

**Georgeta Nazarska**  
**University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia**  
**[g.nazarska@unibit.bg], ORCID: 0000-0002-6448-3692**

## **Muslim Women under the 'Care' of the State Women's Organizations in Bulgaria (1950s–1980s)**

**Abstract:** *The article examines the policies towards ethno-religious communities led by the totalitarian state in communist Bulgaria in the 1950s-1980s. Specifically, the work of the state women's organizations (the Women's Department of the Fatherland Front and the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement) for the 'cultural elevation' of Muslim women in the country (Turkish, Bulgarian Muslim and Roma women) is studied. Based on archival documentation originating from the structures of the women's movement, the goals and results of long-term interactions, the motivation of the participants, the reflections of the activities in a political, social and cultural context are analyzed. Along with the main issue, the following are commented on: the nature of the so-called communist feminism and its participation in the assimilationist plans and processes in Bulgaria; the degree of inclusion of political mobilization of Muslim women through the women's movement and its potential for supporting the social mobility of marginalized communities. The study uses a social historical approach and uses primarily on primary documentation.*

**Keywords:** *Muslim women; Bulgaria; communist feminism; totalitarianism; assimilation.*

### **Introduction**

**Methodological framework.** The article examines the policies towards ethno-religious communities led by the totalitarian state in communist Bulgaria in the 1950s–1980s. Specifically, the work of the state women's organizations (the Women's Department of the Fatherland Front and the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement) for the 'cultural elevation' of Muslim women in the country (Turkish, Bulgarian Muslim and Roma women) is studied. Based on archival documentation originating from the structures of the women's movement, the goals and results of long-term interactions, the motivation of the participants, the reflections of the activities in a political, social and cultural context are analyzed. Along with the main issue, the following are commented on: the nature of the so-called communist feminism and its participation in the assimilationist plans and processes in Bulgaria; the degree of inclusion of political mobilization of Muslim women through

the women's movement and its potential for supporting the social mobility of marginalized communities. The study uses a social historical approach and uses primarily on primary documentation.

***Political and social context.*** Immediately after the coup d'état in the autumn of 1944, the Fatherland Front (FF) government that came to power began a transformation of the women's movement in Bulgaria. The central and local leaderships of the largest organization, the Bulgarian Women's Union (BWU), were replaced by representatives of the FF, some members were expelled and arrested, the organization was renamed the Bulgarian People's Union of Women (BPUW) and became highly politicized. After the destruction of the democratic opposition and the establishment of a totalitarian regime, headed by the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP), in 1950 the BWU was disbanded and the women's movement came under the auspices of the FF in the form of the Women's Department (Marcheva, 1995; Marcheva, 1998). During this period, it finally lost its feminist character, as it subordinated its aspirations for women's equality to the political tasks of the regime. Even when in 1968 on the instructions of the BCP it was re-established under the name Committee of Bulgarian Women's Movement (CBWM) (Macheva, 2011a), it operated without autonomy, as one of the many organizations of the party-state, which had to keep certain groups of the population in subjection and control their public activity. In this sense, in 1950-1989, a transformation of liberal into communist feminism was noticeable in the Bulgarian women's movement, which was practically a pseudo feminism<sup>1</sup>. This could be argued by personalities of the leaders of the women's movement: Tsola Dragoycheva – Chairwoman of the BPUW and of the Women's Department (1945-1968), was an influential political figure in the same period as member of the Politburo of the Central Committee (CC) of the BCP and a long-time Minister; Elena Lagadinova – Chairwoman of the Executive Board of the CBWM (1968-1990), also enjoyed political trust from the authorities as a former partisan and long-time member of the State Council (1971-1990) (see Marcheva, 2005; Marcheva, 2011b; Daskalova, 2016).

Mass organizations in the totalitarian state were completely subordinated to its goals. In this case, women's formations followed its economic, social and cultural policies. They became a tool for social engineering, taking actions against religion and working for the assimilation

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<sup>1</sup> For the debates on this issue see Daskalova, 2012, 486-493, who justifies for the opposite view.

of ethno-religious minority communities (Ivanova, 2002; Gruev, 2003; Gruev, Kalionski, 2008; Brunbauer, 2010; Kabakchieva, 2009).

