KEEPING THE BONDS : THE OTTOMANS AND MUSLIM EDUCATION IN AUTONOMOUS BULGARIA, 1878-1908

One of the major decisions of the Berlin Congress of 1878 was the establishment of the autonomous Bulgarian Principality on territories previously ruled directly by the Ottoman sultan. Among the Bulgarians the event was greeted with a mixture of jubilation at the prospect of having their own state and resentment that territories they believed to be inhabited by their own compatriots would remain under Ottoman control. As the intense feelings settled down, life in the Principality assumed a more orderly fashion and the Bulgarians had to confront the major task of managing the affairs of the new state. One of the challenges was the necessity to devise policies towards the various ethnic and religious communities in the new state. The Muslims became the primary focus of attention since they were the most numerous group and had preserved close links with the Empire. Many Bulgarians were anxious that this community had remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire and thus, in the course of time, it could turn into a potential element of

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instability. Although Muslim emigration was viewed with silent approval as a possible answer to the Bulgarian concerns, the mass expulsion of the whole community was never considered a possibility due to the negative consequences this would have on the Bulgarian economy and the risk of complications in relations with the Ottomans. The only remaining option, therefore, was to attempt to cultivate allegiance to the new state among the members of the Muslim community. By general consent the process had to begin in the main institutions for social and cultural reproduction, the school establishments, where individuals were brought up according to the main rules and principles characteristic for the society in which they were expected to take part.

For the Ottomans, on the other hand, the political arrangement decreed by the Berlin Congress resulted not only in loss of territory but also in an unprecedented situation. The establishment of autonomous Bulgaria along with the ceding of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Habsburgs represented the first instance when such large Muslim communities whose formation was associated with Ottoman presence, remained under foreign rule. In such circumstances the Ottomans had to find and develop new ways to safeguard the social and cultural bonds with these Muslim communities and render protection to their members. In the case of the Bulgarian Principality, the Ottomans, similarly to the Bulgarians, recognized the important role education could play in the pursuit of these objectives. The present article is an attempt to trace and evaluate the efforts made by the Ottomans to influence Muslim education in the Principality and seeks to link them to political and ideological currents prevalent in the Empire during the period under discussion. It strives to offer insight into the larger question about involvement of the Ottomans in the affairs of the Muslim community and their interaction with the Bulgarians on related matters.

EDUCATION IN THE OTTOMAN PROVINCES IN THE PERIOD BEFORE 1878

Prior to launching upon a detailed discussion of Ottoman policy towards Muslim schools in the Bulgaria, it is necessary to make a brief review of the pre-existing conditions of education and reform efforts in the Ottoman provinces. The first attempts to improve education in the Ottoman Empire sought to remedy mainly deficiencies in military and

technical training without achieving an overall reorganization of the education system.[1] Further steps were made in the late 1830s in the eve of the *Tanzimat* with the establishment of the *rüşdiyes*, the junior secondary schools designed for training the Empire's future civil servants.[2] However, the 1839 imperial rescript of Gülhane that announced the beginning of the *Tanzimat* era did not make any concrete references to education. It was not until 1846 that the Ottoman government convened a special committee, whose explicit task was to draw up of a project for education reform. Among its accomplishments was the establishment of permanent Educational Council, *Meclis-i Maarif*, and the decision to expand the network of *rüşdiyes* to the provinces.[3]

In spite of the efforts of the *Tanzimat* statesmen during this initial stage, the spread of the new education initiatives proceeded more slowly than planned and the divide in education standards between the capital and the provinces remained substantial. The plan envisioned the establishment of 25 *rüşdiye* schools in various provincial towns but by 1856 only six were founded.[4] The first provincial *rüşdiyes* were opened close to the capital, in Bursa and Edirne, but functioned at lower standards than those in Istanbul. The next step was made in Bosnia in the early 1850s. Undoubtedly, this decision was influenced to a great extent by the desire of the Ottoman government to keep local feudal opposition under control.[5] By that time the Ottomans had realized that the expansion of a modernized school network under state control was beneficial

[1] Examples of such projects were the *Hendesehane*, the higher school of engineering, opened in 1734 under the auspices of Count de Bonneval and the establishment of an advanced school for sciences and mathematics for the navy aided by Baron De Tott. The subject of reform in Ottoman education has been treated more generally by a few works dealing with the history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey in the 19th and 20th c. For example see Roderic DAVISON, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-76,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963; Niyazi BERKES, *The Emergence of Secularism in Turkey,* Montreal, McGill University Press, 1964; Bernard LEWIS, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968; Stanford SHAW and Ezel KURAL SHAW, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II, Reform, Revolution and Republic: the Rise of Modern Turkey,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977.

[2] Carter FINDLEY, *Bureaucratic reform in the Ottoman Empire, The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 159.

[3] LEWIS, *op. cit.,* p. 113-114; Faik REFIK UNAT, *Türkiye eğitim sisteminin gelişmesin tarihi bir bakış,* Ankara, Milli Eğitim, p. 18-19.

[4] İlhan TEKELİ and Selim İLKİN, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda eğitim ve bilgi üretim sisteminin oluşumu ve dönüşümü,* Ankara, Türk Tarih kurumu, 1993, p. 64.

[5] Akşin SOMEL, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908. Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline,* Leiden, Brill, 2000, p. 67.

for centralization. In the future they would apply more frequently the same method of reinforcing authority over other areas threatening to slip out of their control. An eminent example was the initiative of Midhat Paşa, the governor of the Danube province, between 1864-1867. He anticipated that mixed schools for Muslim and non-Muslim children would promote a spirit of brotherhood, pose a curb to rising Bulgarian nationalism and create allegiance to the Ottoman state. Midhat Paşa encouraged the expansion of the elementary school network, promoted reform in school curricula and established two professional schools. His project for funding schools by means of surplus revenue from the provincial budget, in addition to voluntary donations, represented an innovation and was a solution to the financial problems schools frequently experienced.[6]

Even after Midhat's departure the educational initiatives in the Danube *vilayet* continued to expand, so it marked the most significant achievement in this respect among all imperial provinces. Evidence about this can be obtained through a comparison of several statistics year-books, *salnames*, from the 1870s. The 1872-1873 (1289) *salname* for the Danube province records 29 *rüşdiyes* and 263 elementary, *subyan*, schools in various towns and villages but offers no specific information as to the number of students enrolled in them.[7] By 1874-1875 (1291) the number of *rüşdiyes* increased to 35,[8] and in 1876 (1293) it had risen to 40 with 2,150 enrolled students.[9] The expansion of the school network in the *vilyaet* of Edirne should also be traced briefly, as parts of it were to be included initially in the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia and, after 1885, in the Bulgarian Principality. The 1871-1872 (1287) *salname* lists 15 existing *rüşdiyes* in the Edirne province, seven of which in territories included later in the Principality.[10] In 1875 there were 24[11] and by 1876, there were 26.[12]

[6] Ali Haydar MIDHAD, *Life of Midhad Pasha, a Record of his Services, Political Reforms, Banishment and Judicial Murder*. Orig. published by London, John Murray, 1903, reprinted by Ann Arbor, Umi Books on Demand, 1999, p. 40-41 ; SOMEL, *op. cit.,* p. 78.

