

Bulgaria in the European Union: Volen Siderov, Social Nationalism and the Resistance to Dependency

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As of November 15 2016, the nationalist and pro-Russian movement in Bulgaria has scored a resounding victory over the New World Order. The establishment parties have been forced to use the rhetoric of nationalism as described in this paper written in the Summer of 2014—

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Abstract:

Nationalism is deliberately misunderstood and distorted by journalists and academics. The near universal rejection of the ethnic principle in post-modernity must have a source. That source is the global nature of capital. Therefore, in postmodernity, nationalist thought is the ethnic folk rejecting an economics that is global and therefore, completely out of control of peoples, states or any institution that is not a bank. Here, this view will be explored using the main political figure in Bulgaria today, Volen Siderov.

Nationalism is a crucial ingredient to understanding the politics of the 19th and 20th century. Contrary to the typical academic however, it was also a significant actor far earlier than that. Nationalism is unpopular with the present American system of both government and education primarily because it does not suit the interests of capital. Capitalism was and is international and revolutionary. There was never a time when capital was “national,” since colonial exploitation for needed resources was needed to produce the surplus soon to be invested in what became the industrial revolution.

This essay will deal with a nation impoverished after the fall of the USSR: Bulgaria. She has been the target of economic vultures from within and without, leaving the country with little freedom and no sovereignty. Bulgaria, like the rest of eastern Europe, is seen as a periphery supplying needed resources, energy and labor to the west, or those who control the west. The point is that the rejection of nationalism by elites is a requirement to justify such rapacious behavior.

If nations do not exist, then neither can imperialism, since the problem with imperialism is that nations lose their sovereignty under a multinational organization. If nations do not exist, then there is no moral problem with taking the resources of another state. Therefore, the frenzied, dishonest and well financed scholarly and journalistic attack on nationalism is little more than loyal service to the empire.

Misrepresentations of Nationalism

Many scholarly definitions of nationalism are caricatures rather than sincere efforts to understand the phenomenon. Academics are so violently opposed to nationalism that their scholarship (Eric Hobsbawm springs to mind) is an excellent example of academic dishonesty. Almost always, official discussions of the matter, academic or otherwise, treat nationalism as an aberration destined to die with

sufficient, enforced Enlightenment. This is identical to the Leninist position in the early 1920s. The vehemence displayed in the mainline literature suggests that what is at stake is the very legitimacy and credibility of the entire Enlightenment project.¹

Regardless of the constantly incorrect forecasts of its demise, nationalism is not only still present, but is growing in strength. The myths of Enlightenment ideology have led to the domination of capital, technocracy, liberal bureaucratism and positivism. These have not only failed to make anyone happy or save a millisecond of labor, but have also developed in precise proportion to an explosion of mental illness, personal and family breakdown, overwork and extreme levels of stress.

There is no hard and fast definition of nationalism as an “ideology,” but this can be said for any political view. Each word in political thought is contested and torn to pieces in the literature. This is at least in part due to the over-theorization and over-specialization of politics as well as the monstrous inflation of professors, journals and universities.

In nationalism's case, this lack of a clear positive program should not be a surprise. This is because nationalism will be characterized and utilized differently depending on the many variables each ethnic group must face. While nationalism has certain general concepts that express a unified view, these should be seen as principles rather than ideological postulates. The point is that how these principles are manifest depends on a multitude of variables requiring highly specialized study.

Most honest writers in the field tend to define nationalism as an ethnic group seeking an independent state. Those groups that already have one will seek to increase its unity, power and cultural level. However, the problem in the constant caricaturization of nationalism has been caused by the denial of a connection between ethnicity and statehood. This has led to a fictional, misty idea called “civic nationalism” that is never defined. This is largely because it has no meaning. It is vapid in its very expression.²

The facts are that nationalism is necessary for even the most rudimentary civic life, since debate implies agreement on more fundamental questions. At a minimum, a nation must be a unity based on a common language (in the broader sense of “social communication”), a shared history, basic moral agreement and a sense of historic mission. This is identical to the *ethnos* or the folk.

Without these minimal ingredients, no political community exists. Without general agreement, ethnic similarity and a single language, politics comes down to force, elite cohesion, and a bureaucracy playing off one group against their many enemies. It is a parody, a carnivalesque inversion of politics that presently typifies the “multicultural” US and EU. This implies the obvious: nations must be cultural, historical and integral long before they can be political, since civic life presupposes these unities.

