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HISTORY EXTENDED ESSAY*

**“The Historical Development Process of the Turks of
Bulgaria”**

Name of the Supervisor: Tümay Timuçin Aslan

Name of the Candidate: Gamze

Surname of the Candidate: Karaca

Number of the Candidate: D1129099

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Research Question: What are the socioeconomic, cultural and political aspects of the historical process of the Turks of Bulgaria and the outcomes and impacts of the latest migration in 1989 on Turkey in this regard?

Abstract

The problems concerning the minorities within the borders of a certain country have always been a matter of international consciousness, as well as the internal affairs of this very country. ‘Minority rights’ is a comprehensive issue, of which the implications are still visible and considerable, even in the political and socioeconomic world of the 21st century. In this essay, the historical process of the development of the Turks of Bulgaria, their socioeconomic, cultural and political rights, and the outcomes of the latest migration in 1989 on Turkey will be discussed.

The very aim of this study has been indicated as an overall evaluation of a history spread not only over years, but also over different regimes and lifestyles. In almost a hundred years, Bulgaria has undergone various regimes, from principality to monarchy, democracy and socialism, and in each period, the government’s approach towards the minorities has been through a certain change. The unsteady policies applied to the Turks in Bulgaria have forced them to migration, since they were frequently exposed to violation of rights and in this process, the situation of the Turks of Bulgaria have become an international affair. Even though their rights have been guaranteed by both bilateral and multilateral treaties today, the process they have been through is an important issue of world diplomacy and also a milestone of today’s definition of minority rights. Thus, the background of the Turks of Bulgaria is a significant point to be mentioned and this essay is created with the intention of serving this very idea.

The research of the study has been carried out with various tools, by analyzing several novels, essays and newspapers. A chronological order of the incidents has been followed, in order to strengthen the causality between the events.

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Contents:

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1. The origin of the Turkish population in Bulgaria</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>1.1 The 1877-1878 Turco-Russian War</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>2. Turks of Bulgaria During the Bulgarian Principality (1877 – 1908)</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>3. Turks of Bulgaria During the Bulgarian Monarchy (1908 – 1944)</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>4. Turks of Bulgaria During the People’s Republic (1944 – 1989)</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>4.1 The Economic Outcomes of the Migration in 1989 on Turkey</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>5. Turks of Bulgaria in the Democratic Period (1989 – Today)</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>6. Conclusion</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>7. Bibliography</i>	<i>16</i>

Introduction

Along with the end of Cold War period, the efforts of the ethnical identities - who have been remained in the background by several totalitarian governments - to appear and find themselves in both democratic platforms and conflict areas ended up with creating different concepts such as *minority*, *minority groups* and *ethnical quarrels* in the international relations terminology.

Minority groups can be considered as the diversity of cultures as well as it can be considered as the source of internal and external crisis and disagreements. The problems regarding the minority groups are issues to be evaluated within the frame of human rights, peace and democracy, as a necessity of 21st century. However, it is difficult to name a fully comprehensive legal formulation at international level which covers the protection of rights of minority groups. Along with the legislative gap in the rights of minorities, the definition of ‘minority’ is also an undetermined issue in the international arena.

The case of the Turks of Bulgaria is a fair example of the issue of minorities throughout the history, which substantially enables a better understanding of the situation by the point of view of not only the people, Turks of Bulgaria themselves, but also the host country, Bulgaria and the motherland, Turkey.

1. The Origin of the Turkish Population in Bulgaria

The history of the Turkish population in the Balkans and accordingly Bulgaria dates back to the establishment period of the Ottoman Empire. (1300-1451) When the Ottomans took over the Simpe Castle on the Gallipoli from the Byzantines in 1353 and thus stepped on Roumelia, along with using this region as a military base, they located immigrant Turkmens in these lands and initiated the Settlement Policy which would last for 150 years. The Ottomans actually followed the aims of creating a communal union within the region and leaving no foreign aspects behind – mostly ‘Christian’ components here – after the conquests of Balkans and thus, they had made many economic and social arrangements in order to maintain a settled lifestyle in the area. This approach was entirely far from destroying the Christian components in the region and had the very objective of a compensation policy indeed. Despite the fact that the Settlement Policy was applied during only the establishment years – a time period of 15 decades, it can be said that it is the very basis of the mass migration from Anatolia to Roumelia and the Turkish population in Bulgaria mainly strikes roots in this period.

