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## History Education and Civic Education: The Bulgarian Case

This text looks at the developments in the relationship between history education and civic education in the Bulgarian educational tradition in the 1878-1944 period and tends to finally refer to the present state of affairs. It examines the political contexts of the methods and writing of textbooks which have ensured the political longevity of the conservative nationalist model in the worldview of both school subjects. The observations are based upon more than eighty textbooks on history and civic education published since 1878 (of which only those that are typical and representative of the dominant trends in the Bulgarian educational tradition are cited here) as well as upon some works in didactics. The main features in the texture of the conservative model are identified on the basis of a discourse analysis of history and civic education textbooks, and they concern the disciplinary, spatio-temporal, and conceptual homologies found in them.

### Keywords:

textbook research, history textbooks, civic education, Bulgaria.

### 1. The Conservative Model

After five centuries of Ottoman rule (1396-1878), a new Bulgarian State was established after the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War. Its boundaries were drawn by the Peace Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878), according to which the territory of Bulgaria included Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia; the state unity of those three regions was regarded for generations after 1878 as "the Bulgarian national ideal", embodied also in the formulas "Great Bulgaria" and "Bulgaria on three seas". However, the San Stefano map never became a political reality. Just two months later (in June 1878), the Congress of Berlin drastically redrew the map and state identity of "the national ideal" – it divided the territory into a Principality of Bulgaria ("Moesia" or what is now northern Bulgaria) and Eastern Rumelia ("Thrace", part of which is now southern Bulgaria), an autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire, while Macedonia was returned entirely to the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the national formula "Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia" was partitioned into its three components. This caused a long-lasting national trauma that would not be healed by the 1885 Unification of the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, followed by the victorious for Bulgaria Serbo-Bulgarian War. This political success did not fully resolve "the national question". The aspirations towards a "Great Bulgaria", which would include Macedonia, became the main imperative in Bulgarian official policy, culminating in three consecutive wars: the two Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1919), called "wars for national unification" in all textbooks from the period. For Bulgaria, the wars ended in defeat and further losses of state territory; the decisions of the peace treaties concluded after the wars would come to be known as "national catastrophes". After the wars, Bulgarian society fell into a deep national, social and cultural crisis which had numerous political

implications, one of them being the rise of interwar authoritarian regimes and Bulgaria's joining the Axis Powers. This led to the annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria in 1941, briefly thought of as "fulfillment of the Bulgarian national ideal". Its end came with the defeat of the Axis Powers in the Second World War, the arrival of the Soviet Army, and the beginning of communist rule in Bulgaria on 9 September 1944.

The previous paragraph is not even a thumbnail sketch of modern Bulgarian history; it is only an attempt to present the political circumstances that dictated also the more specific problem of the relationship between history and civic education in the Bulgarian educational tradition. Until 1944, "the national ideal" was a thematic common-place and conceptual core of both history and civic education. In this sense, it is very interesting to observe the appearance of "a happy ending" for Bulgarian history in the textbooks that were written at the time of the actual historical events – and that dramatically failed to anticipate the actual outcomes of those events.

A textbook published in a fourth edition in 1879 ends with the glorious image of San Stefano Bulgaria: "This Bulgarian kingdom includes almost the entire Bulgarian land" (Manchov 1879, 215). We can only imagine that the author was writing his history textbook in synchrony with history itself, running through the same temporal corridor as actual history – yet doomed to drop behind just a moment later. He must have written the textbook at some point during the short interval between March and June 1878, between the treaties of San Stefano and of Berlin.

Another textbook with a happy ending was published in 1918: "The Bulgarians participated in the European war, defeated their enemies, and liberated Macedonia, the Morava lands and Dobrudzha. In this way they restored the great and whole Bulgaria" (Stanev 1918, 216). This textbook was released in that same crucial year – perhaps just weeks before the military breakthrough which caused the defeat of Bulgaria that would come to be known as "the second national catastrophe".



Another happy-ending nationalist account was published in 1943; it states that “now the great deed of our national unification is coming to its happy end” (Sheytanov, Bozhikov 1943, 110). The “now” here is one year after the occupation of Macedonia and southern Thrace by Bulgarian troops – and one year before the arrival of the Soviet Army on the Danube. Two years earlier, one of the co-authors of the above-cited textbook co-authored another textbook, which includes a section on civic education that ends with the same formula as follows:

... in April 1941 most of the newly liberated lands were occupied by our national army. Bulgarian rule was established there. The joy of our until recently enslaved brothers became even greater. Aegean Thrace, the western outlands, and most of Macedonia are now under the powerful protection of the Bulgarian State. The great deed of our national unification is coming to its happy end. Days of progress and prosperity are coming for all Bulgarians (Popvasilev, Sheytanov 1941, 126).

