**ET CETERA (essays, reflections, impressions) /
ET CETERA (есеї, роздуми, враження)**

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USE OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS
AS POLITICAL WEAPONS
BY THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST REGIME 1944-1989:
FIVE CASE STUDIES

1. Introduction

A terrible war is currently underway in Ukraine, with frequent reports occurring about Ukrainian children being kidnapped to Russia and having their names changed. Changing names of people against their will is a horrible crime which falls under the notion of use of language (and indirectly linguistics) as weapons. War, territorial and similar conflicts often involve the use of history, philosophy, art and similar material or non-material things that are not weapons but are used as weapons. Scarce goods have been employed as weapons (Wallensteen, 1976) and even food – or, rather, its absence. Purposeful deprivation of people of food was effectuated on a mind-boggling scale in Ukraine in 1932-1933 – in the Holodomor period. From the point of view of Ukrainians today, these are not just sensitive issues, they are morbid, extremely painful, adding up to the centuries-old attempts of Russia, USSR and the Russian Federation to annihilate Ukraine as a nation – together with its history, culture, language. These attempts are now resumed with Putin's outspoken desire not to allow Ukraine to exist as a state (YouTube: Barroso interview). How Ukrainians view this issue is hard to imagine, so it would best be handled by Ukrainians. This paper deals with use of language and linguistics as political weapons in Bulgaria, a country sharing a similar history, culture, language genealogy – and the circumstance that both states were under the control of a totalitarian power. Hence, a story of what happened in Bulgaria under communism may be useful for the understanding of what happened or is still happening in Ukraine. This paper also covers some aspects of Bulgarian and Ukrainian linguistics and parallels between them.

2. Theoretical background and methodology

The subject of study is a time period in which language and linguistics were used as weapons in Bulgaria, assuming that this is no longer done and cannot happen any more in a EU member state that strictly follows the fundamental principles of the EU, especially those dealing with human rights. The object of study are certain events involving scientific research or related to it, representative of the use of language and linguistics as weapons by the 1944-1989 communist regime in Bulgaria. The methodology involves the selection of criteria that indicate whether a certain event/set of events represents the use of language and linguistics

as weapons. By "language" such data are understood that are also related to moral values – be it human dignity or the dignity of a nation before the world. The theft of the name of an extinct language damages the dignity of a nation whose forefathers used it – even though the language may be dead today. A person's name is not simply a technical designation, it carries moral values – which are lost when a human being is deprived of one's name. The extremely drastic case reported here describes not the deprivation of a single person's name but the ***forceful changing*** in Bulgaria of the names of ***one million people***. Thus what is meant by "language" here is larger than what is standardly understood: a system of phonological, lexical, grammatical etc. data or a means of communication used by a nation.

The employment of language and linguistics as weapons can be done by a state or a political and ideological alliance of states (USSR and satellite states) against another country. But the use of such "weapons" can also be not so much against other countries as against ideological enemies. Crucially, such enemies are not necessarily located in other countries, they are ***possible or prospective internal enemies***: which means that possible or probable enemies are the communist states' own citizens.

3. Selection of data to be analyzed; findings, discussion

The paper analyzes ***five cases*** from the history of Bulgaria after WWII involving the use of language and linguistics for political purposes. Two of them are linked to the interference by the Komintern and the Stalinist regime in Bulgaria and the imposition of communist governments in the Balkans. The first one describes the theft of the Greek word and linguistic term *Macedonian* from the historical and cultural heritage of Greece. The second one provides an answer to the question why, in the understanding of those who usurped power and established communist states, a high-ranking functionary must, when possible, be presented before the masses as "a scientist". The third case reveals the attempt in the 1950s to impose Stalinist linguistics as "the only correct approach to the study of language". The fourth case involves a problem that appears to be a purely linguistic one but has political underpinnings. The fifth case describes the forceful changing of the names of all Bulgarian Turks, one million people – which grew into ethnic cleansing in 1989.

