The National Self-Determination Projects of Greece and Bulgaria: The Role of Ethnic Bessarabian Diasporas

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Abstract: The article is devoted to an analysis of the roles of the Bulgarian and Greek diasporas in Bessarabia in achievement of the national self-determination projects of Greece and Bulgaria. Based on historical and ethnographic materials, the paper demonstrates the conditions under which ethnocultural groups became the nucleus of national liberation movements in the 19th century. Emphasis is placed on the fact that successful rebellion in Greece in 1821–1832 and the war in Bulgaria in 1876–1877 became possible due to the active position of ethnic diasporas in Odessa and Bessarabia. Their activities proceeded in several directions: emergence of the idea of national revival; financial support for the national struggle by Maecenas from diasporas; and formation of people's militias that played the role of an advance detachment in national liberation wars.

The Black Sea Region is an area of stable transcultural interaction. Throughout history, tribes, ethnic groups, nation states, empires and complex integration systems have played an active role there. This area, together with the Balkans, may serve as an illustration for exploring the civilizational factors and ethnic influence on geopolitical processes in both the present and the past. This region may be taken as a model to investigate processes entailing the formation and interplay of ideas and sensibilities that determine the dynamic of cultural and political borders.

Besides forming the long-term memory of regional socio-cultural actors, the knowledge accumulated in the form of experience also determines the capacity of the information and value system channels in the region. The actual channels of exchanges in knowledge are the modes and methods for the regulation of behaviour, the mechanisms for the succession of cultural and household experience, the modes of socio-cultural adaptation under conditions of changes in political power, and commemorative practices by groups and states.

Herewith, the deep mechanisms of interaction between the parties to regional geopolitical relations always relied on the advantages accorded by the status of 'periphery'. Above all, this refers to the traditions of 'contact space', 'marginal space', 'space of intercultural communication', 'transit region', etc. These regions, which are always remote from centres, are precisely the most favourable for exchanges of human resources, goods, ideas and knowledge. The peripheries

frequently become spaces for the emergence of diasporas of cataclysm, as fluid political borders transform formerly coherent cultural areas into patchworks of separated local groups. Such groups experienced numerous nation-building models. As a result, they either lost their cultural specificity, or developed such forms of diasporic behaviour that allowed them to manipulate identities in line with the political environment.

This article presents an analysis of the influence of diasporas on the formation of national movements in Bulgaria and Greece. Emphasis is placed on forms of diasporic behaviour when the groups are able to act as guardians of the 'cultural matrix'. Also, ideas of reviving their cultures and states were formed within these groups. The exchange of knowledge became a vital aspect of the interaction between diasporas and nation states. It presumed the integration of the accumulated experience and resources in the diaspora during the formation of nation and state. The aim of this paper is to analyse the influence of the diasporas of Greeks and Bulgarians in Bessarabia on the processes of nation-building in Greece and Bulgaria. The subject of research is the transfer of knowledge, information, resources and ideas between the diasporas and nation-states at the stage when national self-determination were being achieved in Greece and Bulgaria.

The present article was written on the basis of extensive research that has been conducted by the author since 2000 during the annual ethnographic expeditions to the southern Ukraine in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology and Ethnology of Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University in Ukraine. The gathering of field and archival materials focused on the examination of the social and cultural processes in the cultural and political borderland. Research papers that described geopolitical (Koch 2012) and functional (Koch 2015) features of the region were published as a result. These works reveal the features of Bessarabia as a transit and contact region situated between several geopolitical centres. The research on social processes in the borderland continued within the research program "Social Transformations in Borderland: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova" in 2013–2014. This program examined the conditions under which diasporas were compelled to adopt social practices that allowed them to lobby for their interests (Koch 2014a). A number of publications examined different aspects of the diasporas in southern Ukraine, such as: features of the linguistic environment (Koch 2008), analysis of adaptation strategies in compact settlement areas (Koch and Samaritaki 2005–2006) and in cities (Koch 2012c; Koch 2016a), features of behavioural strategies and identification practices of local ethnic diasporas (Koch 2011). These works focused on the regional practices of adaptation that are specific to local diasporas.

During the international research program "The Greeks of Ukraine: History and Culture" that was conducted in cooperation with Odessa branch of the Hellenic Foundation for Culture, the author conducted research into the compact settlements of Greeks in southern Ukraine and in urban communities of Greeks (Koch 2014b). This research was designed to analyse the features of local identity in a crisis situation (Koch 2012b). The identified features of the Greek and Bulgarian diasporas in southern Ukraine were the social practices of ethnic group presentation (Koch 2013), the ability to change identity as an adaptation tactic (Koch 2016b), and the ability to lobby for common interests (Koch 2014a). Thus, the research on Greek and Bulgarian diasporas, as agents of nation-building in their states, flows organically from previous works. The analysis of connections between the activities of diaspora communities and political events in Greece and Bulgaria between the 1820s and 1870s was conducted by the following researchers: Ivan Zabunov (Zabunov 1981), Boris Bilunov (Bilunov 1986), Lidiia Stepanova (Stepanova 1981), Iuriĭ Priakhin (Priakhin 1994, 130) et al. However, in most of these works, the ethnic groups were viewed as objects of state policies implemented by political centres.