Enter Siderov

Ukraine and Bulgaria were both behind the Iron Curtain, though in a radically different capacity. Bulgaria was part of the Warsaw Pact, an ostensibly independent country that did the will of Moscow without question. Ukraine, on the other hand, was considered a part of Russia and hence, the USSR. While the Bulgarians were trusted allies of Russian policy, the Ukrainians were seen as untrustworthy nationalists that were in need of endless surveillance.³

The tragi-comic reign of Boyko Borisov is worthy of its own sitcom. After the meltdown of 2008, the Borisov government was treated to an IMF-appointed finance minister, M. Djankov, even more hated than Borisov himself. Djankov was for some time a major bureaucrat in the World Bank. His faction

¹ Probably the most dishonest and fraudulent treatment of the subject can be found in the almost unreadable *Fantasies of Salvation: Democracy, Nationalism, and Myth in Post-Communist Europe*, by Vladimir Tismaneanu (Princeton University Press, 2009). The very title shows its ideology, but more importantly, this work is quite normal in elite academia and is accepted as the default view of the system as a whole.

² For a bad example, see Beiner, R. *Liberalism, Nationalism, Citizenship: Essays on the Problem of Political Community* (UBC Press, 2003), esp pg 12ff

³ Gutterman, Steve (2009). “Russia: Famine that Killed Millions not Seen as Genocide.” ABC News, 25 February 2009 (abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=6957274)

came to power in 2007 with an electoral turnout of about 27%. In 2009, again, his faction came to power with a grand total of 38% of the popular vote in, yet again, a farce of an election where a handful of Bulgarians voted. Of course, the west sees the elections of its stooges under these conditions as perfectly reasonable.

The media is owned by westernized businesses and showed only the speeches of Borisov during the elections. Organized crime ensured his “electoral victory” with the full blessing of the US and EU. The westernized “ruling party” of Borisov, the “Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria,” polls with an approval rating of between 11 and 15%, though their president got about 50% of the vote. The west not only considers this travesty democratic, but Borisov received public support from David Cameron, Angela Merkel and Obama. Media control is essential to this party's victories, since their public stance is nationalist, while their public policies are the opposite. Further, while governments in the past have been created entire by this party getting only 30% of the vote or so, this too, is called “democracy” in the west.⁴

In early 2013, Borisov was forced to resign midst riots over corruption, high energy prices and the general sense that Borisov is merely a tool of organized crime. Fleeting in his pajamas, Borisov was seen running to a plane, frightened for his life, as Bulgaria burned. This did not do well for Bulgarian national morale.⁵ The final act to this farce was that, as a reward for destroying Bulgaria for the sake of slightly lower European oil prices, the disgraced finance minister Djankov was immediately given a post at the Harvard University with tenure, though he has never taught before.⁶

Today, Boyko heads the party “Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria” and plays for FC Vitosha Bistritsa. Significantly, he is reputed to be shacking up with Tsvetelina Borislavova, who at one time was the chief of the Bulgarian-American Credit Bank. Hence, he is literally in bed with the western financial establishment. In parliament, his faction gets to control the legislative process while rarely getting more than 35% of the low turnouts.

The Bulgarian currency, the lev, is pegged to the Euro, hence distorting the Bulgarian economy and attaching it to the indebted and financially unstable European Union.⁷ The monetary system is stable, as is the fiscal system. Low growth is the biggest problem, but high levels of education are the best advantage. As always, the products fashioned by former Soviet states have no market in the west, but interest remains in the east. Bulgaria's economy is largely oriented to the Russian market, as are all the former Soviet states or satellites. China seems very interested in Bulgaria, which is normally a good sign.⁸ What makes Bulgaria unique here is how rapidly she was brought into the EU. All rules governing admission to the Union were shoved aside to get Sophia in as quickly as possible.

Bulgarian oil and her long standing alliance with Moscow are the two reasons the EU rushed to bring Bulgaria into its thralldom. As energy prices rose, Bulgaria's very fragile economy went into a sharp decline. Rapidly, she was admitted into the EU as a countermeasure to the prospect of a closer relationship with a resurgent and confident Russia. In essence, Bulgaria was guaranteed international respectability by EU membership in exchange for sovereignty, her oil, her natural gas and her government's domestic popularity.⁹ The EU has brought nothing positive to Bulgaria whatsoever, and,

⁴ Igor Novaković (2010) “European” and “Extreme” Populists in the Same Row – the New Government of the Republic of Bulgaria. WBSO, 17: 63-73. Novakovic calls anyone who questions this absurdity an “extremist”, hence proving the fraud of these labels.

⁵ The U.S. Congressional Quarterly produced evidence in 2011 that Borisov was, in fact, not only in bed with the mafia, but a major player in it as well. Borisov is largely foreign funded, receiving money from the EU and the US so as to bring Bulgaria into the mainstream of western capitalism, while it is clear and open links with organized crime are not seen as a barrier to western support.

