

REVIEWS

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MAJOR TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BULGARIAN POPULATION IN THE XXth CENTURY

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The population of this country has aroused interest ever since its foundation. At the time when our ancestors came here from the steppe near the Volga river they certainly knew how many warriors there were in the horde, how many families, they also knew the number of women and children they were supposed to provide food, transportation and shelter for. The khans and tsars needed data on the inhabitants, on the number of soldiers available, on taxpayers, etc. We do not know exactly how this data was gathered, but surely there must have been a way to obtain such data from the separate clans, tribes and territorial units.

Later on, at the time when the Third Bulgarian state was established in 1877-1878, the interest towards the population kept growing, since the state authorities - both central and local - needed statistics on human resources due to economic, political, social and other considerations, with respect to the state constitution and the making of decisions on the country's development.

The factors and causes, determining population growth in the country, are of a complex nature. Apart from the purely biological - the need to reproduce in the individual families, there are also the social, economic, spiritual (moral), etc. The main factors determining population growth are the birth rate and mortality rate, setting the natural increase in population, and the passive increase rate, formed as the difference between the number of emigrants and immigrants.

Immediately after the Liberation, the populace residing on the territory of the Principality of Bulgaria numbered 2,007 thousand people, 336 thousand of whom resided in the towns and the other 1,617 thousand in the villages (Table 1). The census carried out in 1880 in the Principality and the one taken in East Roumelia in 1894 give us the total population of Bulgaria - 2,950,599 people, 560,207 living in towns and 2,390,392 in villages.

By the end of the XIX c. the population of Bulgaria increased by 793 thousand people, 182 thousand being the increase in the urban population and 611 thousand the increase in the rural population. During the period 1900 - 1946 it grew by 3,285 thousand people, the increase in towns being 993 thousand people and the increase in the villages - 2,293 people.

During the period 1946 - 1985, at the end of which the population number scored its highest, the total increase was 1,919, the increase in the urban population being 4064, while the rural areas featured a decrease by 2,145. That was due not only to changes in the economic and social sphere but

also the fact that a number of villages turned first into industrial settlements and later into towns. The decrease in rural population during the period was due mainly to the large-scale migration from the villages to towns and industrial settlements, instigated by the cooperation and mechanization of agricultural production and the increased need for workforce for the industry being set up, as well as in construction and the rest of the branches in the economy.

Table 1

Census taken	Total	Towns	Villages	Relative share of urban population, %
1880	2,007,919	336,102	1,617,817	16.7
1884	942,680	224,105	718,575	23.8
1887	3,154,375	593,547	2,560,828	18.8
1892	3,310,713	652,328	2,658,385	19.7
1900	3,744,283	742,435	3,001,848	19.8
1905	4,035,575	789,689	3,245,886	19.6
1910	4,337,513	829,522	3,507,991	19.1
1920	4,846,971	966,375	3,880,596	19.9
1926	5,748,741	1,130,131	4,348,610	20.6
1934	6,077,939	1,302,551	4,775,388	21.4
1946	7,029,349	1,735,188	5,294,161	24.7
1956	7,613,709	2,556,071	5,057,638	33.6
1965	8,227,866	3,822,924	4,405,042	46.5
1975	8,727,771	5,061,087	3,666,684	58.0
1985	8,948,649	5,799,939	3,148,710	64.8
1992	8,487,317	5,704,552	2,782,765	67.2
2001*	7,973,673	5,500,695	2,472,978	69.0

* Preliminary data.

For a period of 105 years (1880 - 1985) since the establishment of The Third Bulgarian State, the population of Bulgaria has increased by 5998 thousand people, the urban population - by 5239, and the rural - by 758 thousand. During the same period the relative share of the urban population increased by a fifth (19.7%) by the end of the XIXth c., and by a fourth (24.7%) in 1946, reaching 69% in 2001.

After 1985 the population of Bulgaria started going down and by 1992, that is, over a period of 7 years, the total fall for the country was 461 thousand people - 95 thousand in towns and 365 thousand people in the villages. According to the data from the latest census taken on March 14 2001 the decrease since 1992 is

513 thousand people - 203 thousand in towns and 309 thousand in the villages. For the period 1985 - 2001 the decrease totals 974 thousand people, 299 thousand in the urban population and 675 thousand in the rural population. Among other things, that was due to changes in the structure of Bulgarian economy, which was gradually transformed from a centrally-planned into a market economy.

During the years of transition in this country, there started and developed processes of restructuring of the industrial and other kinds of enterprises, which resulted in laying off some of the workforce and an increase in the army of unemployed people. Those economic processes lead to substantial emigration and more than 600 - 700 thousand people left the country in order to earn their living abroad.

It is worth noting that the decrease in population number during the period 1985 - 1992 was due mainly to emigration by predominantly young Bulgarians possessing high level of qualification and good moral qualities. As far as the decrease during the period 1993 - 2001 is concerned, it amounted to 513 thousand for the country as a whole (203 thousand in the towns and 309 thousand in the villages), and two thirds of it was due to the negative natural growth (deaths outnumbered births), numbering 337 thousand people, and only a third was due to emigration.