The role played by ethnic diasporas during the revival periods of their nations led to the gradual development of an integrated network of transnational and national institutions. The grounding of diasporas on such system of connections allowed them to act as independent parties to political processes. This is why the present article is focused on research into the system of interactions between diasporas and nation states, with the supposition that the subjectivity of these diasporas preceded the appearance of their nation-states.

The loss of independent development by the Balkan nations in the 14th–15th centuries interrupted the natural development of their nations and introduced a number of variables to this process. The interruption of the nation-building process is usually connected to a change in vectors of national memory, together with the construction and "appending" of lost and broken informational links under circumstances characterized by the loss of independent development. The national revival processes that were activated in the Balkans in the 18th century, as well as the struggle for self-determination, required recovering the history of the oppressed nations and ensuring succession from preceding generations.

Reconstruction of the system of traditional connections seemed, on the one hand, appealing to the most archaic parts of social culture and, on the other hand, required the "reconstruction" of lost knowledge on the integrity of social and cultural systems (Koch and Prigarin 2013).

The revival of independence and statehood for both Greece and Bulgaria began with the actualization of ethnic culture and the formation of national self-identification of these nations within the largest diaspora that had grown in the North Black Sea Region in the 18th century. These ethnic groups acted as custodians of the full ethnocultural complex that provided a "return" to the beginning (religion, language, household priorities). Initially, the formation of Bulgarian and Greek diasporas coincided with the period of their national revival and made it possible to organize national liberation movements in their mother countries.

The Black Sea Region including Bessarabia is a political and cultural borderland. Until the 17th century, these territories were marked on medieval maps as '*Loca Deserta*' (empty space; see Koch 2015). A disputed territory that did not see any stable state borders after the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia, it became an arena for long-term conflicts between the major empires: the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*), the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire. The idea of a nation-state and its sovereignty within a national territory, as established by the Westphalian system, encouraged empires to expand. Competing political centres implemented geopolitical and cultural projects with regard to these disputed peripheral territories. They had to legalize their right to be present and rule there. The related ethnic groups that were able to satisfy the political interests of these geopolitical actors served as the objects of such a 'patronage' policy.

The wars of the 17th–19th centuries radically changed the ethnic and social structures of the North Black Sea Region. Although Bessarabia in this period was a territory ravaged by wars and had a thinly dispersed population, the weakness of the state made it a refuge for serfdom and absolutism, a destination of escape from the West (the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia), East and North (Russia, Poland, Austria). Christians from the Ottoman Empire (Greeks, Bulgarians, Gagauz), Germans, Swiss and Jews from the Duchy of Warsaw and South-west Germany readily moved there. At the end of the 18th century, Bessarabia in fact was divided into areas under Moldavian, Turkish and Nogai rule (Palamarchuk 2005, 6–9).

As a result of several Russo-Ottoman wars, these territories became part of the Russian Empire and the Orthodox world. After acquiring the North Black Sea region, Russia needed a loyal and culturally similar population that would be able to develop these virgin lands. Thus, state protectionism had the following aims: economic development of the territory, settlement of the borderland by groups that were loyal to the authorities and organization of a geopolitical corridor to the Balkans. After the formation of large cultural groups of Greeks, Bulgarians, Gagauz and Albanians, this region was often called a part of the 'Greater Balkans'.

The majority of the diasporic groups may be characterized as labour-mobilized diasporas, historically, and diasporas of 'cataclysm'. With regard to the Greeks and the Bulgarians, the specific aspects of their development in the Black Sea Region and dynamic of their social statuses allowed them to be represented in different roles: 1) as *indigenous people*, whose ethnogenesis was inextricably connected with the Black Sea Region, provided that ethnogenesis is understood as a long-term process of acquisition of ethnocultural patterns, rather than the fact of complete formation; 2) as an *ethnic group* (diaspora of 'cataclysm') that, as a result of socio-political processes – separation from a coherent ethnic territory by state borders – emerged within the frameworks of "other" states. An example of this is the fact of existence of 'Greater Bulgaria', which included Bessarabia, Dobrudja and Macedonia, or the 'Hellenic World', which comprised all lands that previously had been part of the political and cultural sphere of the Eastern Roman Empire; 3) as an *ethnic minority* that was formed as a result of agrarian colonization (labour migration) driven by economic factors, so that, as a consequence, the group's identity became closely linked to the colonized territories. This is possible if group formation is considered the result of the confessional and economic influence of the Ottoman Empire and Russia's protectionist policy; 4) as a *group of emigrants* who, in the course of repeated waves of migration, transformed into a *multi-genealogical diaspora* by assuming organizational forms from the individual communities and developing national-cultural and political institutions.