[7] *Tuna salnamesi*, 5. Defa, 1289.

[8] *Tuna salnamesi,* 6. Defa, 1291.

[9] *Tuna salnamesi,* 9. Defa, 1293.

[10] *Salname-i vilayet-i Edirne, 1287*.

[11] *Salname-i devlet-i aliyye-i Osmaniyye, 1292*.

[12] *Salname-i devlet-i aliyye-i Osmaniyye, 1293*.

A comparison of the statistics for different Ottoman provinces for the year 1876 reveals that on the eve of the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, the Danube *vilayet* held the leading position in terms of numbers of *rüşdiyes* and students enrolled.[13] But the war and the subsequent separation of territory from the direct control of the sultan threatened to be a major break in the development of Muslim education in the area.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSLIM EDUCATION, BULGARIAN EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUSLIM SCHOOLS

One of the factors that affected the development of Muslim education was the massive Muslim emigration from the Principality and Eastern Rumelia. The military activities of 1877-78, the period of disorder in their aftermath and the establishment of the Bulgarian state, where in spite of all legal guarantees of equality the Christian Bulgarian element appeared to enjoy a position of superiority, set off large scale Muslim departure. In the decades to follow, Muslim emigration continued steadily and led to a decrease of the Muslim community in the Principality. It is difficult to come up with exact numbers because the censuses at the time were imprecise and debatable. This task is further complicated by the fact that many Muslims refugees returned to their native places in Bulgaria only to leave again for the Ottoman Empire. According to the only available official statistics of the time, the Bulgarian one, in the period 1880/1884 the number of Muslims in the Principality was 580.000 people, which represented about 28 % of the whole population. For the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia, which was annexed to the Principality in 1885, the number of Muslims for the same period was 195.000 or 20% of its population. In 1910 Muslims in both Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia numbered around 600.000 and accounted for 13% of the total population.[14]

[13] *Salname-i devlet-i aliyye-i Osmaniyye, 1293*.

[14] M.K. SARAFOU, "Naselenieto u Kniazhestvo Bulgaria potrite parvi prebroyavaniya", p. 201-246, in *Perisolichsko Spisanie*, XLIV, 1894, p. 216. See the varying statistics in Richard CRAMPTON, "The Turks in Bulgaria, 1878-1944," p. 43-78, in Kemal Karpat, Ed., *The Turks of Bulgaria, Their History, Culture and Political Fate as Minority,* Istan-

The Muslim community was represented by four major groups — Turks, Pomaks,[15] gypsies and Tatars[16] — who differed in terms of language, degree of identification with the Ottomans and ethnic background. The Turks made up the largest ethno-linguistic group that associated itself most closely with the Ottoman Empire. They were the ones who were most interested in reviving the education system that functioned during the Ottoman period and keeping up pace with educational developments in the Ottoman Empire. In turn, the Ottomans demonstrated the greatest concern for the fate of this group and were involved most actively in its affairs. It will not be a mistake to equate Muslim education in the Bulgaria and the education initiatives among the Turks there. By contrast, the number of Pomak and Tatar schools was tiny,[17] a fact that also reflected the relatively small proportion of these groups within the Muslim community.

Bulgarian intentions to impose control over Muslim schools and make them run according to new standards set up by the state were more easily stated than carried out in practice. Until 1885 in a political environment dominated by frequent crises and partisanship, the ruling Bulgarian governments had to confront what they saw to be much more important matters, such as settling the railway question, dealing with the issue of Muslim estates and taking measures to uproot brigandage in north-east Bulgaria.[18] During this period the efforts to regulate education aimed

bul, Isis Press, 1990, p. 71 ; Alexandre POPOVIC, " Les Turcs de Bulgarie, 1878-1985. Une expérience des nationalités dans le monde communiste, " p. 147-183 in *Les Musulmans des Balkans à l'époque post-ottomane. Histoire et politique,* Istanbul, les Éditions Isis, 1994, p. 148 ; Ömer TURAN, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria*, *1878-1908,* Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998, p. 101-108 ; Konstantin JIREČEK, *Patuvania po Bulgaria,* Sofia, Nauka i izkustvo, 1974, p. 46-48.

[15] The Pomaks, who are considered to be local converts to Islam, had preserved their Slavic or Greek vernacular dialects and inhabited parts of southwest Bulgaria, a region in the central Danube plain around Lovech, as well as Rumelia's southern border regions. Although they differed in lifestyle and language from the large Turk community, they also shared a number of cultural characteristics. Therefore, it was not uncommon for Pomaks to intermix and be assimilated into the Turkish populations in the urban environment. See Bernard LORY**,** *Le sort de l'héritage ottoman en Bulgarie. L'exemple des villes bulgares, 1878-1900,* Istanbul, Isis Press, 1985, p. 48 ; POPOVIC, *op. cit.,* p. 148 ; TURAN, *op. cit.,* p. 102.

[16] It must be noted that there are no detailed studies about the Tatars and Muslim gypsies in Bulgaria during that period. See Popovic, *op. cit.,* p. 148.

[17] For a comparison in 1907-1908 school year the Turks had 1,158 schools — primary, *rüşdiyes* and medreses, while the Tatars had 53 and the Pomaks 23 all primary schools. See TURAN, *op. cit.,* p. 234.

[18] For detailed description of events in the Principality until 1885 see Richard CRAMP-

primarily at Bulgarian schools.[19] The first attempt to extend state regulation to Muslim school was made in February 1885 with the enactment of "The Law of the Public and Private Schools" (*Zakon za obshtestvenite i chastnite uchilishta*). The law introduced compulsory Bulgarian language classes and required that subjects other than religion, such as mathematics, geography and history be included in Muslim school curricula. It stipulated that the financial support and supervision of these schools was primarily the responsibility of the Muslim community itself.[20] The legal stipulations, though, were not always enforced and in many cases the Muslims were left with a considerable degree of autonomy with regard to school matters.[21] In reality, this policy of benign neglect had adverse effects because very little, if anything, was done to alleviate the material difficulties of Muslim schools, improve curricula or encourage Muslim school-age children to attend them.