The preliminary results from the census taken on March 1st 2001 are a decisive confirmation of the abovementioned tendency towards both an absolute and relative decrease in the number of people living in the villages, and it is a tendency whose origins date back to 1946. At the beginning of the XXI c. the rural population of Bulgaria was already below 2.5 million people. The drastic depopulation of villages as well as the unfavorable age structure of the inhabitants are bound to have an adverse effect on the overall development of agriculture and farming in view of the human potential required for them.

The results from the latest census also show that despite the absolute decrease in urban population, the urbanization process is still going on - currently 69.0% of the total population is living in the towns. One characteristic feature of urbanization in Bulgaria is the increasing concentration of urban population in the big towns. More than half of the country's population (51.6%) reside in some 40 towns each of them having a population of over 25 thousand people. 32.3% of the population live in the biggest towns - over 100 thousand people, while that percentage was 12% in 1965. On March 1st 2001 there were nine towns in Bulgaria featuring a population of over 100 thousand people each - namely Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Bourgas, Rousse, Stara Zagora, Pleven, Sliven and Dobrich. In Sofia and Plovdiv there was a decrease in population in comparison with that of 1992. There was an increase in the number of inhabitants of five of the towns, featuring a population of over 25 thousand people - Varna, Petrich, Sandanski, Svishtov and Haskovo.

One of the main relations in the development of the population is the ratio of the sexes. The gender structure of the population, that is the male/

female ratio in Bulgaria during the past 123 years, since 1878, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Census taken	Total	Men	Women	Number of women per 1000 men
1887	3,154,375	1,605,393	1,548,986	965
1892	3,310,713	1,690,626	1,620,087	958
1900	3,744,283	1,909,567	1,834,716	961
1905	4,035,575	2,057,092	1,978,483	962
1910	4,337,513	2,206,685	2,130,828	966
1920	4,846,971	2,420,784	2,426,187	1002
1926	5,748,741	2,743,025	2,735,716	997
1934	6,077,939	3,053,893	3,024,046	990
1946	7,029,349	3,516,774	3,512,575	999
1956	7,613,709	3,799,356	3,814,353	1004
1965	8,227,866	4,114,167	4,113,699	1000
1975	8,727,771	4,357,820	4,369,951	1003
1985	8,948,649	4,433,302	4,515,347	1019
1992	8,487,317	4,170,621	4,316,696	1035
2001	7,973,673	3,888,441	4,085,232	1051

During the period 1887 - 1910 men systematically outnumbered women. In 1920 women outnumbered men for the first time with a ratio of 1002 women over 1000 men. This was due to the great losses incurred by the male population during the wars in the beginning of the XXth c. - the Balkan War of 1912, The Inter-ally War of 1913 and especially the bloody World War I - 1915 - 1918. In the period that followed, due to the laws of natural self-regulation the gender ratio in Bulgaria was back to its original state - men outnumbered women. This becomes clear from the data by the censuses taken in 1926, 1936 and 1946. Between 1956 - 2001, however, women outnumbered men again by an ever-increasing number. The break in the natural balance between the number of men and women in favour of the latter is due to many different factors. A major factor is, on the one hand, the higher mortality rate among men, and the greater migration among men in comparison with women, on the other.

The data from the current demographic statistics on the natural distribution of Bulgarian population during the XXth c. is quite indicative of the drastic fall in the natural growth as a result of the ongoing reduction in the birth rate and increased mortality rate. The above puts Bulgarian population in a hard demographic situation, leading to disadvantageous tendencies in its development during the XXI century (Table 3).

Table 3

Year	Babies born alive (No)	Deaths (No)	Natural growth (No)	Birth rate (%)	Mortality rate (%)	Natural growth (%)
1890	112,772	67,854	44,918	34.9	21.0	13.9
1900	156,962	83,667	73,295	42.2	22.5	19.7
1910	179,563	99,939	79,624	41.7	23.2	18.5
1920	192,665	103,511	89,154	39.9	21.4	18.5
1930	179,973	92,771	87,202	31.4	16.2	15.2
1940	140,564	85,046	55,518	22.2	13.4	8.8
1944	151,013	94,082	56,931	21.9	13.6	8.3
1950	182,571	74,134	108,437	25.2	10.2	15.0
1960	140,082	63,665	76,417	17.8	8.1	9.7
1970	138,745	77,095	61,650	16.3	9.1	7.2
1980	128,190	97,950	30,240	14.5	11.1	3.4
1990	105,180	108,608	-3,428	12.1	12.5	-0.4
1995	71,967	114,670	-42,703	8.6	13.6	-5.0
1999	72,291	111,786	-39,495	8.8	13.6	-4.8

Since the beginning of the previous century the *birth rate* in Bulgaria is constantly going down. It was 42.2 per mill in 1900, but it went down to 22.2 per mill in 1944. In 1950 there was a slight increase, but in the following period - 1960 till the end of the XXth c. it fell sharply, until it reached 8.8 per mill in 1999.

Death rate among Bulgarian population was also decreasing up till the middle of the XXth c., from 22.5 per mill in 1900 to 10.2 per mill in 1950. During the second half of the century, however, starting at the beginning of 1960, there was an increase in the death rate - from 8.1 per mill in 1960 it grew to 13.6 per mill in 1999.

