: The Political, Practical and Psychological Aspects of Pax Ottomanica,” in Király, *Tolerance and Movements of Religious Dissent in Eastern Europe*; Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe Under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (Ser: A History of East Central Europe, Vol 5) (Seattle WA: University of Washington Press 1977), 109, 275.

<sup>36</sup> Kathryn Hain, “Devshirme is a Contested Practice,” *Utah Historical Review* 2 (2012): 165-176.

<sup>37</sup> Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Polsce w zarysie (do 1950 roku)* [The Latest History of Jews in Poland (Since 1950)]. (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 1993): 19.

<sup>38</sup> Denver Brunson, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Ser: Early American Histories) (Charlottesville VA: University of Virginia Press 2013).

as practiced in the majority of Europe's nation-states, has often been an imposition from above on an unwilling population, entailing forced linguistic and/or religious assimilation of soldiers stemming from minorities.<sup>39</sup>

Although succumbing to mythologizing the past may result in a potent unifying national master narrative, this approach is not conducive to objective historiography. Furthermore, when myths are too much at odds with the actual (checkable) reality of the past, the tension may lead to social or political strife, and even to military conflict. How to detect a historical myth? It is a fact or a phenomenon (alongside its 'correct patriotic interpretation'), which is posed as a "historical truth." What is more, the myth of this kind tends to function as a constitutive (nodal) element in a national master narrative, and is evoked, when needed, for the sake of national mobilization. When a scholar aspires to verify the veracity of the myth with the use of documents and other evidence, her efforts are speedily thwarted by public opprobrium and arguments ad hominem, often generated with the employment of administrative measures at the disposal of a given nation-state.<sup>40</sup> A well-known "fact" is a *myth*, when this purported "fact" is not supported by evidence, while oftentimes is politically "sacralized" by taught in school as the "national truth."<sup>41</sup> It is so especially in cases when the administration of a nation-state is summarily deployed for preventing any dispassionate analysis of such a myth ("fact"), and for turning public opinion against the researcher who may dare to commit an unheard of act of "national blasphemy," namely, by attempting to fact-check the myth.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> I benefited from discussing this issue with Konstanty Gebert.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Martina Baleva and Ulf Brunnbauer, eds., *Batak kato miasto na pametta / Batak als bulgarischer Erinnerungsort* [Bataks as a Bulgarian lieu de memoire] (Sofia: Iztok-Zapad 2007); Krzysztof Popek, "The Manipulation of Photographs by Dimitar Cavra and Its Influence on the Creation of the Myth of the Batak Massacre (1876) in Bulgarian Historiography," in: Alicja Bemben et al., eds., *Cryptohistories* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2015): 115-125; Aleksandur Vazekov, "Proektut i skandalut Batak" [The Batak Project and Scandal] *Anamneza* 4 (2009): 132-203.

<sup>41</sup> For instance, in present-day Bulgaria school textbooks propose, without any hint of irony, that the world's first-ever civilization emerged on the territory of today's Bulgaria. Furthermore, Bulgaria is posed as Europe's oldest surviving state and at the same time one of the modern world's extant 12 civilizations. In addition, Bulgarian is proposed to be one of the globe's oldest languages endowed with a writing system. Cf. Konstantin Konstantinov, *Uchebnik po rodinoznanie. Ot 1. do 4. Klas* [Textbook of the Knowledge About the Motherland {that is, Bulgaria}: From Grade 1 Through Grade 4] (Dobrich: Izdatelstvo Iliia Vulchev 2016), p. 9 and back cover blurb.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Jerzy Topolski, *Jak się pisze i rozumie historię. Tajemnice narracji historycznej* [How to Write and Comprehend History: The Secrets of Historical Narrative] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie 1996): 203-204.

Although obviously not involved in the production of the Bulgarian national master narrative, Turkish scholars also have a problem with taking a proper note of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing. Thus far, no Turkish-language history or analysis of this tragic event has been published. The few books devoted to this ethnic cleansing, which appeared in Turkey, are collections of expellees' life stories that tend to be published in extremely low print runs.<sup>43</sup> The myopia was caused, first, by the long-lasting separation of national Turkish history from the non-national Ottoman past. In this schema, from Ankara's perspective, the events in the political and social life of Bulgaria's Turks and Muslims properly belong to the latter, *not* the former. Second, from the perspective of historical dis/continuities, the main point of reference for Turkish scholars is the concept of *muhacir*, that is, "migrant, refugee."<sup>44</sup> This Turkish term of Arabic origin<sup>45</sup> refers to Muslim populations displaced from the territories of the Ottoman Empire, seized between the eighteenth century and 1923 by the Christian empires of Austria and Russia, and by the Balkan nation-states. Later, this term was also applied to Muslims of various ethnicities expelled from Bulgaria, Greece,<sup>46</sup> Romania, Serbia, or Yugoslavia to Turkey. However, in

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Seher Boykoy, ed., *25. Yılında Bulgaristan'dan 1989 Göçü* [The 25th Anniversary of the Emigration from Bulgaria] (Bursa: Nilüfer Belediyesi 2015); Nurettin Yılmaz, *Ömür serüveni* [Life Stories] (Ser: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu Yayınları, Vol 67; Tarihe not düşmek: 1989 göçü, Vol 4) (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Arsen Avagyan, Tiran Lokmagazyozyan and Ragıp Zarakolu, eds., *Türk dış siyasetinde Kuzey Kafkasya siyasi muhacereti (1920-1971)* [Immigration from the North Caucasus in Turkish Foreign Policy (1920-1971)] (Ser: Türkiye incelemeleri dizisi) (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları 2013); Ufuk Erdem, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e muhacir komisyonları ve faaliyetleri (1860-1923)* [Immigration Commissions and Their Activities from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic (1860-1923)] (Ser: Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları, Series IV/A-2-2.4, Vol 17) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları 2018).

