

‘Forebears’, ‘saints’ and ‘martyrs’: the politics of commemoration in Bulgaria in the 1880s and 1890s¹

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The memory of the Bulgarian national revolutionary movement, as in all other national ideologies,² was not transmitted only in books.³ It was embodied in the images of ‘saints’ and ‘martyrs’ commemorated at specific places. This paper will focus on the importance of the cult of forebears and predecessors as a part of popular political culture in Bulgaria in the 1880s and 1890s. During this period it increasingly mattered how ordinary people felt about nationality. The importance of this problem increased because of the introduction of universal male suffrage which followed the Tŕrnovo constitution of 1879.⁴ In this regard attention will be paid to days of national commemoration usually organised at the places of execution of Bulgarian national heroes and where Bulgarian rebel detachments had had battles.⁵ These days of commemoration were cultural and discursive practices that constituted new identities, new definitions of patriotism and identification with the state.

I will be arguing that the commemoration of dead leaders and great events from the past played a very important role in shaping popular historical memory as part of identity building which cannot be done without stories, signs and symbols.⁶ These rituals shaped the ways in which the national revolutionaries were perceived and imagined. They invented a nationalistic public tradition and fostered a form of patriotism specific to itself. In this way historical myths became a part of political mythology and they aided political mobilisation. The commemorations were the obvious sites for this to take place. They were occasions for politics and folklore to be manifested together. Because of this, special attention will be given to the nationalistic and radical *language*, to the operation of national *symbols*, and to the pervasive concern with ritual and *gesture*.

During this period European political life found itself increasingly ritualised and filled with symbols and public appeals. As the previous religious ways of ensuring subordination, obedience and loyalty were eroded, the need for something to replace

¹ My work was facilitated by suggestions, comments and encouragements made by several colleagues, especially Timothy Ashplant, Emanuel Gutmann, Thomas K. Schippers, Nico Wilterdink, Ton Zwaan, José Alvarez Junco, Rafael Cruz and Dessislava Dragneva.

² On Bulgarian nationalism see for example M. Todorova, *The Course of Discourses of Bulgarian Nationalism*, in *East European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter F. Sugar. Washington 1995: 55-102.

³ I am referring here to some very important books that shaped the reception of the national revolutionary past in the decade after 1878 as Z. Stoianov, *Vasil Levski. Diakoniat*. Plovdiv 1883.; *Chetite v Balgaria na Philip Totia, Hadzgy Dimitar i Stefan Karadzga (1867-1868)*, Plovdiv 1885.; *Cherti ot szivota i spisatelskata deiatelnost na Liuben S. Karavelov*. Plovdiv, 1885; *Zapiski po balgarskite vastania. (Razkaz na ochevidec)*. vol. 1. Plovdiv 1884.

⁴ For the Tŕrnovo constitution in English language see C. E. Black, *The Establishment of Constitutional Government in Bulgaria*. Princeton 1943: 69-133; C. Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism. Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886*. Connecticut 1978: 37-8, 102; R. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918. A History*. New York 1983: 27-35.

⁵ In the very beginning this analysis was inspired mainly by L Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution*. Berkeley 1984 and especially the first part entitled ‘*The Poetics of Power*’

⁶ About the role of these commemorations in the political mobilisation see S. Detchev, ‘*Roliata na predcite i predtechite v politicheskata mobilizacia po vreme na balgarskata kriza (1886-1887)*’ in *Predci i predtechki. Mitove i utopii na Balkanite*. Blagoevgrad 1997: 326-37

them was met by what some authors like Eric Hobsbawm have called ‘the invention of tradition.’⁷ This development was a mixture of planting from above and growth from below. In this regard new national festivals were instituted. However, as this article will demonstrate, Bulgarian radical politicians had no recent historical resources such as crown, military glory, empire or colonial conquest⁸ and for that reason, despite the imitation and appropriation of other nationalistic traditions, they turned to the different legitimising resources at their disposal.

A day of national commemoration is one of those occasions when nationalist or patriotic discourse provides its own revealing glimpse into modern Bulgarian national mythology. Ritual occasions like Hadzgi Dimităr’s day, Hristo Botev’s day and others gave an opportunity for Bulgarian rebels against Ottoman domination from the past were presented as ‘saints’ and ‘martyrs’ and these very words were used by contemporaries in order to depict them.

Initially these days of national commemoration originated in a fragile civil society and as an initiative of the political circles around the Popular Liberal Party. Among other factors, in 1879 the Liberals won the first parliamentary elections for the National Assembly in the Bulgarian principality by appropriating during the pre-election campaign the symbolic capital of the late Liuben Karavelov a former émigré, radical journalist and politician during the national movement against Ottoman domination.⁹ At the beginning of 1882, during the struggle against the *pālnomoshtia regime* (which had been established by the monarch Alexander I and the Conservatives when they suspended the constitution in 1881), in order to re-enforce their political message, the liberals organised in Rousse worship at the graves of Karavelov and another national revolutionary activist Angel Kāntchev.¹⁰ At the start of 1885 even the Conservatives in the Bulgarian principality were forced to make an attempt to discredit the Liberals by appropriating the moral authority of the late revolutionary leader Vasil Levski as well as the revolutionary leader, journalist and poet Hristo Botev. They made this in obvious opposition to the prestige of Karavelov.¹¹ In the spring of 1885 bones of Georgi S. Rakovski (a national ideologist and revolutionary leader under Ottoman domination) were carried from Romania to Bulgaria, initiated by the Volunteer’s association in Rousse.¹² This was used by the Liberals and their leader, the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Petko Karavelov (Liuben Karavelov’s brother) as a political demonstration to increase their prestige among the public. It is not surprising that as a result of this action their political adversaries were furious. They immediately blamed the Liberals for the attempt to appropriate Rakovski’s heritage and represent themselves as his unique political followers.¹³

Moreover, these commemorations were a part of the struggle for national unification after the Congress of Berlin in 1878.¹⁴ On the eve of the Unification of Eastern

⁷ E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire*. New York 1987: 105.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ G. Todorov, ‘Bālgarskata sledosvobozhdenska publicistica i istoriografia za zhivota i deinostta na Liuben Karavelov (1879 - 1885)’, in *V pamet na academic Mihail Dimitrov*. Sofia 1974: 401.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 403.

¹¹ *Otechestvo*, 23 May 1885, No 26.; *Tārnovska konstitucia*, 13 Feb. 1885, No. 112.