In this sense, the new Bulgarian State was conceived of throughout the 1878-1944 period as a not entirely attained homeland; and, at the same, as the main instrument by which the long-cherished homeland (i.e. “Great Bulgaria” or “Bulgaria on three seas”) could be attained through systematic political action on the part of the state including, not in the last place, war. This interconnection of “the civic concept” of the state and “the ethnic concept” of the homeland (whereby the two instrumentally justified each other) would eventually leave no room for any liberal attitudes in official education, be it in history or in civics – especially in the authoritarian political contexts of the interwar period. Here is how those characteristics of the period are summed up in a contemporary two-volume study on Bulgarian society (1878-1939):

The new nationalism and state authoritarianism started from an entirely different (as compared with liberalism) concept of the state, the nation, and the individual. ... In the envisioned “new order”, “new state”, and “new society” (or “new citizenship”), the individual was an obedient particle of the organized and guided by leaders and elites whole. ... The state was the protector of the nation, and its justification consisted precisely therein (and not in some “social contract” of individual wills); it was authoritarian because that is how it could best coordinate and guide society towards the achievement of the national and social goals. Oriented by education and spirit towards their achievement, the individual owed unconditional obedience to the state (and its leaders)...  
... The ideal and objective of “the new Bulgarian education” (called by some “balgaroznanie”, “balgarouchenie”<sup>1</sup>) was the formation of “the new citizen”, who had to be above

1 These peculiar terms of the interwar period can be translated only in clumsy expressions like “learning to be Bulgarian” and “teaching Bulgarianness”.

all “Bulgarian” and “patriotic”. He had to be disciplined, to respect the authority of the leaders and to have a sense of “duty” to the nation and the state, being ready to unconditionally sacrifice himself for them. A national and state (authoritarian) spirit was to be cultivated by teaching particular subjects, especially “national” subjects such as Bulgarian history, language and literature, and geography. To these were added the subjects “religion” (designed to “Christianize” schools) and “civics” (where the emphasis was on duty to the state)... (Daskalov 2005, II, 397-399).

Here are also some examples of the clear conservative imperative of civic education textbooks from different decades. The attitude towards the state explicitly declared in them, including at the level of lexical repetition, is one of “respect”, “obedience”, “duty”, and “protection”:

... *The agents of power must be respected; whoever teases or attacks them commits a rebellious crime* (Gruev 1881, 22).<sup>2</sup>

... the first duty of the citizen to the fatherland is the duty from which all other duties follow, namely: to obey the laws of their country and to respect the authorities in charge of implementing them. But what if they are bad and unjust? We still must obey them. Indeed, they have been created by people, but people are not infallible and therefore their deeds are not perfect. ... Refusing to abide by the laws because we think they are bad would mean committing an injustice; it would be the same as refusing the state what we owe it ... it is better to endure injustice than to act unjustly (Paunchev 1904, 20).

The good citizen *selflessly loves his homeland and serves it faithfully... he looks up to and respects the head of state, the state institutions, the state symbols* (the national flag, the national anthem, etc.) and *our national army*. He knows that the head of state works always for the good and well-being of the nation and the state; that the state institutions make his life easier; that the state symbols represent the honour and power of his state, and that our brave national army defends him from external and internal enemies... *O you Bulgarian, keep your state as the apple of your eye!* ... (Koychev 1938, 79-80).

The good citizen loves his fatherland ... The good citizen respects the state authorities and voluntarily, willingly carries out their lawful orders... (Mandov, Petev 1942, 62).

The conservative character of the model of civic education is especially evident from another circumstance in the interwar period: the use of the terms “citizen” and “subject” in textbooks as full synonyms, for the citizen was conceived of precisely and only as someone who obeyed the government and its institutions. For example, in a textbook from 1938, we find the following contextual synonymy in the lesson titled “Duties and Rights of Citizens”: “The most important duty of the citizen is to obey the laws... Every Bulgar-

2 In all quotes in this paper the italics are in the original, and the underlining is added.



ian subject is obliged to do his military service... Every Bulgarian subject must duly pay his taxes... Every citizen is obliged to vote" (Koychev 1938, 13); also: "Civic rights are enjoyed not only by the Bulgarian subjects but also by all foreigners living in Bulgaria..." (Pravdolyubov, Stoyanov 1938, 61); as well as the almost-set-phrase "Bulgarian citizens or subjects" found in a number of civic education textbooks.

The conservative model of civic education has as its core nationalism and the traumatic consciousness of the non-coincidence of homeland and state throughout the 1878-1944 period. Its persistence in the traditions of Bulgarian education is due to the successive discursive achievement of entire series of homologies in the curricula, textbooks, and relevant political and cultural contexts – series of disciplinary, spatio-temporal, and conceptual homologies, which are examined separately in the next sections.