<sup>45</sup> *Muhacir* is the Turkish (Osmanlıca) phonemic adaptation of the Arabic term مهاجر *muhājir*, hence, in English it is also transliterated directly from Arabic as *muhajir*. In turn, this word is derived from the Arabic term هجرة *Hijra* "migration," which denotes the move of Muhammed and his followers from Mecca to Medina. The inhabitants of Medina who accepted them, became known as the أنصار *'ansar* "supporters," for their hospitality to the *muhajirs*. Therefore, it has been a useful concept for Islamic polities whenever they want to justify the reception of Muslim refugees, like the case of Syrians in contemporary Turkey. (I thank Egemen Yılıgür for this insightful comment.)

<sup>46</sup> In the context of the 1923 "population exchange" (that is, parallel expulsions) between Greece and Turkey (known in Turkish, as the *Türkiye-Yunanistan Nüfus Mübadelesi* "Population Exchange between Turkey and Greece"), the usual Turkish term for these expellees is *mübadil* "exchangee." Sometimes, by extension, this term is employed for referring to Turkish (and Muslim) expellees from other Balkan states, though in most cases these expulsions were unilateral, rather than reciprocal population exchanges (cf Ayfer Özçelik, *Uluslararası Denizli ve Çevresi Tarih ve Kültür Sempozyumu. Bildiriler 6-7-8 Eylül 2006 Denizli* [International Symposium on History and Culture in Denizli: Proceedings, 6-7-8 September 2006] (Denizli: Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü 2007): 294). I thank Egemen Yılıgür for bringing my attention to this term.

the ideologized process of the continuing Turkicization of the Turkish language,<sup>47</sup> after World War II, the Arabo-Ottoman term *muhajir* was replaced with the Turkic neologism *göçmen*.<sup>48</sup> In the context of Turkish ethnolinguistic nationalism, the Turkish term *soydaş* “ethnic kin, co-ethnics” became popular in the late twentieth century for referring to Turkish (and Slavophone Muslim) expellees from the Balkans.<sup>49</sup> This longue durée perspective that conflates temporal and spatial discontinuities between the Ottoman Empire and Turkey is also informed by important studies of western scholars,<sup>50</sup> which tend to present the experience of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing as part and parcel of Turkish ‘migration’ (*göç*) from Bulgaria to Turkey.<sup>51</sup>

### **What is in the Name?**

From this aforementioned longue durée perspective, the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing appears to be a mere spike in the two-centuries-long continuum of ‘(forced) migrations’ of Muslims from the northern Black Sea littoral, the Caucasus and the Balkans in the wake of Christian (imperial or national) conquests. This Turkish historiographic interpretation of the events reinforces the Bulgarian approach, which proposes that the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing was none other than such a spike in the continuous (voluntary)

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<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Ser: Oxford Linguistics) (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Faik Gökay, *Kime niyet, kime kismet* [Who Did What to Whom?] (Ser: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu Yayınları, Vol 64; Tarihe not düşmek: 1989 göçü, Vol 1) (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu 2013); “Podręczny słowniczek pojęć” [A Glossary of Terms] in *Dzieje Turków* [A History of the Turkic Peoples] (Ser: Pomocnik Historyczny, Vol 3) (Warsaw: Polityka 2016): 11; Beğlan B. Toğrol, *112 yıllık göç (1878-1989). 1989 yazında üç aylık göçün tarihî perspektif içinde psikolojik incelemesi* [The 112-Year-Old Migration: The Psychological Analysis of the Migration in the Summer of 1989, Which Lasted Three Months, With a Historical Background] (Ser: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü, Vol 464) (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü 1989).

<sup>49</sup> This word stems from the Turkic word *soy* “kin, lineage” and the nominal suffix *-daş* (cf “Bulgaristan'da soydaş direnişinin simgesi Türkan bebek anıldı” [The Symbol of Our Co-Ethnics in Bulgaria: Baby Türkan Commemorated] *Hürriyet*, 26 December 2017. [www.hurriyet.com.tr/bulgaristanda-soydas-direnisinin-simgesi-turka-40690987](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bulgaristanda-soydas-direnisinin-simgesi-turka-40690987) (Accessed 3 May 2019)). Egemen Yılıgür kindly reminded me about this term.

<sup>50</sup> Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (Princeton NJ: Darwin Press 1995); Alexandre Toumarkine, *Les migrations des populations musulmanes balkaniques en Anatolie (1876-1913)* [The Migrations of Muslim Populations in the Balkans and Anatolia (1876-1913)] (Ser: Cahiers du Bosphore, Vol 13) (Istanbul: Isis 1995).