¹² Z. Stoianov, *Sāchinenia*, vol. 3. Sofia 1983: 432.

¹³ *Sredeca*, 12 June 1885 No. 132

¹⁴ I. Stoianovitch, *Iz minaloto*. Sofia 1992: 37-8.; E. Stelova, A. Pantev, *Sāedinenieto na Kniazhestvo Bālgaria i Iztochna Rumelia*. Sofia 1985: 68-9.; I. Dimitrov, *Predi 100 godini Sāedinenieto*. Sofia 1985: 123.

Rumelia¹⁵ and the Bulgarian Principality (6 September 1885)¹⁶ these commemorations were very important in mobilising the Bulgarian public especially in Eastern Rumelia in order to support the Unification movement. On 17 May 1884, through the initiative of the pupils from the local secondary school in Plovdiv, the first commemoration of Hristo Botev was organised. On 19 May 1885 Botev was commemorated again in the towns of Plovdiv, Chirpan, Iambol and Sliven.¹⁷

Following on from the first attempts of 1884,¹⁸ on 20 and 21 July 1885, through the initiative of the Volunteer's association of Kazanlāk, a day of national commemoration was organised for Hadzgi Dimităr at Buzludzga in the Balkan mountains. There were guests from Eastern Rumelia and the Bulgarian principality. Priests held a memorial service at the grave of the hero after which speeches and recitals of poems devoted to Hadzgi Dimităr's death began. This was followed by eating and drinking as well as popular dances (*hora*). Shouts of 'Down with Rumelia!', 'Long live the Unification!' and 'Long live complete (celokupna) Bulgaria!' accompanied the holiday.¹⁹

Organised by political figures with radical and populist leanings, all these commemorations were overwhelmed by rhetoric against 'notables' (*chorbadzgi*), 'monks' and 'kings'.²⁰ In this regard they marked the competition for power between the Liberal and Conservative parts of the Bulgarian political class.

Days of national commemoration were also organised during the 'Bulgarian crisis' (1886-87). This was a unique period when as a result of Bulgarian Unification on 6 September 1885 and the coup d'état on 9 August 1886 (when pro-Russian Bulgarian officers kidnapped the Bulgarian monarch), the country entered political crisis and for a period of almost ten years Bulgarian-Russian relations broke down (1886-1896). These events had their shattering impact on Bulgarian society and its political culture because they brought very crucial political and cultural matters into debate. 'The Bulgarian crisis' (1886-1887) challenged many assumptions about the role of Russia in Bulgarian history and politics. During the crisis and in the following years, the politically active part of the population and the whole of the Bulgarian intelligentsia were irreconcilably divided on the issue of 'Russia' and the 'Russian menace' and thus it became central for Bulgarian political life.²¹

On 20 April 1886 a commemoration ceremony took place in the small town of Panagiurishte and at 'Oborishte' where the so-called Bulgarian National Assembly of 1876 made the decision to proclaim the uprising against Ottoman power.²² On 18 May 1886 pupils from a local secondary school in Plovdiv organised a commemoration to

¹⁵ For a general overview on Eastern Rumelia in the English language see R. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878 – 1918*, : 85-97.; B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans. Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. vol. 1, 1983: 366-70; C. Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia* :7-8, 14, 93, 208-13, 224; D. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria 1870-1895*, Durham and London 1993: 70-6.

¹⁶ About the union between Eastern Rumelia and Bulgarian principality in English language see B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, vol. 1: 370-1; C. Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia*: 214-36.; R. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918*: 97-103; D. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov*: 74-81.

¹⁷ E. Stelova, A. Pantev, *Săedinenieto*: 60-1.

¹⁸ Z. Stoianov, *Săchinenia*, vol. 3. Sofia 1983: 391, 426-9.

¹⁹ I. Stoianovitch, *Iz minaloto*: 37-8; E. Stelova, A. Pantev, *Săedinenieto*:. 68-9.; I. Dimitrov, *Predi 100 godini*: 123.

²⁰ Z. Stoianov, *Săchinenia*, vol. 3. Sofia 1983: 395, 425, 430.

²¹ For more see. S. Radev, *Stroiteli na săvremenna Bulgaria* vol. 1. Sofia 1973:739-803; vol. 2 Sofia 1973. R. Popov, *Bălgaria na krăstopăt. Regentstvoto 1886 - 1887*. Sofia 1991. In the English language see C. Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia* , B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, vol. 1, 1983: 237-74, 371-2; R. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918*: 105-24; D. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov*: 84-123.

²² *Nezavisimost*, 3 may 1886 No. 15; 7 May 1886, No. 16.

Hristo Botev as in the previous two years.²³ At the same time a commemoration was organised by a special commission headed by the mayor of Vratsa at 'Milin kamāk', where in 1876 a detachment commanded by Botev had had one of its battles with Ottoman troops.²⁴ There were also several commemorations for Botev in 1887.²⁵

There was a commemoration of Hadzgi Dimităr again on 20 July 1886.²⁶ Meanwhile, on 13 July near the village of Vishovgrad, where eighteen years previously a rebel detachment had fought a battle with Ottoman troops, Bulgarian revolutionaries were commemorated. One of the revolutionary leaders, Stefan Karadzga, was commemorated and in one of the main speeches the Bulgarian monarch, Alexander I, was represented as the embodiment of 'Karadzga's spirit.'²⁷ The same kind of commemoration at 'Kanlădere', where in 1868 Bulgarian rebel detachments led by Hadzgi Dimitar and Stefan Karadzga had fought with Ottoman troops, took place in July 1886²⁸ and 1887.²⁹

These commemorations established a new patriotic political repertoire. They mapped many sacred geographical places like Buzludzga, Oborishte, Batak, Perushtica, Drianovski manastir, Shipka, Milin kamāk, Kozlodui. In the mass consciousness these sacred places became part of a modern Bulgarian national and political mythology. Therefore, these places began to have extraordinary emotional and symbolic significance and great emotional power and passion. Contemporaries were aware of this function in 1885, writing about 'the historic role' that Buzludzga was to play in the future, Z.Stoyanov stated explicitly that 'it will be contemporary with the Mount of Saint Athos'.³⁰

The names of national heroes including Hadzgi Dimităr, Stefan Karadzga, Liuben Karavelov, Georgi Rakovski, Hristo Botev also became sacred. In the 1880s the phraseology of forebears and predecessors was given and presented as 'saints' and 'martyrs' and became a regular, required part of nationalist discourse. The constant reminders of 'our popular martyrs' of 1868, 1875 and 1876 was an important part of the political discourse of radical nationalist circles within the Popular Liberal party.³¹ This was especially salient in the proclamations written by the initiative committees of the associations known as 'Bulgaria for itself' ('*Bălgaria za sebe si*') that began to appear to oppose the political pressure coming from St Petersburg in many Bulgarian towns and villages in February and March 1887.³² Mention of these 'martyrs' in all of the proclamations was as a ritualistic gesture.³³ Political documents tried to suggest to the contemporary public that 'the shadows of these patriots' and 'martyrs' '... are flying above us and they are looking at how we will behave in these critical times'.³⁴ This language of 'our martyrs' was a revival of the Bulgarian emigrant discourse in Romania from the beginning of the 1870s, when with the contribution of Botev,

²³ Z. Stoianov, *Săchinenia*, vol. 3. Sofia, 1983., s. 459.