## 2. Disciplinary Homologies

Just as the conservative model of civic education was not a Bulgarian invention but a product of institutional transfer of European educational models in the last two decades of the nineteenth century (here we cannot go into the details, paths of transfer, and choice of those particular models), so too the non-autonomous character of the school subject "civics" corresponded to already existing non-Bulgarian educational traditions. Whereas there were history and geography textbooks throughout the nineteenth century, even before the establishment of the Bulgarian State in 1878, "civics" was predictably institutionalized in Bulgarian education only after the establishment of the new state, that is to say, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

The first Bulgarian civic education textbook was published in 1881, and here we will note three of its characteristics. Firstly, its author, Yoakim Gruev, admitted that his model and source were foreign, and defined his work not as original but rather as translation: "This book, based on a translation of a similar French book compiled by Mr. P. Lalois, is designed to introduce pupils..." (Gruev 1881, 2). Secondly, in the title of the textbook civic education was interlinked with ethics in a unified subject field: the title was "Basics of Ethics and of Civic Science". Thirdly, the textbook covered an even wider field of interrelated knowledge than the one formulated in its title: "Every Bulgarian must know both the *history* and the *geography* of his land, he must know its *laws* and *regulations*; otherwise he will not be able to love it well and to serve it well" (Gruev 1881, 3).

This, inherited from foreign educational models, combination of subjects that also served as a basis of civic education, was regulated by state education policy and the relevant laws. In the 1891 National Education Law, civics appeared as a separate subject listed

among the following subjects: "...Homeland Studies [*Otechestvovedenie*], Civics..." (for primary schools); the list of secondary school subjects goes as follows: "... Bulgarian Language, Civics, History, Geography..." (Uchilishten almanah 1900, 279, 289). These collocations in the list of subjects became clearly interconnected subjects in the 1909 National Education Law: the subject to be taught at primary schools is "Homeland Studies with Civics" (according to the relevant curricula, "Homeland Studies" were defined as a combination between history and geography); the subject to be taught at junior high schools was defined as "General and National Geography with Civics", and the one at high schools as "Civics with Political Economy" (Sbornik 1924, 19, 22, 55-56). The syllabus of the "civics" section, whatever other subjects it was combined with, remained constant throughout the decades in question: it included knowledge about the home, family, native place, municipality, fatherland, society, state, territorial administration, legislation, the Constitution, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, the structure and activity of the different government ministries, the rights and duties of citizens.

It appears that the combination of the different subjects (history, geography, Bulgarian language and literature) with civics was asymmetrical, as the most persistent combination of civic education in the relevant institutional formulations is that with geography at the different levels of education. This, however, is at first sight only. As early as the 1890s, we find, alongside "civics" in "Homeland Studies", literary works that serve as illustrations to the lessons – these are mostly popular poems by Ivan Vazov<sup>3</sup>, selected thematically; the poems about the beauty of the Bulgarian landscape illustrate geography lessons, while the poems about Bulgarian heroism illustrate history lessons. In addition, the lessons in geography and civics abound in historical references – the lessons about a particular area (or municipality) almost always include historical references to events that took place there in the distant or recent past. Furthermore, history is conceived of as a hermeneutic tool aimed at achieving the understanding of civics – at that, in its ethical aspect, as knowledge of the national virtues:

When you learn the history [of Bulgaria], you will learn how our ancestors succeeded with their diligence in appropriating the land we were born in; who their enemies were and how they heroically fought them; how faithful they were to their clan, to their fatherland, and how they sacrificed their lives and property for its freedom and glory. And only then will you be able to understand better the great virtues I spoke to you about in "civics",

3 Ivan Vazov (1850-1921), classic Bulgarian writer known as "the patriarch of Bulgarian literature". His poetry, prose, and plays are an embodiment of the national idea in Bulgarian culture.



which are necessary for the well-being and greatness of a nation" (Paunchev 1899, 415).

The same imperative regarding the connection of civic education with national history was valid for the 1930s too: a section on civics in a 1936 textbook, in the lesson titled "Who Teach Us to Be Good Citizens", listed the parents, the school, the Church, and history, because "*all of us Bulgarians must know our national history - only then will we know how to preserve our state and to work for its success and well-being*" (Popov 1936, 14). Thus, national history was conceived of as a social agent which, along with the family and institutions, was capable of immediately forming "good citizens".

This tendency towards inter-subject connections and combinations, realized within the context of the nationalist tendency, had found imperative institutional justification in Memorandum on National Education No. 12353 dated 17 October 1913 (at the time of the Second Balkan War):

Since the liberation to this day, our state has striven to create the institutions necessary for its proper development, and to improve them so that they can be adequate to the tasks they are designed to fulfill. All those institutions, whatever their social purpose, cannot function in isolation from each other, but must jointly pursue one main idea – the idea that unites the souls of all members of the state...

After the liberation, the patriotic tendency in our schools decreased somewhat. Priority was given to general education; while the remaining national influence in this education was somehow overshadowed by the mass of general knowledge... We must create in ourselves above all faith in the national genius and determine ourselves as a nation through one national ideal...

The *history* teacher can do much in this respect. Indeed, history is studied so that pupils can learn about the development of the social, economic, and political institutions of different nations at different times. But in addition to that, the teacher should not forget to underline the efforts of the separate nations to self-determine themselves as national units... In recounting the heroic struggles of nations for national unification ... an allusion should be made to the unification aspirations of our nation...

The *geography* teacher also has ample opportunities to awaken pride in his pupils that they are sons of a "heavenly land" ... without forgetting the lands that were forcibly severed from the Bulgarian body...