3.1. Case Number One. Imposition in 1944, on orders by Stalin and the Komintern, of the Greek word *Macedonian* as a denomination for a western Bulgarian dialect

The theft of the Greek word *Macedonian* and its imposition as a denomination for the Bulgarian dialect spoken in Vardar Macedonia (Kabakčiev, 2025) was part of the global strategy of the USSR led by Stalin to subdue the histories, cultures and languages of the national republics within the Soviet Union and simply erase them if possible, as well as of some nearby countries including Bulgaria. The Greek word *Macedonian* was stolen by Stalin's puppets in Vardar Macedonia with a special purpose in mind: to appropriate from Ancient Greece its history, culture and even language (Kabakčiev, ibid.). But while stealing history and culture may be somewhat easier to accomplish and can be said to have been achieved through the erection in Skopje of statues of Greek emperors etc., appropriating ***the name of a language***, an ancient Greek dialect spoken in Alexander the Great's Empire, in order to flaunt it as one's own proved a harder nut to crack. The reason: genealogically, from the scientific point of view, Macedonian, the language spoken in Alexander the Great's

Empire, has absolutely nothing to do with the Western Bulgarian dialect spoken in Vardar Macedonia.

The embezzlement of the name *Macedonian* by the emerging new state within Yugoslavia started in 1944. On 2 August, a group of communists calling themselves "Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia" gathered beneath the Serbian monastery *Prohor Pčinjski*. They asked to enter the monastery to hold their meeting but were refused entry, so the meeting took place in a field beneath the monastery. The language in Vardar Macedonia – used by state institutions, taught at schools etc., was literary Bulgarian but the local population spoke a specific Western dialect. Obeying orders of Stalin and the Komintern, the meeting proclaimed the Bulgarian dialect spoken there to be "Macedonian language", despite the fact that the communist group did not include any individual with any linguistic background. It is worth noting that from 1944 onwards the ruling Bulgarian Communist Party fulfilled the Komintern order for creating "a Macedonian language" – although most Bulgarian communists rejected it, and even tried to "Macedonize" parts of Bulgaria.[1]

Thus, a brazen theft was perpetrated by ignoramuses on orders by Stalin and the Komintern of a name of an ancient language, an inseparable part of the historical and cultural legacy not only of Greece but of the whole world. It drew international attention after the 1991-1992 breakup of Yugoslavia and the need to establish a new state. The theft did not remain unopposed: first by Greece, uncompromisingly, later by Bulgaria. The theft of *Macedonian* as a language name was accompanied by the appropriation of the name of the whole region, *Macedonia*. It was then, as is now too, inhabited by many ethnicities different from Bulgarians and Greeks: Serbians, Albanians, Montenegrins, Bosniaks, Turkish, Roma, Aromanian, etc. The firm stand of Greece and Bulgaria, their refusal to recognize the new state by the name *Macedonia* and the language spoken in it as *Macedonian*, impeded its recognition by the world community for thirty years: between 1991, after a referendum for independence was held in the would-be new state, until 2019, after the coming into force of the Prespa Agreement (2018) – signed in 2018 between the new country and Greece. In this long period, the emerging state was internationally known under the name FYROM, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

3.1.1. Antiquization

The enormous majority of people in Greece and Bulgaria do not recognize a language called "Macedonian". For them, for linguists, historians, for the governments of Bulgaria and Greece, the language spoken in North Macedonia is a Bulgarian dialect. Indeed, under the Prespa 2018 Agreement, the Greek government is obliged to accept the term *Macedonian* – but only provisionally, under a special condition that the name *Macedonian* in the Prespa Agreement refers to a Slavic language unrelated to the Ancient Greek language known in linguistics and in the history of the world as *Macedonian*. To many people this issue may seem strange, as the embezzlement of a language name can hardly provide any special benefits. Why was it perpetrated then? Because the theft of the name *Macedonian* applied to a dialect was accompanied by an embezzlement of the ethnic and geographical denomination *Macedonian*. It started to be used with respect to only some residents of the geographical region of Macedonia, those of Vardar Macedonia. Many of the

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[1] The "Macedonization" gradually subsided and ended in the late 1950s.

people in the geographical region Macedonia were in the past, and still are, Greeks and Bulgarians, but many other ethnicities also reside there.

In the mid 2000s, the arrogance of the FYROM government spiked and they launched what is today known as "antiquization" (Wikipedia: Antiquization). But it did not last long. Some years after the crowding of the Skopje center with statues of figures from Greek and Bulgarian history (called Disneyland by both local people and international visitors), the premier Nikola Gruevski, the main antiquizer, was sentenced to prison by a North Macedonian court for misappropriation of public funds. He managed to flee the country in the boot of a passenger car, arrived in Hungary and was met there as a "political refugee": an act incompatible with EU legislation to which the European Union has, strangely, been turning a blind eye ever since.