<sup>51</sup> Ayşe Parla, *Precarious Hope: Migration and the Limits of Belonging in Turkey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2019).

migration of Turks (and Slavophone Muslims, or Pomaks) from Bulgaria to Turkey in the period from the Russian founding of this nation-state in 1878 to the fall of communism. In turn, western scholars also adopt this interpretation labelling this type of population movement as “emigration,” while reserving the biblical term “exodus” for the “spikes,” as induced by warfare or the use of blatant coercion or force.<sup>52</sup>

Hence, it should not be surprising that the most thorough reference on ethnic cleansing in Europe published thus far, *Lexikon der Vertreibungen: Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Lexicon of Expulsions: Deportations, Forced Expulsions and Ethnic Cleansing in twentieth-century Europe), refers to the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing as “an act of emigration” (*Emigrationsakt*) and “mass flight” (*Massenflucht*).<sup>53</sup> The book’s authors refuse to recognize the tragic event as ethnic cleansing (*ethnische Säuberung*) or expulsion (*Vertreibung*), though they acknowledge that “some elements of expulsion” (*Elemente der Vertreibung*) could be detected in it.<sup>54</sup>

As a result, a self-reinforcing feedback has been created between Bulgarian, international and Turkish interpretations of the character of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing. Because Bulgarian and Turkish scholars and commentators tend to refer to it as “(e)migration,” their international counterparts – in good faith – tend to adopt this term, too. In turn, Bulgarian and Turkish scholars and commentators fall back on such an international opinion to “prove” their point. Rarely does anyone try to break out of this solipsistic vicious circle in order to carry out a check-up by applying a definition of emigration or ethnic cleansing to the facts on the ground.

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Höpken, “Der Exodus: Muslimische Emigration aus Bulgarien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert” [The Exodus: Muslim Emigration from Bulgaria in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries] in Reinhard Lauer and Hans Georg Majer, eds., *Osmanen und Islam in Südosteuropa* (Ser: Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Neue Folge, Vol 24) (Berlin: De Gruyter 2014): 303-431.

<sup>53</sup> Detlef Brandes, Holm Sundhaussen and Stefan Troebst, eds., *Lexikon der Vertreibungen: Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* [Lexicon of Expulsions: Deportations, Forced Expulsions and Ethnic Cleansing in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe] (Vienna: Böhlau 2010): 95-6, 666-7.

<sup>54</sup> Brandes, Sundhaussen and Troebst, eds., *Lexikon der Vertreibungen*, 95.

Hence, in Bulgaria the zhivkovite propaganda's term Голямата екскурзия *Goliamata ekskurziia* ('Big Excursion') continues predominating as the preferred label for the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing (cf Apostolova 2008), while that of *1989 Göçü* ('1989 Migration') in Turkey.<sup>55</sup> Bulgarian scholars, who wish to use the former term more critically, put it in between inverted commas as "*Goliamata ekskurziia*,"<sup>56</sup> while very few propose to speak of екзодус *ekzodus* ("exodus").<sup>57</sup> However, often the supposedly required inverted commas are forgotten or omitted in the case of the former term, making it back into a zhivkovite euphemism, which is preferred by Bulgarian nationalists. On the other hand, the term "exodus" comes with no discrete definition and confusing biblical references on top of that, which are not appropriate in the case of the overwhelmingly Muslim expellees.

In the early 1990s, the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing was still known in Turkey under the more appropriate term of *büyük göç* ("Big Migration"),<sup>58</sup> or that of the *1989 Bulgaristan zorunlu göç* ("1989 Forced Migration from Bulgaria").<sup>59</sup> Seldom is this expulsion ever referred to as *etnik temizlik* ("ethnic cleansing"),<sup>60</sup> or *kov(ul)ma* ("expulsion")<sup>61</sup> in Turkish-language literature. The Turkish reluctance to