Russia's protectionist policy toward foreign colonists was set forth in a dozen of manifestos and resolutions. The beginning of this process was marked by the Manifesto of 1762 issued by Catherine II, *Vyzyvnoĭ Manifest Ekateriny II* (On inviting foreign immigration), and the Manifesto of 1763, *Manifest o daruemykh inostrannym pereselencam avantazhakh i privilegiiakh* (On Granting Privileges to Foreign Migrants; see Manifest ot 22 iiulia, 313–16). Henceforth, the state policy of protectionism was stipulated by the following documents: Resolution on Establishment of the Chancellery of Guardianship of Foreigners (1763); Regulations for "Invited" City Settlers, who were Greeks and Bulgarians by nationality, from the Archipelago and Other Foreign Places to Odessa (1795); Resolution on the Privileges of Settlers to the Novorossiia Gubernia from Turkey (1802); Resolution on Rules of Acceptance and Settlement of Foreign Colonists (1804); Regulations on the Government of the South-Russia Colonies (1818); Resolution on Settlement in the Bessarabian Region by Bulgarians and Other Migrants from Transdanubia (1819); Regulation on Restrictions on Further Migration of Foreigners to Russia (1819); Resolution on Supervision and Settlement of Bulgarian Migrants and Other 'One Faith Believers' to Russia (1830) (see Polnoe sobranie zakonov). The provisions of common law were herewith preserved for a long

time in order to implement internal regulation of ethnic communities (Dzherela 2013, n.p.).

Thus, after 1812, the idea of broad autonomy was propagated in the region. Through the Resolution of 23 July 1812, Alexander I declared that "residents from the Bessarabian region are vested with their laws", i.e. the right to broad self-government under the rule of Russian laws. So the colonists, to whom the group of Bulgarians and Greeks belonged, were a privileged sector of the Empire's population. The benefits granted to them led to an influx of migrants and assured their loyalty to the government.

The collective right to a social and cultural space, "positive" discrimination by the state, became one of the conditions for the preservation of an active ethnic identity in these groups. Apart from that, this was facilitated by: group adaptation (the majority of the agrarian settlers preserved the community structure), significant social and demographic resources and enclave resettlement.

In general, the creation of the Greek and Bulgarian diasporas had a pragmatic character. They perceived resettlement as "internal" migration within their "own" cultural area. Thus, both groups were connected to this territory historically. For the Greeks, these territories had been familiar since the seventh century BC (the period of Greek colonization of the North Black Sea Region). For Bulgarians, They were the territories of their early ethnogenesis in the seventh century AD (the history of Kubrat's Bulgaria and the First Bulgarian Empire are directly connected to the historical roots of this nation). Such a position made it possible, in course of formation of the national concept, to appeal to origins, to select the "high-demand" elements for the construction of a positive image of the nation, without which its "revival" seemed impossible.

Both groups had vast experience and historical connections in 'hosting culture'. The common religion and, connected to that fact, significant impact of Greeks and Bulgarians as representatives of the Church, education, literature (since the ninth century) and political doctrine of the 'third Rome' were fundamental to the high status of *Edinovertsy* (co-religionists) in Russia. From the perspective of perception of their own place in the history of the region, it is interesting to evaluate the contribution of Bulgarians to the development of the steppe territory of the Black Sea Region during the Kievan Rus' period that was represented in a letter written by the Bulgarian communities in Ukraine to the Ukrainian Minister of Education in 2010. The letter stated the following:

> We find it necessary […] to refer to you with the proposal […] to objectively highlight the role of the ancient Bulgarians in the formation of the Old Russian nation and the foundation of the Old Russian state called

> the Kievan Khaganate, and then its successor – Kievan Rus' (Obrashchenie 2012, n.p.; translation from the Russian by the author).

The process of national revival among the Bulgarians and Greeks definitely aligned with the national interests of Russia, which sought support from the *Edinovertsy* in the fight for the Balkans. In contrast to the 'Philhellenism' (the sociocultural movement that appeared in Western Europe), in Russia, the ideological justification for 'patronage' became a significant part of its foreign policy. Russia, as the only state with a common religion, intended to gain international recognition of its right act as a patron to the Orthodox nations. The Russian policy of 'patronage' presumed that as '*inorodets*', literally meaning "of different nations", they obtained the status of 'colonists' as of 1819 and economic benefits (exemption from taxation, welfare assistance, land plots, etc.), as 'co-religionists', they acquired the same status as the 'majority' and thus ceased being the 'minority'. That allowed them to engage in trade, join the merchant class and purchase land. The Transdanubian colonists gained access to social mobility and right to promotion in the army and state bodies.