The *Bulgarian language* teacher has the advantage of being given the opportunity to directly introduce pupils to the spirit of the Bulgarians through their own words... Give children works that reveal the Bulgarian spirit. Read them descriptions and memories of past struggles and amazing feats from the recent war... Underline the phenomenal Bulgarian heroism... (cited in Yordanov 1925, 26-33).

The Memorandum goes on to refer to the lessons in folk songs, civics, art, music, physical education, to the role of national festivals in patriotic education,

and so on. Given this institutionally regulated focus of the different school subjects on one and the same message – "the national idea" – the different subjects themselves begin to look simply as thematic variations on one and the same substantive message.<sup>4</sup>

Let us note that the institutionalized focus of the different subjects on just "one thing" continued after 1944 as well, in the Stalinist period; the only big difference is that whereas interwar nationalism made the different subject fields focus on the *subject* – "the nation", Stalinism made them focus on the *method* – "Marxist-Leninist philosophy", "Communist Party spirit in science and education", and so on.

By making the different subjects and sciences serve always and only one political and axiological centre (regardless of its different kind and character before and after 1944), the state made them incapable of producing different narratives and conveying different messages to society depending on their different subject matter, instruments, and methods. All of them proved to be repositories of one disciplinary homology for which the different subject fields functioned as nothing more than "themes". It turns out that the main function of the state and its education policies in both political cases was to completely institutionalize this inability. This, however, is a bigger question which we cannot discuss here.

In such a context, each of the school subjects may be said to have carried the message – that is to say, "the national idea" and "the national ideal" in the 1878-1944 period – of any of the others. The first systematic Bulgarian work on the methods of teaching history, published in the interwar period, defined the subject as follows: "... history at school presents a certain *centre of almost all sciences*" (Stanev, Stoyanov 1922, 10); still, it devoted more special attention to geography because "the study of the history of any nation is always preceded by a *geographic review of the place*" (ibid.). Since the interconnection between history and geography was also the basis for adding the subject "civics" to them, in the next paragraph we will look in more detail at the question of how history and geography education produced the homologies of time and space that transferred "the national idea" and the "Great Bulgaria" model to the subject parameters of "civics" in Bulgarian education policies and its conservative political model.

4 Academic science could not entirely serve as an institutional corrective of this situation in education because Sofia University was founded at the end of the nineteenth century precisely as a Higher School designed to train mostly teachers (hence the similarity between school curricula and the University curricula); as well as because "*one of the most significant lines of Bulgarianization of the university model was in the perception and development of the Higher School primarily as an educational, and not as a scientific institution*" (Boyadzhieva 1998, 288).



### 3. Spatial and Temporal Homologies

It turns out that after 1878, Great Bulgaria ("Bulgaria of Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia", "Bulgaria on three seas" envisaged by the 1878 San Stefano map that never became a political reality) was the main storyline in geography textbooks and syllabi. That is to say, the subject "Geography of Bulgaria" taught much more than geography of the *state* – it was primarily designed to teach geography of the *nation* in its form of an imaginary territorial map that never became a reality in modern history. Paradoxical as this might seem at first sight, the sections on "civics" (institutionally connected with geography lessons anyway) fully conformed to this geographical tendency and took up its imperatives; thus, precisely through its connection with geography, civics began to teach not about the state but about the nation.

In 1892 the state curriculum formulated the subject "Homeland Studies" for primary schools. Under the title "European Turkey", it is written there explicitly: "*Macedonia and the Edirne vilayet are to be studied according to the same curriculum as the one for studying the Principality of Bulgaria*" (Programa 1892, 17). The formulas "Bulgarian lands beyond the boundaries of the Bulgarian State" and "Bulgarian lands under the rule of Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Turkey" are to be found in the curricula for all school levels. As defined in a 1907 curriculum, Geography for the fourth grade of primary school went into details such as the lesson title "Roads and Passes Linking Macedonia to Bulgaria" (Programa 1907, 15). This tendency continued and intensified in the interwar period. Thus, it turns out that throughout the 1878-1944 period, geography was a subject in which Great Bulgaria was conceived of as a natural phenomenon.

That is also why the boundaries drawn by a political and historical event such as the June-July 1878 Congress of Berlin were conceived of as "artificial" (opposite to the "natural" character of Great Bulgaria) precisely in geography education. An 1899 text, defined as "manual of homeland studies" (that is to say, geography and history of Bulgaria) explains this in detail (Paunchev 1899, 177-188). The "artificial boundaries" of course had clear negative connotations in relation to both the essence of natural phenomena and national values. The "natural boundaries", which were conceived of as ethnic and national – that is to say, the ones the State must strive to attain – were denoted precisely by natural phenomena: a river (the Danube as the northern boundary) and three seas (the Black Sea, the Aegean, and the Adriatic).