At this stage it is necessary to consider briefly education developments in the autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia that remained under the direct political authority of the sultan until September 1885 when it was annexed to the Principality. In Eastern Rumelia the institutional and administrative transformation proceeded much more rapidly and smoothly. Contemporary observers attributed this phenomenon to the absence of political disputes, so typical for the Principality. The major legislative and administrative decisions were taken by an explicitly appointed European commission and could not be challenged.[22] Fur-

TON, *Bulgaria, 1878-1918. A History,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1983, ch. 1-3; LORY, *op. cit.,* p. 58.

[19] The first legal regulations in this aspect were "The Temporary Decree of Public Schools" of 1878 and "The Law for the Material Support and Educational Reform of Schools" of 1880.

[20] See "Zakon za obshtestvenite i chastnite uchilishta" (Law of Public and Private Schools) in *Darzhaven vestnik (State Gazette)*, 9 February 1885, nº13, Art. 104-108.

[21] For example art. 112 of the same law stipulated that teachers had to be Bulgarian citizens. In reality, however, this provision was not applied so strictly since some teachers appointed by the Ottomans did not meet this requirement. According to Bulgarian statistics cited by Turan, in the 1894-95 school year 10 out of the 57 *rüşdiye* teachers were appointed by the Ottomans, p. 235. Although this number could include Muslims from Bulgaria, it is likely that among them there were people from the Empire itself. A document from Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Mümtaze Kalemi Bulgaristan Tasnifi (A.MTZ.04) 87/66 alludes that the teacher in Kazanlık was from Istanbul. Another document A.MTZ.04 109/53 estimates that towards 1902 there were 11 *rüşdiye* teachers sent to the Principality and Eastern Rumelia by the Ottomans; also LORY, *op. cit.,* p. 41.

[22] JIREČEK, *op. cit.,* p. 210.

thermore, a large, if not excessive, bureaucratic body made up of local and international members took care of their implementation.[23] The aforementioned commission produced the so-called Organic Statute that gave guidelines for the internal administration of the province. Among other matters, it regulated school affairs. According to it, each confessional group had the right to open its own schools and choose the language in which instruction would be conducted. The support of schools at every level was declared the primary responsibility of the religious communities themselves, although it was envisioned that some support would be allocated from the provincial budget as well. The local religious communities would also be responsible for the appointment of teachers and inspectors in their schools.[24] The education law passed in March 1881 provided more concrete guidelines on school programs, duration of the school year, examinations and the appointment of teachers[25] but it left the specific decisions on such matters to the communities themselves.

Muslim schools in Eastern Rumelia resumed their functioning a little bit earlier than those in the Principality. For example, in September 1880 the Muslim schools in Eski Zağra (Stara Zagora) were already open and had made a request for books to the Ottoman Ministry of Education. Similarly, there is information that in January 1882 the *rüşdiye* in Plovdiv was functioning.[26] Formally, Muslim schools in Rumelia were under the tutelage and direction of the province's Directorate of Education but they relied exclusively on the Ottoman Ministry of Education for assistance. Ottoman support was expressed in terms of appointing teachers, paying their salaries, and providing books and other school materials.[27] As it will be discussed later, these were the same ways through which the Ottomans aided Muslim schools in Bulgaria before and after the union with Eastern Rumelia.

After 1885 Eastern Rumelia theoretically continued to exist. According to the Bulgarian-Ottoman treaty of 1886 it was still an autonomous Ottoman province, the only difference being that its governor was the Bulgarian prince, while the Organic Statute, though modified, was still its principal law. However, in reality the province became an integral

[23] CRAMPTON, *Bulgaria*, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
[24] Mahir AYDIN, *Şarkî Rumeli Vilayeti,* Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992, p. 85-86.
[25] *Id., ibid.,* p. 216-128.
[26] *Id., ibid.,* p. 221 ; p. 225.
[27] *Id., ibid.,* p. 224-225.

part of the Principality. While the Ottomans kept referring to Bulgaria as "the Principality and Eastern Rumelia," the Bulgarians no longer made such a distinction. The Rumelian institutions merged with the Bulgarian ones and, in the process, the Directorate of Education was transformed into a part of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education.[28] From this point on Muslim schools in the province were affected by the same jurisdiction and legislation as those in the Principality, including the first major education law.

The "Law for National Education" (*Zakon za narodnoto prosveshtenie*), was enacted on 23 January 1892. It reflected the sprit of rapprochement with the Ottomans and the centralization tendencies characteristic for the period between 1886 and 1894 during which Stefan Stambolov dominated Bulgarian state affairs.[29] The law set a major distinction between public and private schools and stipulated that the state would support financially only the former. Muslim schools were mentioned explicitly as the only private institutions eligible to receive support from the state and the local municipality budget.[30] The effects of the provision, however, should not be overestimated. Promised aid was not always granted and complaints regarding this came up occasionally in the dispatches of the Ottoman commissioner in Sofia.[31]

Partly as a result of material problems education standards in Muslim schools remained low and affected literacy levels among Muslims that remained low for almost the entire period under discussion. For example, the author of a report on literacy for the 1894-95 school year pointed that areas populated exclusively by Muslims, such as certain regions in the north-east, had a literacy rate of 7.46%, while the overall rate for the Principality was 20%.[32] The tendency stood out even more taking into account the great number of Muslim primary schools : in 1894-95 they accounted for 27.74% of all primary schools in Bulgaria and the district

[28] LORY, *op. cit.,* p. 29.

[29] For the reasons and more concrete expressions of this rapprochement, see Duncan M. PERRY, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria, 1870-1895,* Durham, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 145-179.

[30] "Zakon za narodnoto prosveshtenie" (Law for National Education), *Darzhaven vestnik*, 23 January, 1892, nº14, Art. 6 and Art. 192.

[31] For example, Ali Ferruh's report of November 1903 remarks that not all the Muslim schools in the Principality had received the full amount of yearly support, A.MTZ.04 106/37.