During the period of Phanariot rule (1711–1821) in Bessarabia, the Greeks were a socially privileged group of landowners and merchants. That was a period of romantic hopes in the revival of the Byzantine Empire in its previous form as a Christian Orthodox Kingdom or the formation of a 'New Byzantium', as reflected in the Hellenization of Church, education and law. Thus, the legislation on the Greek language had been preserved in Bessarabia until 1825 (see Grossmann 1904). It is a well-known fact that it was not difficult to obtain Russian allegiance, as noted by the English consul in Odessa in 1850 (Harlaftis 1996, 55). The representatives of a number of Phanariot families, who held official positions, were granted Russian *dvorianstvo* (nobility). Among them were such well-known families as Mavrocordat, Lascaris, Ypsilantis, Panagioti, Mourouzi, Mavrogeni, Soutzos, Karadzha, Khandzherlii, Cantacuzino, Callimachi and Marazli. However, the Greeks intended to preserve the 'dual allegiance' that was vital to international trade and became conducive to the organization of a network of secret societies.

The Greeks mostly settled in the cities. There were large communities in Odessa, Ismail, Kiliya and Akkerman. They included merchants who were involved in large financial operations, exporting and brokerage. In the urban population census in the beginning of the 19th century, they were counted as 'indigenous people'. In Odessa, Greek assets predominated until the elimination of 'Porto Franco' status in 1858. Odessa became the largest cultural centre of the 'Greek world'. There was a specially appointed 'Guardian' for the Greeks – Colonel Afanasii Kes-Oglu, who managed state funds in order to build and develop

the Holy Trinity Church. Apart from that, in 1805 Apollon Skal'kovskiĭ (1837) mentioned that the Odessa Greek Community presented to the Duc de Richelieu an act that stipulated the promise to contribute a sum of money from each unit of wheat that was sold abroad for two and half *kopeyks* (cents) to build the Greek Church (Ukaz ob usroenii, n.p.).

In 1795, according to data provided by Simon Bernshteĭn, Greeks accounted for approximately ten percent of the city's population (2,349 people) (Bernshteĭn 1881, 23). According to the materials accompanying the statement of the Ekaterinoslavsk military *gubernator*, Lt. General Nikolaĭ Berdiaev, submitted to the Emperor in April 1797, Greeks were over 15 percent of the city's population (Priakhin 1994, 130).

The specific feature of this diaspora was its economic sustainability. During the period of the 'Porto Franco' regime, Odessa was a convenient offshore centre where the largest Phanariot families accumulated their assets. Thus, the Greeks of Odessa were recognized as the "fathers" of the economic miracle, when in five years the ten year-old city ranked fourth in wealth in the Empire, after Moscow, St. Petersburg and Warsaw.

In order to ensure the safety of trade transactions, the Greeks founded two insurance companies in the city: the Greek-Russian Insurance Company, managed by Ioannis Destunis and Theodore Serafinos, and the Company of Greek-Insurers, founded by Ioannis Amvrosios and Ilias Manesis. There were several dozen influential entrepreneurs in this ethnic group. In the first third of the 19th century, the most significant trade transactions were conducted by Alexandros Mavros, Dimitrios Inglesis, Vasilios Yannopoulos, Ilias Manesis, Alexandros Koumbares, Chiriacos Papachatzis, Ioannis Amvrosios, Dimitrios Palaiologos, Gregorios Marazli and Theodore Serahpinos. By the end of the second decade, their total assets were ten million roubles, so that they were considered the wealthiest merchants in the Russian Empire (Morozan 2009, 45–53). The companies owned by Theodoros Rodoconachi, Stephanos Ralli and Konstantinos Papudov handled one fifth part of all foreign transactions in the city between 1833 and 1860 (Kardasis 2001, 155–59).

Economic influence gave the Greeks significant lobbying power before state bodies; they formed a cultural group inside the city community that "voted with money" for the development of their own culture and the revival of their lost state. The affluent settlers donated their funds to the construction of schools and hospitals, churches and residential houses in Odessa, book publishing, and the establishment of libraries and museums. In the 19th century, Greeks served as the mayors of Odessa six times (for a total of 33 years): Ioan Kafedzhi (in 1800–

1803); Ioannis Amvrosios (in 1806–1809 and again in 1821–1824); Dimitrios Inglesis (in 1818–1821); Konstantinos Papudov (in 1842–1845); and Gregorios Marazli (in 1878–1896). For the wealthy Greek families from former Byzantium, the revival of Byzantium in the lands of Wallachia, Moldova and Bessarabia was a strategic mission that successfully aligned with the 'Greek project' of Catherine II (Markova 1958, 52–78). That is why organization of the Greek revolution in general was conducted at the initiative of reputable Greek families that held official positions in various states of Europe and Russia (Dimitrios Inglesis, Ioannis Kapodistrias, Gregorios Marazli, Ioannis Gorgolis, Alexander Ypsilantis, etc.) (Arsh 1959, 142).