### **The Women's Movement in Communist Bulgaria and the Mobilization of Muslim Women (1950s–1980s)**

*Establishment of women's societies with the participation of Muslim women.* The political change in 1944 left the BWU with 171 branches – 118 urban, 9 railway and 44 rural (Daskalova, 2012). This required the new BPUW to take rapid measures for its massification, while at the same time taking control of the leadership positions in the branches and 'purging' them of pro-German sympathizers and those accused of pro-Nazi actions<sup>2</sup>. The appeal for massification also affected the regions populated by Muslim women. Until then, there were no societies with their membership in the BWU, except for the special fund at the headquarters called 'The Education of the Rhodopean Pomak Woman', which was closed in 1947<sup>3</sup>.

In 1945–1950, the BPUW carried out a rapid mobilization of women, tripling its membership and turning it into a mass totalitarian structure. The activities were supported by the women's committees established in December 1944 at the district committees of the FF, formed on a party principle by Bulgarian women who knew Turkish and were usually teachers in Turkish schools<sup>4</sup>. Until the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty (1947), the slogans for the re-education of women in the spirit of people's democracy and the fight against fascist remnants were in progress. The process gained particular momentum in 1949–1950 in response to the order of the BCP to the BPUW to mobilize all women without distinction of nationality, religion and political beliefs, and to begin to educate them politically and civically, to raise their everyday and cultural level, and to detach them from the influence of religion<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 1.**

year	mem- bers	total num- ber of branches	number of rural branches	branches of Muslim women
1945/06	200 000	2 050	1 900	

<sup>2</sup> ЦДА [TsDA, Central State Archives], ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 26, л. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Пак там, а.е. 24, л. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Пак там, ф. 28, оп. 1, а.е. 516, л. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Пак там, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 24, л. 14.

<b>1945/12</b>	240 000	2 810	2 630	
<b>1946</b>	300 000	3 513	3 313	
<b>1947</b>	407 000	3 860	3 540	
<b>1948</b>	426 651	3 900	3 570	
<b>1949</b>	610 000	4 551		1873 in Krumovgrad district, 1420 in Kardzhali district, 1120 in Momchilgrad district
<b>1959</b>				42 in Targovishte district, 4100 Turkish women; 13 in Silistra district, Turkish villages

*Source:* ЦДА [TsDA, Central State Archives], ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 14, л. 31, 35; а.е.27, л. 118; а.е. 24, л. 14.

Some of the rural societies noted in Table 1. were founded in 1948–1949 by Turkish, Bulgarian Muslim and Roma women. The first ones emerged in Chepino, Chepelare, Kardzhali, Momchilgrad and Ardino (1945), and subsequently affected Southern (districts of Kardzhali, Momchilgrad, Ardino, and Gotse Delchev) and Northeastern Bulgaria (districts of Targovishte, Razgrad, Shoumen, Tutrakan, Ispirih, and Provadia)<sup>6</sup>. In 1949, 45 societies of Turkish women were registered with 7945 members, and the best-organized Turkish women were in Krumovgrad (1873), Kardzhali (1420) and Momchilgrad districts (1120)<sup>7</sup>. Most societies were founded by Bulgarian women – local teachers, school principals, municipal officials, nurses, telegraph operators, wives of military officers and employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who dominated as chairs and in their governing bodies until the end of the 1970s. For example, in the Kardzhali women's society, founded by many Turkish tobacco workers, they only reached the position of deputy district chairs<sup>8</sup>.

When establishing societies, the BPWU acted situationally (campaigning for the BCP in the elections for the 7<sup>th</sup> Grand Assembly and for municipal councils), and also used various state initiatives: literacy of the population in the Rhodope Mountains, seizure of grain and agricultural products from producers, early sowing of tobacco, competition

<sup>6</sup> Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 138-139.

<sup>7</sup> Пак там, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 27, л. 118.

<sup>8</sup> Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 108, 116-117, 138-139; ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 26, л. 153 гр.

in the implementation of the two-year economic plan, brigade movement, even when celebrating the new women's holiday – March 8<sup>th</sup><sup>9</sup>. The founding and initial activities of the societies took the form of entertainments, parties, concerts, meetings, talks, courses, gatherings, demonstrations, giving solemn promises, etc., and according to most reports they were met with enthusiasm and delight and were visited en masse<sup>10</sup>. Rarely does official documentation include information about the fear of young Muslim women to participate, due to prohibitions from their husbands, and about the gathering of older women only on Fridays; about the dissatisfaction of Roma women with the outfits; about protests by Turkish women about the lack of fabric for sewing veils and clothing and because of their forced labor in the fields on the festive Friday. Even fewer are the admissions about the impossibility of forming societies or about those that practically do not work due to 'unhealthy moods'<sup>11</sup>.