The abovementioned birth rate and mortality rate of Bulgarian population during the previous century set the natural growth of the population, which has been decreasing throughout the century. While from the beginning of the century till the 80ies that growth was positive, although falling, at the beginning of the 90ies it became negative and in 1999 it reached minus 4.8 per mill. So here we have, after all, the result of the "active" demographic policy of the Bulgarian state, meant to promote the development of the nation. If things follow the same course and no decisive measures are taken in that respect, the Bulgarian nation is bound to disappear. I would not want to believe such is the fate of this people, a nation which has survived after 500 years of oppression. During the previous century this country achieved positive results in building up its economy, culture, art, both the material and spiritual sphere. Bulgarian people are hard-working, talented, studious, they are much more knowledgeable and capable than a many other people. The Bulgarian nation has survived much harder moments in its centuries-long development and, because it has always survived and come back to life - we should hope it would survive now as well.

In order to have a fuller and more accomplished picture, however, we will offer here some comparative statistics on birth rates, mortality rates and natural growth in

Bulgaria and some other countries in Europe and elsewhere. In 1998 the birth rate in Albania was 18.9 per mill, in Norway it was 13.2, in France - 12.6, in Yugoslavia - 12.4, in Great Britain - 12.1, in Portugal - 11.4, in Belgium 11.2, in Switzerland - 10.9, in Slovakia - 10.7, in Poland - 10.2, in Austria - 10.1, in Russia - 8.6 and in Bulgaria - 7.9.

During the same year the mortality rate in Albania was 5.8 per mill, in Switzerland - 8.7, in Spain - 9.1, in France - 9.2, in Greece - 9.6, in Austria and Poland - 9.7, in Slovakia and Italy - 9.9, in Russia - 13.7, in Hungary - 13.9 and Bulgaria was number one, featuring 14.3 per mill.

As far as negative natural growth is concerned, Bulgaria is also number one, featuring minus 6.4 per mill. Compare that with Russia - minus 5.1, Hungary - minus 4.3, the Czech Republic - minus 1.8, Romania - minus 1.4, while in Albania it was 13.2, in France - 3.4, in Norway - 3.1, in Switzerland - 2.2, in Yugoslavia - 1.9, in Great Britain - 1.5, in Belgium - 1.0, in Slovakia - 0.8, in Portugal - 0.7 and in Austria - 0.4. In some other countries, such as Germany and Italy natural growth is also negative, but it is less than 1.0 per mill.

One of the main demographic characteristics of population in this country is its age structure. The relationship between the three age groups - those below, in and beyond working capacity characterizes the living potential of the country. Currently the age pyramid of the population is narrow at its base and broad at the top, which shows that the number of young people is decreasing and that of senior citizens - above working capacity age - is increasing (Table 4).

Table 4

Census taken	Number of People				Relative share of the population (%)			
	Total	Below working capacity	In working capacity	Beyond working capacity	Total	Below working capacity	In working capacity	Beyond working capacity
1900	3,744,283	1,607,440	1,769,484	367,359	100.0	42.9	47.3	9.8
1905	4,035,575	1,686,393	1,942,574	406,608	100.0	41.8	48.3	10.1
1910	4,337,513	1,823,999	2,087,978	425,536	100.0	42.1	48.1	9.8
1920	4,846,971	1,881,862	2,222,481					
1920	4,846,971	1,881,862	2,481,007	484,102	100.0	38.8	51.2	10.0
1926	5,478,741	2,036,665	2,912,600	529,476	100.0	37.2	53.2	9.7
1934	6,077,939	2,275,767	3,231,058	571,114	100.0	37.4	53.2	9.4
1946	7,029,349	2,092,504	4,117,001	819,844	100.0	29.8	58.6	11.7
1956	7,613,709	2,136,681	4,486,795	990,233	100.0	28.1	58.9	13.0
1965	8,227,866	2,112,364	4,789,007	1,326,496	100.0	25.7	58.2	16.1
1975	8,727,771	2,061,143	5,058,511	1,608,117	100.0	23.6	58.0	18.4
1985	8,948,649	2,046,709	5,013,161	1,888,779	100.0	22.9	56.0	21.1
1992	8,487,317	1,735,712	4,734,275	2,017,330	100.0	20.5	55.8	23.8
2001*	7,973,673	1,555,803	4,250,539	2,167,331	100.0	19.5	63.4	17.1

* Preliminary data.

During the XXth c. the age structure of Bulgarian population shifted towards a systematic decrease in the relative share of people below working capacity, that is, aged under 16, who are to become the generation in working capacity, on the one hand, and an increase in the number and relative share of senior people above working capacity, on the other. The percentage of people below working capacity in 1900 - 42.9%, went down to 20.5% in 1992 and to less than one fifth in 2001, in other words, in comparison with 1900 its share fell in excess of 2.1 times. During the same period the absolute number of people below working capacity grew up till 1934, when it became 2,257 thousand people, after that point there was a steady tendency towards a reduction in the number of young people. At the end of 1992 the number of people under 17 was 1,735, or approximately the same it was in 1905 - 1910. However, while the average total population number was 4,186 thousand during the period 1905 - 1910, in 1992 it grew to 8,487 thousand, that is, twice.