[32] Todor IVANCHOV, "Gramotnost na naselenieto v Bulgaria" (Literacy of the Population of Bulgaria), p. 31-60 in *Uchilishten Pregled (School Review) (UP)*, January 1896, nº1, p. 33-34.

of Akkadınlar, leading the statistics for illiteracy at the time, had 77 such schools.[33]

An article devoted to the issue of primary education in Bulgaria that was published in 1907 in the *Uchilishten Pregled (School Review)* journal reports more on literacy levels among Muslims and the condition of their schools. It also gives an insight into the Bulgarian attitudes towards Muslim education and an idea about the extent to which the legislation stipulations regarding Muslim schools had made their way in practice. The author of the article, Nikola Iv. Vankov extolled the value of public primary education offered freely by the Bulgarian state and criticized private schools for the inferior quality of education they provided. To support his argument, he pointed to Muslim primary schools that suffered from constant financial difficulties, particularly severe among the poor rural populations. Such material constraints, he argued, were rare in public schools. Vankov admitted that the condition of schools in towns was much better in terms of curriculum and method of teaching but pointed to the "widely-known" fact that in the villages the only subject taught was religion.[34] Muslim schools in the countryside had emerged as bastions of conservatism, against which the government could do nothing for fear of awakening opposition and "fanaticism."[35] Judging from this article, apparently the attempts to introduce compulsory classes in the Bulgarian language had produced no significant result in some rural areas. In one case inspectors who visited one such Muslim school noted that "children could not respond to basic class commands in Bulgarian, such as 'get up' and 'sit down'" and wrote in the Cyrillic alphabet from right to left.[36]

While a political agenda clearly loomed behind Vankov's criticism, it should be noted that the more educated members of the Muslim community also observed numerous shortcomings in the functioning of their schools. Moreover, it appeared that problems existed in town schools as well. The letter of Ali Cevad, the principal of the *rüşdiye* in the town of Shumen, offers some insight into this matter.[37] Ali Cevad had voluntar-

[33] Kiril POPOV, "Nachalnoto obrazovanie v Bulgaria prez 1894-95" (The Primary Education in Bulgaria in 1894-95), p. 1028-1052 in *UP*, September 1897, p. 1031-1037.

[34] Nikola Iv. VANKOV, "Chastnite nachalni uchilishta v Bulgaria" (The Private Primary Schools in Bulgaria), p. 695-716 in *UP*, nº 2, March 1907.

[35] *Id., ibid.,* p. 707.

[36] *Id., ibid.,* p. 704.

[37] The letter was most likely addressed to Kesimzade Mehmet Rüştü, one of the Muslim members of the Bulgarian parliament at the time and patron of Muslim education.

ily undertaken the task to inspect local primary schools. In one of his visits to the *mekteb* attached to the Şerif Paşa mosque he spotted a number of irregularities that had led to a decline in the quality of learning. He reported that the students did not come to classes regularly, while their families did not show concern as to whether their children attended school. The teachers had low criteria and encouraged absenteeism but exaggerated the progress of the students by submitting higher grades in the official examination protocol. Grades in the immediate examination records were twice as low. Ali Cevad insisted that strict measures would be taken to introduce appropriate schooling standards and even proposed the school to be punished by being deprived of support from the local education council.[38]

In his memoirs another distinguished teacher and education activist, Abdullah Fehmi Meçik, similarly complained of poor school curricula and education standards, and echoed issues raised by Vankov. He stressed that he was particularly worried about village schools where the study of religion had taken over the entire curriculum. Meçik noted that he did not dare to introduce innovation there due to the "fanaticism" (*taassub*) of the villagers and the influence of the "turbaned" (*sarıklılar*) on them.[39]

Such critical remarks regarding the problems and deficiencies in Muslim schools concern mainly education at the primary level but education at the junior secondary schools was apparently much better. The *rüşdiye* in Plovdiv received a very high evaluation by the Ottoman commissioner who characterized it as "the most distinguished in terms of progress" and "the most accomplished (one)."[40] Similarly, in 1894 a letter sent to the Ottoman Ministry of Education from the Ottoman trade representative in Russe described the brilliant performance of the students at the local *rüşdiye* on their final exam in the presence of a number of city notables, foreign consuls and school inspectors.[41]

[38] Sts. Cyril and Methodius National Library, Oriental Section (NBKM), Predfond Shumen, (SHm) 17/27.

[39] Hakkı Abdullah MEÇİK, *Şumnu: Bulgaristan Türklerinin Kültür Hayatı*, Izmir, 1977, p. 20-21. The book is authored by Abdullah Fehmi Meçik's son and includes paragraphs taken from his memoirs that were never published separately. Meçik's comment regarding the Muslims in the countryside will seem less striking if we note that he was a Young Turk sympathizer.

[40] Respectively "en ziyade mazhar-ı terakki olan" and "en mükemmel olan" BOA, A.MTZ.04 109/53.

[41] BOA, A.MTZ.04 9/9.

Two major conclusions could be drawn at this point. First, it must be stressed that contrary to what could be expected from the new Bulgarian state that was set upon pursuing a course of nation-building with all its consequences for diverse ethnic and religious communities, Muslim education retained considerable autonomy. That autonomy did not always create conditions favorable for the advancement of Muslim schools. All of them were private institutions and in spite of the legal provisions that promised funding from the state budget, they were largely dependent on the financial support of the local Muslim community and the Ottomans. Since the majority of the Muslims who stayed in the Principality were poor and the Ottomans could not provide assistance in all the instances in which it was needed, Muslim education continued to experience material problems that generated further difficulties. At the same time, the fact that the Bulgarians were not so strict in enforcing the law in the case of Muslim schools allowed the Ottomans to be involved in Muslim education affairs. One of the main motives behind Bulgarian actions was the concern that any interference in the affairs of the Muslim community would meet its resentment and threatened to break up the *modus vivendi* to which relations between the two major religious communities were stabilized. Another reason, which is often overlooked and underestimated, was Bulgarian anxiety not to provoke deterioration of relations with the Ottoman Empire, their official suzerain, which could in full right send troops across the border. This Principality regarded its position particularly vulnerable in the period between 1885 and 1896 when relations with Russia, its traditional protector, were in a critical state.[42]

Second, it must be noted that during the period of Bulgaria's autonomous existence there was a major divide between primary and secondary Muslim education. This phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that for most of the *Tanzimat* period education reform efforts were directed mainly to the secondary schools. Primary schools received attention only after the publication of the 1869 *Maarif Nizamnamesi*, so by the time the Bulgarian lands separated from Ottoman control the traditions in this area were still relatively weak, which also affected the character and quality of Muslim primary education afterwards. Of no lesser significance is the fact that between 1878 and 1908 the Ottomans

[42] Relations between Bulgaria and Russia worsened after the Bulgarian union with Eastern Rumelia, an act that did not receive Russian approval, and remained critical until 1894. For more on the matter see CRAMPTON, *Bulgaria*, *op. cit.,* ch. 4-9.

supported exclusively the *rüşdiyes* in Bulgaria, although their attention at home was centered on primary education.