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Seher, ed., 25. *Yılında Bulgaristan'dan 1989 Göçü*.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Veselin Angelov, "*Goliamata ekskurziia*". *Prinuditelnoto izselvane na etnicheski turtsi ot Bulgariia, iuni-avgust 1989* ['The Big Excursion: The Forced Deportation of Ethnic Turks from Bulgaria, June-August 1989] (2 vols) (Sofia: At author's expense 2011); Cahdar Marinov, "'Vuzroditelniat protses' i 'goliamata ekskurziia' (1984-1989 g.)" ['The Revival Process' and the 'Big Excursion' (1984-1989)] in Ivailo Znepolski, ed., *Istoriia na Narodna republika Bulgariia* [History of the People's Republic of Bulgaria] (pp 511-515). (Sofia: Ciela and Institut za izsledvane na blizkoto minalo 2009); Khristo Khristov. 2016. "S 'Goliamata ekskurziia' Zhivkov dopulnitelno vlosnil ikonomicheskoto polozhenie v Bulgariya [With the 'Big Excursion' {Which He Ordered} Zhivkov Further Worsened the Economic Situation in Bulgaria]. *Mediapool* 2 Sept 2016 [www.mediapool.bg/s-golyamata-ekskurziya-zhivkov-dopalnitelno-vloshil-ikonomicheskoto-polozhenie-v-bulgaria-news253686.html](http://www.mediapool.bg/s-golyamata-ekskurziya-zhivkov-dopalnitelno-vloshil-ikonomicheskoto-polozhenie-v-bulgaria-news253686.html) (Accessed 27 September 2016).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Avramov, *Ikonomika na Vuzroditelniya protses*, 261.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Ercüment Konukman and Kutlay Doğan, *Tarihi belgeler ışığında büyük göç ve Anavatan* [The Great Immigration and the Motherland: In Light of Historical Documents] (Ankara: Türk Basın Birliği 1990).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. "1989 Bulgaristan Zorunlu Göç" [The 1989 Forced Migration {of Turks} from Bulgaria] 2012 <http://1989zorunlugoc.blogspot.co.uk> (Accessed 12 July 2016); "Sofya'dan zorunlu göç" [Sofia {Orders} Forced Migration] *Cumhuriyet*. 26 May 1989, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Dokuzuncu Askerî Tarih Semineri bildirileri: Türkiye cumhuriyeti'ni ilgilendiren genel konular ile XIX. ve XX. yüzyıllarda Osmanlı devleti ve Türkiye cumhuriyeti'nin Balkanlar'daki askerî, siyasî, iktisadî ve toplumsal ilişkileri: 22-24 Ekim 2003, İstanbul* [The Proceedings of the Ninth Military History Seminar: Turkey in the 19th and 20th Centuries from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic in the Broader Context of the Balkans and with Further Contributions on Military, Political, Economic and Social Relations in the Republic of Turkey: 22-24 October 2003 in Istanbul] (Vol 1) (Ser: Gnkur. Askerî Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı yayınları) (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basım Evi 2005): 242-243.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Tarihte Türk-Bulgar ilişkileri* [The History of Turkish-Bulgarian Relations] (Ser: Gnkur. Askerî Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Başkanlığı yayınları) (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basım Evi 2004): 144.

use a straightforward term for referring to the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing is caused by Ankara's unwillingness to bring any international attention to Turkey's ongoing ethnic cleansing of Kurds, which flared up into a full-scale civil war during 1984-1999.<sup>62</sup> As a result, the Turkish government was also careful not to criticize the Zhivkov regime too vociferously when the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing was in full swing. They knew that Bulgaria was ready to point to Ankara's ongoing ethnic cleansing of Kurds, first, for shaming Turkey, and second, in order to show world public opinion that Sofia's treatment of Bulgarian Turks was more lenient (or "civilized").<sup>63</sup> And it appears that to this day Sofia is ready to employ this 'argument' for silencing any of Ankara's criticisms of Bulgaria's mistreatment of the country's Turks and Slavophone Muslims (or Pomaks).<sup>64</sup>

## A Way Forward

The first step toward an improved comprehension of the past is a rejection of sacralized historical myths, seen as 'undisputed and unanalyzable truths.' Second, continuities and discontinuities applied for probing into the past should be nuanced for the sake of improved comprehension of analyzed events, and must not be treated as an unmodifiable given. For instance, the Turkish penchant for the *longue durée* view of the emigration of Muslims from the Ottoman Empire's shrinking borderlands conquered by Christian powers from the eighteenth century through the turn of the twentieth century could be enriched with a reflection on the colonial techniques of ethnic cleansing and genocide as developed and deployed by the Russian Empire alongside the Black Sea's northern and western shores,

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Cengiz Gunet and Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, eds., *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation* (London: Routledge 2014).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Salakh Bedreddin, *Kiurdite – muchenitsi v sobstvenata si rodina* [The Kurds – Martyrs in their Own Homeland] [translated from the Arabic] (Sofia: Asotsiatsiia KAVA za kiurdska kultura 1992); "Bulgaria: Kurds Stand Fast Against Turk's Oppression," *Daily Report: Eastern Europe. Index* 8 (1985) 29 November.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Delco [= Delcho] Balabanov, *Kurtlerin [sic] Soy ve Tarihleri* [The Noble Kurds in Dates] (Sofia: Bulgaristan Kurdistan'la Dayanisma Komitesi 1998); Petur Petrov, ed., *Mezhdunarodna konferentsiia za Kurdistan* [The International Conference on Kurdistan] (Sofia: Bulgarski kulturno-informatsionen tsentur za Kurdistan and Komitet za solidarnost s Kurdistan 1994).

and in the Caucasus.<sup>65</sup> Then such a change in methodology would make it possible to assess Russian actions in the Caucasus in 1864 as the Circassian Genocide,<sup>66</sup> or analyze the 1877-1878 Russian conquest of Bulgaria in terms of ethnic cleansing and genocide.<sup>67</sup> However, this methodological leap in thinking about the past would require scaling the political obstacle in the form of Ankara's insistence on *not* recognizing the 1915 Ottoman genocide of Armenians and Assyrians<sup>68</sup>.<sup>69</sup> From the *longue durée* perspective, the Ottomans learned this murderous technique of politicized 'population management' from imperial Russia.