1.2 The 1877 – 1878 Turco-Russian War

The 1877-78 Turco-Russian War forms the breaking point of the Ottoman’s hegemony on the Balkans which lasted for 550 years. While the Ottoman Empire was undergoing an obvious political disintegration and disengagement process ; Russia, whose status was getting substantially critical in the international arena, had chosen to stress the policy of Pan Slavism which she started to follow after the 1870s and which basically referred to establishing a one and major Slav Empire in the Balkans. After she signed the Treaty of Peste in 1877 with Austria - who had similar objectives in the Balkans – which contained articles preventing the actions leading to the policy of Pan Slavism, the Turco-Russian War stroke immediately.

After the war which resulted in the defeat of the Ottomans, Treaty of San Stefano was signed – which would never be implemented. This treaty is the very first time that Bulgaria was politically emphasized in the international platform. According to the treaty, an autonomous Bulgarian Principality was to be established, whose boundaries were defined as to the river Danube on the north; Black Sea on the east; Aegean Sea on the south and Albania on the north. However, with the Treaty of Berlin to be signed afterwards, those indicated

Boundaries of Bulgaria would be narrowed, and until then, the Bulgarian governments would define establishing the Bulgaria of San Stefano as their most significant external policy.¹

All in all, Bulgarian Principality was established in the Danube district of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. Approximately 70% of the fertile arable land belonged to the Turks and almost half of the population was composed of Muslims. At this period, 1.613.000 Bulgarians and 1.801.000 Turks comprised a total population of 3.414.000.²

Thus, in the Balkans and accordingly Bulgaria whose status has changed in the international arena, the status of the Turks in the social life had also altered. The policies of inhabiting together and tolerance, which have been applied by the Ottomans in the region for centuries, had reversed itself and starting from this date, the Turks of Bulgaria had been through various treatments.

2. Turks of Bulgaria During the Bulgarian Principality (1877-1908)

The Bulgarian Principality who declared her autonomy with the Treaty of Berlin, thus became a means of the Pan Slavism Policy of Russia in the region, and even took part in several contra-Turkish actions. *According to the determination of Justin McCarthy, approximately 1.253.500 people had become immigrants because of the period starting with the 1877-78 Turco-Russian War.*³ Along with such actions, the creations of the Turkish-Islamic Culture in the region were also damaged and the Turks had basically become a minority in the lands which used to be their home.

In the Treaty of Berlin, it was noted that *no discrimination between the Turkish minority and the Bulgarian majority could be sought; the members of the minority could benefit from all the social and civil rights as the Bulgarians and that no religious difference could prevent them from possessing those very rights*⁴. However, these decisions of the treaty was mainly neglected and obviously disregarded. While the *Bulgarian government made the primary education compulsory for the individuals who are bounded to Bulgaria as a citizen in*

¹Özlem, Kader. *The Transformation of Turks of Bulgaria in Historical Process and the Effects of EU Membership Process of Bulgaria to Turkish Minority*. Thesis. Uludağ Univ ersity. Ankara: Journal Of International Social Research, 2008. p:16

² Şimşir, Bilal N. *Türk Basınında Bulgaristan Türkleri: Zorla Ad Değiştirme Sorunu. [Turks of Bulgaria in the Turkish Pres: Issue of Changing of Names by Force]* Ankara: Başbakanlık Basın-Yayın ve Enformasyon Genel Müdürlüğü, 1985, p:42

³ Justin, McCarthy. *Ölüm ve Sürgün [Death and Exile]*. Trans. Umar Bilge. 2nd ed. İstanbul: İnkılap, 1998, p:05.

⁴ Şimşir, Bilal N. *Bulgaristan Türkleri [The Turks of Bulgaria]*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1986, p:32.

the first Bulgarian constitution which was enforced in 1879⁵, the Turkish education institutions of the region had undergone a process of deformation: Within this period, almost 1500 Turkish education institutions were destroyed, a vast majority of Turkish teachers were forced to immigration and the financial aids providing budgets for the Turkish schools were reduced While the architectural pieces were also affected by these actions against the Turkish minority, the remaining buildings were taken from the Turks and nationalized⁶.

Turkish Schools, Teachers and Students in Bulgaria According to Bulgarian Statistics⁷

<i>School Years</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
<i>1894–5</i>	<i>1,300</i>	<i>1,516</i>	<i>72,582</i>
<i>1895–6</i>	<i>1,341</i>	<i>1,549</i>	<i>75,160</i>
<i>1907–8</i>	<i>1,234</i>	<i>1,566</i>	<i>63,516</i>

Along with those drawbacks, in the period of 1877-1908, the moral and material loss of the Turks of Bulgaria forced the people – especially the rich and intellectual group – to immigrations, and the economically insufficient group behind was left alone in the middle of this injustice and destruction.