OTTOMAN SUPPORT TO MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN BULGARIA

As it has already been suggested, in the course of time the Ottomans were among as the main agents that influenced the development of Muslim education in Bulgaria, particularly the junior-secondary institutions. During the period under discussion Muslim education in Bulgaria preserved to a great extent its Ottoman outlook and content, which was possible as a result of the initiatives the Ottomans undertook to support its development. On the basis of the archival sources surveyed for this study we could distinguish the following initiatives: Ottoman diplomatic intervention and lobbying on behalf of Muslim schools in Bulgaria; providing funds for the construction and repair of schools, mainly *rüşdiyes*; appointing teachers and paying their salaries; sending of books and maps; and granting of scholarships to gifted Muslim students from the Principality and Eastern Rumelia to continue their studies in higher education establishments in the Empire. This part of the article will discuss each of these steps in more detail.

At first the Ottomans were apprehensive about interfering in school affairs in Bulgaria since they were concerned that such initiatives would provoke complications in relations between the two states. This opinion was expressed in a dispatch of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry to the Ottoman Ministry of Education dated July 29, 1880. The document refers to a petition of the Muslims from Varna requesting the appointment of a teacher at the local *rüşdiye* along with assuming the payment of his salary.[43] By the beginning of 1881, however, the Ottoman government felt comfortable enough to consider sending a teacher to the aforementioned schools and even make arrangements with the Ottoman Bank for the payment of his salary. The sultan further approved the allocation of an additional sum of money for finishing the construction of a *rüşdiye* for girls in the same town.[44] The arrangements apparently

[43] BOA, Şura-yı Devlet Evrakı Hulasa Kayıt Defterleri — Maarif (Ş.D. DH. Maarif) 1/581, 208/45.

[44] BOA, A.MTZ.04 6/3.

amounted to no immediate practical result, since the Shumen *rüşdiye,* established in 1884/1885, is considered to be the first one of its type in the Principality.[45] However, the *rüşdiye* in Russe must be mentioned as the other pioneering institution. It opened in August 1884 following an agreement between the local Muslim community and the Ottomans regarding the appointment of a principal (*muallim-i evvel*). The school initially had to use another building because the original one dating to Ottoman period at the time was used as barracks. The matter of the restoration of the building to its original purpose and owners occupied much of the attention of the Ottoman commissioner Nihat Paşa and the Ottoman Foreign Ministry in the autumn of 1884. It was eventually resolved after the intervention of the Bulgarian prince at the beginning of 1885.[46] The insistence with which Nihat Paşa pleaded with various Bulgarian institutions was a sign that by that time relations between the two sides had stabilized and in such conditions the Ottomans could undertake more decisive measures.

Qualified teachers who were sent to the *rüşdiyes* in the Principality were expected to apply the so-called "new method" (*usul-i cedid*) in their pedagogical practice. The concept of the "new method" of teaching was developed by Selim Sabit Efendi, who emerged as one of the leading Ottoman pedagogues and educational reformers from the 1870s onwards. According to the "new method" system, students would be divided into classes and branches according to their age and abilities for the purpose of ensuring the best comprehension of the material. Teachers had to be competent in Arabic, Persian, mathematics, geography and other sciences, and to display paternal behaviour towards the students. Contrary to previous practices, instruction in Arabic and Persian would be conducted in Ottoman-Turkish using books in that language.[47] The qualification of being able to teach in accordance with *usul-i cedid* was also viewed with high esteem by the members of the Muslim community in Bulgaria.[48]

[45] Osman KESKİOĞLU, *Bulgaristan'da Türkler,* Ankara, Kültür ve Turizm bakanlığı yayınları, 1985, p. 60; Haşim ERTÜRK and Rasim EMİNOĞLU, *Bulgaristan'da Türk-İslam Eğitimi ve Kültür Müesseseleri ve Medresetü'n-nüvvab*, İstanbul, İslam Tarih, Sanat ve Kültürünü Araştırma Vakfı, 1993, p. 10; B. SAKARBALKAN, "Prenslik Devrinde Bulgaristan'da Türk Eğitimi, 1878-1908" in *Türk Kültürü*, III, 1964-65 refers to 1883 as the time of opening of the *rüşdiye*, p. 87.

[46] BOA, A.MTZ.04 13/2, January 1885.

[47] SOMEL, *op. cit.,* p. 170-172.

[48] An example is the petition of the müftü of Shumen regarding the appointment of a

Ottoman commitment to keep the development of Muslim education in Bulgaria in pace with improvements in this sphere taking place in the Ottoman Empire was demonstrated by the position they adopted in a dispute regarding the replacement of the principal of the Plovdiv *rüşdiye* in the autumn of 1894. The case, well documented by the reports of the Ottoman commissioner, the local müftü and members of the Muslim community, and will be accounted in some detail. For the purposes of implementing educational reforms and introducing the *usul-i cedid* to the Plovdiv *rüşdiye,* it was necessary to appoint a new principal acquainted with the aforementioned innovations. The old principal, Tahsin Efendi, who had been holding this post for the last five years, was no longer considered appropriate, since he had graduated from the *Darülmuallimin*, the teachers' seminary in Istanbul, 22 years before. A suitable candidate was found in the person of a certain Ragıb Efendi, a member of the local Muslim community, who was among the most recent distinguished graduates of the *Mekteb-i sultani* in Istanbul. Initially, the Grand Vizier's office did not agree with Ragıb's appointment since he had graduated in May the same year, and it was not considered proper for him to assume such an important position only three months after that. Eventually, the decision was reconsidered and Ragib was allowed to take up the principal's chair. However, Tahsin Efendi, was determined to struggle by all means against this decision. He gathered a group of 30 supporters and appealed to all possible institutions that could have any relation to Muslim education, including the Bulgarian authorities. In the dispute they readily took Tahsin's side. The Bulgarian school inspectorate approved neither Ragib's appointment nor of the new program patterned closely upon the one in Ottoman schools and gave Tahsin an official document reinstalling him as a principal.[49] To make sure that the decision was respected, Tahsin Efendi was accompanied by a policeman to the school. There he suddenly abandoned his pro-Bulgarian stance and pronounced a speech in which he accused the local Muslim education commission of serving Bulgarian interests.

The Ottomans were greatly disturbed by the fact that the dispute provoked the intervention of the Bulgarian authorities and gave them an opportunity to manipulate local Muslim affairs. The second secretary of

teacher for the *rüşdiye*. It expressed the preference that the candidate should be aware of the new method of teaching (*usul-i cedid vakıf olan*) in addition to having knowledge in the French language, BOA, A.MTZ.04 13/2, July 23, 1884.