3.1.2. The EU allows the use of a stolen name of an ancient language

No country can be allowed to appropriate the name of a language – whether living or extinct, for its purposes. If this were to be tolerated, Catalonians, who have been trying for years to establish an independent state, might decide through a referendum (hypothetically) that the name of their country shall henceforward be "Europe" and their ethnicity and language shall be "European". The absurdity of such a scenario is crystal-clear. But the pathetic circumstance is that the EU is allowing this scenario to be realized with respect to the language/dialect spoken in North Macedonia. The circumstance stems from the relevant clause in the Prespa Agreement (art. 7.1). ***This is a huge defect of the Agreement*** – which allows citizens of North Macedonia and institutions and people around the world to refer to the Western Bulgarian dialect as "Macedonian". Furthermore, it is a drastic semantic inconsistency to allow one and the same word – which is also a scientific and a political term, to have two completely different meanings in different contexts.[2]

3.2. Case Number Two. High-ranking communist functionaries posed before the masses as "scientists"

The communist practices in Bulgaria, just like in USSR and the other countries under the command of the USSR, led to a thwarted conception of what a scientist is. By definition and according to common sense, scientists are people who do research in science and make scientific discoveries, irrespective of the political convictions they may have. Goebbels, one of the most high-ranking Nazi figures, wrote a doctoral thesis at Heidelberg University, received a Ph.D. in 1922 and by 1940 had written more than a dozen books (Wikipedia: Paul Goebbels). In other words, although Goebbels was the minister of propaganda of the Third Reich, the Nazi regime did not intentionally present him before the masses as a scientist. He simply was – by devotion, whatever his crimes against humanity and his own family. Furthermore, his efforts and achievements in philological science have not been deemed wrong or inadequate.[3] But in the topsy-turvy world of communism, values are structured differently. A high-ranking political functionary may have never done any research or made a scientific discovery, but the unwritten communist doctrine

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[2] Obviously, this clause in the Prespa Agreement was a gigantic political compromise that the Greek government decided to make then – and today Greece, under a different government, has to swallow bitterly its consequences.
[3] To the best knowledge of the author here.

has it that such a person can be proclaimed "a scientist" and be thought of by the masses as such. Why? Because it is precisely among the internal masses that the worst enemies of communism are feared to be lurking. Therefore, the masses must systematically have it hammered in their heads that ***communists are not stupid***! Communists are ***clever*** and the most high-ranking among them are "scientists". They are awarded Ph.D. degrees, professors' posts and various other titles. Examples illustrating this phenomenon are abundant, especially in modern times, and echoes of such corrupt practices are present in some countries of Eastern Europe even today, long after the fall of communism, but this topic requires additional research.

3.2.1 Dzhugashvili, a linguist

The most extreme example of a communist figure to be hailed as scientist is Stalin's, the blood-thirstiest dictator in the history of mankind. But, given his stature, it was insufficient to call him simply a linguist. He was regularly portrayed as "a genius" – who solved all the problems of linguistics. One of his major feats was that he

> *opened a new 'epoch' in linguistics by refuting the whole of previous (pre-Stalinist) linguistic tradition, which primarily included Indo-European historical-comparative linguistics and the European structuralism of the first half of the 20th century (the Geneva, Prague and Copenhagen schools). […] Stalin's linguistic views are […] the only 'true', objective and 'correct' methodology, capable of explaining the problem of language origin, revealing true links between language and the social world and presenting the communicative function of language as dependent on social transformation of nature* (Nowak & Zimny, 2014, p. 73).

The idea that communists are not stupid but smart and therefore many of them are scientists, was persistently sustained in the USSR and its satellite states, and the practice blossomed even in post-communist times. According to Ukrainian reports, Yanukovych, the former president of Ukraine, is "Doctor of Economics, Professor, Full Member of the Academy of Economic Sciences of Ukraine, Member of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine" (Yanukovych: Curriculum Vitae) – however inconceivable it may be for a prominent scientist to lower himself to the post of a political figure.

Elena Ceaușescu, Nicolae Ceaușescu's wife, was hailed by Romania's communist establishment to be a chemist and a "prominent scientist" (Davey, 2021). But there was a problem. This lady did not know how to pronounce the chemical CO_2, carbon dioxide. She used to call it *CO-doi*, which earned her the nickname "big tail".[4] She is widely reported by the majority of the Romanian scientific community and generally in Romania not only ***not to have been*** a scientist but to have been ***a complete ignoramus in chemistry***. Nevertheless, she was awarded various degrees and titles in Romania and received awards even abroad, at prestigious institutions, causing mass indignation among scientists in Romania and triggering scandals in some West European institutions who gave her scientific credit under political pressure (Davey, 2021; Wikipedia: Elena Ceaușescu).