⁶ Chances are that this “tenure” exists so as to protect him from retribution due to his organized crime connections.

⁷ World Bank. Data for Bulgaria, 2012. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bulgaria>

⁸ Ng, Francis (2006) Bulgaria's Integration Into the Pan-European Economy and Industrial Restructuring. World Bank Publications

⁹ Bulgaria: 2012 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report; Public Information; and Statement by the Executive

given her energy policy, membership costing the impoverished country a fortune. The real issue here is that the fraud can only last so long as nationalism is suppressed by elites in the west as well as Sophia.

Under the EU, Bulgaria has been forced to export her domestic resources. Bulgaria must, in the inverted carnival of international capitalism, import oil, since the EU demands it be routed to them. To add to this comedy, the Bulgarian government then began investing in nuclear power to compensate for the oil forcibly taken from the country. That all of this was sold domestically as “democratization” brings misanthropic scorn to a new level.

What industry remains is dedicated to 1970s-level computer equipment and automotive parts from the same era. The worst aspect of Bulgaria's economy is the fact that Russians do not want Bulgarian goods anymore. The shift to the west was worse than useless, since a) no one wants them there either, and b) she came to the west just in time for the west's implosion. In this case, bad luck partners with incompetence for a comic display that is tempered only by the heroic Bulgarian people's suffering. However, given that the alternative to westernization is integration into Eurasia, there is probably nothing the Bulgarian elites can do that will harm their present, albeit costly, EU standing.

For most Bulgarians, nationalism was at the basis of the overthrow of dictator Todor Zhivkov 25 years ago (November 10, 2009). Today, none of that is left. The 20 year anniversary was met with a stony silence from the Bulgarian population, and no one showed up at the main square in Sophia to take part in the state-run celebrations of Bulgarian independence. They seek the guiding hand of Russia on the one hand, and a strong Bulgarian state, on the other.¹⁰ Today, the new “President” Rosen Plevnielev, seeks stronger ties with China while sitting on the board of the American Chamber of Commerce and being the head of a major German consortium invested in Bulgaria. He won 50% of the vote with an opposition so divided that it fielded no fewer than 17 candidates.

It was noted in passing that the stuffing of ballot boxes by two parliament members of “Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria” was caught on video, but the election was given the western, European, liberal seal of approval regardless.¹¹ Even more, Boyko, somehow still a political player, merely denied what was on the video, saying the elections were perfectly legitimate. The US and EU agreed. Brunwasser cites a poll in Bulgaria that shows 76% of Bulgarians questioning the basic assumptions of liberal democracy.¹² This is presented as if it is an inexplicable and indicative, no doubt, of Bulgarian lack of enlightenment.

While for both Ukraine and Bulgaria, independence was based on the moral issue of self-determination in the face of a disintegrating empire, today, independence has shown little actual economic or political progress. Both countries are stagnating economically, and the “democratic” movement that brought the current state system into power held in contempt by a large majority of the population. Adding more to the farce, the mere injection of money into the Bulgarian economy is recorded as “growth” by the west and the Bulgarian media. Of course, today, the prime rate is about 11% and actual growth in production is zero. Services dominate the economy once actual industry was sold off for scrap to the EU.

As of this writing, the average Bulgarian wage is \$400 monthly, and has the distinction of being both the poorest and most corrupt state in the EU.¹³ The former Bulgarian president, George Parvanov, had faced major impeachment vote both for his aid to Saddam Hussein as well as his failure to fight official corruption. Of course, the “punishment” for corruption is mere show, since this was known as a problem when Brussels accepted Bulgaria in a Russophobic panic. Parvanov, in good liberal fashion, called himself a “national socialist” in his campaign, but advocated, once in office, integration into

Director for Bulgaria. IMF Country Report No. 12/328

¹⁰ Brunwasser, Matthew (2009) “Bulgaria: Still Stuck in the Trauma of Transition.” New York Times, 10 November

¹¹ Novinite: Sophia News Agency. Bulgaria Election Body Fails to Censure Ruling Party MPs for Interfering with Elections, October 29, 2011

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Weaver, Matthew (2008) “EU Suspends Bulgaria's Funding.” Guardian, 23 July

NATO, liberal economics, and continued EU membership.¹⁴

In 2007, the EU suspended all aid to Bulgaria on the grounds that corruption had gotten worse, not better, since Sophia was accepted into the EU.¹⁵ Weaver reports for the British Guardian newspaper that the EU suspended aid to Bulgaria because of severe spending irregularities and the lack of any attempt to fight corruption and mismanagement. Hence, as of now, we are dealing with two countries known for their radical nationalism now facing economic failure and political meltdown.