[49] BOA, Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Mümtaze Kalemi Rumeli-i Şarkî Evrakı (A.MTZ.RŞ) 12/9.

the Ottoman commissariat in Plovdiv pointed out that Tahsin Efendi, had committed a disgraceful act and also feared that this case could set a dangerous precedent for future Bulgarian intervention. He proposed Tahsin's urgent removal as the only solution to neutralize his behaviour and avoid further complications. The local müftü agreed to this solution, so did the Muslim educational council. However, a petition from the scribe of the latter body presented a slightly different perspective on the matter. The council similarly disapproved of Tahsin's actions but it also pointed that in its view Ragıb was not the most appropriate candidate. The petition further implied that there were motives of material nature since the new principal was going to receive a salary of 1,000 guruş, an amount probably greater than what the previous one was paid.[50] The Ottomans conducted no further investigation into the argument and apparently succeeded in convincing Tahsin to resign. Ragıb became the new principal without any further evidence of Bulgarian objection.

This case is a compact demonstration of the variety of conflicting interests that intersected over matters related to Muslim education. It reveals Bulgarian desire to play a role in the affairs of the Mulism community and influence the development of Muslim schools, although the documents provide no specific information about the Bulgarian views and motives. The dispute in the *rüşdiye* in Plovidiv represented a suitable occasion to intervene, especially after Tahsin's appeal. The case also demonstrates Ottoman commitment to introducing innovations and improving the quality of education at *rüşdiyes* in Bulgaria, as well as the determination to protect their autonomous functioning. The dispute further brings to the fore the fact that there were differences of opinion and various convictions among the members of the local Muslim community. Tahsin and his supporters, for example, appealed to the Bulgarian authorities, while other members of community criticized him for this act.

Another way through which the Ottomans supported Muslim schools was by providing them with books and maps. All of the school materials sent were the same as the ones used in the Empire itself and were on the list of the so-called Library of Education, *Maarif kütüphanesi*, the printing house associated to the Ottoman Ministry of Education.[51] They were

[50] A.MTZ.RŞ, 12/9.

[51] BOA, A.MTZ.RŞ 1/19, A.MTZ.04 62/50. In one case when the Ottoman Ministry of Education received a request for books outside of this list, it informed the school that the demanded books were very expensive and it could not afford to pay for them.

one of the important channels through which new ideas and developments in Ottoman society were communicated to the Muslim community in the Principality. Thus, for example, books on subjects like morality conveyed to the students the prevailing values and ethical standards sanctioned by the Hamidian regime,[52] while history books transmitted the official political attitudes of the period in question.[53] These were not necessarily in line with Bulgarian interpretation of historical events and political realities, and provoked occasional complaints.[54]

A look at the list of books shipped to the *rüşdiye* in Russe in the autumn of 1885 provides an idea about the history works sent to the Principality. It contained 100 copies of Ahmed Vefik Paşa's *Fezleke-i tarih-i osmani*,[55] one of the history books commonly used in Ottoman schools at the time that still had remained unaffected by the restrictions on history writing imposed by Abdülhamid II.[56] In 1899, reflecting the changing trends of historical interpretation, the schools of Plovdiv received 30 copies of *Tarih-i osmani* and 60 copies of *Tarih-i Islâm* both by Ali Cevad and 40 copies of Sırrı Beğ's *Muhtasar-ı tarih-i umumi*.[57] The books expressed two different ideological currents that existed in Ottoman society at the time. While Ali Cevad's textbook was written in Ottoman patriotic spirit, stressing on territorial gains and losses, Sırrı Beğ's work displayed a more outspoken inclination towards Turkism.[58]

The Ottomans also donated funds for the construction and repair of Muslim schools, although this activity was relatively limited. For instance in 1904 the Ottoman Ministry of Education sent 2,646 *guruş* for the reconstruction of the boys' and girls' *rüşdiyes* in Plovdiv.[59] In 1906 both the primary school and the *rüşdiye* in Karlovo received a

[52] For a discussion of books on morality during the Hamidian period see Benjamin C. FORTNA, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools", p. 369-393, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 32 (2000).

[53] SOMEL, *op. cit.,* p. 194.

[54] Vankov, for example, was anxious that the school materials sent from the Ottoman Empire could produce "chauvinistic" moods among Muslim pupils and would prevent them from growing up together with their Bulgarian fellow students as citizens of one state. Vankov was particularly dissatisfied with the fact that a map printed in Istanbul as late as 1904 portrayed Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina as parts of the Ottoman Empire, p. 705.

[55] A.MTZ.04 13/2.

[56] SOMEL, *op. cit.,* p. 194-196.

[57] BOA, A.MTZ.04 62/50.

[58] SOMEL, *op. cit.,* p. 196-201.

[59] BOA, A.MTZ.04, 141/56.

donation of 20 lira from the imperial treasury for the repair of their buildings.[60]

The fact that the Ottomans concentrated their initiatives on Muslim junior-secondary schools was motivated by practical considerations. If the Ottomans really wished to maintain their influence over the Muslim community in Bulgaria, it was easier and more economic to concentrate their efforts and means on the *rüşdiyes*. At that level of education there were more solid traditions established during the Ottoman period. Also the fact that secondary education was not compulsory under Bulgarian law and, therefore, was not the priority of the Bulgarian state, gave the Ottomans greater freedom in determining its course of development without risking serious disputes with the Bulgarian authorities. Finally, it was expected that the well-educated teachers sent from Istanbul would find among the upper-level students more mature and receptive disciples. The Ottomans anticipated that the *rüşdiye* graduates would stay in the Principality and would contribute to the Muslim community's cultural and political advancement and the improvement of its organization. Similarly, they hoped that the most distinguished Muslim students from the Principality and Rumelia, who went to study in various higher educational institutions in the Empire on Ottoman government scholarships, would come back to put their talents and skills in the service of their community.[61] As it happened, most of these anticipations were not realized.

Among the career prospects for returning imperial school graduates was the opportunity to become teachers at the local *rüşdiyes* but it was not such a desirable option. A notable example was the same Ragıb Efendi who became the principal of the Plovdiv *rüşdiye* after the dramatic events in the autumn of 1894. At the end of the very same school year in which he was appointed he petitioned the Ottoman Foreign Ministry to find him a more appropriate job in Bulgaria, Serbia or Romania

[60] BOA, A.MTZ.04 141/56; During this period one French frank was exchanged for approximately 0.0433-0.044 lira, while the lira equaled 100 *guruş*. Şevket PAMUK, "Money in the Ottoman Empire, 1326-1914", p. 947-981 in Donald Quartaert and Halil İnalcık, *Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 972-973. As to the Bulgarian lev, its exchange rate varied between 99 and 101.5 francs for one golden lev, Richard CRAMPTON, *op. cit.,* p. 221.