On the other hand, through the lens of Bulgarian history, the period of 1877/1878-1989 can be defined as a "national revolution,"<sup>70</sup> or the period of the construction of the Bulgarian nation-state through the unceasing policy of ethnoreligious and ethnolinguistic homogenization ("purification," or de-Turkicization and de-Islamization). In this ideological framework Muslims, Jews and non-Bulgarian-speakers were defined as 'un-Bulgarian aliens' who had to be assimilated or expelled in order to produce "pure" (that is, through and through Orthodox and Slavophone) Bulgaria.<sup>71</sup> The Ottoman tradition of the millet system (or non-territorial autonomies for ethnoreligious communities) and Bulgaria's international obligations, alongside the tradition of interethnic and interconfessional

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<sup>65</sup> Dana Lyn, "Imperial Alchemy: Resettlement, Ethnicity, and Governance in the Russian Caucasus, 1828-1865" (PhD diss. University of California, Davis, 2007).

<sup>66</sup> Richmond, *The Circassian Genocide*.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. James Donaldson, *Atrocités Russes en Asie et en Roumelie pendant les mois de Juin, Juillet et Aout 1877* [The Russian Atrocities in {Ottoman} Asia and Rumelia in the Months of June, July and August 1877] (Constantinople [Istanbul]: Imprimerie de A. H. Boyajian 1877) <http://ubsm.bg.ac.rs/engleski/dokument/1844/atrocits-russes-en-asie-et-en-roumlie-pendant-les-mois-juin-juillet-et-aout-1877> (Accessed 27 October 2016).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books 2004).

<sup>69</sup> The 1915 genocide of Armenians and Assyrians appears to shame today's Turkey, as long as no clear distinction is maintained between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. The latter was founded in 1923, so the Turkish nation-state cannot be seen as guilty of this genocide, which was perpetrated by the Ottoman administration. Obviously, this does preclude personal responsibility in the case of Ottoman officials who then became civil servants in Turkey (cf Benjamin C. Fortna, *The Circassian: A Life of Esref Bey, Late Ottoman Insurgent and Special Agent* (New York: Oxford University Press 2016)).

<sup>70</sup> I realize that the term "national revolution" is not employed in Bulgarian historiography. It is my own coinage introduced for distinguishing between the period when it was "normal" and "acceptable" to assimilate by force and expel people in the political quest for ethnolinguistic and ethnoconfessional "purity" of the Bulgarian nation-state, on the one hand, and postcommunist pro-European Bulgaria, on the other hand, where such policies are condemned and not employed.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War*, 140.

*komşuluk* (“[good] neighborliness,” known as *комшулук komshuluk* in Bulgarian),<sup>72</sup> mitigated this divisive policy of ‘purification’ until Bulgaria’s 1908 declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire. Until that time Slavophone Muslims (or Pomaks) and Turks in Bulgaria were largely left to their devices, while their emigration to the Ottoman Empire was mostly voluntary, though frequently triggered by the dramatically changing economic situation (mainly due to the seizure and redistribution of large Muslim owners’ land among Bulgarian peasants<sup>73</sup>). The point break is 1912-1914, or the period of the Balkan Wars. During this conflict and afterward, that is, until 1989, migrations of Turks and Slavophone Muslims (or Pomaks) from Bulgaria and their assimilation became invariably forced in their character, with moments of intensification, which are easily recognizable as acts of ethnic cleansing.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, in 2012, the democratic and liberal deputies gained the sufficient majority in the Bulgarian Parliament for adopting the momentous *Declaration Condemning the Attempted Forced Assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims*.<sup>75</sup> This *Declaration* unequivocally recognizes the 1989 expulsion of Bulgaria’s Turks (and Slavophone Muslims, or Pomaks) as *етническо прочистване etnichesko prochistvane* “ethnic cleansing”<sup>76</sup> (see the English translation of this *Declaration* below). Curiously,

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<sup>72</sup> The term *komşuluk* may also denote “neighborhood,” and stems from Turkic *komşu* “neighbor,” which, among others, yielded *komshi* “neighbor” in Albanian, or *комшија komšija* “neighbor” in Macedonian.

<sup>73</sup> Krzysztof Popek, “‘A Body Without a Head:’ The Elite of the Muslim Minority in the Bulgarian Lands at the Turn of the 20th Century,” *Balkanica Posnaniensia. Acta et studia* 25 (2018): 133-4.

<sup>74</sup> Krzysztof Popek, “Muhadžirowie. Uwagi na temat emigracji muzułmanów z ziem bułgarskich na przełomie XIX i XX wieku” [Muhajirs: Remarks on the Emigration of Muslims from the Bulgarian Lands in the 19th and 20th Centuries] (pp 47-69). *Balkanica Posnaniensia. Acta et studia* 23 (2016): 64-5.

<sup>75</sup> “Deklaratsiia osuzhdashta opita za nasilstvena asimilatsiia na bulgarskite miusiulmani” [The Declaration Condemning the Attempted Forced Assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims] (Sofia: Narodno Sobranie na Respublika Bulgariia 2012) 11 January. [www.parliament.bg/bg/declaration/ID/13813](http://www.parliament.bg/bg/declaration/ID/13813). (Accessed 14 July 2015).