²⁴ *Nezavisimost*, 14 May, No. 18; 28 May 1886, No. 22.

²⁵ *Nezavisima Bălgaria*, 23 May 1887, No. 98.; *Svoboda*, 20 May 1887. No. 57.; *Bălgarsko*, 16 June 1888. No. 17-18.

²⁶ *Svetlina*, 26 July, No. 191, *Rositca*, 30 July, No. 9.

²⁷ *Nezavisimost*, 30 July 1886, No. 37.

²⁸ *Nezavisimost*, 23 July 1886, No. 35.

²⁹ P. Frangov, *Tărszgestvoto pri Krăvnata reka*. Veliko Tarnovo 1887.

³⁰ Z. Stoianov, *Săchinenia*, vol. 3. Sofia 1983: 395.

³¹ Z. Stojanov, *Ne mu beshe vremeto*. Rousse 1886: 9.

³² For more see V. Tankova, 'Problemi na organizacionnoto ustrojstvo i razvitie na Narodnoliberalnata partia (1886-1894)', *Vekove* 1988 5: 24-7.

³³ See for example *Nezavisima Bălgaria*, 28 Feb. 1887, No. 66, 5 March 1887, No. 68, 24 March 1887, No. 76.; 28 March, No. 78; 31 March, No 79 and many others.

³⁴ *Nezavisima Bălgaria*, 31 March 1887, No. 79.

Levski and Hadzgi Dimităr as ‘martyrs’ of the Bulgarian national cause were depicted and imagined.³⁵ Moreover, on the eve of the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, the Bulgarian Central Charity Society (BCBO) issued a proclamation to Bulgarians to join the coming Russian army in the name of the ‘blood of our martyrs.’³⁶ When in 1885 the Conservative politician from Eastern Rumelia, Danail Jurukov, was invited by Zahari Stoianov to attend the commemoration of Hadzgi Dimităr at Buzludzga he replied that there was no reason to worship ‘different saints.’ Stoianov answered that he would not like to worship ‘Russian ones’ because ‘we should have our own’.³⁷ Furthermore, having in mind the carrying of Rakovski’s bones, at that time Conservative and Pro-Russian politician and journalist Ikonov, wrote in his memoirs: ‘Church and citizenry made a bow to his coffin and honour these remains much more than they deserved. All of us wondered about the jealousy of some Bulgarians toward this hero and patriot and everybody praised this jealousy.’³⁸

In 1886-87 through the speeches and the orchestrated atmosphere at these commemorations, radical circles within the Liberal party tried to put forward many notions and ideas with current political salience. They tried to appropriate the symbolic capital of Bulgarian ‘martyrs’ against Ottoman power in order to legitimise and intensify the struggle against Russian pressure and interference in Bulgarian internal affairs. Yet at the beginning of 1886. Stoianov underlined: ‘As a people we can be proud that all our popular workers and patriots: Rakovski, Karavelov, Levski, Botev, Kănchev, Volov, Benkovski have been against official Russia. They have never appealed to her because they have known that (the) Russian whip is more painful than the Turkish one.’³⁹ In the following months the press that supported the resistance of the Bulgarian regency led by Stambolov against Russian policy argued that

if there had not lived on the Balkan Peninsula Bulgarians, if there had not been crazy heads Hadzgi Dimitărs, Levskis, and other naughty elements, then Russia should not have had a taste of here.⁴⁰

In the speeches at these commemorations the orators emphasised the heroic deeds of the Bulgarian insurgents against Ottoman rule in explicit or implicit opposition to the Russian military action of 1877-78.⁴¹ Many of them explicitly placed a symbolic link between the policy of the Bulgarian government against current Russian pressure and the Bulgarian ‘martyrs’ of the 1860s and 1870s. Their ‘shadows’ were depicted as looking like the contemporaries whether they would be able to preserve ‘liberty, which was accomplished through their valuable blood.’⁴² The radical journalist D Petkov emphasised how ‘the liberty for which Botev sacrificed his life is being raped for a year by a strong tyrant.’⁴³ – an unequivocal allusion to the Russian tsar

³⁵ About Botev’s own contribution to this mythology of ‘saints’ and ‘martyrs’ in the first half of 1870s see for example Z. Stoyanov, *Hristo Botjov. Opit za biografija*. Sofia 1976: 242.

³⁶ *Osvobozhdenie Bolgarii ot tureckogo iga*. vol. 1., Moskva 1961: 643-4.

³⁷ Jurukov, D. *Spomeni iz politicheskia szivot na Bălgaria*. Sofia 1932: s. 114.

³⁸ Ikonov, T. *Memoari*. Sofia 1973: 399.

³⁹ See the introduction written by Z. Stojanov in G. S. Rakovski, *Preselenie v Rusia ili ruskata ubijstvenna politika za bălgarite*. Sofia 1886: 8.

⁴⁰ Z. Stojanov, *Kakvo napravihme v Tărnovo?* Rousse 1886: 6. See also *Svoboda*, 20 May 1887., No. 57

⁴¹ *Svetlina*, 26 July 1886, No. 191.; P. Frangov, *Tărszgestvoto*.: 28.

⁴² *Nezavisimost*, 30 July, No. 37.

⁴³ *Nezavisima Bălgaria*, 23 May 1887, No. 98.