The second aspect of the Greek diaspora was the widespread resettlement of farmers. Agrarian colonization took place during the period 1775–1812. 47 Greek colonies had appeared in a period of just eight years, from 1801 to 1809. Seven of them were Greek-Bulgarian (Kalmakan 2002, 15). Such settlements with a "binary identity" are present in the Odessa region to this day. Preservation of the dual culture was dictated by the ethno-political events of the mid-20th century, when manipulating the "choice" of accessible identities inside families eased socio-political restrictions with regard to "troubled" nations (Koch and Samaritaki 2005–2006).

The Bulgarian colonization of Bessarabia had a mostly agricultural character. It took effect after the Russo-Ottoman Wars of 1806–1812 and 1828–1829. Between 60 and 80 thousand Bulgarians were living in Bessarabia by 1825. 57 Bulgarian colonies were integrated into four districts (Bernshteĭn 1952, 5–20). These districts were incorporated in the Bessarabian Office of Foreign Settlers of the Guardianship Committee (Popechitel'nyĭ Komitet, n.p.). Founded in 1818, this was the first state institution of Transdanubian colonists (Fedorov 1974, 69–73). In the official documents of this period, these lands were called 'New Bulgaria' or '*Malka* (Little) Bulgaria', which had its own cultural capital, Bolgrad (*Tabaki*), the centre of Bessarabian Bulgarian settlement.

The economic specialization of the settlers allowed them to secure for their group the "right to be present", the collective right to social space, which has been reflected in regional iconography and the group's commemorative practices. This, together with collective activity in the state social sphere, transformed the group into an active participant in regional policy. The result of the first collective 'Request of the Bulgarians' was the appointment of Ivan Inzov to the post of chairman of the Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in South Russia (Popechitel'nyĭ Komitet, n.p.).

By the beginning of the 19th century, the Greeks and the Bulgarians formed a multifurcated system of meaningful spaces: churches, cemeteries, memorials, etc. Despite the fact that they had a common religion, each group had its "own" sacred centre. The Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, founded in Odessa in 1795, was recognized as the centre of the Greek group. Consecrations of the Hetoerists were conducted in front of the chancel of this church. The sacred centre of the Bessarabian Bulgarians was the Transfiguration Cathedral in Bolgrad. The day of its consecration, 29 October 1838, became the Day of the Bessarabian Bulgarians.

Thus, both groups created the conditions for the preservation of ethnocultural communication systems by establishing Greek and Bulgarian theatres, printing shops, educational centres for diaspora children and hospitals. In fact, the Greek theatre became the first theatre in the 'Greek world' that was opened after the loss of independence (Pro dramaturgiiu 2009, 51–52).

The full cycle of education from preschool to secondary school (gymnasium) was provided in the diaspora communities. Among the Greek citizens, the literacy rate reached 70 percent and was one of the highest in the region. For example, 23 educational institutions with Greek as the language of education functioned in Odessa. The 'Greek Commercial School', which applied innovative educational methods, was opened with funding provided by Greek Maecenas in 1816. That was part of the project to create the Modern Greek School (Kumas 2009, 46–47).

The similar situation prevailed among the Bulgarian settlers. The new Bulgarian Gymnasium (now named after Georgi Rakovski) was opened in Bolgrad in 1858; the first Bulgarian theatre and printing shop were founded in this Gymnasium. The education of children was financed by philanthropic organizations and state scholarships. With regard to Bulgarians, the 'patronage' policy included broad educational and social support. In the political circles of Russia, projects of massive support to Bulgarians (to the extent that the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, Nikolaĭ Ignat'ev, even proposed resettling all Bulgarians to Russia) were repeatedly discussed during the crucial years of the war with the Ottoman Empire (Khevrolina 2006, 99–119).

In the early 1860s, a significant number of Bulgarian youth was enrolled at educational institutions in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Since 1869, the Asian Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs annually allocated 5,000 roubles for scholarships for Bulgarian students and transferred significant amounts for the maintenance of educational institutions on the Slavic outskirts of the Ottoman Empire (in 1862–1864, 45,000 roubles were allocated for these purposes)

(Bilunov 1986, 8). In 1862, the boarding school for Balkan Slavs, headed by Teodor Minkov (a Bulgarian pedagogue and enlightener), was established in Nikolaev (Mykolaïv). Between 1867 and 1892, the South Slavic Boarding School functioned as a private educational institution in which over 800 people – natives of the Ottoman Empire's South Slavic provinces – were educated (Stepanova 1981, 186). Minkov felt obliged to provide an education that would foster the revival of the Bulgarian nationality. During the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, the South Slavic Boarding School became a meeting place for volunteers who intended to serve on the Balkan front. Minkov acted as a coordinator for this movement (Bondarenko n.d.). Known students in the schools in southern Russia included Hristo Botev, Naĭden Gerov, Dobri Chintulov, Semen Vankov, Georgi Stamatov, Panaĭot Volov, Ekaterina Karavelova, Aleksandar Malinov, etc. Consequently, the activities of Nikolaĭ Palauzov, Spiridon Palauzov, Vasil Aprilov, Naĭden Gerov and Teodor Minkov became the basis for the formation of secular Bulgarian education and the modern Bulgarian school.

