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Marxism in Bulgaria Before 1891

The gestation period of Marxism in Bulgaria before a Marxist party came into existence in 1891 is one of the least studied periods in the history of the Bulgarian Communist Party. In Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, where most of the work on BCP historiography has been done, attention has primarily, and understandably, gone to the activities of Dimitür Blagoev, the so-called father of Bulgarian Marxism, whose early career as propagandist and organizer of the new movement included a notable effort while he was a student at the University of St. Petersburg to form the first Marxist group in Russia.¹ The story of the penetration and dissemination of Marxism in Bulgaria, however, is by no means exhausted with accounts of Blagoev's life to 1891. Yet, Bulgarian Marxist historians have done little to date to reconstruct this story in monographic investigations of the kind they have produced for other phases of their party's history.² Of the general accounts they have produced, the best one, relatively speaking, is in the latest *Istoriia na Bülgarskata Komunisticheska Partia*, which devotes fifteen pages (out of 699) to Blagoev's early activities and the party's prehistory, including the founding congress of 1891.³ Western

1. The field of Blagoev studies is sizable, since Blagoev was a tireless writer whose *Süchineniia* fill twenty volumes (Sofia, 1957–64) and whose activities were interwoven with Bulgarian political and intellectual life until the early 1920s. Publications to September 1, 1964, are listed in P. Küncheva et al., *Dimitür Blagoev: Bibliografiia* (Sofia, 1954), L. P. Likhacheva, *Dimitr Blagoev: Biobibliograficheskii ukazatel'* (Moscow, 1956), and I. Tsolov et al., *Istoriia na BKP, 1885–1944: Bibliografiia. Materiali publikovani sled 9 septemvri 1944 g.* (Sofia, 1965), esp. pp. 369–85. Subsequent relevant works include *Dimitür Blagoev, Georgi Kirkov, Georgi Bakalov, Dimitür Polianov v spomenite na süvremennitsite si* (Sofia, 1968), *Dimitür Blagoev, 1856–1966* (Sofia, 1968), G. N. Karaev, *Blagoev v Peterburg* (Sofia, 1969; trans. from Russian), E. Bogdanova, *Vela Blagoeva: Biografichen ocherk* (Sofia, 1969), and *Spravochnik küm süchineniata na Dimitür Blagoev* (Sofia, 1967).

2. Existing fragmentary contributions on the period to 1891 are listed in *Istoriia na BKP, 1885–1944: Bibliografiia*, pp. 35–38; *Izvestiia na Instituta po istoriia na BKP*, 20 (1969): 577–78; and L. Kirkova, *La science historique bulgare, 1965–1969: Bibliographie*, supplement to vol. 5 of *Études historiques* (Sofia, 1970), pp. 199–222.

3. Sofia, 1969: hereafter cited as *Istoriia na BKP*. Other general accounts include *Istoriia na Bülgarskata Komunisticheska Partia: Kratük ocherk*, 2nd ed. (Sofia, 1969), and *Materiali po istoriia na Bülgarskata Komunisticheska Partia*, issued by the party's publishing office in several editions since 1952 "in aid to persons studying the history of BCP"; for bibliographic details see *Istoriia na BKP, 1885–1944: Bibliografiia*, pp. 31–32. The 1959 edition of *Materiali* is available in Russian as *Istoriia Bolgarskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii: V pomoshch' izuchaiushchim istoriiu BKP* (Moscow, 1960).

work, as can be expected, is much more limited—the only comparable summation of this period is in Joseph Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria: Origins and Development, 1883–1936*.⁴ It is the purpose of this article, therefore, to indicate, in the space available, what is known about the arrival and propagation of Marxism in Bulgaria before 1891 and to stimulate additional work on the subject, beyond what the “victors” are interested in or willing to produce.

A history of the Bulgarian Communist Party, which draws its ideology from the thought of Marx and Engels, should, it would seem, begin with the first notice these men and their ideas received among Bulgarians. This occurred in 1858, a year before Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*—the *locus classicus* of his theory of historical materialism—appeared, and it was Engels who was noticed first.⁵ In its rubric “Trade News,” the journal *Bŭlgarski knizhitsi*, which had been started earlier that year by the Society for Bulgarian Literature in Constantinople, commented for the benefit of Bulgarian merchants in the Ottoman Empire that the financial crises in the world were a predictable phenomenon which did not have to take business by surprise and that “farsighted men often foresee and forewarn of them in time, but their voice remains a voice in the wilderness.” “We recall,” the commentator continued, “that in the 1840s a certain Friedrich Engels positively stated in his work *The Condition of the Working Class in Manchester*⁶ that in England business crises recur periodically every five or eight years, and many other writers have for a long time pointed out the economic law on which this calculation rests.”⁷

The mention of Engels was obviously incidental and intended to bolster the point that economic crises were cyclical and therefore predictable rather than to introduce Engels to the readers of the journal. In fact, no other mention of Engels or Marx appeared in *Bŭlgarski knizhitsi* or other Bulgarian publications for more than fourteen years, until 1872, when the newspaper *Pravo*, also published in the Ottoman capital, noted in an article on the fifth congress of the First International at The Hague that the International was divided between those “who sought to improve the condition of the working class by moderate and economic measures as well as enlightenment and better education” and others who sought “to reach the same goal by means of a general political and social revolution.” “Chieftain of the latter party,” the article

4. New York, 1959, pp. 11–17.

5. D. Ivanchev, *Bŭlgarski periodichen pečat, 1844–1944: Anotiran bibliografski ukazatel*, 3 vols. (Sofia, 1962–69), 1:94.

6. The work is, of course, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, which Engels published in 1845. It was based on his observations of conditions in Manchester, where his father, a German industrialist, had business interests.

7. *Bŭlgarski knizhitsi*, July 1858, rubric, p. 50; G. Borshukov, *Istoriia na bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika, 1844–1877; 1878–1885* (Sofia, 1965), p. 110.

observed, "appears to be the famous German, Karl Marx, while his followers are most of last year's participants in the Paris Commune."⁸ Far from friendly to Marx and radicalism, the paper by characterizing Marx as famous acknowledged that he was already known, if not written about, among Bulgarians. Awareness of Marx and Marxism, whatever its extent might have been at that time, remained private, however, and no mention of either was made again in print until Marx's death in 1883, when three newspapers in Plovdiv, the capital of Eastern Rumelia, noted the fact and published some biographic data on "the renowned socialist and economist."⁹

The main reasons for the isolation of the Bulgarians from the impact of Marxism during the lifetime of Marx are to be found in their condition in the Ottoman Empire and in the colonies they had abroad. Of the large cities in the empire where ideas from abroad could penetrate and take hold, Constantinople (*Tsarigrad*, "the emperor's city," as Bulgarians had called it since Byzantine times) was the magnet that attracted enterprising Bulgarians by its economic and educational opportunities, cosmopolitan atmosphere and presence of Westerners, and greater security. Most of them, however, tended to pursue their individual progress or promote the cause of national advancement through cooperation with the Ottoman Establishment rather than in radical opposition to it. They regarded their enemies to be above all the Greeks who were entrenched in wealth and power and, through the Patriarchate of Constantinople, controlled the religious life of Orthodox Bulgarians throughout the empire. The struggle that engaged the energies of the Constantinople Bulgarians was thus with the Greeks, and it focused on the issue of separate churches and schools, culminating in the establishment of Bulgarian religious autonomy in 1870 in the form of an exarchate. With the Patriarchate's condemnation of the Bulgarian separatists as schismatic in 1872, their leaders in the Ottoman capital threw themselves behind the cause of the Exarchate to assure its survival and its hold on the Bulgarian provinces and those contested with the Greeks in Macedonia and Thrace.¹⁰ To the eve of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–78, divided as they were by questions of tactics as well as by wealth and social status, the Constantinople Bulgarians remained, in the eyes of radical Bulgarians abroad, "reformist," advocates of gradualism and national quietism, and "Turkish bootlickers."¹¹ A significant number among them had received a Western education—at the Galata Saray Lycée, Robert College,

8. Quoted in G. Mladzhov, "Koga za pŕvi pŕt u nas se spomenava imeto na Karl Marks," *Istoricheski pregled*, 1958, no. 3, pp. 68–71.

9. *Ibid.*

10. On the Exarchate see Richard von Mach, *The Bulgarian Exarchate: Its History and the Extent of Its Authority in Turkey* (London, 1907).

11. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, *Istoriia na Bŕlgariia*, 2nd rev. ed., 3 vols. (Sofia, 1961–64), 1:399–402; C. E. Black, *The Establishment of Constitutional Government in Bulgaria* (Princeton, 1943), pp. 28–36.

and other schools in Constantinople and abroad—and were imbued with ideas of liberalism and constitutionalism.¹² Returning to their liberated country after 1878, they were to have a great impact on its political life and organization as a state.

The most liberal of the Bulgarian leaders in Constantinople was Petko R. Slaveikov (1827–95), teacher, editor of newspapers, translator, collector of folklore, writer, and general “enlightener” of his people.¹³ Having obtained little formal education, he was a self-taught and self-made man attached to the values of learning, work, and enlightenment. His contacts ranged far and wide and included the American Protestant missionaries, whom he helped in the translation of the Bible into modern Bulgarian.¹⁴ In his political views Slaveikov favored democracy, egalitarianism to a degree, and populism, although some ideas of the utopian socialists, especially Charles Fourier, also appealed to him. Writing on “Socialism and Communism” in 1870, he pointed out that Fourier did not reject private ownership and inheritance and that he harmonized the interests of labor, capital, and talent while safeguarding freedom. Slaveikov found himself out of sympathy with communism, because it “restricted freedom and demanded a crude equalization of men.” He remained, in the view of later Marxists, a “petty-bourgeois democrat”¹⁵ who went on to play a central role in Bulgarian political life after 1878 as a spokesman of the democratic viewpoint.