This model is stereotypical for the entire period until 1944 – so much so that it can also be found in a very famous Bulgarian interwar historical novel by popular right-wing writer Fani Popova-Mutafova. Set in the thirteenth century, the novel projects the following vision in relation to the state which King Yoan

Assen II achieved through one war and several successful dynastic marriages:

*God Himself had marked the boundaries of this blessed land: the three seas and the wide white river... from the throne of Holy Sofia, one will would guide the flowering of the great kingdom: the will of the Bulgarian king... And there was no one other than the Bulgarian king who could unite, rally around his throne, weld into one, the rebellious, eternally warring nations... (Popova-Mutafova 1938, 20-21).*

Here the natural boundaries of Great Bulgaria (called upon to "unite", through its king, the entire Balkan Peninsula) – a river and three seas – are explicitly declared to be a matter of Divine Choice and Will. Correspondingly, in the interwar period, the textbooks on geography (and civics as part of geography education) and historical novels strove to convey a common message and a common political reference expressed by means of "the natural boundaries".

However, the truly active agent of this homology was history, which covertly or overtly directed both geography (and hence, civics) and historical novels at the time. The very popular in the interwar period series of historical short stories and novels published by the Drevna Balgaria (Ancient Bulgaria) Publishing House (including the above-quoted novel by Fani Popova-Mutafova) was recommended by the Ministry of Education for reading; in addition, a book on methods of teaching history (based on the ideas of Russian specialists) recommended historical novels for "reading at home" while preparing history lessons: "reading historical novels is of great significance" (Kostov 1929, 112).

It was history that legitimated Great Bulgaria ("Bulgaria on three seas") as the true space of the nation: all that geography had to do was to say the same thing, but through natural arguments such as the Danube River and the three seas. The San Stefano map of March 1878 looks very much like the Great Bulgarias of the Bulgarian kings Simeon the Great in the tenth century and of the above-mentioned Yoan Assen II in the thirteenth century (in a geopolitical respect, this was in fact one and the same model). Although these Great Bulgarias proved very fragile and temporary in the Middle Ages, this resemblance was enough to set in motion the powerful instruments of analogy in the interwar period. A decade after 1878, the analogy between the Middle Ages and San Stefano Bulgaria by way of the map of Simeon the Great did not simply exist in the public sphere – it was institutionalized and written clearly in a history textbook. The tenth century of Simeon the Great was interpreted in the following way:

*Now the whole Bulgarian nation, which inhabits almost the whole Balkan Peninsula, was united for the first time in one state, under the rule of one king's will; now it made*



up one whole, towards which all our kings aspired and towards which we, too, aspire now (Ganchev 1888, 24).

“Now” and “then”, San Stefano and Simeon the Great, actually said one and the same thing. And what they said is so much the same, that the great king from the tenth century who fought many wars in fact turned out to have “united in one whole” – in other words, according to the textbook the “whole” in question was the nation and the territory, represented as natural and essential even before their first political incorporation within the boundaries of the state, whereby the homology with the maps of the science of geography was again achieved entirely instinctively and, furthermore, as something that was self-evident.

The predicate “unification” abounded in the interwar curricula which contained lessons about the Balkan Wars and the First World War. With no exception, all interwar curricula and textbooks on history contained the section “Wars for Bulgarian National Unification 1912-1919”. Analogy also drove the predicate in the sections of the curricula devoted to the Middle Ages (here is just one of the numerous examples: “Unification of the Balkan Slavic Lands into One. Iv. Assen II” – Programa 1920, 17). In this period the mediaeval Bulgarian kings were consistently represented as unifiers of the nation (as were the new wars, whose objective was formulated as national unification). All history textbooks until 1944 are completely identical on this point.<sup>5</sup>

It is precisely the 1912-1919 wars that turned the analogy into an argument, thereby turning the Middle Ages into a contemporary political allegory (thus conceptually eliminating the Middle Ages, for they saw the mediaeval Great Bulgarias in the tenth or twelfth-thirteenth centuries as realizations of the long-cherished Bulgarian nation-state). In his 1918 book *The Wars for the Unification of the Bulgarians in the Twelfth Century* (in Bulgarian), military historian Yordan Venedikov explicitly made this analogy not only through the term “wars for unification” referring to the twelfth century but also through the explained even in the Preface “storyline” of the allegory, which practically turned his historical study into a propaganda text; similar suggestions are also to be found in a number of history textbooks in the form of “lessons for the present” from the historical past:

By a strange coincidence imposed by the inexorable laws of international life, today we are fighting in the same places, against almost the same enemies, and for the same goals for which our ancestors fought under the House of Assen.

5 The question of the predicates expressing and legitimating the political actions through which the territory of Great Bulgaria was to be achieved – “to conquer”, “to unite”, “to liberate” – is discussed in more detail in Hranova 2005.

The citizen-soldier who, arms in hand, is building the future of our nation, will see that he is faced with the same enemies of the same character as back then.

He will draw courage from the good and learn lessons from the bad sides of our ancestors, and he will see for himself that no matter how strong they were, it was not the enemies that could determine the situation of our nation.

Placing the Bulgarians at the crossroads between the eastern and the western civilization, fate has assigned them a more enviable situation in the society of nations; but to achieve this, as long as our enemy-neighbours are still the same as they were seven centuries ago, we must now be more perfect and more perspicacious than our ancestors (Venedikov 1918, 1).