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[4] Romanian *codoi* 'big tail'.

In a similar case in Bulgaria, Lyudmila Zhivkova, the daughter of the dictator Todor Zhivkov, loved to implore the masses to "think of her as fire" when making public addresses – and this earned her the nickname "burning princess".[5] In 1971 Zhivkova successfully defended a Ph.D. dissertation at the Institute of Balkan Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Entitled *Anglo-Turkish Relationships 1933-1939*, it was, according to her Oxford lecturer, written by an employee of the Bulgarian Embassy in London (Wikipedia: Lyudmila Zhivkova). Zhivkova was an unstoppable upstart who allowed herself almost everything under her father's umbrella. The parvenu had the unspeakable arrogance to pay an exorbitant sum of money (state-owned) to the Louvre, so that the museum opened exclusively for her on a national holiday. Zhivkova never suffered any lack of "scientific supporters". Raynov (1989: pp. 8–9), argues that it was the classics of Marxism-Leninism who explained in depth all unresolved issues about human consciousness and insists that Zhivkova is among the main contributors who explained man's brain activity.

3.2.2 Treatment of "scientific functionaries" in united Germany

In all the East European satellites of the USSR, such "academic" absurdities were massively observed before the fall of communism in 1989-1990 and even after that. They stand in stark contrast to what happened after the re-unification of Germany. Plöhn (Internet publication) describes the scientific and professional assessments of university and scientific staff that took place in Germany after the re-unification:

> *especially in the humanities and social sciences East German universities had been corrupted by the socialist regime because it used them for the legitimization of the existing suppressive political order. Therefore not only the departments of Marxism-Leninism had to be closed. Also the professors and lecturers in (Socialist) Law, (Socialist) Economy, History of the Working Class, and Philosophy had to leave the universities. Their disciplines had to be shut down as well. Instead, new institutes had to be created. The necessary staff was imported from West Germany.*

Similarly, Glaser (2003, pp. 476-477) points out that "nearly 20 000 out of 38 900 staff and faculty members in East Germany lost their jobs as a result of the assessment of academic staff initiated by the newly-united state"; Plöhn goes on to explain that a number of laid off individuals turned to protest and some even became politicians. But this

> *could not stop the necessary opening of East German universities to western knowledge ... But also in other disciplines like languages or History of Art the testers found a great number of poorly qualified scientists. Others were regarded as personally inacceptable because of their hidden contacts to the secret police.*

In full contrast to Germany, after the fall of communism in Bulgaria, university lecturers who had worked for the totalitarian regime and the communist secret services and had taught disciplines such as those described above (socialist law, socialist economy, etc.) kept their jobs, received no administrative sanctions

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[5] Bulgarian *plamtyashtata* 'the burning female'.

and continued to uphold the policies of the totalitarian regime, resorting to novel tactical schemata. For example, they renamed the communist term 'socialist economy' to a "newly-coined word" *икономикс* 'economics', introducing a word-formation affix -*икс* non-existent in Bulgarian and borrowed from English, i.e., from formerly "the language of the imperialist enemy". Communist individuals who used to teach "academic disciplines" such as "scientific communism" or "dictatorship of the proletariat" turned miraculously – literally overnight – into specialists in "market economy" and "human rights". The necessary transition from communism to a status quo based on the values of the Western world in the so-called academic sphere in Bulgaria simply failed to take place. It was a falsification and a farce – and is very rarely described (see, e.g., Kabakčiev, 1999) in the Bulgarian political and sociolinguistic literature.