<sup>76</sup> Implicitly (by stating that it adheres ‘to the highest achievements of European and world thought, [and to] international law in the sphere of human rights and minority rights’ [“Deklaratsiia osuzhdashta opita za nasilstvena asimilatsiia na bulgarskite miusiulmani”]), this *Declaration* espouses the internationally adopted definition of ethnic cleansing, as derived from the 1994 UN opinion, namely, “Based on the many reports describing the policy and practices conducted in the former Yugoslavia, ‘ethnic cleansing’ has been carried out by means of murder, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, extra-judicial executions, rape and sexual assaults, confinement of civilian population in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportation of civilian population, deliberate military attacks or threats of attacks on civilians and civilian areas, and wanton destruction of property. Those practices constitute crimes against humanity and can be assimilated to specific war crimes. Furthermore, such acts could also fall within the meaning of the Genocide Convention” (“Letter Dated 24 May 1994 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council” (New York: United Nations 1994). 24 May, 33 [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/1994/674](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1994/674) (Accessed 16 February 2016)). Furthermore, the 1998 Rome

this highly significant document is relatively unknown in Bulgaria, and almost completely unknown outside the country, including Turkey. The first full English translation of the *Declaration* was made available only in 2019.<sup>77</sup> Not that this document is without any problems, for instance, the use of the sobriquet “Bulgarian Muslims” in order to avoid mentioning the ethnonym “Turks.” This usage, which verges on the denial of identity, appears to perpetuate the zhivkiovite tradition of claiming that after 1985 there were no minorities left in communist Bulgaria, so the country’s Turks had to be referred to as “Bulgarian Muslims.”<sup>78</sup> This unfortunate collocation continues to be employed in today’s Bulgaria for dubbing (and at times, for suppressing) Pomaks (Slavophone Muslims).<sup>79</sup> I infer that the use of this term in the *Declaration* is a result of a compromise with nationalists in the ranks of Bulgarian democrats.

But whatever the shortcomings of this document may be, the *Declaration* can successfully function as a foundation for long overdue and much needed Bulgarian-Turkish reconciliation, meaning between Bulgaria and its Turkish minority, and between Sofia and Ankara. Jan Józef Lipski, a precursor and one of the foremost figures of the post-1989 German-Polish reconciliation, wisely noticed that “[w]e must tell all to each other [that is, the Poles to the Germans and vice versa...]. Without this the burden of the past will not let us enter a common future” (*Musimy powiedzieć sobie*

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Statute of the International Criminal Court among various ‘crimes against humanity’ (Article 5.1.a), in Article 7, among others, defines the two following crimes against humanity, which fulfill the aforementioned definition of ethnic cleansing, namely, “‘Deportation or forcible transfer of population,’ mean[ing] forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts from the area in which they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law” and “‘Persecution,’ against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender [...], or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, [...] mean[ing] the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity” (“Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court” 17 July 1998 [http://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99\\_corr/cstatute.htm](http://legal.un.org/icc/statute/99_corr/cstatute.htm) (Accessed 29 February 2016)).

<sup>77</sup> *Declaration* in Tomasz Kamusella, “Words Matter: Bulgaria and the 30th Anniversary of the Largest Ethnic Cleansing in Cold War Europe” *New Eastern Europe* (2019) 25 February. <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2019/02/25/words-matter-bulgaria-and-the-30th-anniversary-of-the-largest-ethnic-cleansing-in-cold-war-europe%E2%82%AC%80%BF/> (Accessed: 29 April 2019).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Jeri Laber, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Bulgaria: An Update* (Ser: Helsinki Watch Report) (New York: US Helsinki Watch Committee 1987).

<sup>79</sup> Elka Mincheva, “‘Sluchaiat Iakoruda’ – mezhdurzhavna politika i samoidentifikatsiia. 2. ‘Makedontsi’ i ‘turtsi’ – 90-te godini na XX vek” [‘The Iakoruda Case’ – Between Self-Identification and State Policy. 2. ‘Macedonians’ and ‘Turks’ in the 1990s] *Bulgarska etnologiia* 30, nos. 3-4 (2005): 82-101.

wszystko [...]. Bez tego ciężar przeszłości nie pozwoli nam wejść we wspólną przyszłość).<sup>80</sup> Hopefully, this truth will not be lost on Bulgarian and Turkish elites, including historians, especially those who are responsible for school curricula and education.

Unfortunately, Turkish scholars appear not to know the *Declaration* and they obediently toe the line of Turkey's political sensibilities, preferring *not* to speak of "ethnic cleansing" in the case of the 1989 expulsion.<sup>81</sup> Their Bulgarian counterparts, almost invariably label this tragedy with the zhivkovite term "*Goliamata ekskurziia*," mostly placed in between inverted commas. In this manner, quite curiously, Bulgarian researchers and intellectuals question the word and spirit of the *Declaration*. As an explanation, they maintain that they employ this now historical term for the sake of avoiding anachronism. But when pushed further about this issue, Bulgarian scholars go to lengths to emphasize that this usage is *not* any adoption or endorsement of zhivkovite propaganda. They claim that they use this term in a critical and objective manner, the required distancing latter supposedly ensured by the tenuous device of inverted commas.<sup>82</sup>

For the sake of comparing the coining and usage of terms employed for labeling emotionally and politically sensitive historical events, I propose to analyze how relevant terminology has developed for referring to the Jewish Holocaust. The German-language neologism *Endlösung* ("Final Solution") was the Nationalist Socialist (Nazi) coinage of the Third Reich's administration for the policy of exterminating Jews (and Roma) as a people. Beginning at the turn of the 1950s, the Greek neologism

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<sup>80</sup> Jan Józef Lipski, "Odprężenie i pojednanie. Polemika z Günterem Grassem" [Détente and Reconciliation : A Polemic with Günter Grass] in Jan Józef Lipski, *Powiedzieć sobie wszystko.... Eseje o sąsiedztwie polsko-niemieckim / Wir müssen uns alles sagen.... Essays zur deutsch-polnischen Nachbarschaft* [edited by Georg Ziegler] (Gliwice and Warsaw: Wydawnictwo „Wokół Nas” and Wydawnictwo Polsko-Niemieckie 1996 [1985]), 89-90.