Alexander III. In another speech at Botev's commemoration Stoianov used an anti-Russian argument about how 'while we have such celebrities as Liuben Karavelov, Botev, Levski and others, the Bulgarian people, its liberty and autonomy will never die.'⁴⁴ The following year it was stated even more explicitly against Russian policy and the Bulgarian Russophiles how 'Rakovski, Levski, Hadzgi Dimităr, Karadzga, Karavelov and others did not die for 'the glory of the Russian tsar'.⁴⁵

Therefore in these commemorations the liberal, or more properly, radical, elite commemorated events connected with the Bulgarian revolutionary past and struggles against the Ottoman Empire. These national days of commemoration usually turned into political meetings and festivals. They were cultural practices that in crucial moments served political purposes. They served the liberals against the conservatives by using rhetoric such as 'ordinary people', 'poor' and 'little' against 'educated', 'wealthy' and 'notables.'⁴⁶ This also served the Unification movement in 1885 and the government and radical nationalist circles during the political crisis in 1886-87. In the following years it served the government led by Stambolov against Russia and the Pro-Russian part of the Bulgarian political class. That is the reason why an overwhelming rhetoric connected with 'patria', 'people', 'nation', 'independence' and 'freedom' was counterposed to what was 'alien' and 'foreigner.'⁴⁷

The Bulgarian liberal and radical elite of nationalists created their own kind of ceremonies. The names of national heroes and hallowed historical places became key words in a public space that served political purposes and for the making of the nation and modern patriotism. These cultural practices popularised the romantic language of national glory that became increasingly invested with emotional significance. Although it was enunciated with religious fervour, it was nonetheless resolutely secular in content.

The message within these commemorations was of a new political energy of radical nationalism. It was a version that was ready to legitimise extreme activities and to imagine a complete rupture with St. Petersburg in the name of Bulgarian 'autonomy', 'liberty' and 'independence.'⁴⁸ The commemorations and the symbolic energy of the 'martyrs' gave some advantages for the liberal and radical political elite over the conservatives, the anti-Russian camp over pro-Russians. In this way radical nationalism was defined as a genuine one.

Moreover, these important dates from the past were put within the interpretative framework that included 6 September 1885 (the day of the Unification)⁴⁹ and 7 November 1885 (the day of the victory by Bulgarian troops at Slivnitsa during the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885). It was explicitly mentioned in a speech made at Panagiurishte by the teacher At. Hr. Simov who emphasised that the '20 April created in our country the 11 August 1877,⁵⁰ 20 April organised the 6 September 1885 and this very day marked 7 November 1885.'⁵¹

⁴⁴ *Nezavisimost*, 21 May 1886. No. 20.

⁴⁵ *Svoboda*, 20 May 1887. No. 57.

⁴⁶ *Nezavisimost*, 21 May 1886., No. 20.

⁴⁷ *Samozashchita*, 28 Sept. 1885, No. 1.; *Tărnovska konstitucia*, 29 March 1886, Nos.18-21, 25-29, 32 etc.; Z. Stoianov, *Ne mu beshe vremeto*. Rousse 1886: 3-4, 39, 46.; *Nezavisimost*, I, 5 April 1886 No. 9.; 9 April 1886 No. 10; 14 May 1886, No. 18; 18 July 1886, No. 27; *Plovdiv*, I, 20 May 1886, No. 7.

⁴⁸ *Nezavisimost*, 7 May, No. 16.

⁴⁹ Sofia, CDA (Centralen Dyrzhaven Arkhiv), f. 1599, a.u. 1667: 1.

⁵⁰ The day when Bulgarian volunteers had a battle with Ottoman troops at Shipka during the Russo-Turkish war 1877-78.

⁵¹ *Nezavisimost*, 7 May, No. 16.

The organisation of these commemorations was an attempt to challenge and substitute the system of commemorations and holidays that had been established since 1879. During this period, apart from the Bulgarian monarch's birthday; the day of his ascension to the throne and the day of St Cyril and St Methodius, there were also commemorations for the Russian tsar's birthday and his name-day together with the whole Russian royal family; a day of the proclamation of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78; the crossing of the river Danube by Russian troops in 1877; the important battles and entrances of Russian troops in different towns during the war; prominent events of Russian history; anniversaries of Russian writers, diplomats and military officers.⁵²

The radical-democratic view of recent national history had acute practical importance. It was part of the political strategy, struggle and programme and it contained a political appeal to the masses. But we have to keep in mind that these commemorations also suggested loyalty to the Prince⁵³ and Nation. Following the Rousseauan heritage, Bulgarian 'patriotism' was a civic religion required by the state and all these ceremonies were an attempt to convert the citizens to the new religion. In this regard the Bulgarian case reaffirmed what many authors who have studied ethnicity and nationalism have already stressed about the similarities between nationalism and religion.⁵⁴ Moreover, they have shown nationalism as a secular religion, 'political religion' or 'civic religion.'⁵⁵ Emile Durkheim has emphasised the role of collective rites and ceremonies in the reaffirmation of all societies. He also stressed the role of commemorations, great events in national life and how, during the French Revolution, things that were purely lay in character were transformed into sacred things, writing: 'these were the Fatherland, Liberty, Reason. A religion tended to become established which had its dogmas, symbols, altars and feasts.'⁵⁶

Insofar as these celebrations were a politicising experience, political mobilisation connected with internal Bulgarian political divisions. It drew group boundaries that might include some and exclude others and it resulted in the suppression of difference and the inclusion of common and 'poor' people against 'rich' and conservative who were excluded. In such a way the commemorations with their symbols and rituals were strategies for the extension of power. They became an important medium for working out political attitudes and they had extremely significant consequences. They inspired citizens' loyalty to and their identification with the state and ruling elite. They increased the degree of sacrifice that had to be imposed on civilians. These events shaped historical and political perceptions of the masses at that time and they were used to create a new national consensus that gave certain advantages to the liberal and radical part of the elite. The public character of the ritual authorised a

⁵² See for example *Bălgaro-russkij kalendar za 1879*. Sofia 1879.; *Kalendar za 1881. Izdava redakcijata na "Bălgarski glas"*. Sofia 1881; *Kalendar za 1881 godina. Izdanie na Slavjanskoto blagotvoritelno druzhestvo v Sofia*, Sofia 1881.

⁵³ *Nezavisimost*, 30 July 1886, No. 37.

⁵⁴ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.*, 2nd Edition. London 1991: 5, 11-2; See also C. Cr. O'Brien, *God-Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge MA 1988; J. Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*, London 1987; Ad. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, Cambridge 1997, chap. 8.

⁵⁵ Among many examples see D. Apter, 'Political religion in the new nations.', in Geertz, Cl. *Old Societies and New States*, New York 1963.; M. Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism confronts the Secular State*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1993; G. Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Civilization*, Hanover and London 1994.