3.3. Case Number Three. The 1950s attempt by Bulgarian communists to impose Stalinist linguistics as "the only correct approach to the study of language"

On 20 June 1950, the major USSR newspaper *Pravda* published an article, allegedly written by Stalin and entitled "Marxism and Problems of Linguistics". Soon after the initial publication, the paper was re-issued in large numbers and heavily propagandized as the work of a first-class linguist, a scientific genius. It was distributed not only within the communist empire but also in its satellites. Bulgaria was quick to follow in the steps of the "Russian comrades". In 1954, Andreychin (1954, pp. 222-223), a major spokesman of Bulgarian communism, wrote in *Balgarski ezik*, journal of the Institute for the Bulgarian Language, that Stalin's work made for the first time in linguistics the "correct distinction between the lexical and grammatical domains" (Andreychin, ibid.). Similar sheer nonsense was voiced in other articles in the same edition by other Bulgarian "scientists". Describing the "linguistic genius" of the Soviet "Father of Nations", they maintained that Stalin opened the eyes of humanity about how language must develop and be studied. Others insisted that the "advanced development of the Bulgarian language" arose thanks to the Russian influence, which

> places Bulgarians in the most favorable position compared to other
> peoples building socialism, giving them the opportunity for direct
> communication with the country of communism under construction and
> the most immediate integration into the great Soviet culture (Georgiev,
> 1957, pp. 401-407).

Interestingly, most Bulgarian writings on "Stalin's linguistic genius" appeared later than March 5, 1954, the day when the blood-thirstiest individual of mankind died – perhaps to honor the glorious scientist.

But in the years following Stalin's death the members of the Bulgarian linguistic community who hurried to praise to the skies Stalin's genius gradually started to shun Stalinist linguistics as a topic, forgetting the idiocies they propagandized about the butcher as a scientist and the need for linguistics to develop according to his vision. And some of the consequences of the acts and activities of these communists remain unexposed to the present day, as shown below, in Case Number Four.

It is highly indicative that at present, in 2024, in the 21st century, when asked whether they know what Stalinist linguistics is, most Bulgarian university students,

graduates, postgraduates and Ph.D. candidates respond that they have no idea what this is. They explain their lack of knowledge by the circumstance that Stalinist linguistics has never been taught at Bulgarian universities and for this reason it is *a terra incognita* for them – and for today's generation of young educated Bulgarians.

3.4. Case Number Four. A thesis, drastically wrong and appearing at first sight to be a purely linguistic one, was conjured in 1944 by a Stalinist; its heritage is still not overcome, eighty years after it was launched

In 1944, the year in which the so-called Macedonian language was invented on orders issued by Stalin and the Komintern, Andreychin, the major protagonist in the 1950s attempts to impose Stalinist linguistics in Bulgaria as "the only correct approach to the study of language", launched a strange conjecture in Bulgarian grammar. Present perfect verb forms (*be* + *-l* past participle), he claimed, are formed from aorist participles only, not from imperfect ones (Andreychin, 1944). When verb forms containing imperfect participles are used, he insisted, these are not perfect forms but modal ones, inferential.

Bulgarian is a rare language in which there are past participles of two types: aorist-based and imperfect-based. For example, *е изпял* 'has sung' is a perfect verb form with a participle (*изпял*) obtained from a perfective verb (*изпея* 'sing') in the aorist, while *е пеел* 'has sung' is a perfect verb form with a participle obtained from an imperfective verb (*пея* 'sing') in the imperfect (*пеел*). There is no disagreement among Bulgarianists on what aorist-based perfect verb forms encode: they signify either a perfect value (as in English *has sung*) or an inferential one, unwitnessed, based on information from a third party, or both simultaneously. But the large majority of Bulgarianists following Andreychin's 1944 conjecture that the present perfect is formed from aorist participles only has it that forms like *е пеел* 'has sung' (from imperfect participles) are not perfect verb forms but are ***only inferentials*** – providing no arguments whatsoever.

In 1944, eight decades ago, Andreychin's conjecture must have appeared exotic, because Bulgarian linguistic publications and grammars until the 1940s universally held that the perfect is formed from both aorist and imperfect participles (Mladenov, 1927; Kostov, 1939; Popov, 1941). The big issue now is that most current grammatical descriptions of Bulgarian repeat Andreychin's wrong conjecture, with only a couple of dissident voices, see below. The falsity of the conjecture is shattered by a large number of arguments based on modern linguistic theories – in publications between 2017-2024 (see, e.g., Kabakčiev, 2023). But its proponents keep their mouths shut for years already: neither admitting a mistake, nor defending their position. The fact that the conjecture was conjured and launched by a Stalinist adds up to its inherent defects: totally unmotivated by any kind of argument and countering the way the perfect is formed. Despite this, the wrong conjecture continues to persist in Bulgarian grammars and other structural descriptions of Bulgarian, with only four "dissidents" in the Bulgarianist community known until recently to view the perfect as formed from imperfect participles too: two Scandinavians (Lindstedt, 1985; Rå Hauge, 1999) and two Bulgarians (Todorova, 2010; Kabakčiev, 2023).