Articulate political radicalism among Bulgarians before 1878 was represented only in their colonies abroad. The sympathy Bulgarians enjoyed in Russia and the relative freedom across the Danube in Rumania drew to these countries many who sought a freer atmosphere, education, or economic opportunity. In Russia there were old colonies that had been formed as a result of the exodus of Bulgarians to “New Russia” and Bessarabia in the wake of the Russo-Turkish wars, as well as merchant families in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other cities. The most numerous of them were in Odessa and Bolgrad,

12. N. Nachov, “Tsarigrad kato kulturen tsentür na bülgarite do 1877 godina,” *Sbornik na Bülgarskata akademiia na naukite*, 19 (1925): 149–63; C. E. Black, “The Influence of Western Political Thought in Bulgaria, 1850–1885,” *American Historical Review*, 48 (April 1943): 507–20. Black indicates that forty-five Bulgarians had graduated from Robert College by 1877 and finds no trace of Marxist influence in the period to 1885. See also R. H. Davison, “Westernized Education in Ottoman Turkey,” *Middle East Journal*, Summer 1961, pp. 289–301; Davison says that the 195 Bulgarians who graduated from the college in its first forty years (1863–1903) were the largest national group.

13. Brief biography in *Kratka bülgarska entsiklopediia*, vol. 4 (Sofia, 1967), p. 550, where the ten-volume edition of his works and the literature on him are cited. See also S. Baeva, *Petko Slaveikov: Zhivot i tvorchestvo, 1827–1870* (Sofia, 1968).

14. W. W. Hall, *Puritans in the Balkans: The American Board Mission in Bulgaria, 1878–1918* (Sofia, 1938), pp. 34–35; Baeva, *Slaveikov*, p. 124.

15. D. Kosev, “Petko Rachev Slaveikov: Obshtstvena i politicheska deinost,” part 1, *Godishnik na Sofiiskiiia universitet, Istoriko-filologicheski fakultet*, 43 (1946–47): 135–37.

where Bulgarians had associations and schools providing educational opportunities and scholarships to young compatriots from Turkey.¹⁶ These opportunities greatly expanded after the Crimean War, when Russian Pan-Slavs formed the so-called Slavic committees to strengthen Russia's ties with the Balkan Slavs, above all the Bulgarians, and combat Western political, cultural, and religious influences among them.¹⁷ The committees extended financial aid and stipends to young Bulgarians for the purpose of producing advocates of the Pan-Slav ideology, the Orthodox faith, and the Russian point of view. As a result of these various opportunities, by 1877 several hundred Bulgarians from Turkey had obtained an education in Russian schools, universities, seminaries, and theological academies.¹⁸

However, not all of the young Bulgarians who went to Russia on such scholarships developed into advocates of the ideas of their sponsors. Like the Russian students, they were caught in the intellectual and political upheaval Russia was experiencing under Alexander II, and many of them became ardent admirers of Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, and other Russian revolutionaries, and followers of the fashionable currents of anarchism, nihilism, populism, and socialism. A case in point was Liuben Karavelov (1834–79), who spent nearly ten years in Moscow as a student, editor of Bulgarian folklore, and writer, and as a result came to know both official and revolutionary Russia well.¹⁹ Official Pan-Slavs frightened him with their program of bringing the “brother Slavs” in Turkey and Austria “under the mighty wing of the Russian eagle,” while discouraging the independent national liberation movements and advising Bulgarians to emigrate to Russia. He found himself ideologically close to the Russian revolutionaries of the 1860s, especially to Chernyshevsky, who urged Bulgarians and Serbs to rely upon themselves and beware of the “perfidious friendship” of the Pan-Slavs.²⁰

In 1869 Karavelov moved to Bucharest and joined the growing struggle between the “Young” and the “Old” in the Bulgarian national movement by preaching in newspapers he published that “liberty is not received, it is taken”

16. N. Nachov, “Bŭlgarskata koloniia v Odesa,” *Uchilishten pregled*, May 1929, pp. 601–28; V. I. Diakovich, *Bŭlgarska Besarabiia* (Sofia, 1918).

17. S. A. Nikitin, *Slavianskie komitety v Rossii v 1858–1876 godakh* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 343–51; Michael B. Petrovich, *The Emergence of Russian Pan-Slavism, 1856–1870* (New York, 1956), pp. 146–52.

18. *Istoriia na Bŭlgariia*, 1:373–76. Nikitin indicates (p. 94) that the Moscow and St. Petersburg committees supported 242 students, the majority of whom were Bulgarians.

19. Karavelov's most recent and detailed biography is by M. Arnaudov, *Liuben Karavelov: Zhivot, delo, epokha, 1834–1879* (Sofia, 1964). Karavelov's works are collected in *Sŭbrani sŭchineniia*, 9 vols. (Sofia, 1965–68). For earlier editions and works on him see G. Konstantinov et al., *Bŭlgarski pisateli: Biografii, bibliografiia* (Sofia, 1961), pp. 126–32.

20. L. V. Vorobiev, *Liuben Karavelov: Mirovozzrenie i tvorchestvo* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 38–71.

and that, like Italy, Bulgaria *fara da sè*. He was generally sympathetic to Slaveikov and others of the "Young" group in Constantinople, but emphasized that "Freedom needs not the Exarch, but Karadzha" (that is, Stefan Karadzha, the renowned guerrilla leader who fell fighting the Turks in 1868). Karavelov remained, however, a theoretician of the national revolution rather than its practitioner, and never crossed the Danube for underground organizational work in Bulgaria, leaving this aspect to Vasil Levski (1837–73), the "apostle of freedom" and organizer of the network of revolutionary committees, and to others. For a few years Karavelov was the moving spirit of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, which he helped to organize in Bucharest, but after the capture and execution of Levski he felt disillusioned and abandoned his revolutionary activities.

Two leading themes in Karavelov's work as a publicist were the advocacy of a Balkan federation around a nucleus of Serbs and Bulgarians and a suspicion of the aims of Russia. The best course for Bulgarians after attaining their freedom and ordering their state "according to the best institutions among the enlightened nations, namely, the Americans, Belgians, and the Swiss," was to join the Serbs and other Balkan nations in a federation on the American or Swiss model to withstand the encroachments of the great powers.²¹ He was particularly apprehensive about Russian aims and warned that "the well-being of the Bulgarians will not come from the North" and that to rely on Russia was "to suffer for another century." Russia, he was convinced, pursued only her own interests; she was responsible for the exodus of thousands of Bulgarians from the Bulgarian provinces of Turkey and the settlement of Tatars and Circassians there, and the little help given for the education of a few Bulgarians was hardly of any benefit to the Bulgarian people as a whole, since most of the students from Bulgaria settled down in Russia or were recruited for police work in Moscow. Russian influence in the formation of the Bulgarian language and the nascent national literature was altogether baneful. The liberation of the Turkish and Austrian Slavs and their unification under the aegis of the autocrat of Russia, as the Pan-Slavs urged, would mean liberty and unity of the kind Prussia imposed on Germany. Striking a prophetic note, Karavelov said:

If Russia comes to the Balkan peninsula as a liberator and savior, Slavic brotherhood will be an accomplished fact; if, however, she comes as a conqueror and a brutally despotic power, requiring all to fall to their knees, then her successes will crumble at once. If the Slavic nations in Austria and Turkey are struggling with such energy to take the foreign

21. Arnaudov, *Liuben Karavelov*, pp. 376–78. The context in which Karavelov's ideas developed is presented by L. S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation: A History of the Movement Toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times* (Northampton, Mass., 1944), pp. 84–122.

yoke off their backs, they will never voluntarily put their backs under the brotherly saddles of the Russian Slavs. In brief, Slavic brotherhood will be realized only when each Slavic nation is free and independent and when every Slav affirms his own national characteristics. . . .²²

As the ideologist of the Bulgarian revolutionary movement, Karavelov professed an eclectic amalgam of ideas which have made him difficult for later Marxists to classify. He was close to Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov, whom Russian Marxists regard as ideological forefathers and classify as revolutionary democrats, but he also leaned toward Western liberalism and federalism and at times defended evolutionary rather than revolutionary means. The efforts of Bulgarian and Soviet Marxists to assess his complex and changeable creed have produced a controversy over whether he was a revolutionary democrat or an evolutionary "enlightener" and, therefore, whether he represented the downtrodden classes or the bourgeoisie.²³ One thing, however, is certain in the still-unresolved controversy: while Karavelov was demonstrably aware of and influenced by Buckle's theory of human progress, Darwin's theory of evolution, and the views of Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and other contemporary thinkers in the West, he never mentioned Marx or Engels in his writings and apparently never read any of their works. If some of his conservative contemporaries regarded him as a socialist, he was anything but a Marxist.²⁴

Among the striking figures of the Bulgarian national revival, the man who came closest to Marxism was Khristo Botev (1849–76), the fiery poet, publicist, and revolutionary who blazed a meteoric path during his short life. A second-generation intellectual (his father was a teacher and "enlightener"), Botev studied in Odessa on a Russian scholarship, but fell, like Karavelov, under the influence of Herzen, Chernyshevsky, and other Russian revolutionaries. A restless soul, he failed to do well in his studies, lost his scholarship, briefly taught school in Bessarabia and his native Kalofer, and turned full-time revolutionary. Along the way he assembled an essentially anarchist

22. Quoted in Arnaudov, *Liuben Karavelov*, p. 498.

23. For an elaboration on the controversy and the Bulgarian and Soviet authors involved in it see A. Bŭnkov, *Razvitie na filosofskata misŭl v Bŭlgariia* (Sofia, 1966), pp. 158–77. A leading Bulgarian Marxist historian of philosophy, Bŭnkov thinks that the two positions "coexisted" in Karavelov, causing him to vacillate, and that in the last analysis he was an ideologist of the liberal bourgeoisie, "which always vacillates." For an interesting attempt at a psychological explanation see S. Chilingirov, "Liuben Karavelov (prinos kŭm krizata v negovata dusha)," *Uchilishten pregled*, January 1929, pp. 2–17.

24. Borshukov, *Istoriia na bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 250–99, esp. p. 288. A thorough student of the early Bulgarian press, Borshukov sides with the view that Karavelov should be classified as a revolutionary democrat. On Karavelov's contacts with Russian revolutionaries see G. Bakalov, "Russkaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia sredi bolgar. I. Do osvobozhdeniia Bolgarii," *Katorga i ssylka*, 1930, no. 2, pp. 114–37.

creed from ideas of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Nechaev to fit his personality.²⁵ The news of the establishment of the Paris Commune in March 1871 reached him in Galatz, Rumania, and touched off an outburst of sympathetic activity. Together with Velichko Popov, the local Bulgarian teacher with whom he was staying, he cabled the Paris Communards “fraternal and cordial greeting” on behalf of a nonexistent “Bulgarian Commune,” which he apparently considered Popov’s household to be.²⁶ He also composed a brief “Credo of the Bulgarian Commune” in the form of the Eastern Orthodox credo, professing faith in “the one Communist order of society” that would bring salvation to mankind through “fraternal labor, freedom, and equality,” in the “triumph of Communism through revolution,” in the “common fatherland of all men and the common ownership of all property,” and in the “future Communist order throughout the world.”²⁷ Bulgarian and Soviet Marxists like to see in the “Credo” the influence of the “Communist Manifesto” of Marx and Engels,²⁸ but the fact is that Botev nowhere indicated familiarity with any of their writings, and the influence of Nechaev’s (or Bakunin’s) “Catechism of the Revolutionary” is more probable.²⁹ The “Credo” was intended to inspire Bulgarian refugees in Rumania to form communes, but no one responded.