3. The Turks of Bulgaria During the Bulgarian Monarchy (1908 – 1944)

During the times the Second Constitutional Period was declared in the Ottoman Empire, the Bulgarian Principality declared her freedom as well, after 30 years of autonomy. This new Bulgarian Monarchy was recognized by the Ottomans with a protocol signed in 1909, in İstanbul which also consisted of articles regarding the situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. According to the Protocol, *the Turkish minority in Bulgaria would be able to benefit from all kinds of civil and political rights; and could possess equality of rights and freedom of religion; the Turkish schools and mosques would also be under protection. Along with these, the productions of the Turkish-Islamic culture would be secured*

⁵ 1879 Bulgaria Constitution Du Royaume De Bulgaire Du 16 Avril [The Bulgarian Constitution of 16 April]. Article: 78

⁶ Memişoğlu, Hüseyin H. *Geçmişten Günümüze Bulgaristan'da Türk Eğitim Tarihi [Turkish Education History in Bulgaria from Yesterday to Today]*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2002, p:74-75.

⁷ Şimşir, Bilal N. *Turks of Bulgaria, 1878-1985*. London: K. Rustem, 1988, p:9

by the Laws of States, and the Ottoman government would be entitled to these productions.⁸ Even if the rights and freedoms of the minority were frequently underlined within the protocol, the reflection of the necessities on the social life and the insufficiency of the arrangements especially in the field of education had a reverse effect on the Turks of Bulgaria. The intense rate of migration until that period caused decrease in the number of teachers, students and relatively education institutions in the country.

Turkish Primary Schools, Teachers, and Students in Bulgaria

(1909-10 School Year)

[Taken from the Archives of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education]⁹

<i>Provinces</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Students</i>
<i>Burgaz</i>	82	106	4,195
<i>Varna</i>	293	334	13,659
<i>Vidin</i>	6	22	309
<i>Vratsa</i>	4	8	204
<i>Küstendil</i>	1	1	8
<i>Plovdiv</i>	46	58	3,476
<i>Pleven</i>	20	25	1,107
<i>Ruse</i>	302	365	18,260
<i>Stara Zagora</i>	54	71	2,382
<i>Tirnovο</i>	66	66	3,558
<i>Shumen</i>	340	365	16,918
<i>Total</i>	1,214	1,521	64,103

While the already existing Turkish schools were in a quite inadequate and unhealthy conditions, the Bulgarian government was somewhat unwilling to provide financial support for these institutions. Whatsmore, while the Turkish minority was encouraged or basically forced to contribute to the budgets of the Bulgarian schools, any provision of financial aid for the Turkish institutions was prohibited. Süleyman Sırrı Tokay, one of the Turkish teachers who experienced this very injustice, writes as follows:

⁸ Ömer, Lütem E. *Tarihsel Süreç İçinde Bulgaristan Türklerinin Hakları. [The Right of the Turks of Bulgaria During the Historical Period]* Ankara: ASAM, 2003, p:45

⁹Şimşir, Bilal N. *Turks of Bulgaria, 1878-1985.* London: K. Rustem, 1988. p:233

“The officials of the municipality and the members of the council to which this village is attached are Turkish. However, although they provide for all the needs of the public (Bulgarian) school, they cannot make provision in the budget of their own school for even a single notebook for poor students. Can a community or council without resources give its national affairs desired form? Of course everything is stalled. They cannot pay the salaries of the teachers; they cannot buy in time the materials needed at the school. While the children of Bulgarian neighbours are educated in a healthy building with nothing lacking, the Turkish children view them with envy and sadness.”¹⁰

In a broader expression, it can be said that the principle of the equality of civil and social rights which was agreed in theory, thus lost its function in practice.

1912-1913 Wars of Balkans cut the cord between the Otoman Empire and the region entirely, while it extended the Bulgarian boundaries. Along with the Treaty of İstanbul, signed in 1913, September 29, Bulgaria included in its borders the regions like Kırçali, Koşukavak and Mestanlı where the Turkish population was in majority. The treaty also consisted of some articles concerning the rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, as well as of new arrangements of their situation in social life: For instance, the Turkish-Muslim population on the lands of Bulgaria could change their nationality and become Bulgarian, and if they wish, they could return to their nationality of origin in 4 years. In a general view, the treaty can be evaluated as a step taken in favor of the rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria in social, political, cultural and religious means.