⁵⁶ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Trans, J. Swain, London 1915: 214.

direct relation between the commemorated forebears, ancestors and ‘martyrs’ on the one hand, and all those who organised or attended the event, on the other.

In the following years, Stefan Stambolov’s government (1887-1894)⁵⁷ and circles close to it, carried on organising these kinds of commemorations. In May 1888 there was a commemoration of Botev in Sofia. In the morning there was memorial service in ‘Sveti Kral’ church followed by a march with a band to Vasil Levski’s grave where speeches were given.⁵⁸ There was a march to the royal palace in order to congratulate the monarch on his day and a breakfast was organised outside the city.⁵⁹

In 1888 there was a celebration of Botev’s detachment at the village of Kozlodui on the river Danube. Participants included pupils, teachers, citizens, officials, peasants, Botev’s brothers-in-arms and other former participants in the Bulgarian revolutionary movement. Many delegations from different towns especially from the northern part of Bulgaria were present as well. Clergy carried church banners. There were military officers also. The pupils were carrying posters with selected couplets from Botev’s poems written on them. There was Botev’s portrait, military and civil music bands. The bank of the Danube was decorated with banners and arches. There was gunfire. A funeral march was played by the band. The procession was led by the clergy, followed by the portrait of the hero, and several delegations from different places with their garlands. There was an ecclesiastical memorial service. Some speeches were made by officials, teachers and journalists. Participants were carrying several garlands. After this ceremony, a lunch started. In the afternoon, people had fun with music bands, shepherd’s pipes, (*kaval*), bagpipes (*gaidi*) and violins. There were popular dances (*hora*).⁶⁰ Between 17-19 May there was a holiday for the population from the region of Vratsa.⁶¹ A traditional commemoration was also organised in Plovdiv.⁶²

In May 1888 at Milin kamāk there was an ecclesiastical memorial service. Speeches were delivered to glorify the heroes and their commander. Pupils recited Botev’s poems. Those who took part were peasants from the region, teachers, pupils and women from the town of Vratsa, Botev’s comrades, the mayor of the town.⁶³ Some complained however, that up to that time at Milin kamāk as well on the bank near Kozlodui there had only been wooden crosses as public monuments.⁶⁴

On the eve of 18 May 1889 Vratsa was decorated with national flags. Administrative buildings, schools and private houses were decorated with garlands. An ecclesiastical liturgy was held. The national anthem at the time ‘Shumi Maritza’ and the song ‘Tih bial Dunav’, that was devoted to the memory of Botev, were played. Since the day of the hero and the day of the monarch coincided, the pupils came with the portrait of the new Bulgarian monarch Prince Ferdinand decorated with tricolors and garlands. There were many officials with their spouses, the clergy from the Vratsa region, citizens and peasants who had come with Botev’s portrait dressed with garlands, tricolors and insurrectionary banners. The band played the song ‘Tih bial Dunav’ in honour of Botev. A teacher made a speech about the importance of Prince Ferdinand’s day. A choir sang for the Prince. The band played ‘Shumi Maritza.’ The pupils recited

⁵⁷ D. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov*, pp. 124-211; R. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918*: 125-160.; B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*: 372.

⁵⁸ For Vasil Levski and his role in Bulgarian popular memory see N. Gentchev, *Vasil Levski*. Sofia 1987.

⁵⁹ *Svoboda*, 21 May 1888, No. 157.

⁶⁰ *Svoboda*, 26 May 1888, No 159; *Bălgarsko*, 16 June 1888. No. 17-18.

⁶¹ *Svoboda*, 26 May 1888, No 159.

⁶² *Plovdiv*, 26 May 1888, No. 159.

⁶³ *Svoboda*, 26 May 1888, No 159.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

Botev's poems. A stone was put at the place of the future monument to Botev. The chorus sang Botev's song 'My Prayer.' There was a procession to the city council. A telegram was sent to the Prince with congratulations. The breakfast was organised in the city garden where music played. People had fun and played dances (*hora*).⁶⁵

On 17 May 1889 again there was a commemoration of Botev's detachment at the village of Kozlodui. The commemoration was organised by the citizens and officials in the town of Oriahovo. Delegations from all local villages were also present. The event followed the whole ritual and ceremony that had been already established.⁶⁶ This tradition was carried on in the next year also on 17 May.⁶⁷

On 27 May 1890 there was a bigger commemoration in Vratsa when Botev's monument was formally opened. The celebration was even postponed from 21 to 27 May in order to allow Prince Ferdinand to visit it together with the Prime Minister, Stambolov. Botev's mother, spouse and daughter also took part in the event. Many towns and communities in the Bulgarian principality sent their garlands.⁶⁸ Botev's 14-year-old daughter, Ivanka Boteva made a speech suggesting loyalty to the contested Petersburg Bulgarian monarch.⁶⁹ The commemoration was covered by all newspapers in the country.

During this period the commemorations of Hadzgi Dimitar, Stefan Karadzga and their rebel detachment were no less important. In July 1888 a commemoration was organised by the Shipka patriotic association 'Bulgaria for itself.'⁷⁰ In 1889, near the town Sevlievo, at Kanlădere, a commemoration was organised by the volunteer's association 'Lev' ('Lion'). In the town a band played at the central square in front of the monument. Boys wore the uniforms of Bulgarian rebels. They carried the banner and marched through the town. The stone was placed where the monument was to be built. At night, fires illuminated the place. There was music and popular songs. Pupils recited poems in the evening. Participants included people from different towns and villages in the region. The next morning there was a memorial service and a garland was placed at the stone. Speeches were given and popular dances (*hora*) took place, at noon they returned to Sevlievo.⁷¹ On 8 July 1890, during the next commemoration, which was preceded by much more publicity in the newspapers, the monument was opened and sanctified by the priests from the nearby villages.⁷²

A tradition of commemorations at Buzludzga was carried on during this period. In 1889 the commemoration was organised on 20 July as St. Elijah's day instead of 18 July. However, since the political environment was cooler there were about 300-400 people present. The decision was taken for the commemoration to take place every year on 20 July. The participants also decided to send a request to the National Assembly to provide money for building a monument to the heroes.⁷³ At the commemoration on 20 July 1890 it was decided that a monument should be built.⁷⁴

There were many similar events during this period. Some of the commemorations were devoted to the uprising of 1876 in Thracia. In 1889 and especially in 1890 those

⁶⁵ *Svoboda*, 31 May 1889, No. 271.; *Napred*, 16 July 1889, No. 8.