Shifting to Bucharest in 1872, Botev found Karavelov at first a kindred mind, and became his close associate in the publication of his newspapers and in the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee. After Karavelov became disillusioned, however, Botev denounced him, as he denounced Slaveikov and others in Constantinople, for turning to activities of enlightenment, education, and change through evolution at a time when the people’s plight demanded “fire and sword, blood and revolution.” In his own newspaper *Zname* (1874–75), which he described as the organ of “our revolutionary party,” Botev urged immediate popular revolt aided by guerrilla bands from the outside and proclaimed that the “only way out of the dreadful plight of the

25. A. Kiselincev, “Filosofskite vūzgleđi na Khristo Botev,” in *Khristo Botev: Sbornik po sluchai sto godini ot rozhdenieto mu*, ed. M. Dimitrov and P. Dinekov (Sofia, 1949), pp. 106–20; Bakalov, “Russkaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia sredi bolgar. I,” p. 120. Botev’s works in various editions and works on him are listed in L. P. Likhacheva, *Khristo Botev: Bio-bibliograficheski ukazatel’* (Moscow, 1960), Konstantinov et al., *Būlgarski pisateli*, pp. 147–54, and *Kratka būlgarska entsiklopediia*, vol. 1 (Sofia, 1963), pp. 278–79.

26. K. N. Derzhavin, *Khristo Botev* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 71–72.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 71. For Bulgarian reactions to the Paris Commune see D. Daskalov, “Parizhkata komuna i būlgarskoto revoliutsionno dvizhenie,” *Novo vreme*, 1971, no. 2, pp. 98–106; and G. Bakalov, “Kak Parizhkata komuna bide posreshtnata ot būlgarite?” *Izbrani istoricheski proizvedeniia* (Sofia, 1960), pp. 363–92. Bakalov originally published his article in 1930 in *Letopisi marksizma* while he was in exile in the Soviet Union.

28. See, for example, Likhacheva, *Khristo Botev*, p. 10; Borshukov, *Istoriia na būlgarskata zhurnalistika*, p. 344.

29. Derzhavin, *Khristo Botev*, pp. 73–74.

people is the revolution, that is, a revolution by the people, immediate, desperate."⁸⁰ He paid much attention to the life of socialist organizations in Europe, and in 1875 reported in some detail on the Gotha congress of the German socialists at which a united Socialist Labor Party of Germany (after 1890 the German Social Democratic Party) emerged.⁸¹ Also in 1875 he presumably took part in a circle of Russian émigrés in Bucharest who studied the works of Marx, and he is said to have owned a copy of the Russian translation of Marx's *Capital* (St. Petersburg, 1872).⁸² In the course of the upheaval in the Bulgarian lands in 1876 he crossed the Danube in Garibaldian fashion as a leader of a guerrilla band, after spectacularly seizing an Austrian riverboat and announcing his plans to the European press. Under a banner inscribed "Liberty or Death" the band marched into northwest Bulgaria, but finding no support or response among the people, they became isolated and broke up. In the ensuing engagements with the Turkish forces the group was decimated, and Botev met the fate he had postulated as the alternative to liberty.

It is easy to see why Botev has had an enormous appeal to the Bulgarian Marxists and why they wish to claim him as the "forerunner of Bulgarian socialism and the Bulgarian Communist Party."⁸³ However, if he indeed studied Marx, he did not evolve into a Marxist. He espoused ideas of Russian and Western utopian socialists and anarchists, preached nationalism against the imperialism of Russia and the other powers, shared with Karavelov and Levski the vision of a Balkan federation, demanded a national revolution against Ottoman rule as well as a social revolution against the propertied classes, and with equal passion preached atheism. In short, as the Bulgarian Communists now see him, Botev was ideologically a Russian revolutionary *narodnik* and utopian socialist who was "unable to move past utopian socialism" to the socialism of Marx and Engels.⁸⁴

The discovery and dissemination of Marxism fell to Blagoev, Ianko

30. *Istoriia na Bŭlgariia*, 1:444; Borshukov, *Istoriia na bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 330–31.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 344.

32. *Istoriia na Bŭlgariia*, 1:446; I. Klincharov, "Boteviiat ekzempiar ot pŭrviiia tom na Marksoviia Kapital," in *Khristo Botev: Sbornik*, pp. 223–25. The findings of Klincharov (1878–1942), published posthumously, are inconclusive: the copy bears only the signature of Stefan Stambolov, the future Bulgarian statesman, who was one of Botev's close friends in Bucharest and allegedly obtained the copy after Botev died. A Marxist, Klincharov was obviously anxious to establish that Botev had read Marx and had been influenced by him.

33. *Istoriia na Bŭlgariia*, 1:447.

34. *Istoriia na BKP*, p. 18; Bŭnkov, *Razvitie na filosofskata misŭl v Bŭlgariia*, pp. 178–90, and M. Bŭchvarov, *Bŭlgarskata filosofska misŭl prez Vŭzrazhdaneto* (Sofia, 1966), pp. 200–223; see also B. Mintsos, "Dŭrzhavnopolitŭchnite i sotsialnostopanskite idei v bŭlgarskata doosvobozhdenska literatura," *Sbornik za narodni umotvoreniia i narodopis*, 16–17 (1900):24–25.

Sakuzov, Evtim Dabev, Nikola Gabrovski, and other Bulgarian *inteligenti* of the generation after Karavelov, Levski, and Botev. Born in 1856 in the village of Zagorichane in Macedonia (near Kostur, today Kastoria, in north-west Greece),³⁵ Blagoev was the son of Vangel Minasov, a poor peasant who left his family shortly thereafter as a *gurbetchiia* (a tradesman away from home) to eke out a living in Constantinople as a dairyman.³⁶ Blagoev's teacher in Zagorichane was a Bulgarian named Georgi K. Dinkov, who had studied in Russia and had brought back Russian revolutionary and socialist ideas.³⁷ Frequently charged with being a Russian agent, Dinkov left Zagorichane in 1871, and Blagoev headed for Constantinople to join his father. He landed a job as a cobbler's apprentice, but after two years of toil he turned again to education. Slaveikov, who was then headmaster at the Bulgarian school in Constantinople, was eager to help him, because, as Blagoev wrote later, "at that time the Bulgarian nationalist revolutionaries were striving to awaken and anchor in the Macedonians the feeling of national unity with the Bulgarians and received with joy every young Macedonian capable of becoming a propagandist of the Bulgarian national idea in Macedonia."³⁸ He did well at the school and followed Slaveikov, first to Adrianople, where Slaveikov established a school with the backing of the Exarchate, and then to Bulgaria. With Slaveikov's support he reached Odessa in 1878 and obtained a scholarship from the Bulgarian community to study in the local seminary, presumably to become a priest for the Exarchate in Macedonia. The seminary, however, was not for him, and he shifted to a secular school on the basis of a baptismal certificate that falsely gave his year of birth as 1859

35. The details of Blagoev's life are known from his "Kratki belezhki iz moia zhitov," which he dictated to his daughter, Stela Blagoeva, after World War I and from the sources referred to in note 1 above; see also N. A. Malevanov and M. A. Kuzmina, "Neopublikovannaia avtobiografia Dimitra Blagoeva (1881 g.)," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1962, no. 2, pp. 229–31, and D. Labelle, "Dimitrii Blagoev in Russia: An Autobiographical Letter," *International Review of Social History*, 9, no. 2 (1964): 286–97. Blagoev was uncertain about his date of birth, 1855 or 1856, but his postwar biographies have fixed it at June 14, 1856. Rothschild's repetition (p. 11) of Blagoev's uncertainty is not justified.

36. Later, while in Russia, Blagoev Russianized his father's Greek name, Vangel, into Blagoi and made it his surname; cf. *Spomeni za Dimitür Blagoev* (Sofia, 1956), pp. 110–11.

37. Dinkov or Dinkata (1839–76) was also an ardent Bulgarian patriot who aided Stefan Verkovič in his researches on the Bulgarians in Macedonia before becoming a teacher at Zagorichane. Blagoev himself later wrote about him and his influence; cf. Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 1:112–25 and 19:355–56. See also K. Babov, *Prinosüt na Dimitür Blagoev za izuchavaneto na ruskiia ezik i ruskata literatura v Bülgariia* (Sofia, 1961), pp. 5–7, and Khristo Khristov, "Gradivo za biografiiata na Georgi K. Dinkov," *Godishnik na Sofiiskiiia universitet, Filosofsko-istoricheski fakultet*, 58 (1964), no. 3, *Istoriia*, pp. 131–65.

38. Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 19:357. Slaveikov was then publishing a newspaper called *Makedoniia*.

in order to show that he was not too old for admission. At the seminary he met Ianko Sakūzov (1860–1941), son of a merchant from Shumen, who was later to become his principal adversary in the Bulgarian Marxist movement. Finding Odessa dull, the two young men left—Blagoev for St. Petersburg and Sakūzov for Germany, England, and France. The directions they took from Odessa were to determine not only their outlooks and personal styles but the nature of their Marxism.

The St. Petersburg period in Blagoev's life (1880–85) was the time of his formation as a Marxist. He was drawn to the Russian capital, as he said later, by tales of student agitation and the idea of studying at the university or the technological institute. Since he could not qualify for the institute, he considered law at the university and finally chose natural science. Arriving for the first lecture, he found the university in turmoil and himself in the midst of a student rally that prevented the professor from using the lecture hall. Blagoev lost no time in joining the rebellious students and was accepted into circles fired by the *narodnik* ideology of the day.³⁹ With his new friends he read and discussed *Narodnaia volia*, *Zemlia i volia*, *Chernyi peredel*, *Vpered!*, and other periodicals reflecting the issues and history of the Russian revolutionary movement. He was also noticed by the Russian police.