Recently, in 2021, a shocking attempt was made to ascribe to the late Bulgarian linguist Yordan Penchev (1987) the idea that he supported the thesis that imperfect participles are not used in the perfect (Lakova & Koeva, 2021, p. 130). Actually, in his publication Penchev not only rejects the thesis that imperfect

participles are not used in the Bulgarian perfect, he actually *emphasizes precisely the opposite*, that verb forms with imperfect participles (such as *chetyal e* 'has read') *are perfect verb forms*, not only judging by their formation but also in semantic terms. Prior to the recent rebuttal of the thesis that Penchev viewed verb forms of the *chetyal e* type as non-perfects (see Kabakčiev, 2024), the dissidents were four. With Penchev added to them, now they are five – but this is still rather insufficient for Bulgarian grammars to be taken seriously with a grossly inadequate thesis. It can be hypothesized that Andreychin's conjecture about imperfect participles arose similarly to his hallucinations about Stalin as a linguist and Stalinist linguistics. But why a quirky conjecture about imperfect participles continues to be prevalent in Bulgarianist studies to the present day – it is hard to provide a reasonable explanation for this.

3.4.1. Soviet and Russian linguistics as a deterring factor in Ukrainian linguistics

Despite the enormous number of researchers and university lecturers in the USSR and the satellite states, linguistics was strikingly underdeveloped in many of its subfields at least until the fall of communism (1989-1990) – due to the Iron Wall, i.e., the isolation of the USSR from the world. As shown in a recent Ukrainian publication (Bakardzhieva-Morikang & Kabakčiev, 2024), some important problem spheres were never or almost never studied in Soviet and Russian linguistics using modern theoretical frameworks. For this reason many linguists in Ukraine today consider Soviet linguistics to be a deterring factor for the development of modern Ukrainian linguistics. Among the unstudied or understudied spheres in Soviet and Russian linguistics are: compositional aspect, an extremely significant universal language phenomenon discovered by Verkuyl (1972); nominal determination, including the article-aspect and case-aspect interplay; the complex mechanisms of explication in Slavic languages with no articles of concepts such as (in)definiteness, (non-)specificity, (non-)genericity; aspect as a phenomenon dependent on NP-referent values. Aspect is understood in Russian linguistics even today as something found in verbs only, while for the rest of the linguistic world aspect is either verbal or compositional and the latter represented in languages like English where there is no aspect in lexical verbs but aspect exists, realized by a complex interplay of sentence components. Intriguingly and indicatively, in Soviet and post-Soviet linguistics aspect is thought to be a "unique Slavic phenomenon".[6] Hence, it is not even subject to research, as sometimes argued, see Bakardzhieva-Morikang & Kabakčiev (2024, p. 39), a paper explaining compositional aspect for the first time in Ukrainian linguistics – due to the systematic forcing on it of obsolete ideas from Soviet and Russian sources.

3.5. Case Number Five. A disgrace for a European country at the end of the 20th century: forceful changing of the names of one million Bulgarian Turks – which in 1989 grew into an ethnic cleansing

Bulgaria is shamefully known in the world as that Soviet satellite which at the end of the communist era changed the names of one million Turks, Bulgarian citizens, against their will. The Bulgarian communist regime exercised name-changing until

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[6] Slavic aspect is analogue-free like a Kremlin Wunderwaffe, unexplainable like the "Russian soul".

almost the end of the 20th century (until the fall of communism in Bulgaria in 1989), despite the fact that in 1975 Bulgaria had signed the Helsinki Declaration on human rights. Name changing was regularly performed by brutal force. Thousands of Turks protesting the changing of names were imprisoned for months and years. On 26 December 1984, three people, including an 18-year old toddler, were shot dead by police during a protest in the square of the village of Mogilyane.

Name-changing had other drastic consequences too. All medical records of Bulgarian citizens with Turkish names were confiscated from hospitals, leading to the inability of doctors to identify the medical state of patients; these records were never found later. All records of pupils with Turkish names were confiscated from schools, again never to be found later. No report is known of a director of a Bulgarian hospital or a school to have resisted the confiscation of records – which constituted a crime under the communist legislation. The forceful changing of the names of all the Turks in Bulgaria gradually led in 1988-1989 to an increase in the number of protests. The problems finally led the ruling communist party to a decision to carry out ethnic cleansing, the largest in Europe during the whole of the Cold War. It affected almost 400 000 Turks, who in the summer of 1989 were forced to hastily abandon their homes and seek refuge in neighboring Turkey.