The effects of World War I were reflected on the Turkish minority in a constructive way. According to the Treaty of Neuilly which was signed between Bulgaria and the Allies in 1919, November 27, it was decided that *the Bulgarian government would not seek any discrimination of religion, language or nationality, and preserve the rights of the minorities within her borders.*¹¹ In a broader sense, it can be said that the Treaty of Neuilly consisted of quite progressive articles for the rights of the minorities.

In spite of the fact that their rights were emphasized and progressed in several legal arrangements such as the Treaty of Neuilly, the Treaty of Lausanne and 1925 Turkish-Bulgarian Friendship Treaties – which included similar decisions -; the Turks of Bulgaria had migrated from Bulgaria as 10-12 thousands in this period. The reasons of this migration were generally related to the inner instabilities of Bulgaria: Between the two world wars, in a

¹⁰ Süleyman, Tokay Sırrı. *Bulgaristan'da Türk Öğretmeni. [Turkish Teacher in Bulgaria]* Anayurt Newspaper [Ankara] 1 Nov. 1954, p: 18

¹¹ Şimşir, Bilal N. *Turks of Bulgaria, 1878-1985*. London: K. Rustem, 1988. p:374-375.

period of 20 years, the transformation of monarchy in multiparty system consisted of violence and coups; and the acts of the fascist governments to come after the Farmer Party were quite repressive towards the Turkish minority. Legal and international arrangements once more could not be enough for the stabilization of the situation of the Turks in the region.

As a general evaluation of the period between the establishment of the Bulgarian Monarchy and the World War II, it can be concluded that the rights and freedoms of the Turks of Bulgaria were underlined and secured in various international treaties and both countries put forth efforts in this regard at least in theory through the legal process. However, due to several internal and external reasons, the continuance of migration remained as a vicious cycle in this period as well.

It must also be emphasized that that the approaches against the minority in the region were generally government-based: The peoples of Turkey and Bulgaria who lived together for centuries remained loyal and faithful to each other in social relationships and the policy of ‘othering’ was basically followed by the government and politicians.

4. Turks of Bulgaria During the People’s Republic (1944 – 1989)

During the transition of communism as the new regime in Bulgaria in 1944, along with the differences of ethnicity and understanding of nationalism, differentiation of ideologies was formed between Bulgaria and Turkey. While the government claimed that the variety of ethnicities along the community did not matter during the first decade of the new system, after the adaptation of the regime into the social life was completed, it was revealed that the promises that had been made earlier were not entirely true. With the Bulgarian government’s demands to Turkey about accepting 250.000 Turks of Bulgaria as immigrants within 3 months in the year of 1950, approximately 150.000 people migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey.¹²

With the appearance of Todor Jivkov on the stage of Bulgarian Communist Party in April, 1956, the principle, which claimed that ethnic identity could not be a matter of discrimination, was drastically abandoned. While the disclosures of the Government of Sofia made the strengthening intolerance against the Turkish minority clear, they also happened to be the indicators of the ongoing and probable assimilation policies to be applied on Turks. In this regard, it can be claimed that the period of Jivkov had been a milestone for the historical process of Turks of Bulgaria, since the actions against the Turkish minority had risen to the

¹² Şimşir, Bilal N. *Turks of Bulgaria, 1878-1985*. London: K. Rustem, 1988. p:112-113

maximum level and the Turks were left unable in both the economic and social life: With the legislations in 1946, Turkish minority schools and related movable/immovable goods were nationalized. The ratio of lessons taught in Turkish was reduced to 1/3 in the years 1951-1952. During the same time period, the subject of *minority schools* was abolished and the Turkish and Bulgarian schools had begun to be merged. Along with these, Turkish minority schools were entirely closed and Turkish lessons were lessened to one hour per week in the national curriculum in the year of 1959. And in 1974, this application came to an end, too.¹³

This assimilation policy which became obvious with Jivkov in charge, continued until December, 1984. In a broader sense, it can be said that it was the “Bulgarnization” process which was trying to be applied, since all the actions point a such systematic: The transformation of Turkish names into Bulgarian names, the closing of the mosques on account of communism and the limitations of religious freedoms are the indicators of a certain ‘cultural assimilation’ policy; whereas the stoppage of financial support to the regions in which Turkish people inhabited and the taking of money from the people who spoke in Turkish point an economical isolation. The tortures and interrogations which the people, who reacted against such implementations, had been through can be interpreted as physical sanctions as well.¹⁴

The reasons behind those actions taken against the Turkish minority were quite obvious: While the Turkish population increased with an annual rate of 25%, the Bulgarians were going through a serious decline in their population and it was said that the last Bulgarian would die in 124 years.¹⁵ These statistics triggered the Bulgarian Communist Party to follow the policy of decreasing the number of Turks in the country. It was feared that a substantially increasing Turkish population would change the ethnic composition and pattern of Bulgaria: Less Turkish people meant a more Bulgarian Bulgaria.