At the same time the number of people in working capacity kept growing till 1975. At the beginning of the century it was 1,769 thousand people, in 1975 it totaled 5,059, featuring an increase of 2.9 times compared to that of 1900. After that the number of people in working capacity started going down - during the period 1985 - 1992 it was 279 thousand, and during 1992 - 2001 - 484 thousand. Compared to the total population number, the growth in the number of people in working capacity was fastest till the period 1965 - 1975, and after that the rate slowed down gradually. What is more, it was for the first time in the previous 100 years that the number of people in working capacity fell, the decrease being by 5 thousand per annum on average for the period 1975 - 1985, by 40 thousand for the period 1985 - 1992, and by 54 thousand per annum for the period 1992 - 2001. The main cause for the abovementioned fluctuations in the development of the share of people in working capacity is the ageing of Bulgarian population as a whole. After the 1950ies the working capacity contingent was filled by sparse generations, born during the periods of constantly decreasing birth rates. In 1926 the total number of the population was 5,479 thousand people while the number of those born alive was 203.7 thousand, or 37.2 per mill; by contrast, in 1985 the population was 8,949 thousand people while the number of those born alive was 119 thousand, or 13.3 per mill. Seven years later, in 1992, the total number of the population was 8,487 thousand people, while those born alive were 89 thousand, or 10.4 per mill; in 1999, however, the population numbered 8,211 thousand while those born alive were 78 thousand, or 8.8 per mill.

For the period in question, the fastest growing age group is that of people over working capacity. In 1900 it numbered 367 thousand people, or 9.8%; in 1956 it went over 1 million, or 13%; in 1985 it was already 1,990 thousand and its relative share rose to 21.1%, and in 1992 it became 2,017 thousand or 23% of the total figure.

At the beginning of the XXI century - the census taken on March 1st 2001, the number of people over working capacity had gone up by 150 thousand in comparison with that of 1992, and become 2,167, their share being 17.1%, or

down by 5.7% in comparison with 1992. That means that at the end of the XXth c. and the beginning of the XXIst c. nearly a quarter of Bulgarian population is over working capacity. This data serves as indisputable evidence of the aging of the population, something which will lead to increasingly adverse repercussions in the future.

A major prerequisite for the normal reproduction of the population is its structure according to marital status. The family, being the main unit of society, is the environment in which children are born, brought up and educated so that they develop as individuals and become good citizens. If we have a sound and solid family then the offspring is good and vice versa.

The general tendency in the structure of the population according to marital status during the period 1900 - 1992 is a substantial decrease in the number and share of the single people offset by the increase in the number and share mostly of people who are married, divorced or widowed (Table 5).

Table 5

Structure of Bulgarian population according to marital status

Census taken	Total	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Not indicated
1900	3,744,283	2,060,231	1,501,821	5,756	173,936	2,539
%	100.0	55.0	40.1	0.2	4.6	0.1
1905	4,035,575	2,179,588	1,665,477	5,496	185,003	38
%	4,337,513	2,335,015	1,792,303	5,210	203,556	1,429
1920	4,846,971	2,551,450	1,997,267	5,746	291,296	1,212
%	100.0	52.6	41.2	0.1	6.0	0.0
1926	5,478,741	2,789,348	2,375,865	9,724	303,790	14
%	100.0	50.9	43.4	0.2	5.5	0.0
1934	6,077,939	2,966,076	2,789,824	15,034	326,235	770
%	100.0	48.8	45.6	0.2	5.4	0.0
1946	7,029,349	3,097,094	3,519,253	25,974	386,993	35
%	100.0	44.1	50.1	0.4	5.5	0.0
1956	7,613,709	3,005,776	4,155,295	49,054	402,905	679
%	100.0	39.5	54.6	0.6	5.3	0.0
1965	8,227,866	3,033,415	465,857	82,980	453,314	-
%	100.0	36.9	56.6	1.0	5.5	-
1975	8,727,771	3,029,532	5,037,714	135,765	524,760	-
%	100.0	34.7	57.7	1.6	6.0	-
1985	8,948,649	3,040,119	5,039,234	248,637	620,659	-
%	100.0	34.0	56.3	2.8	6.9	-
1992	8,487,317	2,876,849	4,659,392	256,036	696,559	8,481
%	100.0	33.9	54.9	3.0	8.1	0.1
2001	7,973,673	2,850,941	4,052,888	322,502	746,977	364
%	100.0	36.0	51.0	4.0	9.0	0.0

In 1990 the number of single people was slightly over 2 million people and constituted more than half (55%) of the population. During the following years the absolute figure increased, but the relative systematically went down. For the period 1900 - 2001 the number increased by 791 thousand, while their share went down from 55% in 1900 to 36.0% in 2001, that is, by 19 points.

At the same time the number of married people was steadily rising, going up by 2,551 thousand for the period 1900 - 2001. Its relative share went up from 40.1% in 1900 to 51.0% in 2001, that is, by 11.1 points.