After the assassination of Alexander II in 1881, Blagoev, like Plekhanov and other *narodniki*, and probably influenced by their writings, became skeptical of the effectiveness of political assassinations and coups d'état to bring about anything but repression. Also like Plekhanov, he turned to Marxism, which had often been discussed by Lavrov, Mikhailovsky, and others in the periodicals.⁴⁰ He spent the winter and spring of 1882–83 reading works of Ferdinand Lassalle and the first volume of Marx's *Capital* (in the Russian translation which was then under ban) and discovered a new faith. He became convinced that only industrial labor in the cities could carry out the social revolution Russia needed, and he resolved to become a propagandist of

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 366–73. Blagoev's memoirs do not indicate when he abandoned the idea that Russia was "a land of milk and honey" which he had before he arrived there.

40. The parallelism of Blagoev's movement toward Marxism with Plekhanov's is striking. Contemporaries in age (Plekhanov was also born in 1856), they became converts to Marxism at the same time—Blagoev in Russia and Plekhanov in Western Europe, where he lived in self-imposed exile from 1880 to 1917. Plekhanov's acquaintance with Marxism in the 1870s, however, preceded Blagoev's. Cf. Iu. Z. Polevoi, *Zarozhdenie marksizma v Rossii, 1883–1894 gg.* (Moscow, 1959), pp. 138–64, and S. H. Baron, *Plekhanov: The Father of Russian Marxism* (Stanford, 1963), pp. 59–77, for Plekhanov's conversion. Contacts between the "father of Russian Marxism" and the "father of Bulgarian Marxism" apparently did not begin until late 1884, when Blagoev's group of Marxists in St. Petersburg read Plekhanov's *Sotsializm i politicheskaia bor'ba* (Geneva, 1883), learned of the existence of his Marxist group in Geneva, and wrote him to establish contact; Blagoev, *Sūchineniia*, 19:390–91.

Marxism in Russia.⁴¹ His first converts were several young Russians, a girl among them, with whom he lived in a “commune” near the university. It was also at this time that he met his future wife, Viktoriia (Vela) Zhivkova (1858–1921), who was studying pedagogy in St. Petersburg but soon had to return to Bulgaria because of illness.

Toward the end of 1883 Blagoev proposed and his commune comrades agreed (at a meeting attended by “about ten persons”) to organize themselves as a Marxist group for the purpose of spreading Marxism among the students and establishing contact with industrial workers in the capital. The group’s meetings attracted at the most thirty students, but the activity among the workers proved “very difficult,” since “many were spies for the government” and the majority were peasants and artisans lacking a “proletarian consciousness.” The group made some headway, adopted a program in 1884, called itself the “Party of Russian Social Democrats,” and published two issues of a newspaper called *Rabochii*.⁴²

The tsarist police, who were keeping track of these activities, picked up Blagoev in February 1885 and deported him, not to Siberia as he feared but to Bulgaria as he wished. Via Odessa and Constantinople he headed for Sofia, where Vela Zhivkova was teaching high school, and there he landed a job as a government clerk. Sofia, with a population of about thirty thousand, had become the capital of the new country six years earlier and was rapidly swelling with bureaucrats, career seekers, businessmen, artisans, Bulgarians from the colonies abroad, and refugees from Macedonia and Thrace, which, after the brief interlude of national unity under the San Stefano settlement, had been returned to Turkey by the Congress of Berlin. Blagoev naturally moved among the Macedonians, who had banded together in an organization called “Makedonskii Glas” and were publishing a newspaper under the same name and agitating for the liberation of their homeland at the first opportunity. It was in *Makedonskii glas* that he published his first article in Bulgaria, “The Balkan Federation and Macedonia,” written in the excited atmosphere on the eve of the events of 1885.⁴³ Cautiously suggesting an alternative to the

41. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

42. Polevoi, *Zarozhdenie marksizma v Rossii*, pp. 283–323; see also S. Ovsiannikova, *Gruppa Blagoeva* (Moscow, 1959), translated into Bulgarian as *Grupata na Blagoev: Iz istoriata na razprostranieneto na marksizma v Rusiia* (Sofia, 1960), and Ovsiannikova’s article in *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1962), cols. 478–79. Copies of *Rabochii*, which published the program (drafted by Blagoev) and contributions by Plekhanov and Axelrod, reached Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and other Russian cities. This caused Lenin to say later that “for the twelve years between 1883 and 1895, practically the only attempt to establish a Social Democratic workers’ press in Russia was the publication . . . of *Rabochii*.” See his *Collected Works*, English version of the 4th ed., 20:247.

43. Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 1:46–54.

generally advocated unification of Macedonia with Bulgaria, he argued that international federation was one of mankind's loftiest ideas in facing "the dilemma of struggle or cooperation" and that in the Balkans the idea had found in recent years great apostles such as Karavelov, Levski, and Botev. Echoing Karavelov, Blagoev felt that only a Balkan federation could protect the Balkan "mini-states" from the imperialism of the great powers, including Russia's, and could provide the collective resources needed for their economic development. In regard to the Macedonian question, which he said required solution "as the *sine qua non* of Bulgaria's progress," a Balkan federation "could and should" free Macedonia from Ottoman rule and provide for its population "a broad freedom of self-government and the socialization of its material and moral resources." The Macedonians should be free to choose the language, religion, and nationality they preferred, and neither Greece nor Serbia nor Bulgaria could profit from an internecine struggle, especially one between the two Slavic nations, over Macedonia. "Peoples of the Balkan peninsula," Blagoev exhorted in Marxist fashion, "unite before it is too late!"

For a first statement of creed in regard to the Macedonian problem and the future of the Balkans, the article was quite lucid, although not thoroughly Marxist, and indicated lines to which Blagoev was to adhere for the rest of his life. The salvation of the Macedonians and the Balkan nations was in the creation of a regional federation for common defense and development. The predatory aims of the imperialist powers, especially Russia, could be thwarted only by such unity, as the leaders of the Bulgarian movement of national liberation before 1878 had recognized. In invoking the "apostles" of that movement, the article was also an attempt to link the budding Marxist movement with the prestigious revolutionaries of the past and to establish an ideological continuity. In the view of later Marxists, however, Blagoev was not fully Marxist in the views expressed in the article. They aver that he was still influenced by idealism in speaking of justice and individualism for the various nations, and by utopian socialism in asserting that by forming a Balkan federation the countries of the peninsula would be able to escape the evils of capitalism.⁴⁴

The first venture Blagoev undertook in Bulgaria "to spread the ideas of socialism" was the publication of a journal, *Süvremennii pokazatel*, which appeared briefly in June–August 1885.⁴⁵ To protect his own job he edited it under the pseudonym Ts. B. Zheliazov and made Vela, whom he married later in 1885, the required "responsible editor."⁴⁶ The stated purpose of the

44. See the preface (pp. xix–xxi) by Kiril Vasilev, a leading Blagoev scholar, to vol. 1 of Blagoev's *Süchineniia*.

45. Ivanchev, *Bülgarski periodichen pečat*, 1:293. Only three issues appeared; a fourth was announced in February 1886, but was not published.

46. Zheliazov was the first of many pseudonyms Blagoev was to use in Bulgaria. A

journal was to popularize “contemporary theories of social science,” which turned out to be bits and pieces of the ideas of Marx, Lassalle, Adam Smith, Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, and many others. As reflected in the journal, Blagoev’s views were still a mixture in which, because of the lack of Marxist literature accessible to him and the nature of his audience in Bulgaria, Marxism was only one of a number of elements. Blagoev himself acknowledged later that at this time he had not yet reached “pure Marxism,” because conditions in Bulgaria—“a country of small owners” totally lacking an industrial proletariat—were even less favorable for a personal theoretical crystallization than in Russia and also the identification of Marxism with nihilism and radical socialism in the minds of the public made the time “unsuited for overt propaganda” of Marxism.⁴⁷

In Sofia, Blagoev remained in touch with the Russian Marxists in St. Petersburg and Geneva and acted as an intermediary between the two groups over points of the program of Russian Marxism. His own circle of friends around *Suvremennii pokazatel*, mainly teachers and students, was also growing into a Marxist group—Blagoev wrote of “the future Social Democratic party”—and the second issue of the journal carried a draft program based on the minimum and maximum programs of the German socialists. However, larger events—the unification of the Bulgarian principality with Eastern Rumelia and the Serbian-Bulgarian war in the fall of 1885—intervened and disrupted this beginning.⁴⁸ They also brought on Blagoev’s first clash with the ideologists of Bulgarian nationalism who included his former teacher and benefactor Slaveikov.

The process that led to the events of 1885 had its origins in the dismemberment of “San Stefano Bulgaria” in 1878 and the deep resentment it aroused in all Bulgarians. In the principality the party of the “Young” or Liberals started action at once to sway the National Assembly, summoned by the Russian Imperial Commissioner to adopt a constitution, to take up

device of the Russian revolutionaries to conceal identity or simulate numerical strength, pseudonyms were widely used by the Bulgarian socialists. Cf. I. Bogdanov, *Rechnik na bulgarskite psevdonimi* (Sofia, 1961).

47. Blagoev, “Prinos kŭm istoriata na sotsializma v Bŭlgariia” (first published in 1906), *Sŭchineniia*, 11:106–8.

48. *Ibid.*, 19:404. After the journal’s first issue appeared, the government of Petko Karavelov fired Vela from her teaching job at the request of the Russian diplomatic representative in Sofia. The Russian government showed increasing alarm at the activities of “anarchists, nihilists, socialists, atheists,” and others in Bulgaria hostile to official Russia, and voices in the Russian press demanded that the journal be stopped for “insult of the Russian emperor.” In the second issue Blagoev wrote bitterly that if the Russians had their way, Bulgaria would be “nothing but a Russian province where absolutism rages” (*ibid.*, 1:173–74). See also V. Topencharov, *Bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika, 1885–1903* (Sofia, 1963), pp. 5–30.

