In studying the social stratification of the nineteenth-century Bulgarian town, the historian is immediately perplexed by the many difficulties that arise in trying to analyze Balkan societies on the basis of the methods and terminology drawn from Western models. Terminology and methods are related of course, and it is really the question of methods which can frustrate an understanding of the social physiognomy of the peoples in question.

A good case in point concerns the concept of class. For the Western student of Ottoman history, a study of class composition is almost invariably affected by the image he has of the traditional classes of Western Europe. These classes, however, took shape in a specific historical setting and in the context of specific local patterns of interaction with other groups and classes that did not hold true for the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman history, to cite one very sweeping example, failed to see the development of that partial affinity of interests that in the West came to characterize relations between the crown and the rising middle classes.¹ One of the eventual results of this collaboration in the West was the ability of part of the middle class or bourgeoisie to be in a position to exploit ever larger numbers of hired workers; and if any single thing subsequently came to act as the defining criterion of the bourgeoisie as a whole, it was the simultaneous presence of a working class subservient to and dependent on that bourgeoisie. In the Ottoman Empire, however, at least where production and industry were concerned, there was no alliance between the sultans and the emerging capitalist classes, and, unlike in the West, the former did not take the steps that would have aided this element by indirectly or directly fostering the appearance of a working class. Rather, the reverse was true, for Ottoman rulers hindered capitalist development both by acts of omission (e.g., their failure to use tariffs to nurture domestic industry) and of commission (e.g., the 1773 firman of Sultan Mustafa III which reiterated state support for the restrictive and equalizing powers of the guilds).² Accordingly, capitalist development in the Ottoman Empire was significantly curtailed. In this situation, and especially in the absence of any true proletari-
at, the use of the term "bourgeoisie" in the context of nineteenth-century Balkan history, however appropriate it sometimes seems to be, can at other times be misleading.³

Other methods of analyzing social composition—e.g., the study of role differentiation, structural-functional analysis, occupational breakdown—can also be less than perfect tools for the examination of nineteenth-century Balkan society, and not only because these methods likewise tend to follow Western models. As paradigms developed in the abstract, such approaches sometimes presume a level of differentiation too sophisticated for application to relatively less advanced societies. But the greater problem here is that these methods, if they are obsessively concerned with descriptive distinctions, thwart the historian's ability to develop a holistic or integral understanding of society and the dynamics of social development. Insight of this sort requires not simply a listing of categories or groups which can be easily "pigeon-holed," but also the appreciation of consciousness, attitudes and patterns of social and political behavior.⁴

The point of the foregoing discussion is to offer a partial explanation for the decision here to examine Bulgarian urban society in the third quarter of the nineteenth century through the use of an ad hoc method combining a simplified structural-functional approach with class analysis in conjunction with a concern for the roles that emerged from membership in a certain occupational group or class. This decision hinges on a belief that while the historiography has seen significant achievements, it has not yet devised a fully acceptable theoretical model of Balkan social development as seen from the inside.⁵

More positively, the mixed approach suggested here offers the practical advantage of permitting a broader and less restrictive discussion of the evidence. Thus, one can cast a larger net in seeking to pull in the information that would be helpful for ascertaining social stratification. On the basis of the state of the literature devoted to the history of the Bulgarian town in the last phase of the Bulgarian national Revival,⁶ four areas of attention and concern come to mind as being relevant for a study of social composition: occupation and function; level of economic activity particularly in terms of relationships

³. For a recent statement of generally the same point in relation to the study of nineteenth-century Serbian history, see the Slavic Review, 36, No. 4 (Dec. 1977), 708-09 (review).
⁵. Useful efforts in this direction are implicitly or explicitly a part of such recent works as Todorov's Balkanskiat grad and Kemal Karpat's An Inquiry into the Social Foundations of Nationalism in the Ottoman State: From Social Estates to Classes, from Millets to Nations ("Research Monographs, No. 39"; Princeton Univ. Center of International Studies, 1973).
⁶. Called in Bulgarian the Vúzrazhdane, the period of the modern national Revival is dated from the 1762 appearance of the Paisii Khilendarski's Istoriia slavianobulgarska. The Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 marks the end of the Vúzrazhdane.
to the means employed to generate income; societal standing as reflected by standard of living and lifestyle; and social role in terms of the nature and pattern of behavior in the arena of public life and local affairs.

In providing a general definition of each of these four areas of concern, the easiest to deal with is the first one, the one that would categorize Bulgarian town society by occupation and function: for here there exists a generally accepted typology which serves as an initial guide: production (manufacture; handicrafts); exchange (wholesale; retail); services; administration; professions; the church; etc. All things considered, and notwithstanding the fact that the nature of the Ottoman system had a restraining effect in certain areas, many old and new fields of activity were open to Bulgarians in the quarter century that preceded Bulgaria's liberation in 1878. The widest range of occupations and functions existed in the sphere of production and exchange. Bulgarians engaged in production ran a widely differentiated gamut from a few isolated factory owners to the newest apprentices learning to sew. Commerce and trade were also highly differentiated fields in the Bulgarian lands, the spectrum ranging from merchants involved in massive import-export trade with Europe to local shopkeepers and itinerant peddlers. Some hired labor was used in both production and trade, as well as in such other tasks as construction. The governmental and administrative sphere, though undergoing the reforms associated with the Ottoman Tanzimat, failed to include more than isolated Bulgarians. Millet self-government theoretically opened certain ecclesiastical and thus quasi-administrative fields to Bulgarians, but it was only after 1872 and the establishment of a separate Bulgarian Church that Bulgarians could take advantage of occupations and functions heretofore dominated by Greeks. For educated Bulgarians, meanwhile, there were other opportunities in lower church offices, in several professions, and in certain other areas such as clerical work.