Siderov and Attack!

That the main nationalist party in Bulgaria is called Attack! should now come as no surprise. Volen Siderov, the head of that party, led the charge for the government's impeachment. Siderov is one of the few politically active Bulgarians with an actual program of reform that does not include the resurrection of the USSR. Needless to say, there is no insult, slander or misrepresentation that has not been applied to Siderov in the western press.

Countries in the Slavic world are almost entirely unknown to the westerner. Therefore, any media label sticks, no matter how false, since there are few to answer the accusations or defend the slandered outcast. Journalists and academics can say what they please without fear that anyone will correct their caricatures and slander, since only a handful of specialists have any knowledge whatsoever. For them, with their economic life totally dependent on government or a university, they either join in the slander or pick another career.

His nationalist program is interesting reading, since Siderov, like his counterparts in Serbia (the Radical Party) and Ukraine (the Independent Socialist Party) has an agenda that synthesizes both nationalism and economic statism and socialism. Siderov is not content to simply rely on nationalist slogans, but wants to place the idea of ethnic solidarity on an economic basis in his rejection of both neo-liberalism and the “virtual economy.”

Siderov holds that following the model of Korea or Japan is important for small countries who need to state to maintain their economic independence.¹⁶ For Siderov, the state is the central institution of national development for countries facing colonization. It should be noted that for what is clearly a third world country in Europe (as there are many, including Serbia, Moldavia and Romania) the one thing that the former Soviet Bloc states have in common is a high rate of literacy and scientific understanding, which was stressed in the militarized Soviet economy. The same high level of literacy existed among the east Asians as well, a fact not lost on Siderov and his (substantial) following.

His (2011) work *The Basics of Bulgarianism* is written for the common man. He mocks the pretensions and contradictions of American writers on the topic. Not having a solid view of nationalism and often using caricatures and distortions that are congenial to their ideology, Siderov first refutes the idea that nationalism is a product of the rationalist “French Revolution”:

There are some propagandistic contemporary “political scientists” in our country repeating the lie that the idea of “nationalism” began to be used only in the 19th century. They suggest that the term has been around for about 200 years, that is, after the French Revolution. In fact, in the early 16th century the Italian author and politician Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) used “nation” in today's sense of the word. In that same century, Charles V (1519-1588) was called “Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.”¹⁷

¹⁴ MediaPool.bg. Първанов си призна за “Гоце” June 23 2006

¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ Dikov, Ivan (2009) “Interview with Volen Siderov.” Sophia News Agency 26 June 2009 (novinite.com/view_news.php?id=105072)

¹⁷ Siderov, V. (2007). Моята битка за България. Бумеранг БГ, 4-5

To use the French Revolution to act as the foil for the creation of “nationalism” is a bit like calling the Orange Order the mainstay of Catholic power in Belfast. The French Revolution rejected all ties of language and culture, and posited a purely bourgeois order of individuals all seeking their self-interest. No concept of unity was ever put forth, nor was one wanted. Quickly dispatching the stupider myths of nationalism, he quotes several western writers on the topic, and finally, summarizes the concept:

The older view of the term, the one we use, “nation” (нация) includes a common language, culture, religion and territory. From this, a state can form that encompasses all of these commonalities. The word “nation” should not frighten us nor should we avoid using it. It is something quite natural and is related to the ideas of “heaven,” “earth,” and “mother” [in Slavonic]. The same goes for the term “nationalism” (национализъм).¹⁸

For Siderov, his main economic concern is the tremendous inequality of wealth in Bulgaria, where a handful of billionaires control the country. He holds that there are many causes of this, but one of the more significant is what he suggests is the predatory nature of foreign investment. It is clear that foreign investment in Bulgaria only serves to remove wealth, not generate it. There is not much of a Bulgarian market, so any EU investment can only be for predatory purposes. EU membership has just exacerbated this. In addition, one of the main planks in his party platform is to increase retirement benefits and social welfare programs for those affected by the government's neo-liberal policies.