<sup>81</sup> Perhaps, a new opening in Turkish scholarship on the subject of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing may be offered by İbrahim Kamil's monumental eight-volume collection of primary sources *Bulgaristan Türkleri ve göçler. Bulgaristan Komünist Partisi gizli belgeleri (1944-1989)* [Bulgarian Turks and Migrations: Secret Documents of the Communist Party of Bulgaria [1944-1989]] (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları), which was published in 2018. Significantly, four volumes – that is, half of this work – are devoted to the latter half of the 1980s alone. And out of these four volumes, the three last ones focus on the planning and the carrying out of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing. These proportions seem to vindicate the 2012 Declaration's decision to label the anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim policies pursued during the last five years of communism in communist Bulgaria, as 'forced assimilation,' and the 1989 expulsion as 'ethnic cleansing.' I thank Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov for bringing this collection to my attention.

<sup>82</sup> *Round Table on the 'Revival Process' in Bulgaria.*

Holocaust (Ολοκάυτωμα *Olokáftoma*, “sacrificial offering [to gods] by burning”) became popular across the English-speaking world. Earlier, this English-language neologism had been applied for referring to the 1895 massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The biblical term *Shoah* (שואה “calamity, disaster, catastrophe” in Hebrew) appeared in the English-language press in the context of the genocide of Jews already in the early 1940s. Jews prefer this term to the non-Jewish name “Holocaust,” especially after the latter came to be used for referring to genocides of other peoples, for instance, the Roma.<sup>83</sup>

In the English-language literature, all the three terms were employed in an equal measure until the late 1960s. Subsequently, “Holocaust” became the preferred term, while the frequency of the use of ‘Shoah’ took over ‘Final Solution’ at the turn of the twenty-first century. Nowadays, the term “Holocaust” is employed in English-language publications over seven times more frequently than the two other terms.<sup>84</sup> In German-language literature, the term *Endlösung* dominated until the late 1970s. Nowadays, the term “Holocaust” is employed four times more frequently in German-language publications than *Endlösung*.<sup>85</sup>

It is high time that in Bulgaria and Turkey a discussion would be devoted to the clear-cut recognition of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing and to the question with what name(s) it should be referred to. Without this step, research on the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing will continue to be hindered and questioned. Significantly, any discussion or research must involve victims of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing, so they could voice what their memories, expectations and wishes may be. These victims

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<sup>83</sup> Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, “Why Do We Call the Holocaust ‘The Holocaust?: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Labels,” *Modern Judaism* 9, no. 2 (1989): 197-211.

<sup>84</sup> “Final Solution,Holocaust,Shoah” *Ngram Viewer* 2019  
[https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Final+Solution%2CHolocaust%2CShoah&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct\\_url=t1%3B%2CFinal%20Solution%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CHolocaust%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CShoah%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CFinal%20Solution%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CHolocaust%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CShoah%3B%2Cc0](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Final+Solution%2CHolocaust%2CShoah&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CFinal%20Solution%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CHolocaust%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CShoah%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CFinal%20Solution%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CHolocaust%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CShoah%3B%2Cc0) (Accessed 29 April 2019).

<sup>85</sup> “Holocaust,Endlösung” *Ngram Viewer* 2019  
[https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Holocaust%2CEndl%C3%B6sung&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2000&corpus=20&smoothing=3&share=&direct\\_url=t1%3B%2CHolocaust%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CEndl%C3%B6sung%3B%2Cc0](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Holocaust%2CEndl%C3%B6sung&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=20&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CHolocaust%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CEndl%C3%B6sung%3B%2Cc0) (Accessed 29 April 2019).

should become the main subject of this discourse and they should be entrusted with leading the discourse.

Only in the mid-1960s, thirty years after the war, with the Frankfurt Trials, did West Germany begin coming to terms with the fact that the majority of wartime Germany's elite were directly or indirectly involved in the preparation and execution of the Holocaust.<sup>86</sup> This breakthrough occurred thanks to the lone courageous and principled Attorney General of the *Land* of Hessen, Fritz Bauer (1903-1968). He was a Jew and opposed the Allies' and West Germany's complacency, or the "pragmatic" approach that entailed forgetting about the past for the sake of opposing successfully the Soviet bloc in the course of the Cold War. Bauer brought as many as possible war criminals to the dock from the territory of his jurisdiction. Most of his counterparts in the other *Länder* of Germany remained inactive in this regard. At present, with the privilege of hindsight, we can say that Bauer singlehandedly saved Germany's honor.<sup>87</sup>

Now, three decades after the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing, Bulgaria still awaits a Fritz Bauer of its own, who would save the country's honor by fulfilling the *Declaration's* heartfelt appeal, "We call upon the Bulgarian Justice and the Attorney General of the Republic of Bulgaria that they ensure completion of the case against the perpetrators of the so-called 'Revival Process'."<sup>88</sup> Thus far, not a single perpetrator of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing has been brought to justice. At the same time, the victims and their descendants, both in Bulgaria and Turkey, must suffer the indignity of the burgeoning personality cult of the ethnic cleanser Todor Zhivkov, who is incongruously celebrated with the flag of the European Union unfurled at his monument in Pravets.<sup>89</sup> Even worse, Bulgaria's incumbent Prime

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<sup>86</sup> Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963–65: Genocide, History and the Limits of the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2010).