In addition to everything else, this excerpt offers us a rather strange (and oxymoronic from a contemporary liberal point of view) phrase – “the citizen-soldier” – which directly refers us also to the problems of civic education in that period through the grounding of its basic term. It turns out that in 1918, a year of war, the soldier was a citizen – that is to say, the citizen was the executor of the historical analogy that justified “the national ideal” and the dream for a Great Bulgaria. A recent study (Iakimova 2010) also examines interwar documents (such as a 1922 booklet titled “Tips for the Soldier-Citizen”) which offer recommendations for soldiers discharged from the army after the end of the wars; the supposition that here the soldier is called “citizen” precisely because he is no longer a soldier is not confirmed, according to the analysis made by the author:

... it appears from the content that the soldier remained a soldier after the end of his service ... the question of civic rights and liberties is discussed precisely in the section on the homeland, not in that on the state ... the citizen turns out to be nothing short of “a citizen of the nation” (Iakimova 2010, 148-151).

Now this requires a review of the conceptual homologies demonstrated precisely by the civic education textbooks from the 1878-1944 period.

#### 4. Conceptual Homologies

At first sight, history education and civic education diverged and even employed opposite methods throughout the 1878-1944 period. The concepts in civic education lessons for all school levels were introduced to pupils in the following sequence: clan – family – municipality – nation – society – state – fatherland. Conversely, the interwar methods of teaching history called this “regressive method” and recommended it only for young pupils or for separate revision or review lessons:

The *family* is closest to the child, therefore the first concepts introduced to children are related to the organiza-



tion and rules of family life. After the family, [the lessons] move on to the *municipality* (village, town), then to the *nation* and, finally, to the *state*... But this historical knowledge is too fragmentary, it is grouped artificially, and should be taught only at primary-school level (Stanev, Stoyanov 1922, 12).

Another difference between the traditions in history education and civic education is that in history lessons, concepts were not highlighted and defined (whether history education should teach historical concepts or not became the subject of debate in methods of teaching history in Bulgaria only in the 1950s-1970s, and not only in Bulgaria). Conversely, civic education strove towards and required definition of concepts as early as from the 1880s onwards. Anticipating our conclusions, we will say here that the difference in methods did not lead to differences in the conceptual constellations in the textbooks on history and on civic education. History textbooks demonstrate – at the level of intentional *uses* in the micro-contexts of textbook discourses – firm homological cores in the meanings of “nation”, “fatherland”, “society”, and “state”. The same homology is to be found in the *definitions* of concepts in the tradition of teaching civic education. As the definitions are easier to trace with certainty than the concrete uses, here we will review only some of them and then try to reveal the homologies on the basis of civic education textbooks (as noted above, at the level of contextual uses the picture of concepts in history textbooks is practically the same).

In the first place, what is interesting is the actual predicate “civic”, which appears in state curricula from the end of the nineteenth century as firmly attached to two different school subjects – “civic history” and “civic education”, whereby the two subjects again turn out to be interconnected at the level of their general predicate. In that period, “civic history” actually meant political history, while the predicate “civic” was designed to distinguish it from the then traditional terms “sacred history” (related to the study of religion) and “natural history” (a general term for the natural sciences). “Civic education”, however, did not completely overlap with “political education”, as a distinction is made between the two predicates in a book by a Bulgarian sociologist published as early as 1902: “The sphere of civic education is wider than that of political education... political education should be sought within the sphere of civic education” insofar as, according to the author, “political” refers only and solely to “the actions of the state for achieving certain goals”, while “civic” education is designed to prepare the individual in principle for “proper relations” with society (Geraskov 1902, 21). What is common to the two institutionalized meanings – “civic” as “political” and “civic” as “social” (conceived of at that time as being broader than the political) – is that both were transferred from foreign conceptual paradigms. To late-nineteenth-century Bulgarians, the

common, everyday and traditional meaning of “citizen” was a “person living in a city or town” as opposed to a person living in a village. In this sense, the first textbooks on civic education had to cope with the relationship between the traditional and the newly transferred meanings of the term, and they coped with this task with varying success. The same problems existed in the relationships between the traditional and the new meanings of the term “state” (which in the traditional Bulgarian dialects means “property inherited from the father”) and “fatherland” (the traditional meaning of which is simply “native place”). The textbooks took different approaches towards the changes necessary after 1878 in the meanings of “citizen”, “state” or “fatherland”. There are textbooks in which the authors themselves used simultaneously different meanings without explaining the shifts between them; or they explained them; or (quite often) they presented the meaning as one, which, however, grew quantitatively and increased its value-content (for example: the fatherland in which all the Bulgarians live is larger than the fatherland in which the individual Bulgarian family lives).

Such a “quantitative” consideration is the main instrument of conceptual definitions in the civic education textbooks. However, each of the concepts is directly involved in the definition of another concept. For example, once defined, the concept “family” becomes a predicate of the concept “nation”, the difference being quantitative only, and the two form a homology that is best visible in the trope mode of a mutually metonymical representation: “The Bulgarian nation is a big family which, with its past, its sufferings and glorious deeds, with its memories, language, mores and customs, differs from all other nations just as every individual differs from his neighbours” (Paunchev 1904, 5).