Significantly, Siderov distinguishes nationalism from imperialism or state expansion:

When we describe nationalism, we must begin by realizing that there is no single program for nationalist ideas. In general terms, it is the defense of the interests of a specific ethnos. These are as varied as there are nations. “Nationalism” in England refers to an empire created by fraud and destruction over entire continents. . . Bulgarian nationalism comes from Rakovsky, Levsky and Botev, whose essential concept was maintaining the Bulgarian way of life in an order based on social justice. Conquering others was not on the agenda. [An empire] sends soldiers to kill for an oligarchic elite. . . There is nothing in common between the citizen and the ruling class. Globalist propaganda, however, teaches us that American expansionism in Iraq is something progressive, but defending the interests of a weak Bulgaria is a terrible thing.¹⁹

That nationalism is regularly conflated with its opposite – imperialism – cannot be anything but deliberate. Nationalism cannot be squared with the denial of all other nationalism just as it cannot be squared with the rationalist French Revolution. Nationalism came into existence as a resistance movement against imperialism. Imperialism is inherently a cosmopolitan idea, since empires do not have ethnic identities. Modern cosmopolitanism is the creation of multinational corporations, banks and the misused and abused American soldier. The grunt will never see any benefit from his sacrifices, but service to the ethnos, on the other hand, is personal, emotional and moral.

Since contemporary empires have no identity other than being the vehicle for a small elite, it must use all forms of manipulation to maintain support. Taking Bulgarian oil and selling off Ukrainian enterprises is called “democratization” and “the free market.” Resistance to such exploitation is called “hate.”²⁰ The creation of “terrorist threats,” “nationalist fanatics” or the growing crop of “new Hitlers” are required to continue to justify extremely high levels of foreign expenditures in imperial wars.

Yet, even the American still can reach a breaking point. As of 2014, there is no money nor

¹⁸ Ibid, (translations mine)

¹⁹ Ibid, pg 7

²⁰ Again the paper by Novaković (2010): “European” and “Extreme” Populists in the Same Row – the New Government of the Republic of Bulgaria” is an example of such atrocious and clearly forced reasoning.

political will for any military action in eastern Europe. Even more, there are not the men or military resources available. Unless the system can generate a “terrorist event” that can be credibly, but superficially, blamed on “the Russians,” the indebted US will just have to gnash its teeth in well earned frustration.

Siderov's error lies in believing that cosmopolitan expansion and imperialism is the “national” policy of the US or Britain. Of course, the reality is that the British ethnos has no power. Britain is, like the US²¹, controlled by a plutocratic elite who almost unanimously preach free-trade and globalization for economic reasons. They are no more “British” than Lenin or Trotsky were “Russian.” They had loyalties only to themselves and their ideological mystifications. The elites of all political parties in the US and EU deny the significance of ethnicity in general, though with some strategic exceptions which remain curious.

In terms of dealing with Bulgaria's neighbors, Siderov holds that Macedonia is an artificial country, created by the Comintern in the 1950s. Further, that the Turkish minority in the country is really the group that has introduced institutionalized corruption into a country that they hate. Siderov here does not and can not separate economic well-being from the sense of family and solidarity that nationalism shows at its best. From this fact, Siderov holds that nationalism is the best approach to international cooperation, since nations, in order to be consistent, must to recognize the legitimate ethic demands of everyone else States should see each other as equals, not as predatory agents that serve only to exploit smaller states for the rich in the larger ones.²²

The common good is essential for Siderov, as it is for all nationalists. There is no reason to sacrifice for a nation unless there is a “common” to defend and a solid sense of the “good” that can be shared. Since cosmopolitanism has a conception neither of the “common” nor the “good,” the moral question is conveniently not present. Without this approach, nationalism is as contradictory as cosmopolitanism. Hence, like every nationalist writer worthy of the name in the last 250 years, Siderov requires of all nationalists to respect the ethnic customs of others.

Conclusion

Bulgaria and Siderov are ideal to discuss the nationalism of oppressed peoples. This is because they have gone from one victimizer to another. Bulgaria's own communists, Moscow and now, Brussels have reduced this country, at one time a major player in the region, to an impoverished, well-educated and highly intelligent people. Her population is plummeting to a greater extent than Russia or Ukraine, partly because there is no reason to make commitments without certainty or incentive.

The exploitation of the EU in this regard is easily as unjustified as Stalin's decades earlier. The cynical use of the EU to stop any Russian advance is identical to the events leading to World War I. Yet in this case, Bulgaria is receiving help from China, meaning that Sophia may well become another hub of the Eurasian world. Let us hope this is so.

²¹ The American is not an ethnic group. Instead, it is a federation of states, regions and ethnic groups.

²² Dikov, Ivan (2009) “Interview with Volen Siderov.” Sophia News Agency 26 June 2009 (novinite.com/view_news.php?id=105072)

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(Hobsbawn was a Jewish communist called an "authority on nationalism" by the entire academic establishment. Most of his work was promoting Marx and Marxism globally. He did not possess the qualifications to grasp nationalism nor the intellectual honesty to pursue it. He sought only to destroy it while downplaying his ethnic identity).

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