However, the Bulgarian group of South Russia, unlike the Greeks, had no lobbying power in state administrative bodies. That was, however, compensated by the creation of a number of ethnocultural and philanthropic organizations that assisted in fundraising for refugees, supporting schools and churches, publishing Bulgarian literature, sending weapons to and preparing volunteers for the Balkan front.

In Odessa the first Bulgarian organization that officially propagated a program on the fight for the revival of the Bulgarian nation was the 'Nastojatel'stvo odesskikh bolgar, sobirajushchikh pozhertvovanie po imperii dlia bednykh bolgarskikh pravoslavnikh tserkveĭ i uchilishch' (Bulgarian board of trustees of Odessa for raising contributions in the empire for poor Bulgarian Orthodox churches and colleges) acted in 1854–1899 under the leadership of Nikolaĭ Palauzov (Grebtsova 1999, 162–64). Twelve schools, following the example of the first secular school in Gabrovo founded by Nikolaĭ Palauzov and Vasil Aprilov, were established with the help of funds raised by the 'Board of Trustees'. By 1845, 53 Bulgarian popular schools had already been established. The Commission charged with the production of clothing for impoverished Bulgarians, which operated through the Embassy in Constantinople, worked under the aegis of the 'Board of Trustees'.

The following institutions also functioned: the Holy Cross Community of the Sisters of Charity as a department of the Red Cross Administration in Odessa in 1868 (where the volunteers for the Balkan front were trained); the Odessa Cyril and Methodius Slavic Philanthropic Society in 1870 (Rostislav Fadeev was recognized as the person who developed the idea of involving Bulgarian volunteers

in military action); the Bulgarian Philanthropic Society in Chisinau in 1876; and the Philanthropic Committees in Bessarabia in 1876–1878. The Greek Philanthropic Society was only founded in 1871.

The development of a new intelligentsia in the diaspora proceeded along with an awareness about the future of state government. The favourable circumstance of being in Russia to engage in national and patriotic activity led to the formation of the basis for national-liberation movements by Greek and Bulgarian communities (Arsh 1969, 94).

As a result of resettlement to the territories of Bessarabia and Tauri, the active part of the Bulgarian and Greek national elite was given the opportunity to reconsider their national strategies and plans. These plans coincided with the geopolitical interests of Russia in the Balkans. The successful Greek Revolution in 1821–1832 and the Liberation War in Bulgaria in 1876–1877 became possible due to the focused actions of ethnic diasporas and mobilization of their resources in southern Russia – in Odessa and Bessarabia.

The organization of the Greek revolution was conducted at the initiative of the Greek noble families who had nurtured this idea for several centuries. Historical memory was an important component of Greek self-identification and it preserved Greek national identity during the period under Ottoman rule (1453–1821). Phanariot Greeks served in various states in Europe and intended to use their influence for the restoration of their Motherland's independence. These families in Russia included the Kapodistrias, Gorgolis, Marazli, Ypsilantis, etc.

However, ideas about the form which the revival should assume differed. Aristocratic Phanariot families of the former Byzantine Empire had devised a plan for the gradual overthrow of the Ottomans and the revival of Byzantium as a multi-national Christian Empire in its former borders. Such an idea was rejected by the ideologists of the Bulgarian revival, who advocated for the creation of an independent Bulgarian nation-state and cultivated the idea of establishing a national church. Another part of the Greek elite absorbed the ideas of the French Revolution and saw the revived Greece as a nation-state. Such a vision of development for Greece also became relevant because of the rapid progress toward national self-determination among the Balkan nations.

That became a reason for the emergence of a network of organizations throughout Europe that promoted national self-determination. The majority had been established on the principle of Masonic lodges: the Love for the Nation (Ionian Islands), Benefaction and Love of the People (London), Eteria Rigas (Vienna), Athens (Moscow), Hellenophone ('Greek-speaking') Hotel (Paris), Phoenix Lodge (Ionian Islands), etc.

If Filomousos Eteria in Vienna acted as the 'legitimate payment office' for the needs of the revolution and the Ovidius Lodge in Chisinau worked on the Constitution of the Republic of Greece, the Filiki Eteria Lodge established in Odessa had to form the revolutionary army. The founders of the Odessa lodge (its public representatives) were Nikolaĭ Skufas, Emmanuil Xanthos and Afanasiĭ Zakalov, who had immigrated to Odessa and conducted their business among the Greek communities in the cities of the Russian Black Sea Region since 1814. The members of this society were almost all business leaders and merchants in Odessa (Muzeĭ 2009, 45).

The Eteria encouraged its members with the ideals of the French Revolution, and moulded their worldview under the influence of Enlightenment ideas. The Orthodox Byzantine identity was moved to the background. That became one of the reasons why, at the beginning of 1818, Filiki Eteria received support from neither Ioannis Kapodistrias (Chancellor of the Septinsular Republic and Foreign Minister of Russia from 1808), nor from the Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory V.