While the number and the relative share of single people steadily constituted half of the population till the period 1926 - 1934, the number and relative share of married people, on the other hand, was constantly on the increase and it became the majority of the total population in 1946. This circumstance has its positive aspects with respect to ensuring normal reproduction of the population. It is, along with the other factors, one of the main prerequisites for the provision of the human resources contingent needed to substitute those falling out by virtue of the laws of nature. If we eliminate the effect of social, moral and other factors, such an increase in the number of married people should ensure larger generations of young people, thus guaranteeing increased reproduction in the second half of the XXc. The reproduction volume during the period under discussion was insufficient, the growth between 1946 - 2001 being 844 thousand people. That growth would have been much greater if it had not been for the substantial fall in the birth rate.

There arises the question whether it is now possible for the birth rate to reach that of 1900 or even 1950. Having in mind the birth rate of most European countries, which is on average 10 to 13 people per mill, as well as the fact that their population is also ageing, we could draw the conclusion that we could not reach a birth rate much higher than the average European level. A number of factors play a role in that respect, for instance changes in family values concerning the number of children they would like to have. Those changes are of moral rather than quantitative nature, i.e. families would rather have fewer children, but ones that possess higher moral and intellectual qualities, being able to satisfy the raised value standards of their parents.

During the XXth c. the relative share of divorced people was also on the rise. If we take a closer look at the changes in the figure from 1900 to 2001, we will notice that till 1965, although growing, its relative value was below 1%. After that point the number of divorced people grew faster, reaching 323 thousand, or 4% of the population in 2001. The number of divorced women prevails over the number of divorced men. Men find it more difficult to cope with the hardships of life and especially household problems, that is why they try again after an unsuccessful marriage; women, however, despite being "the weaker sex", endure difficulties and loneliness with greater ease. Although it is not very high, the number and the share of divorced people in this country, in comparison with a number of European countries, is indicative that moral standards and criteria of society with respect to the family have progressed towards a greater freedom in family relationships.

The number of widowed people also showed a tendency towards an increase during the past century. Those were the people who had lost their family partners and had not created new families. Elderly men and women in particular, mainly due to ethical scruples, were hesitant about entering into new matrimonial relationship, following the loss of a partner. That is particularly characteristic of good, sound families, where there existed harmony between members, and the widowed partner did not find it easy to make the choice of creating a new family.

As a result of the ever-increasing death rate among the male part of the population, the majority of the widowed people are females. At the beginning of the XXth c. (1900) the relative share of widowed females was twice as large as that of widowed males. A similar tendency can be observed also during the following years and in 2001 the share of widowed females was 3.5 times as big as that of widowed males.

Another major characteristic of the population is its structure according to educational level. Against a background of decreasing population number in this country we can observe an absolute and relative increase in the number of people who have graduated higher, college-level and specialized secondary education institutions, as well as a fall in the number of those who have graduated or not completed their studies at a primary education institution, and illiterate people (Table 6).

Table 6

Structure of the population over 7 years of age, according to educational level

Educational level	1934	1946	1956	1965	1975	1985	1992	2001
Total	4,941,848	6,008,354	6,495,229	7,213,375	7,658,498	8,102,363	7,796,602	7,519,849
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Higher	33,031	552,238	112,506	173,319	311,851	503,330	619,294	1,072,532
%	0.7	0.9	1.7	2.4	4.1	6.3	7.9	14.2
Secondary*	13,311	276,694	575,397	888,328	1,594,991	2,447,933	2,888,144	2,873,429
%	2.7	4.6	8.9	12.3	20.3	30.7	37.0	38.2
Elementary*	443,113	1,125,410	1,616,225	2,309,436	2,617,963	2,605,539	2,370,214	2,050,769
%	9.0	18.7	24.9	32.0	34.2	32.7	30.4	27.3
Primary	1,733,350	2,202,557	2,367,812	2,286,716	2,043,989	1,689,313	1,233,727	930,664
%	35.1	36.7	36.5	31.7	26.7	21.1	15.8	12.4
Incomplete primary	1,034,289	966,891	973,184	930,394	689,527	856,248	527,392	431,759
%	20.9	16.1	15.0	12.9	9.0	9.1	6.8	5.7
Illiterate	1,558,770	1,380,857	850,105	623,182	400,177	-	152,955	138,089
%	31.6	23.0	13.1	8.6	5.2	-	2.0	1.8

* Including college-level, specialized secondary and vocational-technical schools.

** Including vocational schools.

For a period of 66 years the number of people with a high educational level (higher, college-level and secondary) has increased 21 times (from 166 thousand in 1934 to 3,946 thousand in 2001). In 1934 4.2% of the population aged over 14 had graduated the above institutions. 12 years later (1946) that percentage was already 24.0%, and by the end of 1992 - 51.0%.

The share of women having a high educational level has been increasing faster than that of men. In 2001 there were 3,946 people having a high educational level, 1,940 thousand of whom (49%) were men and 2,006 thousand (51%) - women.

Despite the high growth rates in the educational level of the population, the relative share of people with elementary education is still considerable (about one third). In 2001 they were 2,050, or 27.3%. During the period 1934 - 1975 the number of people with secondary education grew very fast - from 9% in 1934 to 34.2% in 1975. During the next period - 1975 - 2001, their number fell by 567 thousand, or 6.9%.