⁶⁶ *Svoboda*, 14 June 1889, No. 275.

⁶⁷ *Svoboda*, 9 May 1890, No. 361.

⁶⁸ *Lichnijat arhiv na Stefan Stambolov*, vol. I, Sofia, 1994, s. 54.; *Svoboda*, 9 May 1890, No. 361; 3 June 1890, No. 367; *Nova Bălgaria*, 16 June 1890, No. 3.; *Narodna misăl*, 7 June 1890, No. 10.

⁶⁹ *Svoboda*, 6 June 1890, No. 368.; *Nova Bălgaria*, 9 June 1890, No. 2.

⁷⁰ *Narodni prava*, 27 July 1888, No. 52.

⁷¹ *Svoboda*, 22 July 1889, No. 286; *Napred*, 16 July 1889, No. 8.

⁷² *Narodni prava*, 21 July 1890, No. 183.

⁷³ *Svoboda*, 1 August 1889, No. 289.

⁷⁴ *Svoboda*, 28 July 1890, No. 381.

commemorations were very intense. They were organised on 20 April 1889⁷⁵ and 1890 in Panaguirishte and at Oborishte.⁷⁶ Similar commemorations took place also in Koprivshtica on 20 April 1890.⁷⁷ On 27 April 1889 local teachers organised a commemoration in the village Perushtica. An arch was built and mourning flags were put up. One of the teachers told a story about the uprising in 1876.⁷⁸ In the next year this commemoration in Perushtica was repeated followed by a ceremony in the village of Batak on 4 May 1890. The Bulgarian monarch was present at the commemoration in Perushtica.⁷⁹ The relatives of the dead heroes took part in many of these commemorations too.⁸⁰ There were also former participants from the Bulgarian rebel detachments who were still alive. By and large, in 1890 those commemorations were much more intense because they formed part of the campaign for the elections of the sixth National Assembly. In the following years these kinds of commemorations were also organised at Kozlodui,⁸¹ Buzludzga,⁸² Panaguirishte⁸³ and other places.

In the next part of the paper I will add something more to the logic of all these events as expressed symbolically in language, images and gestures.

These commemorations served as legitimising underpinnings of Stambolov's government, its internal and foreign policy, as well as of the political class who ruled Bulgaria in the late 1880s and early 1890s. For example, in the speeches by a local teacher and educational inspector at Oborishte in 1890, the Prime Minister, Stambolov, was depicted as 'the first worker' at the time of the uprising in 1876.⁸⁴ Yet in September 1887 the newspaper *Vardar* wrote that only two of the fighters from the national movement against Ottoman rule were still alive – Stambolov and Stoianov.⁸⁵ In June 1890 *Nova Bălgaria* emphasised that it was Stambolov who carried on publishing in the Romanian town of Geurgevo, Botev's newspaper of the same name after the poet's death in 1876.⁸⁶ In many other cases this symbolic link between the Prime Minister and governmental circles, on the one hand, and the national revolutionary movement against Ottoman power from the past, on the other, was underlined.⁸⁷ Until the end of the regime the close friendship between Stambolov and Botev was used to legitimise Stambolov and as a justification for his policies.⁸⁸

Part of the message was sought to legitimise explicitly the anti-Russian policy of the Bulgarian government. In 1888 at the commemoration in Plovdiv, in a speech made by Nikola Spepij, Botev was juxtaposed to 'the Russians who are trying to enslave Bulgaria.'⁸⁹ In the discourse of the governmental newspapers the above-mentioned opposition between the heroes of the Bulgarian national revolutionary movement and

⁷⁵ *Napred*, 16 July 1889, No. 8.

⁷⁶ *Svoboda*, 25 April 1890, No. 357.; *Plovdiv*, 29 April 1890, No. 31.

⁷⁷ *Svoboda*, 26 May 1890, No. 365.

⁷⁸ *Svoboda*, 10 May 1889, No. 265.

⁷⁹ *Plovdiv*, 6 May 1890, No. 33.

⁸⁰ I. Stoianovitch, *Iz minaloto.*, p. 38.; D. Marinov, *Stefan Stambolov i noveishata ni istoria*. Sofia 1993: 64.; C. Petrov, 'Buzludganskite tărzhestva i tiahnata rolia v revoliucionnata ni istoria.', *Istoricheski pregled*, 1971, 3: 59.

⁸¹ *Svoboda*, 4 June 1892, No. 826.

⁸² *Malāk vestnik*, 11 July 1892, No. 28.

⁸³ *Svoboda*, 29 April 1894, No. 1376.

⁸⁴ *Svoboda*, 25 April 1890, No. 357.

⁸⁵ *Vardar*, 22 Sept. 1887, No. 1

⁸⁶ *Nova Bălgaria*, 9 June 1890, No. 2.

⁸⁷ *Narodna misāl*, 7 June 1890, No. 10.

⁸⁸ *Svoboda*, 15 March 1894, No. 1342.

⁸⁹ *Plovdiv*, 26 May 1888, No. 19.

Russia took a prominent place.⁹⁰ In a debate with a Russophile newspaper *Macedonia* regarding Russian help for the Bulgarian *Liberation*, the newspaper *Plovdiv* wrote:

Then, why have so many Bulgarian heroes shed their blood? Why have so many Bulgarian daughters passed through great disgrace? Why have so many Bulgarian mothers had to wear black clothes? In the end, you, Bulgarian foes with Bulgarian names, why were Batak, Perushtica and Panaguirishte wrecked in streams of blood?⁹¹

Even at the end of the Stambolov's rule the official newspaper *Svoboda* continued to use rhetoric reflecting how Rakovski, Karavelov, Levski and Botev – 'as much as they wanted to see their fatherland free, so much they avoided and were afraid of Russian deliverance'.⁹² Therefore, the Bulgarian government and its political followers took the symbolic role of the fighters against Ottoman rule whilst the Russian Empire took the symbolic place of the Ottoman Empire.⁹³

As I have already mentioned, although still in 1886-87 the Bulgarian monarch Alexander I was sometimes depicted as an embodiment of the martyrs' spirit,⁹⁴ in the next years with the new Bulgarian monarch, Prince Ferdinand, this symbolic link was intensified. It was not by accident that Botev's commemorations were organised so that the day of the hero and the day of the monarch would coincide. The portrait of the new Bulgarian monarch was a part of the commemoration and he was personally congratulated on his day and Botev's day as well. The importance of his day was emphasised together with the commemoration of the poet.⁹⁵ Ironically, the poet was a writer whose poetry and journalism were generally directed against the monarchy. Notwithstanding, Prince Ferdinand was even personally present at some of the commemorations and played an important role in them.⁹⁶ Moreover, despite the continuing rhetoric about 'liberty', 'autonomy', 'independence', 'the new, young and honorable' and against what was described as 'old, rotten and backward',⁹⁷ there was also much more emphasis on the 'Prince.' Explicitly or implicitly, the energy of this rhetoric was more pro-Monarchical and anti-Russian.