The society was not numerous, but it had followers among the Greek communities in the cities of the Russian Black Sea Region. The majority of the society's members were merchants, politicians and military men. The fewest among its representatives consisted of farmers. The *Eforia* (specific administrative institution) of the Filiki Eteria guided the activity of other *Eforias* in the organization of securing of reinforcements and equipment to Alexander Ypsilantis' army and to Greece.

Apart from financial support for warfare, the Greek diaspora became a source for the creation of a militia (volunteer troops) that was led by Ypsilantis (who was an heir to the renowned Phanariot family that ruled Moldova and Wallachia until 1806). The rebellion, launched in Bessarabian February 1821, became the signal for the national liberation of Greece that began on 25 March. This day is celebrated as Independence Day in modern Greece. Noteworthy is that the rebellion began after the Ottomans executed the Patriarch of Constantinople's Orthodox Church in Istanbul, whose body was delivered to Odessa; for 50 years, from 1821 to 1871, Gregory's body was kept in the Holy Trinity Church in Odessa. Odessa thus gained the status of 'cradle of Greek independence'.

The rebellion was crushed, but it served as the beginning to a nine-year struggle, which resulted in the birth of a nation-state. In January 1822, the Constitution of the Revolution, known as the 'Provisional Regime of Greece', was adopted by the First National Assembly of Epidaurus. Alexander Mavrocordatos was elected as President of the Executive. He was a representative of one of the most powerful

Phanariot families of Wallachia. In March 1827, the National Assembly elected Ioannis Kapodistrias as Governor of the Greek Hellenic State for the next seven years. On 24 April 1830, Greek independence was declared.

The Odessa Greek Philanthropic Society, founded on the model of the Filiki Eteria, functioned in Odessa during this entire arduous period of the struggle for independence from 1821 to 1832. It legally aided refugees and participants in the rebellion.

For the Bulgarians, the idea of the statehood creation coincided with the formation of their national ideology, church and self-identification. Russia's interest in the Balkans became a catalyst for this process, although the revival of the Bulgarians during the initial stages was closely linked to the revolutionary rise of the Greeks. On the one hand, a significant portion of Greek '*buditelia*' (national revival activists) was closely connected to the Phanariots and Eterias, and saw the Bulgarian revival as an integral part of the revival of the Balkan nations: Sofroniĭ Vrachanski, Spiridon Palauzov. On the other hand, a portion of the Bulgarian intelligentsia opposed Greek domination in culture and religion and advocated for the autonomy of the Bulgarian church and education. These ideas were developed by the following leaders: Paìsiĭ Hilendàrski, Petar Beron, Neofit Rilski, Iuriĭ Venelin, Vasil Aprilov and Naĭden Gerov.

Thus, the national-liberation movement of the Bulgarians from the 1820s through the 1850s was focused on education and the formation of Bulgarian national self-determination. In 1839, after the promulgation of the Sultan's edict on the equality of Ottoman subjects, Bulgarians were granted the right to claim for the replacement of Greek Episcopalians with Bulgarians. The establishment of the independent Bulgarian church, i.e. the foundation the Bulgarian Exarchate, free from Phanariot control, became a political focus for the organization of the Bulgarian nation. The development of the Bulgarian nationalist ideology turned out to be closely connected not only to ideas of liberation from the Ottoman Empire, but also to the desire to create the Bulgarian national church. The Ottoman government intended to use the Greek-Bulgarian conflict to weaken the centrifugal movements in the Empire. The official policy of the Russian Empire in this field was controversial. On the one hand, the government tried to restrain the Bulgarians from "needless" demands to avoid souring relations with the Greeks. On the other hand, the separation of a part of the congregation from the Patriarchate of Constantinople suited the Russian Empire (Zabunov 1981, 148). Fearing the strength of the Uniates in Bulgaria, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople, General Nikolaĭ Ignat'ev, supported the Bulgarians and requested a positive decision on the Bulgarian church issue from the Ottoman Porte. Until the end of

the 1860s, the Patriarchate of Constantinople in fact lost any genuine authority in the Bulgarian lands.

As in Greece, the national-liberation movement in Bulgaria began with the foundation of the secret societies, *zaveras*. The most popular society was Velchova Zavera in Tŭrnovo, which directed its activities against the Turks beginning in 1833–1835.

In the 1860s–70s, the national-liberation movement of Bulgarians assumed an organised revolutionary form. The completion of the Chetnik period in the national-liberation movement was associated with the name of Georgi Rakovski. Parallel to the activities of the group around Rakovski, who headed the 'People's Committee' in 1866, the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee was established. These organizations drafted the first program documents. Vasil Levski established the Internal Revolutionary Organisation and Provisional Government in Bulgaria only in 1869. The fundraising, preparation of materials and demographic basis for the rebellion and the activities of secret societies were closely linked to Bessarabia and Odessa. The life paths of the famous activists of the Bulgarian revival were intimately tied to the region; noteworthy among them were: Nikolaĭ Palauzov, Vasil Aprilov, Raĭko Zhinzifov, Hristo Botev, Ivan Vasov, Liuben Karavelov, Georgi Rakovski, etc.