¹³ Özbir, Kamuran. *Bulgar Yönetimi Gerçeği Gizleyemez [Bulgarian Government Can not Hide the Truth]*. İstanbul:1986. p: 41.

¹⁴ Çetin, Turhan. *The Socio-Economic Outcomes of the Last Turkish Migration (1989) from Bulgaria to Turkey*. Thesis. Gazi University, 2008. Ankara: Turkish Studies, 2008. p:15

¹⁵ Cebeci, Ahmet. *Bulgaristan Türkleri. [Turks of Bulgaria] Türk Kültürü* Apr. 1968. p: 342-47.

Birth Rates of the Bulgarian, Turkish and Gypsy Populations in Bulgaria (‰)¹⁶

Years	Bulgarian	Turkish	Gypsy
1956	8.4	25.2	25.8
1965	5.5	21.7	14.3
1974	6.5	17.7	13.3

Although these applications had the very aim of weakening the Turkish identity and fraying the bonds between the individuals, the Turks in the region had hold each other and their ethnic identities faster than before instead, and this mechanism *morally* reversed itself.

As a natural result of this process, the fact of migration once more relapsed, and almost 130.000 Turkish people had migrated from Bulgaria to outer countries, mostly Turkey, between the years 1969-1978.¹⁷

Within the same years, with both the two sided agreements between Turkey and Bulgaria (The Agreement of Migration) and the international regulations (United Nations Charter, The Engagement of Genocide, The Agreement on the Removal of Discrimination of Races, The Agreement on Civil, Political, Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, Universal Declaration on Human Rights and Helsinki Accords) the rights of the Turks were once more emphasized, at least on paper.

The changing of Turkish names in Bulgarian names by force in December, 2004 was the last drop for both the Turkish minority and relation of Turkey and Bulgaria. While the Turks started to form groups and organize protest demonstration, the Turkish and world media stressed the issue in a broader sense and an intense oppression was established on the Bulgarian government in an international level. As a result, the government of Sofia had to retreat and Todor Jivkov opened the border gates by stating that the ‘Bulgarian Muslims’ could return to Turkey in case that they desired to. And thus, while 310.000¹⁸ Bulgarian Turk migrated to Turkey in the summer of 1989; this migration had the very title of being the most major mass migration in Europe after World War II.

¹⁶ Şimşir, Bilal N. *Turks of Bulgaria, 1878-1985*. London: K. Rustem, 1988. p:78

¹⁷ Balkan Göçmenleri Federasyonu. (Federation of the Immigrants of the Balkans) *Yayınlanmamış Göç İstatistikleri. [Unpublished Migration Statistics] Report. 2006, October 27*

¹⁸ **Balkan Göçmenleri** Federasyonu. (Federation of the Immigrants of the Balkans) *Yayınlanmamış Göç İstatistikleri. [Unpublished Migration Statistics] Report. 2006, October 27*

4.1 The Economic Outcomes of the Migration in 1989 on Turkey

The unconditional and unplanned acceptance of approximately 310.000 immigrants within a time period of six months affected the Turkish economy comprehensively. While providing a stable lifestyle and accomodation for the immigrants was a quite deep issue to deal with, employing this population became even more difficult. Even if the migration had been spread over years, it would still have been challenging for Turkey to deal with the socioeconomic burden of this phenomenon¹⁹, thus, experiencing a such process within a quite short time period made the progress even harder. However, by the efforts of both the government and non-governmental organizations, the population coming from Bulgaria was somehow integrated in the Turkish society in many fields:

By the end of 1989, 88.960 immigrants applied for jobs. Among these, 56.531 applied to Turkish Employment Organization and 32.429 to provincial governor's offices. Of these aplicants, 15.898 were employed by the Turkish Employment Organization and 17.747 by the provincial governor's offices, making 33.646 people in total, approximately 37.8% of the population, employed. The provinces in which the immigrants were employed most were İstanbul, Bursa, İzmir, Sakarya, Edirne and Tekirdağ.²⁰