“the question facing the entire nation” before doing anything else and to refuse to abide by the decisions of the Congress of Berlin. The negative view that the Russian authorities took of the Liberals’ action and the caution shown by the Conservatives dissuaded the Assembly from this course, but the feeling remained general and deep that the injustice inflicted on the nation must be righted at the first opportunity and that the principality had the overriding task of regaining the unity of all Bulgarians. The leaders of the Liberals, Petko Karavelov (younger brother of Liuben who had also studied in Russia and espoused *narodnik* views), Slaveikov, and Dragan Tsankov tried, in and out of office, to advance “the national cause,” and came to be regarded as troublemakers by Russian officials. Their first newspaper *Tselokupna Bŭlgariia*, edited by Slaveikov, was dedicated “first and foremost” to “supporting and advocating the aspirations of our nation toward unification.” Providing an effective expression of the popular sentiments, it declared that “as long as we Bulgarians live in the lands of our forefathers, we shall forever be opposed to the artificial and forcible dismemberment which befell us at a time when more than ever we believed that we were near our goal. We shall not retreat or abandon our goal until we are united as one nation in one state.”⁴⁹ The political and constitutional crises that beset the new state drove the leaders of the Liberals in the principality to Eastern Rumelia, where they strengthened the local Liberals striving toward the same goal.

Around the more circumspect Karavelov and Slaveikov a group of younger, aggressive nationalists began to emerge as the left wing of the party, demanding revolutionary tactics in the tradition of Levski, Botev, and other “apostles of Bulgarian liberty.” The strongest personality among them was Stefan Stambolov (1854–95), also a former student at the Odessa seminary (expelled for connections with Russian revolutionaries) and a member of the Bulgarian revolutionary committee in Bucharest before the liberation. After Botev’s death Stambolov continued to publish his newspaper *Nova Bŭlgariia* and in 1880 started another, *Sŭedinenie*, in his hometown and political base, Turnovo. A close friend of his was Zakhari Stoianov (1850 or 1851–89), a participant in the uprising of 1876, admirer of Karavelov, Levski, and Botev, first historian of the uprising, biographer of Levski and Botev, and propagandist of the nationalism of the earlier revolutionaries. He saw his function as that of interpreter of this ideology to the generation of the 1880s and organizer, in Levski’s style, of a network of revolutionary committees in Eastern Rumelia and Macedonia designed to effect their unification with the principality. Events took him in 1882 to Plovdiv, where he became

49. Quoted in B. M. Andreev, *Nachalo, razvoi i vŭzkhod na bŭlgarskiiia pečat*, 2 vols. (Sofia, 1946–48), 2:18–19.

the leader of the revolutionary elements and prepared the ground for the proclamation of the union in 1885.⁵⁰

The unification was understandably greeted with general jubilation, and when Serbia turned to war to undo it, and Russia, furious at Prince Alexander and the nationalists, withdrew her officers from the Bulgarian units, the Bulgarians became galvanized in defense of the unity they had just achieved. Among the few dissenters was Blagoev, who was drafted for guard duty in Sofia and saw his journal and circle of budding Marxists fall apart. Already an alienated man, he was further estranged by dismissal from his government job when Zakhari Stoiانov attacked him in the press and exposed him behind the "Zheliازov" pseudonym.⁵¹ In his counterattack (a 94-page pamphlet entitled *Nashite Apostoli* published in April 1886) Blagoev characterized the unification as the imposition of the principality's authoritarian regime on the more democratically governed Eastern Rumelia and an act benefiting the prince against the interests of the Bulgarian people.⁵² It was a heated and hasty judgment which he modified twenty years later,⁵³ but in 1885 and for years thereafter he was convinced that nothing Stoiانov and his fellow nationalists did was any good.

Blagoev's feelings at the time are clearly revealed in *Nashite Apostoli*. An *ad hominem* attack on Stoiانov subtitled "Zakharii Stoiانov kato publitsist, revoliutsioner, apostol i patriot," it is full of venom, sarcasm, and vituperation. In his memoirs Blagoev justified the attack by saying that it

50. Khristo Khristov, "Zakharii Stoiانov: Obshtestvena i politicheska deinost," *Godishnik na Sofiiskaa universitet, Istoriko-filologicheski fakultet*, 44 (1947-48), no. 2, Istoriiia, pp. 73-74; see also the brief biography in *Kratka bulgarska entsiklopediia*, 4:646-47, and the sources listed in it. Stoiانov's works were most recently reissued in three volumes (Sofia, 1965-66), the third of which contains (pp. 5-42) an article on him by Borshukov. Parts of his history of the 1876 uprising are available as *Pages from the Autobiography of a Bulgarian Insurgent* (London, 1913).

51. Khristov, "Zakharii Stoiانov," pp. 112-14; Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 11:109-10. In his newspaper *Borba* in Plovdiv Stoiانov had also noted the ideological line of Blagoev's journal and had concluded that "in a country where the towns are still free of the murderous smoke of factories, the capitalist class consists for the most part of some former thieves, and the landlord's estate is in a most pitiable condition, Marx, Mill, and Chernyshevsky will not be understood." Cf. Topencharov, *Bulgarskata zhurnalistika*, p. 25.

52. Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 1:242-55.

53. In his preface to vol. 1 of Blagoev's *Süchineniia* (p. xxxi), Vasilev points out that Blagoev was wrong in his early judgment of the unification and that "this great historic act was above all the work of the broad masses of the people, a work patriotic and progressive in its significance." Blagoev changed his mind in 1906 (in "Prinos kým istoriiata na sotsializma v Bülgariiia") and wrote (quoted by Vasilev): "The unification . . . created a larger national unit (from the two Bulgarias), combined their resources for common economic goals, and created better conditions for the development of their productive forces. In general, in socioeconomic terms the unification meant a greater space and more favorable conditions for the bourgeois development of Bulgaria. In political terms it made Bulgaria a stronger factor in the Balkan peninsula."

had become necessary "to come out against" Stoianov, who had "captivated the entire intelligentsia with nationalist visions," and against his interpretation of the views of the "apostles." The fact is that Blagoev's motives were much more personal, and his style showed it. Stoianov, he said, was an informer exposing "literary" pseudonyms, "unclean in body and soul," a "bullgoring left and right," a writer of abominations against socialism and the socialists, a mental pauper spreading depravity, chauvinism, and narrow-mindedness, and a reactionary who misguided the youth of the country by parading as their "teacher" and "apostle" of the school of Karavelov, Levski, and Botev. Unlike such latter-day apostles, Blagoev said, Karavelov and Botev never allowed "chauvinism and pseudo patriotism to seize their souls" and never told the people that "this is not the time to preach revolutionary ideas." On the contrary, Karavelov had called in his newspapers for the fullest national and social liberation when he wrote that "we want all or nothing, we want complete freedom" and that "all nations in Europe today are in motion, everyone wants to move ahead, every nationality wants to live independently, every man wants to be governed by his own will and does not want to have on his back individuals who govern him by their whims and who feed on his sweat and blood. Only absolute freedom (as, for example, in America and Switzerland) can abolish the historic, national, and ethnic differences." Even more radical than Karavelov, Botev had written that "our revolutionary party and nearly all of the Bulgarian people (except its traitors and exploiters) are now convinced that anyone, who by his social status is an enemy of even that minimal liberalism by which the so-called progressives measure the development of mankind's freedom, is no friend of the man who plans to put his life on the broad foundation of this freedom and does not want to be a servant or slave to foreign or domestic oppressors."⁵⁴

Echoing Marx, Blagoev explained that the advancement of freedom that had been gained through the French Revolution had immediately been threatened by a new oppressor—"the anointed King Capital"—which had arisen to hold down and exploit the nations within a variety of despotic, constitutional, and republican forms of government. The historic trend, however, was leading to the breakup of these forms of government, to the liberation of the exploited masses, and to the organization of "individual communes bound together by a federal union, in which entire nations can live autonomously and every man can be free individually." Even though not Marxists, Blagoev said, Karavelov and Botev had understood the trend and direction of social progress, as could be seen in their advocacy of a Danubian federation and Karavelov's praise of the United States and Switzerland as federal unions

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 205–13.

where “the main basis of social and political organization is communal self-government under which the people govern themselves directly.”⁵⁵

Zakhari Stoianov, Blagoev continued, had completely failed to understand these ideas, as his superficial account of the events before 1878 demonstrated, and while such history nurtured patriotism⁵⁶ and “wrestling nationalism” (*pekhlivanski natsionalizŭm*), it was questionable whether this kind of “education” was useful and capable of transmitting the “ideas and ideals of the Bulgarian revolutionary party.” The ideal of the unity of the Bulgarian nation was dear to the revolutionaries of the pre-1878 period and was a valid one today, but the question was “what kind of unification, in what circumstances, and by what means.” For some people the ideal of the unification of all lands inhabited by Bulgarians was a chauvinist cry for war and victory, based “not on the idea of personal freedom and the good of the people, but on alleged ‘historic and national tasks’ which we had better call ‘historic and national stupidities,’ such as ‘Greater Bulgaria,’ ‘the empire of Krum and Simeon,’⁵⁷ and so on. Such unity rests not on human rights and human resources, but on wrestling nationalism which erects monuments to human stupidity and ignorance such as [visions of] the conquest of Constantinople, seizure of the Aegean coast, and hegemony of the Balkan peninsula.” The real unification of Bulgarians, Blagoev concluded, was their liberation from domestic and foreign tyranny through a general revolution of the people, headed by a party of true revolutionaries and not chauvinists of Stoianov’s stripe.⁵⁸

Amidst the vituperation, in *Nashite Apostoli* Blagoev pressed the point that the revolutionary socialists were the true heirs of Karavelov and Botev, whose “principal significance for us is as first representatives and makers of the Bulgarian revolutionary party. . . . These revolutionaries and the Bulgarian revolutionary party whose foundation they laid are part of the global revolutionary party. . . . It is true that today there is no revolutionary party in our country. With the death of Karavelov the revolutionary party lost its last representative. However, this does not mean that it has died.”⁵⁹ It is evident that Blagoev’s plans for future activity included reconstituting “the revolutionary party” of Karavelov and Botev.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 221–25.

56. Blagoev’s usage of “patriotism” was negative and pejorative, close in meaning to “nationalism” and unlike its present usage in Bulgaria.

57. The reference is to the early medieval empire, which on occasion had threatened Constantinople and held sway over much of the Balkan peninsula. Nationalist historians set it up as an “ideal” the nation should strive to attain again. Cf. Steven Runciman, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* (London, 1930).

58. Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 1:225–55.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Gaining knowledge and perspective, Blagoev twenty years later revised his 1886 view of Karavelov and emphasized Karavelov's withdrawal from "the revolutionary party" and the doubt his withdrawal spread about tactics.⁶⁰ But he never retracted or modified his characterization of Zakhari Stoianov, and it remained for later Marxists to enter some corrections. Acting under the exigencies of the general campaign to cultivate patriotism that has been pressed since the early 1960s, they have stressed that Stoianov was a patriotic revolutionary and that his account of the events before 1878 is "rich in skillful depictions of the way of life of the Bulgarian people, tableaux of the actual events, and portraits of revolutionary leaders," and "has a great value in social education."⁶¹

At loose ends in Sofia, Blagoev followed his wife to Shumen, where she had found a job, and became a teacher in the elementary school. Also in Shumen was Ianko Sakūzov, his acquaintance from the Odessa seminary days, who had returned in 1884 from his studies in Europe. In the West, Sakūzov had been exposed to a broad education, including the lectures of Thomas Huxley in London and Hippolyte Taine in Paris, and had gained considerable knowledge of Marxism and other German currents of socialist thought.⁶² The two young men found much in common and came to know each other well. In 1887, however, Blagoev lost his job when the municipal school was taken over by the state. He moved to Vidin to teach in the municipal high school there, and became its principal in 1888. During his years in Vidin (1887–90) he continued his efforts to spread socialist ideas among the "intelligentsia," that is, the teachers in the area, taking advantage of the unrest among them. At meetings Blagoev argued that the teachers should be militant and should become unionized for greater strength; but he was

60. *Ibid.*, 11:48–49.

61. *Kratka bŭlgarska entsiklopediia*, 4:646–47. Borshukov (see note 50 above) goes further in concluding that Stoianov's "errors and strayings" are "much less important than his total patriotic contribution" and that "the people—the readers who are still fascinated by his work—will put him where he deserves to be: on the pedestal with the nation's other great sons." For an earlier postwar negative evaluation of Stoianov, see Khristo Khristov, "Otnoshenieto na Z. Stoianov kŭm bŭlgarskoto natsionalno-revoliutsi-onno demokratichtno dvizhenie i kŭm sotsializma," *Istoričeski pregled*, 1947, no. 2, pp. 155–76.

62. Brief biographic sketches in *Kratka bŭlgarska entsiklopediia*, 4:449; *Sovetskaia istoričeskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 12 (Moscow, 1969), col. 481; and Topencharov, *Bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 185–86. One of the men who influenced Sakūzov was Henry George, the American social critic, reformer, and author of *Progress and Poverty* (1879). Rothschild provides some information on Sakūzov's early life, and *Istoriia na BKP* mentions him only once, in connection with the founding congress of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party in 1891, obviously underplaying the contribution to the rise of the Marxist movement of a man who was to become Blagoev's leading antagonist in it. One of the lacunae in the history of this period and of Bulgarian Marxism in general is the lack of a full-length biography of Sakūzov.

rebuffed and came to the conclusion that his efforts “in that direction were useless” and that he should address them to a wider audience.⁶³

Of the earliest Marxists, the first to translate Marx and begin the process of making his works available to Bulgarian readers was Evtim Dabev (1864–1946), another teacher and member of the lower ranks of the intelligentsia.⁶⁴ Born in Gabrovo, a manufacturing town that boasted the first modern school in Bulgaria, Dabev was educated there and in Plovdiv, and taught in his home town. He picked up some Marxism along the way (independently of Blagoev and Sakūzov, whom he met later), and in June 1886 started a weekly paper called *Rositsa* (after a river in the area) to spread the new ideas. His Marxism, in Blagoev’s view, was low-grade (since he later became an “opportunist” by advocating gains through accommodation with the bourgeoisie), but in this early period his role in the dissemination of the Marxist ideology and the creation of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party is beyond dispute. In *Rositsa*, the first Marxist newspaper in Bulgaria, which he published with two other teachers, Todor Postompirov (1854–1940) and Pet’o Mustakov (who used the pseudonym “Gladnik,” the hungry one), Dabev included a translation of Marx’s *Wage Labor and Capital* made from a Russian translation published in Geneva in 1883.⁶⁵ The first installment was accompanied by a note describing Marx as “one of the greatest geniuses of thought in our century possessing colossal knowledge and unusual critical talent” and “founder of the international workingmen’s association.” In regard to the brusque intervention of Russia in Bulgarian affairs after the unification, Dabev, not unlike Blagoev, endorsed the position taken by Stambolov and other Liberals against the Russian pressure, which brought about the dethronement of Prince Alexander and reached a climax in Russia’s rupture of relations with Bulgaria in November 1886.

By the end of 1886 *Rositsa* had ceased to appear, but Dabev continued his propaganda for Marxism (he set up his own printing shop) by publishing the pamphlet *Koi na chii grūb zhivee?* (Gabrovo, 1888), a readable adapta-

63. Blagoev, *Sūchineniia*, 19:405–6. Blagoev also edited for a while, behind another “responsible editor,” a newspaper of the local teachers’ association; see Topencharov, *Būlgarskata zhurnalistika*, p. 155. From an orthodox Marxist point of view, Blagoev, still an impure Marxist, was guilty of a “*narodnik* overestimation of the role of the intelligentsia”; see *Istoriia na BKP*, p. 40. Rothschild (p. 17) is confused about the chronology of Blagoev’s stay in Vidin.

64. *Kratka būlgarska entsiklopediia*, vol. 2 (Sofia, 1964), p. 97; Topencharov, *Būlgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 65–77; and G. Borshukov, “Danni za niakoi ranni sotsialisticheski grupi do osnovavaneto na BSDP,” *Izvestiia na Instituta za istoriia*, 6 (1956):237–90, esp. pp. 265–66. Our knowledge of Dabev’s life is sketchy, and we do not know how this indigenous Marxist became acquainted with Marxism.

65. Topencharov, *Būlgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 68–69; K. Karutsin and V. Kovachev, *Karl Marks i Fridrikh Engels na būlgarski: Bibliografiia* (Sofia, 1961), pp. 12–13 and 47

tion of *Kto chem zhiivet?* by the Russian-Polish Marxist Simon Dikshtein,⁶⁶ and a translation of Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (Gabrovo, 1890),⁶⁷ with an adaptation of Vera Zasulich's preface to the Russian translation (also made in Geneva), which Dabev used. Helpful in the publication and dissemination of Engels's work was Krüstiu (Christian) Rakovski (1873–1941), the peripatetic Bulgarian who was to play a leading role in the Bulgarian and Rumanian Marxist movements as well as in Russia after 1917 and was a student in Gabrovo at the time. One of Dabev's merits that followers of Blagoev have acknowledged is that his popular translations introduced into the Bulgarian language the first Marxist terms—"surplus value," "strike," and others—and made plain "even to the simplest worker the secret of capitalist exploitation, namely, surplus value."⁶⁸ Persistent in his work and tenacious in his views, Dabev gained a place among the early leaders of Bulgarian Marxism, and in 1903 he sided with Saküzov against Blagoev on the fundamental issue of class cooperation versus class struggle which split the party.

While Blagoev was still in Shumen in 1887 his feud with Stoianov flared up again. The left wing of the printers' syndicate in Sofia (the first labor organization formed in Bulgaria in 1883) seceded from it and started a weekly paper called *Rabotnik*.⁶⁹ In setting forth its line the editors (the "responsible editor" was F. Barzakov) indicated that until the economic system of the country was completely changed they intended to promote the interests of labor as well as of the small-scale entrepreneurs, but "in a few years" when the capitalists would "fatten on the backs of the workers" they would "turn to the opposite page and read Lassalle and Marx for inspiration in the kind of struggle all labor organizations abroad are waging today." The paper's line was not Marxist or socialist despite the "sporadic" reference to Marx,⁷⁰ but when it lashed at Stoianov's latest book as a "dirty slander and panegyric of ignorance," he decided that the socialists, possibly Blagoev himself, had been busy again. In an article entitled "Nikhilistite v Bülgariia" (published in *Svoboda*, organ of

66. Published in Geneva in 1885 with a preface by Plekhanov; see Polevoi, *Zarozhdenie marksizma v Rossii*, p. 233.

67. These and other publications that made up the early Marxist literature in Bulgaria are listed in Nikola V. Mikhov, "Kakvo e chela bülgarskata sotsialisticheska i progresivna inteligentsiia prez pärvite dvadeset godini sled Osvobozhdenieto," *Godishnik na Bülgarskiia bibliografski institut*, 1 (1945–46): 423–64; see also G. Borshukov, "Oshte dannii za deinost na bülgarski sotsialisti do osnovavaneto na BSDP," *Izvestiia na Instituta za istoriia*, 7 (1957): 269–319, and *Stopanska i sotsialna knizhnina v Bülgariia: Bibliografiia na bülgarskite knigi i statii ot nachaloto do dnes, 1850–1945* (Svishtov, 1948), pp. 120–41 and 785–817.

68. Borshukov, "Oshte dannii," p. 272.

69. Ivanchev, *Bülgarski periodichen pečat*, 2:206. The paper appeared from March to June 1887, and was stopped by the authorities.