From 1934 to 1965 the number of people with primary education grew. That growth was most remarkable during the period 1946 - 1965 - the time marked by a drive to eliminate illiteracy among the population. After 1965 the number and relative share of people with primary education fell. In 2001 the number of people with primary education was 931 thousand, or 12.4% (81.1% of them are aged below 14 and over 60). During the same period the number and relative share of people with incomplete primary education also fell. In 1934 they were 1,034 thousand, or about 21%, but in 2001 they were already 432 thousand, or 5.7%. Even more dramatic was the fall in the number of illiterate people which was 1,559 thousand, or 31.6% in 1934, but in 2001 their number decreased to 138 thousand, or 1.8%. The majority are senior people, predominantly women.

For the past five decades the number of women who have graduated an educational institution has grown approximately 25 times, that of men - about 7.5 times. As a result, by the end of 1992, 47 out of 100 university graduates were women, while for the period 1985 - 1992 only, 38% of the total 116 thousand university graduates were men, and 62% - women.

It was in 1900 that data on the ethnic structure of the population was collected for the first time in history. At the beginning of the previous century the ethnic structure of the population was as follows: Bulgarians - 2,888 thousand, or 77.1%, Turks - 531 thousand (14.2%), Romanies - 89 thousand (2.4%), other ethnic groups - 235 thousand (6.3%). The data on the past 90 years shows that Bulgaria has been and still is a mononational country with predominantly Bulgarian population. As far as the other ethnic groups are concerned, the most numerous are the Turkish and Romany groups, while the rest - the Armenian, Jewish, Tartar and Russian, represent smaller groups (see Table 7).

Table 7

Bulgarian population according to ethnic group

Ethnic group	1900	1920	1946	1956	1965	1985	2001
Total	3,744,283	4,846,971	7,029,349	7,613,709	8,227,968	8,727,771	7,973,673
%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Bulgarian	2,888,219	4,036,056	5,903,580	6,506,541	7,231,243	7,930,024	6,660,682
%	77.1	83.3	84.0	85.5	87.9	90.9	83.6
Turkish	531,240	520,339	675,500	656,025	780,928	730,728	757,781
%	14.2	10.7	9.6	8.6	9.5	8.4	9.5
Romany	89,549	98,451	170,011	197,865	148,874	18,323	365,797
%	2.4	2.0	2.4	2.6	1.8	0.2	4.6
Tartar	-	-	-	5,993	6,430	5,963	-
%	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-
Jewish	33,661	43,209	44,209	6,027	5,108	3,076	-
%	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	-
Armenian	14,581	11,509	21,637	21,954	20,282	14,526	-
%	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	-
Not indicated	-	-	-	-	-	-	67,640
%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.8

The increase in the Romany ethnic group is most noticeable. During the period 1900 - 2001 it grew by 276 thousand people, or almost 4 times, while during the same period Bulgarians grew by 3,772 thousand (2.5 times), and the Turkish ethnic group - by 226 thousand (1.5 times).

In 2001 the relative share of Bulgarians grew by 6.5 per cent in comparison with the 1900 figure, that of the Turks went down by 4.7 per cent and that of the Romanies rose by 2.2 per cent. The decrease in the share of ethnic Turks is due mainly to emigration. On the other hand, the natural growth of that ethnic group is higher, which explains the comparatively high and stable relative share of the total figure.

The third most numerous ethnic group - the Romanies, represent a comparatively small relative share of the total population number, despite its high natural growth rate. It should also be noted here that during certain periods in the development of the country parts of the Romany ethnic group identified themselves as belonging to the Bulgarian ethnic group.

The number and the relative share of the "others" group has gradually decreased during the period 1900 - 2001 - their number fell by 65 thousand, and their share - by 3.5 per cent compared to 1900. The most numerous

representatives in that group in 1992 were the Russians - 17 thousand people, the Arabs - 5.7 thousand, the Walachians - 5.2 thousand, the Greeks - 4.9 thousand, etc.

A major conclusion we could draw is that, despite certain fluctuations, the ethnic composition of Bulgarian population has, in a way, been already historically shaped out. In that respect the factors which affect the ethnic structure of the population are the dynamics of natural growth on the one hand, and migration on the other. After 1930 there were four emigration waves: 1931 - 1941, numbering 100 thousand people, 1947 - 1951 - 156 thousand, 1969 - 1978 - 114 thousand, and 1989 - 1992 - 362 thousand. Those were mostly Turkish and Jewish people who emigrated to Turkey and Israel respectively.

It is worth noting that with the Bulgarian ethnic group growth is more characteristic of the senior part of the population, that is, it is ageing, while the Turkish and the Romany ethnic groups are characterized by a relatively higher proportion of younger people. If we refer to those under 29 as young, those between 30 and 59 as middle-aged, and those over 60 as elderly, at the end of 1992 40.5% of Bulgarians were between 30 and 59, 51.4% of the Turks were under 29 and those over 60 - 11.6%. The age structure of the Romany ethnic group looks even "younger". Two thirds of it, or 66.0%, were aged under 29 and only 5.1% - over 60.