[61] There were three scholarships for the Principality and two for Eastern Rumelia. BOA, A.MTZ.04 109/53 and 130/54.

commensurate with his abilities and in view of his knowledge of Bulgarian and French.[62]

Many *rüşdiye* graduates from the Principality looked towards Istanbul not only as the place where they would continue their studies,[63] but also as the final destination where they would be able to find better career opportunities and live in a more familiar culture and society. Ottoman concerns in this respect were voiced in a report of 1902 by Ali Ferruh, the Ottoman Commissioner in Sofia, to the Grand Vizier's office. Ali Ferruh lamented that every year the most gifted students from the *rüşdiyes* in Bulgaria went to study in various schools in the Ottoman Empire and after attaining even higher qualifications, found suitable jobs and settled there. The Muslim community was deprived of its most intelligent and qualified people, who otherwise would have emerged as its leaders and the prime defenders of its rights. The Bulgarians, to whose benefit this negative trend worked, showed a considerable tolerance for it.[64]

To put a curb on the "brain drain" Ali Ferruh had developed his own plan, which he presented to the Ottoman Ministry of Education. He proposed the transformation of the Plovdiv *rüşdiye* into a higher-level *idadi* school with a boarding house attached to it. In his view the project was also financially more feasible since the sum of 50 lira spent annually on the students studying at the *Mülkiye* and the *Mekteb-i sultani* could pay the salary of three or four qualified teachers at the *idadi* plus allowances for needy students. The Ottoman Ministry of Education did not consider the *idadi* project viable. The ministry questioned the accurateness of Ali Ferruh's calculations of all the expenses that would be associated with the execution of the project. It further cited possible Bulgarian antagonism and thus recommended continuation of the old practice.[65]

[62] BOA, A.MTZ.04 61/98, June 23, 1895.

[63] That trend is well documented by a number of sources from BOA such as A.MTZ.04 8/6, which contains over a hundred pages of applications from Muslims in the Principality and the responses of the Ottoman Education and Foreign Ministries. A.MTZ.04 35/39 and 130/56, BOA, Ayniyat Defteri nº 1422, p. 403 and nº1423, p. 161 also contain relevant information.

[64] BOA, A.MTZ.04 109/53.

[65] BOA, A.MTZ.04 109/53.

A look at another source, Ali Çankaya's *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler*[66] also confirms Ali Ferruh's observations. After completing their education at the local *rüşdiyes* many Muslims from the Principality pursued advanced education in the Ottoman Empire.[67] In this respect, the Plovdiv *rüşdiye* stands out as the institution that produced the greatest number of *Mülkiye* students, an indication of the high quality of education this institution provided. Coincidentally, this school features as one of the major recipients of aid from the Ottoman Empire, a factor, as it could be argued, that contributed to its prosperity and the success of its graduates. The more support, however, also meant closer supervision and higher education standards. Eventually, the *Mülkiye* graduates from the Principality were employed in the Ottoman bureaucracy, married off to local families, and having found their place in Ottoman society, never went back to Bulgaria.[68]

In some cases economic constraints had an impact on Ottoman policy towards Muslim education the Principality. In the spring of 1900 teachers in Bulgaria appointed by the Ottoman Ministry of Education were complaining that they had not received their salaries for the past year and up to that moment they had been given no explanation for the delay.[69] The problem was not resolved two years after, if we are to judge from a petition of the Muslims from Karlovo. They described the neediness of the local *rüşdiye* teacher Behçet Efendi, who had not received his salary for sixteen months. The Karlovo Muslims were concerned that he would follow the example of the teacher in Kazanlık who, desperate to make appeals, had left his job and returned to Istanbul.[70] The problem of late salaries, however, was not a case limited to Muslim schools in Bulgaria but was common for schools in the Empire proper and all branches of the Ottoman bureaucracy.[71]

[66] Ali ÇANKAYA, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler. III. Cild (1860-1923),* Ankara, Mars Matbaası, 1968-69.

[67] See ÇANKAYA, the biographies of Mehmed Vehbi, biog. nº 649, p. 765, İsmail Hakkı, biog. nº 675, p. 787, İsmail Sabri, biog. nº 695, p. 813, Sermed Yaşar Balcı, biog. nº 742, p. 867, Arif Tevfik, biog. nº 743, p. 867, Mehmet Rauf Demirtaş, biog. nº 904, p. 1032, İbrahim Zağra, biog. nº 1053, p. 1154-1155.

[68] The only exception appears to be Tahir Lütfü Toğay. He was a Young Turk activist, so in order to avoid persecution by Abdülhamid II, he left his post as a principal of the *idadi* in Erzurum and returned to his native town of Russe. Eventually, after World War I he went to the Ottoman Empire and settled there permanently. Çankaya, biog. nº 428, p. 523.

[69] BOA, A.MTZ.04 64/1.

[70] BOA, A.MTZ.04 87/66.

[71] See SOMEL, *op. cit.,* p. 165.

OTTOMAN MOTIVES

While assessing the motives behind the Ottoman involvement in Muslim schools in the Principality it is necessary to look further into the prevailing political and ideological tendencies in the Empire at the time. Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism were the three main currents espoused and elaborated to varying degree by Ottoman intellectual circles inside and outside the Empire, as well as by the government. Ottomanism originated during the *Tanzimat* period was initially designed to cultivate a common allegiance to the Ottoman state and curb the development of nationalism among the Empire's various nationalities. To say that it was a stillborn notion would be inaccurate, since it did have supporters among Ottoman Muslim bureaucratic and intellectual circles and non-Muslim merchant groups.[72] After the war of 1877-78 the popularity of Ottomanism diminished under the pressure of advancing Balkan nationalism and Muslim resentment to concessions made to non-Muslims. The last decades of the 19th c. witnessed the appearance of Turkish nationalist and Turkist ideas but at that stage their influence was still limited to intellectuals, publicists and political opposition groups, such as the Young Turk movement.[73] It was Islamism that asserted itself as the dominant political and ideological trend backed by the sultan and the Ottoman government.[74] As Landau points, it developed as a reaction to foreign encroachments and one of its aims was reinforcing the bonds among Muslims in the Empire, "including those in the lost territories."[75] Ottoman initiatives with regard to Muslim education in the Principality should be viewed in the context of this tendency.