***Training of active women activists in the women's movement.***

Already after 1945, the BPUW began to attract agitators and instructors to work among the Muslim population. At first, they were Bulgarians who spoke Turkish. The inclusion of Turkish or Tatar women was problematic until the end of the 1940s, and this greatly hindered mobilization<sup>12</sup>. In 1949–1950, the first full-time instructors were appointed: Elmaz Tatarova – sister of a communist hero, who later made an upward career in the CC of the BCP, and Muzafer Ibryamova/ Ibraimova (Aliieva) from Pleven<sup>13</sup>. Subsequently, their number increased to 3 in the Board and 14 in the district committees in Shoumen, Omurtag, Razgrad, Provadia, Dulovo, Isparih, Kubrat, Rousse, Novi Pazar, Sevlievo, Sliven, Aytos, Karnobat, etc.<sup>14</sup> Their commitment was to visit the vil-

<sup>9</sup> Пак там, а.е. 337, л. 7-8; а.е. 339, л. 206-206гр.; а.е. 43, л. 96-97; а.е. 14, л. 61-70; ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 140; ф. 28, оп. 9, а.е. 45, л. 14-15, 20-21, 34-34гр., 42-43.

<sup>10</sup> Пак там, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 27, л. 118; а.е. 24, л. 45.

<sup>11</sup> Пак там, а.е. 43, л. 102; а.е. 339, л. 51; а.е. 24, л. 180; а.е. 14, л. 73.

<sup>12</sup> Пак там, а.е. 14, л. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Пак там, а.е. 26, л. 53, 56-57; а.е. 25, л. 69. Elmaz (Blaga) Tatarova (1926-2009) - head of the 'Work among Turks' Sector at the Women's Department of the CC – BCP (1951), instructor at the 'Work among Turks' Department (1955) and at the 'Propaganda and Agitation' Department (until 1979), employee of the 'National Minorities' Department (since 1962) of the CC – BCP, member of the National Committee of the FF, Vice-Chair of the Board of the CBWM (1979–1982), candidate member of the CC – BCP (1966–1989).

<sup>14</sup> ЦДА, ф.7, оп. 1, а.е. 27, л. 119; ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 118.

lages in districts, to hold meetings and assemblies, and to directly campaign on current issues: autumn sowing, implementation of plans and competition between collectives, women's rights, etc. There they answered pressing questions about agricultural pensions, rations in kind, the organization of kindergartens, etc.<sup>15</sup>

Since 1950, when the women's movement transitioned to the FF, a targeted recruitment of agitators and activists began to form local women's committees. Usually, these were Muslim women elected as people's (municipal) councilors, awarded as champions for their industrial or agricultural work ('high-achieving women'), teachers, etc.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, courses were organized for district activists, in which, by decision of the local FF committees, young women up to 20 years old, members of the Communist Youth Union (64%), the BCP (10%) or the FF (18%) were enrolled. Their education was up to primary (38.2% had completed 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 20.6% had completed 7<sup>th</sup> grade). Most were co-operative farmers. In schools in Gotse Delchev, Velinograd, Chepelare and Smolyan they underwent intensive training aimed at introducing them to the communist ideology and its vision for the women's movement. From these graduates, agitation groups were formed, which gave lectures in Turkish, led literacy and homemaking circles and reading groups<sup>17</sup>. For example, in 1958 in Silistra, Turkish women numbered 525 (21%) of all activists. After the decision of the Executive Committee of the FF to work with the Roma population (1958), Roma women were also attracted as agitators<sup>18</sup>. In 1959, the district women's committees included about 29 Turkish and Roma women (an average of 11% of their composition), and their number in the local ones was significant. Usually these were teachers, students or officials in the FF, most of whom were members of the BCP (Table 2).