The suppression of rebellion in June 1876 provoked an international reaction and became the basis for the political recognition of the right of the Bulgarian nation to independence, which became possible only after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878. The Bulgarians were active participants in military campaigns. A number of officers of Bulgarian nationality who were trained in Russia served in the Russian army, among them: Colonel Konstantin Kesiakov, Captain Rumen Nikolov, Lieutenant Dimitr Filov, Avram Gudzhev, Pencho Shyvarov, Danail Nikolaev, etc. Bulgarian physicians who had been professionally trained in Russia also participated in the rebellion: Konstantin Bonev, Aleksander Bogdanov, Iakov Petkov, Ivan Panov, Konstantin Viazankov and Savva Mirkov. During the military campaigns of 1877–1878, many of them led the rebellion.

In general, the armed military units formed on an ethnic basis in southern Russia and Bessarabia during the turn of the 18th into the 19th century, including the preparation of military and political personnel with the prospect of deploying them to the Balkans, consisted of: the Sparta Legion led by Stefan Mavromichali, formed on the Peloponnese in 1770 (Arsh 2004, 435), it became a part of the Greek infantry in 1779 that participated in defending the Black Sea coast (as of 1787 the Greek Battalion of Balaklava); in 1795, the Odessa Greek Division was formed from the fleet of Lambros Katsonis. The first commander of the Division

was Major Constantinos Bitsyli (Teokharidi 1930, 11–16). The following forms of militia had significance: the Greek Sacred Band led by Ypsilantis in 1821; the Bulgarian militia led by Ivan Liprandi in 1829; Bulgarian volunteers in 1853–1856; the Bulgarian Legions led by Georgi Rakovski in 1861–1862 and 1867–1868; Chetnik Detachments led by Stefan Karadzha, Hadzhi Dimitar and Hristo Botev in 1867–1868; and the Honourable Dismounted Convey/Bulgarian Militia in 1877–1878. The military skills and experience acquired by such organized Bessarabian militia units made it possible for them to become the basis for national armies after independence was gained. For example, the reorganized Sacred Band of Ypsilantis became a regular military unit in the new Greek army, just as the Bulgarian Militia of 1877–1878 became the basis for the regular army of the independent state of Bulgaria.

The modern memorial policy of Bulgaria and Greece with regard to Bessarabia and the North Black Sea Region has been directed at maintaining the memory of the significant role this territory has played in national history. The diasporas of these ethnic groups in Ukraine preserve and retransmit the memory of participation in the process of securing the independence of their states, as shown by a number of new memorial complexes in Ukraine devoted to this period of history, e.g. the Filiki Eteria Museum in Odessa, monuments to the Greeks Maecenas in Odessa, the monument to the Bulgarian militia in Bolgrad that includes 225 names inscribed on the memorial stone, commemorative plaques to Hristo Botev, Ivan Vazov, Vasil Aprilov, etc.

Modern processes demonstrate the cultural significance of these diasporas to the modern Republics of Bulgaria and Greece. Thus, for example, Bulgaria dynamically transformed its national doctrine to include all Bulgarians who live abroad, initiating the right of Bulgarians from foreign countries to participate in the state's political life. Greece encourages its citizens to make charitable contributions in the Black Sea Region (to contribute to Hellenic development and the implementation of Hellenic values).

The important thing is that the ethnic diasporas of Bulgarians and Greeks in Bessarabia and Odessa continue to be recognized by the metropoles in periods of crisis as "ethnic nests", where the nation's culture can find its impetus for the next stage of development.

The analysis of the influence of the diasporas of Greeks and Bulgarians of Bessarabia on nation-building processes in Greece and Bulgaria allowed for the presentation of several key aspects. Firstly, in both cases, the diasporas of these ethnic groups had been created prior to the nation-states. In particular, the nation-states became places for the formation of the ideology of national rebirth by using

historic and ethnographic arguments for this purpose. Secondly, the diasporas presented an opportunity for the intellectual elite to rely on their resources (demographic and financial). During the period of preparation of the national-liberation rebellions, the diasporas became a place for the preparation of human resources required by the nascent states, especially lawyers, scientists, military men and civil servants. Thirdly, diasporas became a place for the creation of a network of kindred solidarity, upon which business and trade had relied. This afforded the diasporic structures, through which the liberation movement was financed, with relative financial independence.

The ability of the diasporas to accumulate resources (intellectual, financial, demographic, diplomatic) and direct them to support the realization of the idea of national self-determination testifies to the social and political capacity of these groups. This fact allows for the assertion that the diasporas of Greeks and Bulgarians of Bessarabia, acting as parties to political developments, should be deemed a part of the integrated national systems of their states, within which unified mechanisms of the exchange of knowledge, sensibilities and resources functioned.

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