<sup>87</sup> Ronen Steinke, *Fritz Bauer, oder, Auschwitz vor Gericht* [Fritz Bauer, or Auschwitz in the Dock] (Zürich: Piper 2013).

<sup>88</sup> "Deklaratsiia osuzhdashta opita za nasilstvena asimilatsiia na bulgarskite miusiulmani."

<sup>89</sup> Tomasz Kamusella "Bulgaria: An Unlikely Personality Cult" *New Eastern Europe* (2018) 7 September <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2018/09/07/bulgaria-unlikely-personality-cult/> (Accessed 29 April 2019).

Minister, Boiko Borisov, praises this ethnic cleanser as a “great Bulgarian leader”.<sup>90</sup> Borisov is the sole EU leader who publicly extols an ethnic cleanser. Unfortunately, this example encourages nationalists and populists, who nowadays rework the Bulgarian national myth of the “five centuries of Turkish yoke” as the петвековният геноцид *petvekovniiat genotsid* “five centuries of the {Bulgarian} genocide {as perpetrated by Turks}.”<sup>91</sup> It is a shame, to say the least, that myths should take over common sense.

## Appendix

The Bulgarian Parliament’s momentous 2012 Declaration is relatively unknown in Bulgaria itself and utterly unknown abroad. There is no full translation of the Declaration into any foreign language. Hence, to ameliorate this gaping omission, I translated this important document into English. The Declaration adds importantly to Europe’s liberal tradition of freedoms and human rights.

### **The Declaration Condemning the Attempted Forced Assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims**

We, the Deputies of the 41<sup>st</sup> [Bulgarian] National Assembly

- referring to the highest achievements of European and world thought, [and to] international law in the sphere of human rights and minority rights;

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<sup>90</sup> “Borisov: Todor Zhivkov kato vseki chovek si ima svoite slabosti, ima i svoite uspekhi” [Borisov: Todor Zhivkov, Like All Had Some Weaknesses, {While on the Other Hand} Achieved Success, Too] *Mediapool* (2011) 7 September [www.mediapool.bg/borisov-todor-zhivkov-kato-vseki-chovek-si-ima-svoite-slabosti-ima-i-svoite-uspehi-news183746.html](http://www.mediapool.bg/borisov-todor-zhivkov-kato-vseki-chovek-si-ima-svoite-slabosti-ima-i-svoite-uspehi-news183746.html) (Accessed 16 March 2016); Emiliia Karaabova “Borisov: Greia navsiakude, no ne moga da stigma Zhivkov [Borisov: Shines in Every Aspect, but I Cannot Understand {Why He Needs to Praise} Zhivkov] *Trud* (2010) 6 November [www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=666842](http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=666842) (Accessed 16 March 2016).

<sup>91</sup> Veselin Bozhkov, *Petvekovniiat genotsid* [The Five Centuries of the {Turkish} Genocide {of Bulgarians}] (Sofia: Izdatelstvo Propeler 2013).

- referring to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;

- expressing our deepest regret that since the beginning of the democratic changes, for 20 years, the Bulgarian justice system has failed to punish the perpetrators of the attempted **forced assimilation** of Bulgarian Muslims, including the so-called “Revival Process;”

- expressing our firm conviction that no statute of limitation can be applied to such crimes,

WE DECLARE THAT:

1. We condemn vociferously the assimilation policy of the [Bulgarian] totalitarian communist regime against the Muslim minority in the Republic of Bulgaria, including the so-called “Revival Process.”

2. We declare the expulsion of more than 360.000 Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin [from Bulgaria to Turkey] in 1989 constitutes a form of **ethnic cleansing** committed by the [Bulgarian] totalitarian regime.

3. We call upon the Bulgarian Justice and the Attorney General of the Republic of Bulgaria that they ensure completion of the case against the perpetrators of the so-called “Revival Process.” Efforts to terminate this case with the use of the statute of limitations means shifting the blame [for this atrocity] onto the Bulgarian people, away from the actual perpetrators.

This Declaration was adopted by the 41<sup>st</sup> National Assembly on 11 January 2012 and is stamped with the official seal of the National Assembly.

Bulgarian Parliament, Sofia, 11 January 2012<sup>92</sup>

NB: I put in bold the terms “forced assimilation” and “ethnic cleansing.”

*Translated from the Bulgarian by Tomasz Kamusella*

*NB: The English translation may be freely reproduced,  
subject to citing its source and the translator’s name*

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<sup>92</sup> “Deklaratsiia osuzhdashta opita za nasilstvena asimilatsiia na bulgarskite miusiulmani.”