<sup>15</sup> Пак там, ф. 7, оп.1, а.е. 27, л. 119; а.е. 26, л. 56-57, 153 гр.; а.е. 14, л. 61-70.

<sup>16</sup> Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 108, 123; ф.7, оп. 1, а.е. 26, л. 153 гр.; а.е. 14, л. 10; ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 44, л. 16, 39-65. Examples are Ayshe Mestanova from Jebel, a striker in the tobacco industry who became an organizer in the National Committee of the FF (1949), and Fatme Gul from Silistra, a holder of two Orders of Labor, who was attracted to the activists.

<sup>17</sup> ЦДА, ф. 7, оп. 1, а.е. 339, л. 49-50.

<sup>18</sup> Пак там, ф. 28, оп. 15, а.е. 27, л. 157-157гр.

Table 2.

District Women's Commissions, 1959	number of Turkish women	number of Roma women	rate, %
Plovdiv	3	0	12
Sliven	3	2	
Bourgas	1	0	
Blagoevgrad	0	2	
Pleven	1	1	10
Dobrich	5	0	
Rousse	3	0	
Shoumen	2	0	
Isperih	6	0	
Total	24	5	
<b>Local Women's Committees, 1959</b>			
Sliven	3	1	
Silistra	150		

Source: ЦДА [TsDA, Central State Archives], ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 139; ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 45, л. 23-25, 234-316.

At the end of the 1950s, these paid or voluntary collaborators of the women's committees came up with dubiously exaggerated data about their extensive work with Muslim women: for example, they reported that in 1959 in the district of Madan they held 700 meetings with 25 thousand women, in the district of Momchilgrad – resp. 486 with 10895 women, and in the district of Krumovgrad – resp. 150 with 4500 women<sup>19</sup>.

During the restructuring of the women's movement in 1968 – separation from the FF and separation into the CBWM, more Muslim, Tatar and Turkish women entered its Board and municipal structures: Elmaz Tatarova, Nadie Ferhadova (Nadia Asparuhova), Saliha Adilova-Elihmanova and Muzein Dorgudova became members of the Board, and the first two were also its vice-chairs. This participation of as many as 4 women is the result not of true empowerment, but of the escalation of the assimilation process against the Turks, Roma and Bulgarian Muslims in the country, in which the party-state sought allies among their intellectuals and of support in the state mass organizations. The members of this governing body met exactly the expectations of

<sup>19</sup> Пак там, а.е. 26, л. 57-60.

the authorities, ignoring their ethno-religious identity in favor of party-political affiliation<sup>20</sup>.

### **Muslim women in the focus of the women's movement in communist Bulgaria (1950s–1980s)**

The so-called communist feminism in Bulgaria completely served the totalitarian government and its social engineering projects. Part of them was the fiction of ‘building’ a society without religion and the ambition to create an ethnically homogeneous nation-state, populated only by Bulgarians.

The official beginning of the atheist policy in the country was given in 1957 by a decision of the Political bureau (PB) of the CC of the BCP, although the previous decade was marked by a clash of ‘godless’ communism with all denominations in Bulgaria. This also applies to Islam, which was also associated with the possible influence of neighboring Turkey. For this reason, all Muslims were viewed simultaneously as carriers of ‘bourgeois remnants’, potential spies and enemies of the government. However, they must form the ‘backbone’ of the new class of cooperative peasants, and therefore it is planned to ‘erode’ their religiosity.

For this purpose, the BCP and all its affiliated organizations began to work continuously and methodically. The women’s committees of the FF were no exception. Motivated by atheistic propaganda, their leaders accepted religious identity as ‘religious fanaticism’, which was a major obstacle to the inclusion of Muslim women in the ‘socialist way of life’ and, in the longer term, to their ethno-religious assimilation (Brunbauer, 2010, p. 308-375, 441-448). From the perspective of extremely negative social stereotypes, women from minority communities are described as standing ‘culturally low compared to other women’, who need to be influenced ‘according to all the rules of cultural elevation’<sup>21</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, women's committees primarily ‘targeted’ the veiling clothing as an important symbol of Muslim women's religious identity (see Gruev, Kalionski, 2008; Nazarska, 2009; Muratova, 2012; Petkova, 2015; Burnaski, 2019). Since 1958, when the status of a national minority of Turks was revoked and when the PB of the CC of the BCP decided to impose ‘European clothing’ on all Turkish women in honor of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coup d’état of September

<sup>20</sup> ПаК там, ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 111-112.