The high birth rate among the population as a whole at the beginning of the century leads us to believe that it is typical of the three major ethnic groups in the country - Bulgarians, Turks and Romanies. During the period 1904 - 1907 the birth rate of the Muslim population (the greater part of the Turkish and the Romany ethnic groups) was 38.3 per mill, while that of the Christian population (Bulgarians, Armenians, etc.) and the Jews - 4.4 per mill. During the following years up till 1936 the birth rate fell mainly among the Christians and Jews (26.3 per mill during 1931 - 1936), while with the Muslim population despite certain fluctuations it remained steady on the same level it was at the beginning of the century. With the exception of the post-war period, that indicator kept falling very rapidly until it reached an exceptionally low level.

During the period 1956 - 1974 the differences in birth rates of the three major ethnic groups - Bulgarian, Turkish and Romany were very big and remained so throughout the whole period. With the Turkish population the birth rate fell from 40.4 per mill in 1956 to 24.5 per mill in 1974, while with the Romany population it fell from 35.5 to 18.3 per mill. As a result of the socio-economic changes the differences in birth rates between the various ethnic groups were reduced, but the birth rates of the Turkish and Romany ethnic groups remained higher than that of the Bulgarian.

As far as the mortality rate within the various ethnic groups is concerned, we should note that with the Bulgarian ethnic group it is lower

than those of the Turkish and Romany groups. That is a reflection of the specific development of each ethnic group. That also holds true of the natural growth of the population - it is lower with Bulgarians compared to that of Turks and Romanies. As already mentioned, the natural growth rate kept falling for the population as a whole, but while for the period 1956 - 1974 it was from 8.3 to 6.5 per mill for Bulgarians, with Turks it was from 25.8 to 17.7 per mill, and with Romanies it was from 25.8 to 13.0 per mill.

Based on the data concerning the development of the demographics with the major ethnic groups in Bulgaria we could draw the conclusion that there do exist homogenization processes among the Bulgarian nation, described as equalization in the demographic characteristics of the various ethnic groups and stabilization of its ethnic structure. The data in Table 8 is also evidential of that.

Table 8

Bulgarian population according to mother tongue

Census taken	Total	Bulgarian	Turkish	Romany	Other
1900	3,744,283	2,887,860	5,397,860	89,549	227,218
%	100.0	77.1	14.4	2.4	6.1
1905	4,035,575	3,210,502	514,658	67,396	243,019
%	100.0	79.6	12.8	1.7	6.0
1910	4,337,513	3,523,151	504,681	76,387	233,294
%	100.0	81.2	11.6	1.8	5.4
1920	4,848,971	4,041,276	542,904	61,555	201,236
%	100.0	83.4	11.2	1.3	4.2
1926	5,478,741	4,585,620	607,763	81,996	203,362
%	100.0	83.7	11.1	1.5	3.7
1934	6,077,939	5,274,854	618,266	80,532	104,285
%	100.0	86.8	10.2	1.3	1.7
1946	7,029,349	6,151,424	701,141	99,270	77,514
%	100.0	87.5	10.0	1.4	1.1
1965	8,227,866	7,382,394	758,832	58,873	27,767
%	100.0	89.7	9.2	0.7	0.3
1975	8,727,771	8,321,001	399,722	1,193	5,855
%	100.0	95.3	4.6	0.0	0.1
1992	8,487,317	7,275,717	813,639	310,425	87,536
%	100.0	85.7	9.6	3.7	1.0
2001	7,973,673	6,758,508	770,543	322,641	73,243
%	100.0	84.8	9.7	4.0	0.9

The notion “mother tongue” is defined as the language the individual acquired in early childhood, or has best command of, the language that is exclusively used at home, within the family or at work. Ever since the beginning of the XXth c. the major mother tongue used by the population in this country has been the Bulgarian language. The number of people who indicated Bulgarian as their mother tongue rose during the period 1900 - 2001 by 3,871 thousand and their relative share grew by 7.7 per cent. As a result at the end of the XXth c. almost nine tenths of the population in this country referred to Bulgarian as their mother tongue.

At the same time the people who indicated Turkish as their mother tongue increased in number from 540 thousand in 1900 to 771 thousand in 2001, that is, by 231 thousand people, and their relative share fell by 4.7 per cent.

The number of people indicating Romany as their mother tongue rose or fell in a wave-like manner within the range of 50 to 100 thousand people. That number was highest in 2001, and their share grew by 1.6 per cent.

The decrease with respect to that criterion was most noticeable with the *other* ethnic groups - from 227 thousand in 1900 to 73 thousand in 2001, and their share fell from 6.1% in 1900 to 0.9% in 2001, that is, by 5.2 per cent. In 2001 there were 48,738 people who chose not to indicate their mother tongue, the male/female ratio being 50/50.

In connection with the structure of the population according to “mother tongue”, which, in a way, is corrective to its structure according to ethnic groups, we should note that during the last decades of the previous century a certain part of the people from the Turkish and especially the Romany ethnic group, having a higher level of education - people who held governmental positions accepted the Bulgarian language as their mother tongue. The explanation is simple, having in mind the fact that holding those positions they usually interact with the populace using the official language - Bulgarian. The same is true of some of the people from the other ethnic groups. The abovementioned tendency leads us to the conclusion that there is a certain consolidation of the Bulgarian population with respect to its ethnic and mother tongue structure.