According to this bias, the *nation* was a “family bigger than the family”, while society was also defined as a “big family”: “Society is like a family, only bigger in size...” (Stanev 1894, 6). For its part, the *state* was a “big society”: “we are members of a big society called state” (Gruev 1881, 37); but the state was “a society bigger than the society”: “As the state consists of many more individual members than a society, it is quite strong and can therefore counter all external enemies...” (Stanev 1894, 26); and so on. Given this state of affairs, the only conceptual difference in fact consists in the separate quantitative levels of gradation. At the top of this hierarchy is the concept “fatherland” which – considering the spatial parameters of “the national ideal of a Great Bulgaria” – of course remains always bigger than the state realized through politics and wars. The common homological core of the concepts “state” and “fatherland” is in that both are defined as “land”, i.e. territory, where the “fatherland” very often directly assumes the social functions of the “state”:



The land on which a nation lives is called its *native* land or *fatherland* ... the fatherland, as a big power, protects us from external enemies, it guards our homes, honour, property, etc. It opens schools in which we receive our education, it takes all measures to facilitate the livelihood of the whole population (Stanev 1894, 10-13).

This homology, expressed especially clearly and consistently in the interwar period, is the core of the conservative model of civic education based on nationalism; its ubiquitous presence has left no room for any liberal ideas that could also take the form of educational practices.

This directly reflected also on the very concept of “citizen” – it had an entirely circular structure, according to which the citizen was a son of the nation and of the fatherland, the homology being realized through the common predicate “freedom”:

For a nation, to be *free* means to be master of itself, to itself have the right to determine freely, without pressure, all its arrangements, all its laws and institutions ... Every person who is the son of such a nation, or a member of it, can proudly call himself *a citizen. The citizen is a free son of a free fatherland...* The union of all free citizens makes up the free fatherland (Stanev 1894, 16-17).

In this very logic, however, the concept “freedom” was an argument not for citizenship understood in a liberal sense but again for nationalism – because in all interwar civic education textbooks the Bulgarians living in other neighbour countries were conceived of as being “under slavery”. Thus, such an idea of freedom in the interwar period defined also the following basic function of the state: “Every state strives to incorporate within its boundaries all lands inhabited by its compatriots in order to become unified and mighty” (Mandov, Petev 1942, 7); of course, history was also used as an argument for this last, and, as a school subject, demonstrated the same constellation of concepts.

Finally, we must note that the conservative model of civic education in the 1878-1944 period and its connections with history education, through which series of disciplinary, spatio-temporal, and conceptual homologies were built, is entirely explicable both from the perspective of the specifically Bulgarian historical context and from the then existing European educational traditions. Finally, we will note some contemporary circumstances that make this selfsame model consciously or unconsciously reproducible today too.

## 5. Continuity Reloaded: Notes on the Present State of Affairs

The subject “civics” disappeared from Bulgarian education throughout the period of communist rule (1944-1989). “Social Science” (*Obshestvoznanie*), a subject introduced in schools in the late 1970s, was simply the title of a course that taught only and solely

Marxist-Leninist historical materialism. That is also why the imperatives for introducing civic education after 1989 appeared as new, unconnected to a direct Bulgarian tradition, and imported after the fall of communism and Bulgaria’s orientation towards membership in the European Union. In this sense, the main documents and curricula are foreign – they are the ones that are popularized, studied, and discussed, while the national tradition remains little-researched and little-known. At the same time, however, it has been revived and is being reproduced, including at the level of the old conceptual homologies – for example, a popular definition of “citizen” formulated in 1998 and cited approvingly and uncritically in a number of later works, goes as follows: “a person who is born, lives or is naturalized in a particular state or nation, who has particular human, civic, political and socio-economic rights and liberties as well as duties and responsibilities which are protected, guaranteed and regulated by law” (Balkanski, Zahariev 1998, 206). The indifference to the contemporary conceptual difference between “state” and “nation” in this definition marks a return towards the old conservative model. Here, however, we will give only two final examples of its contemporary recruitment in the narrower aspect of the relationship of interest to us here: the relationship between civic education and history. Both examples are from writings of experts in methods of teaching history.

The first example is from Romyana Kusheva’s monograph *Methods of Teaching History* (in Bulgarian, 2006). The latter contains a separate chapter on “History and Civics” (Kusheva 2006, 30-36). The developments in the history of the two school subjects in the 1878-1944 period reviewed in this chapter lead to the following conclusion, which we agree with:

The intersection points of history and civic education are especially clear in the definition of the goals of teaching them at school. Viewed even in a long interval of time – until the mid-forties – they essentially remained unchanged ... they can equally well be identified as goals of civic education and as goals of history education (ibid., 34-35).

What we disagree with is the absence of any political reflection in the following conclusion drawn by the author: “... there is every reason to conclude that there is an analogy between the views on civic education in the late thirties and in the late nineties” (ibid., 37). The least we can note here is that such an analogy categorically connects the politically conservative national model from the interwar period to the 1990s – something which the author does not see as problematic in any way.