<sup>21</sup> ПаК там, ф. 28, оп. 18, а.е. 50, л. 83-88, 147-154; оп. 16, а.е. 48, л. 59.

9<sup>th</sup>, 1944, women's committees began a comprehensive agitation aimed at unveiling. In their speeches at meetings and in personal conversations, the agitators and activists unequivocally stated to the tobacco workers that they expected them not only to fulfill the five-year economic plan in a shorter time and to achieve higher yields. They should work in the fields without veils, and that those awarded state orders and medals should serve as an example<sup>22</sup>. The women's committees carried out similar propaganda during the organized 'friendly Bulgarian-Turkish celebrations', evenings, dinners, sittings with literary and theatrical programs, etc. on the occasion of Women's Day – March 8<sup>th</sup><sup>23</sup>. In the 1960s, many of these events were held under the motto 'the veil – an enemy of the Turkish woman'<sup>24</sup>. Turkish and Roma women themselves were involved in the broad campaign to replace veils with secular clothing. Because of these actions in 1959, 348 Turkish women in the Targovishte region gave up their veils, and according to other data, probably exaggerated, about 60-70% of women in the Silistra region. Success was noted in the Kardzhali and Targovishte regions too<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand, in the 1960s, women's committees reported religious resistance, supported by men among the Turkish women in the Bourgas region and in the Bulgarian Muslim settlements of Blagoevgrad region.

An atheistic focus was also given to the courses for activists and for 'increasing domestic culture' (in sewing and cooking), conducted by the women's committees in the 1960s<sup>26</sup>. The center of their syllabi was the introduction of secular clothing, but content of lectures touched on a wide range of religious issues, for example, 'scientific and reactionary nature of religion; harmful influence of religious rites; role of the family in atheist upbringing'. During the training, the leaders purposefully explained the need for new dishes that violated religious taboos, as well as the benefits of abortions, forbidden by Allah. According to them, 'we there must fight them [the Bulgarian Muslim women in the Smolyan region] because they give birth to many [babies]'<sup>27</sup>. The

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<sup>22</sup> As early as the 1950s, the women's movement encouraged Muslim women to ignore religious prohibitions - to plant tobacco on the holyday of Friday and to work with men in the fields.

<sup>23</sup> ЦДА, ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 47, л. 13-15, 44-49, 61-70; оп. 15, а.е. 26, л. 3-8, 15-17, 23-25, 57-60.

<sup>24</sup> Пак там, оп. 16, а.е. 48, л. 86-105.

<sup>25</sup> Пак там, а.е. 45, л. 26-28, 45-46.

<sup>26</sup> Пак там, а.е. 48, л. 59. For the courses of domestic culture, see Brunbauer, 2010, p. 364-365; Muratova, 2012; Petkova, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> ЦДА, ф. 28, оп. 16, а.е. 48, л. 71.

‘re-education’ also included the prevention of early marriage – another tradition sanctioned by Islam, but which the activists denounced as ‘hooliganism’<sup>28</sup>.

In the 1970s–1980s, the new women's formation – the CBWM, actively participated in the introduction of the new socialist holiday-ritual system, which was constructed according to the Soviet pattern and was imposed with the resources of all party-state institutions, the BCP and its satellite mass organizations. Basing on ‘For further improvement of the work among the Bulgarian Turks and their full inclusion in the Bulgarian people in the struggle for socialism and communism’ resolution (1969) the PB of the CC of the BCP gave an explicit task to the CBWM to work for ‘fuller inclusion’ of Turks ‘in the economic, socio-political and cultural life, for increasing their labor and socio-political activity, for raising their class-party, patriotic and international education, for their personal improvement and moral improvement’<sup>29</sup>.

For this purpose, in the 1970s, when Bulgarian Muslims were forcibly renamed, with the instructions of the Board, all district and municipal councils of the CBWM began to work against ‘religious prejudices’ in cooperation with the committees of the FF and the so-called houses for socialist life and culture<sup>30</sup>. In the Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Pazardzhik, Lovech and Plovdiv regions, thematic exhibitions, lectures, conferences, meetings and conversations were held against the naming of children with ‘Arabic names’, in ‘helping’ mothers’ decisions not to have many children and explaining how to use ‘family planning’<sup>31</sup>.