The major scholarly works dealing with the subject of Ottoman policies of Islamism or its foreign policy counterpart Pan-Islamism have devoted little or no attention to their manifestation towards the Balkan

[72] Roderic DAVISON, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923,* Austin, University of Texas Press, 1990, p. 118-123.

[73] David KUSHNER, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908,* London, Frank Cass, 1977, p. 14-19; M. Şükrü HANİOĞLU, *Preparation for a Revolution, The Young Turks, 1902-1908,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 64-73, p. 299-302.

[74] Some major works discussing Pan-Islam and Islamism and specific policies of Abdülhamid II include Jacob LANDAU, *The Politics of Pan-Islam. Ideology and Organization,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990; Azmi ÖZCAN, *Pan-Islamism. Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain, 1877-1924,* Leiden, Brill, 1997; Kemal KARPAT, *The Politicization of Islam. Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000.

[75] LANDAU, *op. cit.,* p. 23.

Muslims left under foreign rule, although some have discussed the impact on the rise and popularization of this trend produced by the influx of Muslim refugees from the Balkans and the news of their experiences under the new rulers.[76] As a result Ottoman Pan-Islamist policies have come to be associated exclusively with the cases of the Muslims in India, Central Africa, Russia and Southeast Asia and the resistance to imperial rule in these regions. However, such initiatives had their expression in the Balkans as well. With regard to the Balkan Muslims under foreign rule Ottoman policy of Pan-Islamism represented reciprocation to the pressure exercised by the European states on behalf of the Christians in the Empire.[77] In the case of the Muslim community in the Bulgarian Principality it was expressed through the steps taken to protect its political rights, safeguard its cultural and religious autonomy and preserve the common bonds it shared with the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman efforts to support and preserve the independent functioning of Muslim schools in the Principality and the Ottoman-Islamic traditions in education offered there should be seen as part of this larger endeavor. The present article has dealt with one aspect of the community's life in which the Ottomans were prominent but they were likewise involved in other initiatives. Among them were maintaining the Muslim religious institutions and functionaries and lobbying for the rights of the Muslim community with the Bulgarian state, issues that still await in-depth systematic scholarly treatment. In view of the nature of these pursuits, it could be claimed that Ottoman Pan-Islamist policy in the Principality was not an aggressive expansionist enterprise, the way it was interpreted by European writers and statesmen at the end of the 19th century,[78] but a defensive endeavor.

[76] Landau for example mentions that the Ottomans were steadily involved in the affairs of the Muslim communities in territories formerly ruled by them through the appointment of teachers, judges and religious scholars, p. 37 ; Özcan cites Landau on this point, p. 52 ; Karpat notes the effect that the news of mistreatment of Balkan Muslims had on the formation of the Islamist ideological and political trend in the Ottoman Empire, p. 97-98.

[77] LANDAU, *op. cit.,* p. 39.

[78] For typical representations see Wilfrid SCAWEN BLUNT, *The Future of Islam*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, 1882 and Gabriel CHARMES, *L'Avenir de la Turquie — le Panislamisme,* Paris, Michel Lévy Frères, 1883 ; İhsan SÜREYYA SIRMA, *Birkaç Sahife Tarih,* Konya, Esra yayınları, 1991, provides an example of the French following the activities of Muslim orders, such as the Shazeliye, in North Africa and their speculations about the support they received from the Ottomans, p. 9-27 ; the British were similarly disturbed whenever the Ottoman press mentioned the expression *ittihad-ı İslam*, the Ottoman Turkish equivalent for Pan-Islamism, Özcan, p. 119.

CONCLUSIONS

From the first years of its establishment the Bulgarian Principality demonstrated an inclination to model the behavior of a typical nation-state in foreign and domestic enterprises but the legacies of the Empire would be present for years to come in many aspects of social, cultural and political life. The years between 1878 and 1908 should therefore be seen as a period of transition during which the country was "learning" how to be a nation-state rather than displaying the attributes of a fully developed one. This process was reflected on the policies towards Muslim education at that time. The Bulgarians wanted to influence the development of Muslim education institutions in such a way that would lead to the promotion of loyalty to the Bulgarian state. However, the legal provisions initiated for this purpose were not always practically implemented due to concerns that such attempts could provoke Ottoman protests and even serious actions against Bulgaria, as well as the fear of arousing Muslim opposition. As a result Muslim education managed to retain its character within the Ottoman and Muslim cultural sphere. This tendency was further reinforced by Ottoman initiatives to protect and support Muslim schools in Bulgaria, particularly the *rüşdiyes*, and the efforts to keep their development parallel to schools in the Empire proper. This article has suggested that Ottoman actions with regards to Muslim education in the Principality should be interpreted in the context of the policy of Islamism or Pan-Islam that was popular during the Hamidian period. To be sure, the archival documents surveyed for this study contain no references to the expression *ittihad-ı İslam*, only a few explicit mentions of the institution of the caliphate and no elaborate discourse justifying Ottoman policies on the grounds of a larger Pan-Islamic enterprise. But when we assess Ottoman actions on the basis of these documents, we can determine that the main objectives they pursued throughout the period were providing protection and patronage to the Muslim community in addition to preserving the cultural and religious bonds between its members and the Ottoman state.

Milena B. METHODIEVA, Akşin SOMEL, *Keeping the Bonds: the Ottomans and Muslim Education in Autonomous Bulgaria, 1878-1908*

The article examines the development of Muslim education in autonomous Bulgaria in the period 1878-1908. It argues that for various reasons the Bulgarians, contrary to their desire, did not succeed in establishing tight control over Muslim schools and the Ottomans emerged as the main agent that influenced their development. As a result, throughout the period under discussion Muslim education managed to retain its Ottoman and Muslim outlook and content. The authors discuss in detail the initiatives of Ottoman support and suggest that they should be interpreted in the context of the major political and ideological tendencies in the Empire at that time.

Milena B. METHODIEVA, Akşin SOMEL, *Maintenir les liens: les Ottomans et l'enseignement musulman dans la Bulgarie autonome, 1878-1908*

Cet article étudie le développement de l'enseignement musulman dans la Bulgarie autonome dans la période 1878-1908. Il démontre que, pour des raisons diverses, les Bulgares, contrairement à ce qu'ils souhaitaient, ne réussirent pas à établir un contrôle étroit sur les écoles musulmanes, et les Ottomans apparaissent comme l'agent principal qui influa sur leur développement. En conséquence, pendant toute la période considérée, l'enseignement musulman conserva ses perspectives et son contenu musulman et ottoman. Les auteurs traitent en détail les initiatives du soutien ottoman et suggèrent qu'il devrait être interprété dans le contexte des tendances politiques et idéologiques majeures de l'Empire à cette période.