70. Topencharov, *Bülgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 116–18.

Stambolov's Liberals), Stoianov charged that Blagoev was hiding behind another "responsible editor" and that the Russians might have recruited him as a spy under the guise of correspondent for a Russian newspaper. Blagoev sent a denial to *Svoboda* (eventually published in *Rabotnik*), acknowledging that he had met "many Russian spies in Sofia" only to expose them as such and that the Russian newspaper *Novosti* had indeed asked him through his wife to be its paid correspondent in Sofia. He had declined because he was "unable to be a correspondent," being "little versed in politics," and because, he said, "the idiotic policy of the Russian government and the blustering tactics of Kaulbars⁷¹ throughout our land made me so indignant that I could not be a coolheaded judge. I would despise myself if I even agreed to talk with spies about Bulgarian affairs. It may be charged that I think wrongly and that my opinions and convictions are in error, but anything else is unscrupulous slander."⁷²

Stoianov, however, remained unconvinced, and in a series of articles on "Sotsializmüt v Bülğariia" in *Svoboda* (whose editor he became in July 1887) he charged that Blagoev had taken the teaching job in Shumen "only as a cover," and he made public two of Vela Blagoeva's letters as evidence.⁷³ He had been unable, he said, to reply sooner to the nihilists of Blagoev's kind because nihilists and friends of Russia of another kind who were threatening the existence of Bulgaria had required attention. Having read Marx, Lassalle, Bakunin, Chernyshevsky, and other "fathers of the new teaching" or merely "two or three booklets" by the Russian émigrés in Geneva, the Bulgarian "emancipators of labor" were excited by the fact that people in Ireland ate potatoes instead of bread, that a Russian worker consumed only five pounds of meat per year, that the paupers in St. Petersburg lived fifty to a room, that the London police stood along the river to prevent starving people from jumping into it, and so on, but knew nothing about the actual conditions in their own country. Their "non-Bulgarian theories" prevented them from understanding that Bulgaria was unique among the countries of Europe in its social equality and distribution of wealth and that its natural resources, including land, were in the hands of the population at large, held "fraternally, evenly, in a primitive and, if you will, communist way." The socialists, Stoianov

71. N. V. Kaulbars was a Russian general sent by Alexander III to Bulgaria in 1886, after the dethronement of Prince Alexander, to browbeat the Bulgarian nationalists into following Russia's wishes. In addition to pressuring the political leaders, Kaulbars toured the country to mount support for Russia's desires and even summoned Russian warships to Varna to threaten occupation, but his efforts were counterproductive and aroused general resentment. Cf. Charles Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism: Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886* (Berkeley, 1958), pp. 262-74; *Istoriia na Bülğariia*, 2:48-51 and 102-4.

72. Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 1:300-302.

73. Stoianov, *Süchineniia* (see note 50 above), 3:213-28.

concluded, might have a place and usefulness in other countries, but in Bulgaria they were an "infection" seeking to penetrate "the unfavorable Bulgarian soil." The youth and the intelligentsia of Bulgaria would do well to shun "these sick men."

Blagoev's response, an unfinished series of articles in another leftist paper, *Napred*, in January–April 1888, was again full of sarcasm and ridicule.⁷⁴ He lampooned Stoianov as a cowherd in the "kingdom of the cattle," hinted at venality on his part, and promised facts. In March 1889, however, he wrote the editor that various difficulties were keeping him from writing the rest of the articles,⁷⁵ and when Stoianov died suddenly in Paris a few months later, the row died with him.

The problems of internal security that these exchanges suggest, and the raw nature of the country's public life in general, brought about at the end of 1887 a law on press controls to tighten the existing erratic censorship. Stambolov, who was instrumental in bringing Prince Ferdinand to Bulgaria against Russia's wishes, and then became prime minister, was anxious to protect his government and the new prince from a hostile press. He enacted stringent provisions against persons availing themselves of the press to endanger "the internal and external security of the state or the personal safety of the prince," to instigate "disobedience, nonobservance of the laws, or disrespect for the authorities," or to attack government officials "in the fulfillment of their duties."⁷⁶ Until his fall in 1894 Stambolov adhered to a policy of parrying what he considered the encroachments of Russian imperialism in Bulgaria and repressing the Russophile elements throughout the political spectrum in the country. The socialists, hardly allies of official Russia, were not the object of special concern, although the general watchfulness of the police intimidated them and inhibited their activities. Blagoev's own view of Stambolov's policy, recorded in 1906, was that "the struggle of the Russophobes against the Russophiles truly became a struggle for the preservation of the national independence against the encroachments of Russia and of her friends inside the country,"⁷⁷ a view for which he is criticized by his present-day followers in Bulgaria.⁷⁸

A phenomenon of those years which Blagoev viewed as an aspect of the history of socialism in Bulgaria was the so-called *siromakhomilstvo* ("pauperophilia"), a movement of "concern for the poor people" started by another

74. The articles are in Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 1:303–23. *Napred* was one of the many journalistic ventures of Georgi A. Kürdzhiev (1854–1907), at that time a follower of the "sentimental socialism" of the Serbian Vasa Pelagić. Cf. *Kratka bülgarska entsiklopediia*, vol. 3 (Sofia, 1966), p. 203; Topencharov, *Bülgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 98–102; and K. Sharova, "Idei Vasy Pelagicha v Bolgarii," *Études balkaniques*, 2–3 (1965): 193–211.

75. Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 1:543.

76. Topencharov, *Bülgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 122–23.

77. Blagoev, *Süchineniia*, 11:93.

78. *Ibid.*, preface by Mikhailov and P. Tsanev (pp. xv–xvi) and editor's note 49, p. 594.

Macedonian, Spiro Gulabchev (1852–1918), a high school teacher in Tŭrnovo. Like Blagoev, Gulabchev went to Russia to study and was deported (in 1886) for subversive activities. While at the University of Kiev he garnered an amalgam of ideas from Pisarev's nihilism, Bakunin's anarchism, the writings of *narodnik* leaders, and the theories of Ukrainian federalists.⁷⁹ The conspiratorial methods of the Russian revolutionaries suited his personality, and in Bulgaria, under the watchful eyes of Stambolov's police, he used them with a flourish. He organized in several towns a network of "pauperophile" groups which he ran single-handed in great secrecy and, in Blagoev's disapproving view, on "purely jesuitic principles." The organization was uncovered and broken up by the police in 1890, but during its brief existence it attracted a number of young radicals (Sava Mutafov, Konstantin Bozveliev, Georgi Kirkov, and others) who subsequently turned to Marxism. Gulabchev himself never became a Marxist, but as a printer and publisher (he set up a printing shop in Ruse), he was for a while in 1891 helpful to the publishing activity of Sakŭzov, Blagoev, Gabrovski, and other Marxists.⁸⁰

Blagoev's difficulties in Vidin, including a conflict with the school board, culminated in an incident which cost him his job and nearly landed him in jail. During a visit by Prince Ferdinand to the town, Blagoev publicly commented about Ferdinand's big red nose; it was reported that he had compared the princely nose to a cucumber. A trial ensued; he was sentenced to three years in jail and lost his job, but a higher court eventually acquitted him. He left Vidin, stayed briefly in Plovdiv, and followed his wife to Tŭrnovo, her home town, where she had found a job and where he attempted (with Traiko Kitanchev, another Macedonian) to pass the bar examination, but failed.⁸¹

In Tŭrnovo, Blagoev found in Nikola Gabrovski (1864–1925), a young lawyer and a local *intelligent*, the most enthusiastic and dynamic propagandist of Marxism in this early period. Educated in Russia and Switzerland, Gabrovski during his law studies in Geneva had moved in Russian émigré circles of various ideological orientations and had acquired a broad socialist outlook, which led him later (in 1903) to part company with Blagoev and side with Sakŭzov and Dabev.⁸² Appointed judge in Sofia, he turned with characteristic

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–16; K. Sharova, "Ideiniiat pŭt na Spiro Gulabchev," *Izvestiia na Instituta za istoriia*, 11 (1962): 103–51; S. Slavov, "Sotsiologicheski i obshtestvenopoliticheski vŭzgliedi na Spiro Gulabchev," *Izvestiia na Instituta po filosofia*, 19 (1970): 247–69.

80. *Istoriia na BKP*, pp. 39–40. Rothschild does not mention Gulabchev or his organization. Gulabchev was also the first to publish Chernyshevsky's *Chto delat'?* in Bulgarian. The first translation was attempted by Stambolov in 1875, but events in Bulgaria deflected his attention from it; see Bakalov, "Russkaia revoliutsionnaia emigratsiia sredi bolgar. I," p. 127.

81. Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 19:406. At the University of St. Petersburg, Blagoev shifted to law in 1883 but did not graduate. Kitanchev (1858–95) later became the first president of the nationalist Supreme Macedonian Committee in Sofia.

82. *Kratka bŭlgarska entsiklopediia*, 1:591; Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 11:118–24; *Istoriia*

enthusiasm to the idea that the intelligentsia had a special role to play, and poured his views into a pamphlet entitled *Nravstvenata zadacha na inteligentsiata* (Sofia, 1889). Using Aesopian language to get past Stambolov's censors, he asserted that "the main lever and moving force of historical evolution is man with his progressive needs," and he said that it was the moral duty and social role of the intelligentsia to recognize and act on that fact. To make itself felt, the intelligentsia should band together in associations (called "Nov Zhivot") federated in a union for the promotion of intellectual interest in society. With several students at the new Higher School in Sofia, in April 1889, he formed the first and only "Nov Zhivot" association and set up an evening and Sunday school for workers, where some 150 of them were taught reading and writing as well as socialism by the *inteligenti*.

In July 1889 the International Exposition in Paris drew Gabrovski to the French capital, where he found large groups of socialists from Europe and America meeting to celebrate the centennial of the French Revolution and to revive the First International. Gabrovski joined the meetings of the Marxist "German" assembly, attended, among the many representatives of the German Social Democrats, by Plekhanov and Axelrod from Geneva. Cochaired by Édouard Vaillant and Wilhelm Liebknecht, the assembly voted to revive the International, called for the formation of Marxist parties in countries where they did not yet exist, and advocated the struggle for universal suffrage where it was not yet attained, in order to achieve the victory of Marxism by democratic means. It also urged the annual observance of May 1 as Labor Day to demonstrate for an eight-hour working day.⁸³

Returning from the great gathering of the intellectual elite of socialism, Gabrovski was understandably both fired by determination to carry out his mission as an *intelligent* with a "moral duty" and inspired by having been present at a historic event. For a while he taught history at the high schools of Sliven and Plovdiv and had, according to Blagoev, "enormous success" among the students as a propagandist of the new ideas. One of his students in Plovdiv was Georgi Bakalov (1873–1939), who was already familiar with Plekhanov's translation of the *Communist Manifesto*, Dabev's translation of *Socialism*:

na BKP, pp. 40–41. In 1914 Gabrovski rejoined Blagoev's "Narrow Socialists" and remained in their party until his assassination in 1925. A maverick Marxist with merits in the establishment of the party rivaling those of Blagoev, Gabrovski has been neglected in Bulgarian postwar research on the party's history.