As pointed out in Kabakčiev (2025), the Bulgarian population in its enormous majority turned a blind eye to the forceful changing of names of their Turkish neighbors and colleagues and their expulsion from the country in the years between 1982 and 1989. At the end of 1989, after the fall of communism in Bulgaria, it became clear that most Bulgarians were against this humiliating policy but were deeply afraid to voice their disagreement – understandable in view of the fierceness of the communist regime. The few Bulgarians who voiced their opposition against the changing of names of Turks and against the ethnic cleansing were severely persecuted by the secret services, police and other law enforcement entities. Some of the most outspoken dissidents spent time in prison – only to be freed with the fall of communism in Bulgaria on 10 November 1989.

4. Conclusion

In Bulgaria, just like everywhere else in the USSR and its satellite states, language and linguistics were systematically and on a very large scale employed by the communist regime as weapons to fight enemies, both external ones and "the internal enemy" – one's own population. Apart from suppressing tens of millions of people in innumerable ways and destroying them physically, the regime spared no means to enforce its barbarian ideology in all possible spheres of culture, art, science. Language and linguistics were especially attractive weapons for fighting enemies and were employed on a scale whose dimensions are hard to comprehend even today, when all the facts of history are generally known. Yet, the five cases of use of language and linguistics as political weapons in 1944-1989 by the Bulgarian communist regime described here are only some of the major techniques of employment of non-material means to impose communist dictatorship within a particular country. Two aspects of this practice are worthy of special attention:

(1) some of the attempts to impose total communist supremacy could not be immediately understood as special strategems then because they were covert and misleading; the circumstance that communist functionaries were presented as scientists was perceived by many as truthful; ordinary people cannot ascertain

whether the description of some communist as "a scientist" is real or fake; it is easier to believe that it is real;

(2) some barbaric acts by communist cliques in separate countries were locally initiated and were not actually triggered or inspired by the Empire of Evil: this is the case with the changing of the names of one million Bulgarian Turks, the brutal suppression of the victims' protests and the ultimate launching of ethnic cleansing that forced hundreds of thousands of innocent Turks to leave their Bulgarian homes and look for shelter and a future life in another country.

To sum up, communism is a supergigantic, mind-boggling crime against humanity whose parameters remain insufficiently described and understood. The present analysis of five cases of language and linguistics used as political weapons in 1944-1989 by the Bulgarian communist regime can be regarded only as an attempt to describe and understand in further depth some of the consequences of the impact of the worst social evil in the history of the world on a small country in Eastern Europe.

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Резюме

Кабакчієв Красімір

ВИКОРИСТАННЯ МОВИ ТА ЛІНГВІСТИКИ ЯК ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ЗБРОЇ БОЛГАРСЬКИМ КОМУНІСТИЧНИМ РЕЖИМОМ 1944-1989: П'ЯТЬ ТЕМАТИЧНИХ РОЗВІДОК

Використання мови та лінгвістики як політичної зброї болгарським комуністичним режимом демонструється п'ятьма подіями 1944-1989 рр.: (1) нав'язування, за наказом Сталіна та Комінтерну, грецького слова *македонський* як назви західного болгарського діалекту; (2) представлення високопоставлених комуністичних функціонерів як «науковців»; (3) насадження сталінської лінгвістики як єдино «правильного підходу» до вивчення мови; (4) висунення сталіністом хибної лінгвістичної тези, яка досі залишається; (5) насильницька зміна імен мільйона болгарських турків, яка в 1989 році переросла в етнічну чистку.

Abstract

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USE OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS AS POLITICAL WEAPONS BY THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST REGIME 1944-1989: FIVE CASE STUDIES

Use of language and linguistics as political weapons by the Bulgarian communist regime is showcased by five 1944-1989 events: (1) imposition, on orders by Stalin and the Komintern, of the Greek word Macedonian as a denomination for a western Bulgarian dialect; (2) presenting high-ranking communist functionaries as "scientists"; (3) imposition of Stalinist linguistics as the only "correct approach" to the study of language; (4) the launching by a Stalinist of a wrong linguistic thesis, still standing; (5) forceful name-changing of one million Bulgarian Turks which in 1989 grew into ethnic cleansing.

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