Our second example is from a 2008 monograph by Maria Radeva, *School History Education in Bulgaria 1878-1944 (A Methodico-Historical Analysis)* (in Bulgar-



ian). Despite its subject, the monograph begins with a long chapter on “Bulgarian History Education in the 1990s: Facing the Challenges of European Integration” – obviously, this is the matrix through which the events of and in textbooks in the 1878-1944 period are also interpreted. Thus, even in the introduction, we read the following about textbooks from the 1878-1944 period:

Although one can find in them separate examples of “hidden agendas” and stereotypes about the Neighbours, on the whole the characteristics of Bulgarian school history education are dominated by tolerant interpretations based on a “calm” analytical, objective attitude towards the facts of political and civic history (Radeva 2008, 14).

Based on our personal knowledge of thirty different Bulgarian textbooks on history from the 1878-1944 period, we insist on noting that this is simply not true. We insist on noting that the textbooks in question are completely and overtly nationalist, especially those from the interwar period which complied with the official requirements formulated in the notorious Memorandum on National Education No. 12353 dated 17 October 1913; that there were no hidden agendas and stereotypes about the neighbours because the stereotypes about the neighbours were entirely explicit and they were even highlighted as “lessons” for Bulgarian society at the time in many textbooks; that after the 1919 Treaty of Neuilly, the image of the great powers (and hence of Europe) in them is quite negative. If there is a “hidden agenda”, it is in the author’s attempt to represent the pre-1944 textbooks as being entirely “European” in the following way:

[T]he Bulgarian textbooks on history were consistent not only with the national cultural and political context but also with the European pedagogical science and humanities, with their liberal values ... the methodical works on history borrowed, followed, applied the common European pedagogical ideas (ibid., 14).

Here it is not clear exactly what is meant by “liberal values” of European pedagogy in the *interwar* period (!) and whether there were “common European pedagogical ideas” at that time at all; it is also most unclear what the author means by the phrase “liberal nationalism” (ibid., 102-103), which functions as an oxymoron when referring to Bulgarian textbooks on history from the interwar period.

It is time to briefly define the “hidden agenda” of this monograph, which is representative not just of the work of Maria Radeva but also of the development of this set of problems in the works of the majority of contemporary Bulgarian historians, if we judge also from their publications on the subject of textbooks: the synchronization of Bulgarian textbooks with “the common European pedagogical ideas” in the interwar period, made within the context of the same syn-

chronization in the 1990s, forms an ordinary allegory that serves the thesis of continuity. In this scheme, the only expelled “actor” and “villain” is communist textbook historiography – on that basis, the hidden agenda consists in the latent return to interwar nationalism in its capacity as very “liberal” and very (in the contemporary sense of the term) “European” – in its role as a positive analogue of present-day developments in history and civic education.

## 6. In Lieu of a Conclusion

The historical longevity of the conservative nationalist model in Bulgarian educational tradition until 1944 is quite explicable by the traumatic image of a “natural” Great Bulgaria, always shattered in the course of time by unfair to the Bulgarian cause political acts which outlined “artificial” state borders. Nationalism after 1989 recognized the European Union not only as a threat to Bulgarian national identity but – paradoxically enough – also as a main agent somehow legitimizing the old nationalist goals, for it was conceived as a powerful instrument for demolishing the “artificial” borders. So, it was possible for a Bulgarian academic historian of the Middle Ages to openly write the following statement in 2004: “The development of the Bulgarian state and ethnic society in the Balkan geopolitical and living space in the Middle Ages had defined the political borders of the territory, the settlement of the neighbours and the problems with them. The changes of these borders as a result of the two world wars have led to a status quo which can be only diluted by the firm establishment of the European Union” (Gjuzelev 2004, 36). Not surprisingly, one can also read in a 2000 text on didactic methods in civic education the following topic recommended for discussion in class: “Let us imagine that a federation between Bulgaria and Macedonia is established by the name “Bulgarian federation”...” (Ivanov 2000, 129).

Such a political imagination does not define itself as an opposition to the official European orientation in the educational policy of the state. On the contrary, it defines itself as “truly European” as it comes in a post-communist (and ante-communist) situation; this way nationalism seems legitimized as it goes straight against the “international” pathos and bias of the communist period. Thus, the renunciation of communism recognizes, somehow “naturally”, as its tradition precisely the right-wing conservative nationalist model of history and civic education from the interwar period. But precisely this “binary” way of thinking on the major part of Bulgarian mainstream experts in teaching methods precludes any political and methodical turn towards a contemporarily rethought liberalism that could be both a theoretical and practical alternative to either of the two.

Of course, this is not a full and complete picture of the recent developments in the connections and

differences between history education and civic education in contemporary Bulgaria. A series of ongoing projects, proposals, and studies problematize this status quo, but they come mostly from interdisciplinary academic projects which, for the time being, remain

mostly in the narrow professional niche of the debate; some of the major projects are still in progress. In any case, we are certain that the public debate on the politics of history education and civic education in Bulgaria is yet to come.

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