83. *Protokoll des Internationalen Arbeiter-Congresses zu Paris abgehalten vom 14. bis 20. Juli 1889* (Nuremberg, 1890). The *Protokoll* does not list Gabrovski among those who attended, since he was not a delegate representing an organization, but listed a "Vereinigung der bulgarischen Studenten in Brüssel." Similar socialist groups of Bulgarian students existed in Liège, Zurich, and Geneva; see Blagoev, *Sūchimeniia*, 1:376–92; A. Shnitman, "K voprosu o vliianii russkogo revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia 1885–1903 godov na revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v Bolgarii," *Voprosy istorii*, 1949, no. 1, pp. 39–55; and K. Sharova, "Būlgarskoto sotsialisticheskoto dvizhenie v navecherieto na Buzludzhanstii kongres (1890–1891 g.)," *Istoricheski pregled*, 1961, no. 4, pp. 41–74.

Utopian and Scientific, and other revolutionary literature.⁸⁴ When Gabrovski and other teachers were dismissed at the beginning of 1891 for spreading socialism, Bakalov led a student strike for which he was expelled from the high school and, like Rakovski, barred from further education in Bulgaria.⁸⁵ Following his teacher to Tŭrnovo, where Gabrovski turned to the practice of law, Bakalov became his clerk and lived in his home. During the summer of 1891 Bakalov worked on a translation of Plekhanov's *Sotsializm i politicheskaia bor'ba* (published later in the year in Sevlievo), and in the fall left for Geneva to join Rakovski and other young Marxists there, study natural science, and learn directly from the master teacher of Marxism, Plekhanov.⁸⁶

At Tŭrnovo, Gabrovski and Blagoev, both motivated by the same objectives, apparently agreed that they should attempt to disseminate convincing arguments against the assertion that there was no ground for socialism in Bulgaria and—in line with the resolution of the Second International—exploit the opportunity to form a Social Democratic party presented by the collapse of Gulabchev's organization. At Shumen, Sakŭzov was already in touch with socialist *krŭzhotsi* in a number of towns, and in January 1891 he began the publication of a monthly journal *Den* to foster the growth of the movement.⁸⁷ Gabrovski and Blagoev welcomed Sakŭzov's journal as a useful channel of contact and propaganda, and for about two years Blagoev assisted Sakŭzov as a contributor and, for a while, as coeditor. By June 1891 Gabrovski had launched another periodical, a quarterly journal called *Novo vreme* (apparently after *Die Neue Zeit*, organ of the German Social Democrats, with Blagoev and others as contributors and himself as editor), which Gulabchev was to publish in Ruse. Though Gulabchev did print a first issue, he became incensed over its contents and destroyed nearly all the copies, and the venture aborted.⁸⁸

84. G. Bakalov, *Izbrani proizvedeniia*, vol. 4 (Sofia, 1964), pp. 206–7; Dancheva, *Georgi Bakalov*, pp. 7–8.

85. In connection with the student strike in Plovdiv, Nikola Genadiev, one of the younger leaders of the Liberals, wrote in the local paper *Balkanska zora* that “the socialist propaganda has no purpose in our country and can have no success.” *Balkanska zora* also published Engels's “The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism” to show how the Marxists viewed Russia's imperialism. Cf. Topencharov, *Bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika*, p. 176.

86. The Bulgarian student socialist group in Geneva was already sizable (about thirty students) and very close to Plekhanov, who had a high opinion of its leaders, especially Rakovski. Plekhanov's closeness with the young Bulgarians and the Russian-Bulgarian diplomatic rupture encouraged him for a while to hope for a teaching position at the new Higher School in Sofia. A fellow exile in Geneva, the Ukrainian *narodnik* and federalist Mikhail P. Dragomanov, who influenced Gulabchev's views, had been brought to the school in 1889 by his Bulgarian son-in-law, Professor Ivan Shishmanov. Cf. Bakalov, *Izbrani proizvedeniia*, 4:207–10; Stoian Nokov, “Studentski spomeni ot Zheneva (1889–1894 g.),” *Istoricheski pregled*, 1956, no. 4, pp. 81–103.

87. Ivanchev, *Bŭlgarski periodichen pechat*, 1:238; Rothschild, *Communist Party of Bulgaria*, pp. 14, 16. *Den* was printed by Gulabchev in Ruse.

88. Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 11:131–32, and editor's note 84, p. 601; Topencharov, *Bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika*, pp. 179–85; *Istoriia na BKP*, pp. 43–44; Sharova, “Bŭlgarskoto

The first step toward forming a party was taken in May 1891, when Gabrovski invited a few fellow socialists to his family's vineyard on the outskirts of Tŭrnovo during the Easter holidays to discuss the matter. The meeting was attended by Gabrovski, Blagoev, Konstantin Bozveliev (1854–1951, a “pauperophile” from Kazanlŭk who sided with Sakŭzov in 1903), Sava Mutafov (1864–1943, another “pauperophile” from Sevlievo who later abandoned politics for the practice of law), two representatives of *krŭzhotsi* in Gabrovo and Drianovo, a student from Tŭrnovo, and Gabrovski's clerk, Bakalov.⁸⁹ The eight “founders” met “clandestinely” and exchanged views on whether they should openly announce the formation of a Social Democratic party and thus separate themselves from the conspiratorial groups of Gulabchev and other radicals blacklisted by Stambolov's police. Fearful of police repression, Bozveliev and Mutafov were against the plan. The group decided to hold another meeting in the summer to try to resolve the issue and consider the statute and program which the “Tŭrnovo circle” (that is, Gabrovski and Blagoev) had drafted.⁹⁰

Before they met again, another budding Marxist, Ivan Kutev, published a translation of the *Communist Manifesto* (printed by Gulabchev), which he prepared from Plekhanov's translation and furnished with a free rendition of Plekhanov's preface. Kutev also included an excerpt from Marx's *Civil War in France* and the statute of the International. Sakŭzov promptly reviewed in *Den* this latest addition to the limited Marxist literature in Bulgarian, reprinting a part of the *Manifesto* and introducing its ringing slogans to the readers of the journal.⁹¹

The meeting was set for August 2⁹² at Mount Buzludzha in the Balkan Mountains south of Tŭrnovo, the time and place for the annual patriotic commemoration of the engagement between the guerrilla band of Khadzhi Dimitŭr and Stefan Karadzhata and Turkish troops in 1868, during which Khadzhi Dimitŭr was killed on the spot.⁹³ The large crowds that usually came were counted upon to provide a cover, and the gathering of the socialists did pass unnoticed by the police. According to Blagoev, those who arrived the previous

sotsialisticheskoto dvizhenie,” pp. 60–63. Rothschild does not mention the *Novo vreme* venture of 1891.

89. Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 11:601, editor's note 86; *Rabotnichesko delo*, May 3, 1971.

90. Blagoev, *Sŭchineniia*, 11:132–34; *Istoriia na BKP*, pp. 44–45; Bakalov, *Isbrani proizvedeniia*, 4:279–84. As an eyewitness Bakalov writes that while Blagoev took the role of theoretician, “the spokesman, agitator, and general agent of the party was Gabrovski.” Since Gabrovski was also at home in Western Europe and spoke the languages, it is not surprising that it was he, rather than Blagoev, who was chosen by the party to represent it at the 1893 congress of the Second International in Zurich.

91. Karutsin and Kovachev, *Karl Marks i Fridrikh Engels na bŭlgarski*, p. 47; Topencharov, *Bŭlgarskata zhurnalistika*, p. 186.

92. Here as elsewhere in the article the dates follow the Gregorian calendar, which Bulgaria adopted in 1916.

93. The peak is not near Sofia, as Rothschild states.

day gathered in the evening around a fire under the tall beech trees and apparently thought of themselves romantically as the guerrillas of 1891.⁹⁴ With others who came the next day, a group of about twenty assembled: Blagoev, Gabrovski, Dabev, Postompirov, Bozveliev, Mutafov, Kutev, Bakalov, and other *inteligenti* as well as workers and artisans—as Blagoev was later anxious to point out—from the nearby towns of Sevlievo, Drianovo, Gabrovo, Kazanlık, Stara Zagora, and Sliven. The issue that took most of the time was again whether to proclaim openly the formation of a socialist party, and the same division appeared as in Tŭrnovo: those coming from Gulabchev's conspiratorial groups adamantly opposed any idea of announcing a party, especially one identified as Social Democratic or Marxist, for fear (later proven unwarranted) that the police would rush to smash it. The "Tŭrnovo representatives," however, prevailed. The founding congress, as the meeting came to be designated in party historiography, resolved to form a "Bulgarian Social Democratic Party," to use Sakŭzov's *Den* as a vehicle for propagating the party's ideology, and to begin the publication of a weekly newspaper as well as a "Bulgarian Social Democratic Library" for original contributions and translations of Marxist literature. The meeting also adopted the program (containing the party's statute) drafted by Gabrovski and Blagoev from the programs of the Belgian and French workers' parties, and elected a "general council" of the party with headquarters in Tŭrnovo.⁹⁵ By noon the "congress" had exhausted its "agenda" and the participants went away in the conviction, if Blagoev is to be believed, that "under the centuries-old beeches of the ancient Balkan Mountain" they had established the party of Marx in Bulgaria.

94. The existing version of what took place at Buzludzha was produced by Blagoev in 1906 in his "Prinos kŭm istoriata na sotsializma v Bŭlgariia" (*Sŭchineniia*, 11:135–38). Blagoev was not only understandably anxious to present himself in the best light and as the main figure and to create an epic with some myths for his followers, but writing with the bitterness engendered by his split with Sakŭzov and the other "Broad Socialists" in 1903, he produced literally a "contribution" rather than a full and objective account. It is not clear, for example, whether he and Gabrovski were at the evening gathering or arrived the next day, whether Sakŭzov was represented in any way, whether he or Gabrovski (who had the genuine oratorical ability Blagoev lacked) led the meeting, or whether Gabrovski alone drafted the program for the party from materials in French. Without further research, Blagoev's "contribution," as incorporated in the Bulgarian histories and in Rothschild's book, cannot be accepted as the final word.

95. *Istoriia na BKP*, pp. 46–48. Text of the 1891 program in *Bŭlgarskata Komunisticheska Partiia v rezoliutsii i resheniia na kongresite, konferentsiite i plenumite na TsK*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Sofia, 1957), pp. 13–25. Under French influence, the program included a demand for decentralization of the state and its transformation into a federation of producers' communes. In 1893 it was replaced by another, modeled after the Erfurt program of the German Social Democratic Party. The documents reproduced (*ibid.*, 1st ed., 1947, p. 35) concerning the party's third congress in 1893 list the "general council" as consisting of, in that order, Gabrovski, Blagoev, Postompirov, and three others.