Apart from that, Turkish Employment Organization and UNICEF carried out a joint-project for women immigrants and opened traditional Turkish handicrafts courses. From ceramics, pottery, embroidery and lacework to knitting and sewing, the courses were taken by many individuals and the graduates of these courses could find various jobs. In order to extend the fields in which the population coming from Bulgaria could be occupied, with the cooperation of United Nations Development Program, further occupational courses on tourism, textile, services, manufacturing, construction and electronics were offered within the Kindred Project. With the help of this program, a total of 9150 people were trained and given certificates.²¹

As educational measures, a vast range of students were placed in various schools. Initially, 1879 students were placeid in unpaid boarding schools whereas 75 primary school, 100 secondary school and high school and 150 university students were given scholarships by

¹⁹ Ömer, Lütem E. *Tarihsel Süreç İçinde Bulgaristan Türklerinin Hakları. [The Right of the Turks of Bulgaria During the Historical Period]* Ankara: ASAM, 2003. p:33

²⁰ Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DPT), *Bulgaristan'dan Türk Göçleri [Turkish Migrations from Bulgaria]*. Ankara: DPT Sosyal Planlama Başkanlığı Hizmete Özel Rapor, 1990. p.36.

²¹ Türkiye İş Kurumu, 1993. *Soydaş Projesi (1989-1993)*. [Online] Received :7.09.2006, at URL: <http://www.iskur.gov.tr>

Social Aid and Solidarity Fund. 1800 students were placed in universities and 2300 teachers were employed after in-service training.²²

In this process, Turkey has made considerable efforts, both by herself and with international cooperations, in order to help the adaptation of the population coming from Bulgaria to the social, economic and cultural life. An agreement was signed between Turkey and United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to aid immigrants. Again, in line with the social state principles, a commission established by provincial governors steadily visited immigrants' houses²³ and sought solutions for their problems regarding food, health, education and other needs. Not only the official and governmental organizations but also the non governmental organizations and the peoples of Turkey themselves, contributed to the amelioration process of Turks of Bulgaria: From opening new bank accounts to fund raising activities, both economically and spiritually, the immigrants were always supported. They were quite welcome to their new home.

5. Turks of Bulgaria in the Democratic Period – Bulgaria Today

After 1989, parallel to the transition period of Bulgaria, the government has headed towards fundamental changes in both internal and external strategies. While Bulgaria followed the policy of strengthening her bonds with the West in the finalization of Cold War, having the membership of international organizations has constituted the center of the Bulgarian external policy. As for the internal policy, the formerly applied minority policies have been abandoned and several reforms in the preservation of rights of the minorities have been observed. These reforms are the natural result of the Bulgarian inner dynamics, but this is also a well known fact that the negative reaction carried out in the international platforms against Bulgaria concerning the assimilations policies in 1984-85 also have a supplementary role since Bulgaria's integration process with the west is an ongoing incident. It can be claimed that Bulgaria has been through a considerably efficient process in the protection of minority rights.

²² Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DPT) [State Planning Institution], *Bulgaristan'dan Türk Göçleri [Turkish Migrations from Bulgaria]*. Ankara: DPT Sosyal Planlama Başkanlığı Hizmete Özel Rapor, 1990. p.36.

²³ Özlem, Kader. *The Transformation of Turks of Bulgaria in Historical Process and the Effects of EU Membership Process of Bulgaria to Turkish Minority*. Thesis. Uludağ University. Ankara: Journal Of International Social Research, 2008.

6. Conclusion

Today, the policies of the Bulgarian government applied to the Turkish minority in her borders are taken into consideration as actions against humanity not only in the international arena, but also by the Bulgarian government herself. In the interview given by Jelio Jeleu, the first democratic president of Bulgaria, on the newspaper *Hürriyet* in June 15, 2009; it is frankly stated that with the overwhelming of the minority rights, there will be no freedom. Jeleu indicated that the assimilation policies applied to the Turks caused Bulgaria to lose prestige in the international arena and added: "It is a stain in our history."

Even though there still exists several problems in Bulgaria regarding the minorities, such as the inability of education in Turkish, the Turks of Bulgaria possess considerable rights after a long and challenging historical process. While the economic burden of the migration is still an efficient matter in the internal affairs of Turkey, the adaptation of the Turks of Bulgaria to their motherland is also an ongoing process to be completed. All in all, it can be claimed that the historical process the Turkish minority in Bulgaria has been through is a fair example of the development of the 'minorities' a concept in the whole world and the issue broadly contributed to the understanding the minority rights and the diversity of ethnicities in today's definition of human rights

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