These cultural practices show the proper place of symbols and images in political life as a part of the new cultural framework. They included constant repetition of the above-mentioned key words and principles, shared attitudes and the use of the same symbols. This symbolic repertoire was very important. The use of symbols including clothing, flags, banners of identification, images engraved with words, colours, objects, simple slogans, really reinforced the political messages. In such a way these rituals became an instrument for the fashioning of the people. Using different symbolic practices such as the use of certain rhetoric, the spread of certain symbols and rituals gave to the political elite and its followers a sense of unity and purpose. People were socialised into a sense of national awareness.

⁹⁰ *Dobrudzga*, 28 Nov. 1887, No. 6.; *Vardar*, 25 Sept. 1887., No. 2.; *Svoboda*, 20 Oct. 1888, No. 212; Z/ Stojanov, *Hristo Botjov. Opit za biografia*. Sofia, 1976; *Svobodno slovo*, 24 юни 1890.

⁹¹ *Plovdiv*, 23 Dec. 1889, No. 50.

⁹² *Svoboda*, 12 May 1894, No. 1386.

⁹³ *Maläk vestnik*, 11 July 1892, No. 28.; *Svoboda*, 29 April 1894, No. 1376.

⁹⁴ *Nezavisimost*, 30 July 1886, No. 37.

⁹⁵ *Svoboda*, 21 May 1888, No. 157; 31 May 1889, No. 271.

⁹⁶ *Svoboda*, 9 May 1890, No. 361; 3 June 1890, No. 367; *Nova Bälgharia*, 16 June 1890, No. 3.; *Narodna misäl*, 7 June 1890, No. 10.; *Plovdiv*, 6 May 1890, No. 33.

⁹⁷ *Nova Bälgharia*, 9 June 1890, No. 2.; *Narodna misäl*, 7 June 1890, No. 10.

These symbols, rituals, common collective practices and periodic festivals brought scattered groups together and they gave a reality to an otherwise imaginary community. Participants in these rituals were usually teachers and pupils from secondary schools and also intellectuals and members of the urban educated classes including officials, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, army officers, clerks, secretaries, booksellers, printers, photographers, doctors, clergymen, artisans, shopkeepers, merchants, but also peasants. For those people the political symbols and rituals used during the ceremonies were reminders of duty and public obligations. By mythologising they glorified the new, more understandable version of patriotism and set a moral example for the population.

The experience of the people during the commemorations was mediated and informed by different discursive practices. Of course, the content of the rituals is an unreliable guide to what the common people actually thought, however, it could be a guide to what they were moulded into thinking. We know too little about what went on in the minds of most relatively inarticulate men and women, their thoughts and feelings. Nevertheless, we can say that the investment of these symbolic actions with political significance gave a greater impact among the population to certain politics, individuals, political groups and organisations.

But what was really very important in these political rituals and practices was the masses that took part.⁹⁸ This public was not very active politically, most of it was illiterate and without the habit of reading books, newspapers and pamphlets.⁹⁹ It was outside of public political debates that were going on in clubs, pubs and newspapers. But by being involved in these national days of commemoration this mass public took part in a specific socialising process of identity and nation-building. Insofar as part of the political behaviour occurred within highly charged symbolic actions and collective rituals of community, the investment of these valued collective rituals with a specific and a new nationalistic political content was symptomatic of the process of nation-building in certain rural areas. By being based on the popular memory of rebel detachments confined to the region, this process sometimes reached villages far removed from the political mainstream. Therefore this public received new values that went beyond the frameworks of the local region and were part of a new political culture created by the elite. In this regard, the goal was also to define the nation based on common history through the rituals that fashioned public memory. In such a way these cultural practices, that were part of the politics of identity, created in the participants the sense of having a group identity. They were engaged in collective action that created allegiance and uniformity out of diversity.

However it must not be assumed that these practices affected all groups of the population in the same way. There were also differences in the reception of these political and cultural practices according to region and social status. The elite whose horizon was less localised than that of the peasant was more influenced. For the rural population very often the revolutionary struggle against Ottoman rule meant little if anything. This was the reason why local rituals were imbued with national meaning. This way through these ritual practices the identification with Bulgaria and modern Bulgarian nationalism was internalised.

⁹⁸ Public holidays were usually celebrated only by state officials. See *Bălgarska narodna kultura. Istorico - etnographski ocherk*. Sofia 1981: 167.

⁹⁹ About the literacy level at that time see D. Mishkova, Literacy and Nation Building, 1878-1912, *East European Quarterly*, XXVIII, 1, 1994.

And last, but not least, what is most striking in these commemorations is their combination of traditional¹⁰⁰ and modern elements. These new cultural practices were not only a manipulation from above. Popular traditional elements were also borrowed and fostered by political activists and the government. Therefore these rituals had two distinct sources - one in popular culture, the other in the modern European patriotic tradition. In this regard, these rituals were a dialogue between the elite or modern culture and popular or traditional culture. In the 1880s and 1890s these political festivals were a complex creation including on the one hand rituals borrowed from traditional popular culture (songs, dances, collective drinking and eating) and on the other, rituals and imagery of modern urban nationalism invented by the political elite. Pagan elements were also part of the popular festivities and life. But they were influenced by a Christianity that was adapted in popular culture. Moreover, as far as popular songs played out of the formal ritual were concerned, it could be very telling that they were never mentioned explicitly in newspaper accounts. Perhaps it was thought they would contaminate the 'purity' of modern patriotism. We can only wonder whether those songs were not part of the common Ottoman heritage or the so-called *chalga* genre.