One of the major socio-economic characteristics of the Bulgarian population is its structure according to the level of economic activity. The number of economically active people (those who hold positions or perform a service in the various branches of the economy) can give us an idea along with the other factors (equipment, tools and factors of production) of the production potential of the nation. These are the people who, using natural resources, through the work they perform create the material, cultural and spiritual wealth and provide the living standard of the nation as a whole. It is thanks to the work done by those people that the rest of the people in working capacity and beyond, live.

From the beginning of the 1920ies till 1992 the number of economically active people grew by 1,361 thousand, or 1.53 times, while the total population number rose by 3,640 thousand, or 1.75 times (Table 9).

Table 9

Bulgarian population according to economic activity

Census taken	Population			%		
	Total	Active	Inactive	Total	Active	Inactive
1920	4,846,971	2,571,500	2,275,471	100.0	53.1	46.9
1926	5,478,741	3,016,484	2,462,257	100.0	55.1	44.9
1934	6,077,939	3,346,105	2,731,834	100.0	55.1	44.9
1946	7,029,349	4,034,730	2,394,619	100.0	57.4	42.6
1956	7,613,709	4,150,207	3,463,502	100.0	54.5	45.5
1965	8,227,866	4,267,709	3,960,068	100.0	51.9	48.1
1975	8,727,771	4,447,764	4,279,987	100.0	51.0	49.0
1985	8,948,649	4,606,140	4,262,509	100.0	52.4	47.6
1992	8,487,317	3,932,468	4,546,368	100.0	46.3	53.6

During the period 1920 - 1985 people who were economically active prevailed in terms of number and relative share over the economically inactive in this country. Their relative share reached its height in 1946, after which point their number went up along with the population total figure, while their share gradually diminished, reaching a number which was less than half of the total population in 1992.

In accordance with the general tendencies in the development of the population, during the period 1986 - 1992, for the first time since the beginning of the century the number of economically active people fell by 745 thousand. For a period of seven years the relative share of economically active people fell by about 16%, while the population number fell by 5.2%.

Comparing the urban and rural population we observe two opposite tendencies - there is an increase in the number of economically active people in the towns and a decrease in the villages. For the period 1920 - 1992 the number of economically active people in towns rose 7.4 times (from 378 thousand to 2,785 thousand), while in the villages their number fell almost twice (from 2,193 thousand to 1,148 thousand). In the general structure of urban population the relative share of economically active people grew by 9.6 per cent, while in villages it fell by 15.3 per cent. For the period 1985 - 1992 there was an absolute and relative decrease in the number of economically active people both in towns and in villages. The decrease in towns was approximately 376 thousand people (5.7%), while in the villages it was about 378 thousand (7.2%) - the process there began in 1956, the time when the first ever absolute and relative reduction in economically active population was registered.

As far as the gender structure of the economically active population is concerned, men hold a greater number and relative share in comparison to

women. During the whole period economically active men outnumbered women by 1.1 - 1.5 times, and their percentage share in the total structure of economically active people featured differences amounting to 9.3 per cent in 1920, 17.6 per cent in 1956 and 4,6 per cent in 1992 in favour of men.

Economic activity is closely related to age, since most of the people in working capacity are economically active (usually 80 - 85%). Changes in the age structure of the population and its structure according to economic activity affect the economically active/economically inactive people ratio. While at the end of 1946 the ratio economically active/economically inactive people was 100/74, in 1975 it was approximately 100/96, and in 1992 it was already 116/100.

In accordance with the abovementioned tendency towards ageing of Bulgarian population, the share of economically active people from the senior age groups rose. While in 1975 the greatest part of the economically active population were people aged between 30 and 39, in 1992 they were people aged between 40 and 49.

On the basis of the above data on the development of Bulgarian population for the period starting from Liberation to the present day, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. During a period of 123 years - from 1878 to 2001 the Bulgarian population went through a long period of development, its number tripled, it suffered grave historical and fateful days - wars, national catastrophes, as well as economic, social and natural disasters. But the national spirit was strong and, after times of grief it found the strength to rise to a new life and revival.

2. During the second half of the XXth c. there were a number of negative processes in the demographic structure of Bulgaria (reduced birth rate, increased mortality rate), as a result of which there fell the natural growth of the population, followed by all the associated negative results. The situation was further aggravated towards the end of the XXth and the beginning of the XXIst century.

3. The demographic policy of the Bulgarian state requires serious strategic changes. Those should aim at stabilizing the demographics - birth rate, mortality rate, natural growth, as well as at improving the structure of the population according to gender, age, marital status, economic activity, etc. Special efforts should be made to neutralize depopulation in certain regions of the country and to revive the Bulgarian village, hence farming and livestock-breeding.

4. Unless serious measures are promptly taken in this respect and the state assumes greater responsibility for the problems of the population, for the demographic crisis Bulgaria is in, the situation is bound to get worse.

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