Despite their intentions, the district leaderships of the CBWM did not report any successes. In a report on the work of the local committees of the FF and the CBWM in Smolyan (1970), the impossibility of defeating ‘domestic conservatism’, i.e. the adherence to early marriages, girls dropping out of school after primary education, the unquestioning compliance with the authority of parents and husbands, the young women’s failure to comply with the statement that veils and shalwars were ‘scars left over from Turkish slavery’. The activists of the CBWM reported that it is impossible to ‘influence and accelerate to the necessary extent the process towards the voluntary and internally convinced restoration of Bulgarian names’, despite their arguments that they were

<sup>28</sup> Пак там, л. 73.

<sup>29</sup> Пак там, ф. 417, оп. 5, а.е. 75, л. 20.

<sup>30</sup> Пак там, оп. 6, а.е. 354, л. 124.

<sup>31</sup> Пак там, оп. 4, л.18; а.е. 36, л. 5, 15, 30; а.е 59, л. 31- 34.

'imposed on them during Turkish slavery' 'with violence, with sword and with fire', by the 'shameful, disgraceful and barbaric assimilationist policy of Turkish feudalism'<sup>32</sup>.

The CBWM followed the established direction in its work with Muslim women in the late 1970s, when party policy was directed towards the assimilation of Bulgarian Turks. As noted by the chairwoman of its Board, Elena Lagadinova, the CBWM must 'find its special place in the great task of integrating Bulgarian Turks into Bulgarian politics', i.e. Turkish women should feel 'what the state does for women, for the family and for children', and form a socialist consciousness within themselves. 'Working with delicacy and intelligence', she advised. In 1977, the leadership outlined strategies for separating Turkish women from family households, where they were under the influence of 'domestic conservatism', speaking Turkish, listening to radio broadcasts in Turkish, living in isolation and wearing traditional clothing. It was proposed to turn them into factory workers, to increase their employment and enrolling their children in kindergartens, where they will be under the supervision of Bulgarian teachers. The CBWM was planning to initiate the introduction of 'decent work attire for Bulgarian Turkish women' and to insist on the introduction of a unified ritual in weddings with the aim of 'incorporating their holidays and traditions into ours'<sup>33</sup>.

As early as October 1985, when the forced renaming of Turks with Bulgarian names began, at the suggestion of Nadia Asparuhova – a Board member and a Turk by origin, the CBWM discussed the opening of language and political courses for Turkish women, who were considered as mothers of key figures in replacing the Turkish language with Bulgarian<sup>34</sup>. In 1987–1988 the district and municipal chairs, instructors and the CBWM Board members, together with activists of the FF, and the ministries of education and health, agitated in favor of the assimilation process in Turkish population districts (Rousse, Razgrad, Shoumen, Targovishte, Dobrich, and Silistra). They published articles in the press, gave lectures in 'family clubs', led 1400 courses on 'domestic culture', held thematic meetings dedicated to the 'education of a patriotic young generation', etc.<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Пак там, л. 85-118.

<sup>33</sup> Пак там, оп. 5, а.е. 75, л. 1-7.

<sup>34</sup> Пак там, ф. 1Б, оп. 89, а.е. 45, л. 13-20.

<sup>35</sup> Пак там, оп. 63, а.е. 37, л. 32-34; ф. 417, оп. 6, а.е. 320, л. 5-9.

In the summer of 1989, when mass protests of Muslims began in Bulgaria and the totalitarian state proceeded with their complete deportation to Turkey, the CBWM activists made trips to monitor the mood of the population. In their meetings, they propagated that it was not the state policy of assimilation, but the efforts of the capitalist West to ‘erode socialism’ that were to blame for mass emigration<sup>36</sup>.

### Conclusion

The Bulgarian women's movement was subordinate to the totalitarian party-state and served its goals and policies. In contrast, in the previous period in the 1950s–1980s, it managed to mobilize Muslim women and include some of them in its hierarchies, but it encountered increasing resistance from шрен, as it got involved in the policies of social engineering and replacement of the ethnic and religious identity of Muslim women in the country. In the 1960s–1980s, it fully supported and worked in favor of the assimilation process.

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<sup>36</sup> Пак там, л. 63-67.

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