Apart from paganism and Christianity there was also a third, modern and secularised element that had a wide space.¹⁰¹ As I mentioned above it included rituals and imagery of modern urban nationalism invented by the political elite. Here one can put speeches that were given and poems that were recited, which included the rhetoric of modern political ideologies and nationalism. The same can be said about the shouts, slogans and posters that accompanied the commemorations. This modern element is also evident in the repertoire of marches and songs played by military and civilian bands - the national anthem at the time "Shumi Maritza", the song "Tih bial Dunav" devoted to the memory of Botev and several other Botev songs. Similarly the symbols of insurrectionary banners from the past, the national tricolour as well as the uniforms of Bulgarian rebels had the same effect as the monuments devoted to the memory of the heroes.

The rituals borrowed from popular rural fairs¹⁰² were integrated into the commemorations. In the late nineteenth century the rural feast days usually combined ecclesiastical and entertainment elements.¹⁰³ They included common customs and ritual practices like songs, dances, eating and drinking. In this regard ritual practices fully belonged within the universe of popular culture if it is defined not as the culture of the common rural and urban people and opposed to that of the elite, but as a repertoire of themes and acts ready for use by people of different social levels. The festivities themselves incorporated a strange mixture of elite and popular practices - processions, dances, songs and other activities rooted in traditional popular culture. In such a way pre-existing symbols and sentiments were mobilised for a modern national cause. In this way mobilisation made great play of local traditions, appropriating the forms of popular culture. We can see therefore in this case how the national movement could, perhaps, mobilise certain feelings of collective belonging which somewhere already existed.

¹⁰⁰ About the role of sacred or consecrated places in Bulgarian tradition see Tz. Georgieva, *Prostranstvo i prostranstva na bǎlgarite XV-XVII vek*. Sofia 1999: 291-8. For the holiday in early modern Bulgarian town and the first attempts to establish modern holidays see R. Gavrilova, *Koleloto na zhivota. Vsekidnevieto na bǎlgarskia vǎzroszdenski grad*. Sofia 1999: 280-293.

¹⁰¹ *Balgarska narodna kultura*: 162-4.

¹⁰² *Balgarska narodna kultura*: 166.

¹⁰³ *Balgarska narodna kultura*: 167

These popular holidays were not exhausted, but their forms were radically transformed. As ancient rituals they also served as vehicles for political expression. The ritualistic activities provided the framework for rural reactions to national appeals. Therefore nationalism and local folklore were mutually reinforcing. Reference to custom thus lent legitimacy to the government that claimed to be in defence of the country against foreign enemies.

In fact, Christianity embraced all different elements of the feasts. Religious rituals and festivals had retained their symbolic and social importance as a part of the popular culture. It is also evident from the message in a newspaper about the commemoration in Vratsa on 27 May 1890. In this regard its title 'A New Easter in Vratsa'¹⁰⁴ is very revealing. Ironically, it described the commemoration of an anticlerical author like Botev. Moreover, together with the song 'He is still alive, still alive' (Zhiv e toi, zhiv e"), devoted to Hadzgi Dimităr, the most popular Botev's songs at that time were 'Borba' ('Fight') and 'My Prayer' ('Moiata molitva'), both of them undoubtedly anti-clerical. Thus, the Bulgarian case again reaffirmed the tendency of nationalism to assimilate traditional religion and the continuing importance of religion for nationalism itself.¹⁰⁵ It also shows the religious functions and the vital role of different national historical narratives about continuity, identity, destiny and salvation, linking the sacred to the secular.¹⁰⁶

As one can see these commemorations were an interesting and strange mixture of secular and religious ceremonies. Rural habits came together in a bizarre mix of pagan, Christian and nationalistic discourse. In this way the commemorations of modern Bulgarian 'saints' and 'martyrs' were a strange mixture of Christianity, paganism, traditional and modern entertainment, Orthodox church rituals, modern secular nationalism and traditional folklore. In fact, they were not mutually exclusive.

As I mentioned these practices and rituals meant different things to different people. This romantic nationalistic rhetoric did not appeal always to everyone but it appealed to enough people to make its influence deep and lasting. Perhaps that was the reason why although these practices were established by political radicals, in the following years they were to be appropriated by other political streams also. Even a Russophile newspaper like *Macedonia* referred to Botev in order to legitimise its Pro-Russian and Tsarist views.¹⁰⁷ Conservatives also identified with the commemorations and used them for political purposes because of the deep effect of them.¹⁰⁸ Whilst in 1885, referring to the commemoration at Buzludzga, Jurukov said that he did not like the worshipping of 'different saints', in 1889 another conservative politician and merchant Dimitri Papazoglu promised to build a monument to Hadzgi Dimităr¹⁰⁹ and according to some sources he gave 1000 leva for this undertaking.¹¹⁰ Bulgarian pupils from the secondary schools conceived their rioting against the local school administration in accordance with the Bulgarian revolutionary movement in the past

¹⁰⁴ *Nova Bălgaria*, 9 June 1890, No. 2; 16 June 1890, No. 3.

¹⁰⁵ See for example J. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982.; M. Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War?*, 1993.; A. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism*. London and New York 1998. In his seminal "Imagined Communities" B. Anderson also paid attention to the similarities between nationalism and religion. B. Anderson *Imagined Communities*, 1991: 5, 11-2.

¹⁰⁶ Among many cases see for example An. Smith, 'The resurgence of nationalism? Myth and memory in the renewal of nations', *British Journal of Sociology*, XLVII, 1996, 4, 575-98.

¹⁰⁷ *Makedonia*, 20 Jan 1890, No. 18.

¹⁰⁸ K. Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*. Sofia 1993: 186-97

¹⁰⁹ *Napred*, 16 July 1889, No. 8.

¹¹⁰ *Svoboda*, 28 July 1890, No. 381.

and used certain symbols, language and imagery from April 1876.¹¹¹ Even Bulgarian socialists made a systematic attempt to counterpose their own carefully articulated version of the national revolutionary past with a variety of symbolism and ritual expression.¹¹² This counter-mythology of the past was an important aspect of this activity.¹¹³ In such a way these rituals of a new political repertoire were a means of popular mobilisation for political purposes that received wide diffusion in the following years.

¹¹¹ J. Pekarev, *Moite politiko-obshtestveni spomeni*. Sofia 1929: 72.

¹¹² C. Petrov, *Buzludganskite tǎrzhestva*, D. Blagoev, *Nashite apostoli*. Sofia 1886; K. Bozveliev, *Moite spomeni*. Sofia 1993: 40, 186-97; *Den*, Sept-Oct. 1891, No. 9-10, Hristo Botev: esp 218-21.; March-April- May 1892, No. 1: esp 222-71.

¹¹³ *Rositsa*, 16 July 1886, No. 7.