Establishing social stratification on the basis of the level of economic activity and the degree of control over means used to earn a livelihood or to generate income requires a preliminary assessment of what at that time and place constituted these means. For nineteenth-century Bulgarian town society, typical income-generating means included, inter alia, artisan tools, raw material, various kinds of mills, stills, disposable capital, a workforce, land, livestock herds, etc. The evaluation of such indices, it should be stressed cannot deal only in quantities, for one must be attentive to questions of relative productivi-

7. To recall the example cited above, the Ottoman situation was not conducive to the emergence of a layer of industrialists (though there were isolated exceptions). To cite another and different kind of example, the not insignificant number of Bulgarians who studied law in the West could not really develop as a group of practicing lawyers in the Bulgarian lands given both the use of Moslem law and the fact that the several commercial courts using Western law were dominated by foreigners or consular officials.
ty, to whether the means in question were passive or active, and to the potentials for application. For comparative purposes, for example, it would be worthwhile to note that as a result of their general sense of insecurity vis-à-vis the Ottoman system wealthy Bulgarian merchants refrained from applying their capital to the development of local industry. The indices in question should also be evaluated in context. For the commodity-producing crafts, for example, the number of journeymen and apprentices would usually be a reliable indicator of the standing of the master involved, whereas this aspect would have little bearing in those fields where a master's skill and reputation was the decisive element in acquiring livelihood and status. Finally, it is necessary to bear in mind that in Bulgarian society at that time many individuals supplemented their occupations with income generated by other means. Specifically, many Bulgarian townspeople—craftsmen and merchants—simultaneously practiced agricultural pursuits which substantially augmented the total household income. Revenue-yielding viticulture was especially widespread.

The third useful focus of attention has to do with social standing as reflected by standard of living and lifestyle. In this respect, some of the surviving physical evidence is as delightful to the tourist as it is informative to the historian. In the well preserved houses of such towns as Koprivshtitsa or such cities as Polvdiv the visitor obtains a very good idea of the opulent life enjoyed by prosperous Bulgarian merchants and others. Other indicators of social status in terms of the standard of living among Bulgarian townspeople (particularly among the upper and middle levels, for it is quite difficult to reconstruct the everyday life of the poor) can be found in such practices as financial support for monasteries, travel, and encouragement and support for the education of offspring.

What makes the next area of concern—social role in terms of participation in social and public life—so significant was the fact that in the middle decades of the nineteenth century great potentials existed for this kind of activity for a broad spectrum of Bulgarian town society (though again, not for those at the lowest levels). That Bulgarian society had become a participatory society was a consequence of the Ottoman practice of permitting a degree of self-gov-


government to recognize ecclesiastical groups, the millets. With the attempt to reform local government during the Tanzimat period, the situation became institutionally complex; but, basically speaking, in the towns it was the obshtini or municipal community councils which continued to provide a forum for extensive Bulgarian involvement in the management of local affairs. The composition and the prerogatives of the obshtini were vague and confusing in actual practice, and it is difficult to tie down all of the loose ends in their history; but it is clear that in the 1830s and 1840s there began a movement away from traditional leadership and traditional practice toward more formal, more open and more democratic community institutions. Throughout the Bulgarian lands this movement produced prolonged and bitter battles for control of local affairs, disputes which involved the participation of disparate groups running from traditional elites to irascible students. These struggles were both a source and a symptom of the social stratification and even the polarization of Bulgarian town society.

If complicated, this many-sided approach to Bulgarian town society is needed to deal with an urban milieu that by the middle of the nineteenth century had become relatively mature in Balkan terms. Urban development in the Bulgarian lands was one of the long-term consequences of a kind of quiet revolution, a gradual social transformation which had its origins in demographic and economic developments dating from the second half of the eighteenth century. Set into motion by these developments (which affected not only the Bulgarians of course), Bulgarian society abandoned its earlier lethargy and became, again in Balkan terms, an economically diversified people with a dynamic urban element spread over a network of several large cities and many fair-sized towns.

Several general processes were active in the expansion of existing urban centers or in the creation of towns and cities out of smaller settlements; and these factors had a varying impact as well on the nature of urban social strati-

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10. For an excellent and recent full-scale study, see Khristo Khristov, Българските общини през Възраждането (Sofia: Българска академия на науките, 1973).
11. For one famous example of these struggles for control of local affairs, see R. M. Karolev, Историята на Габровското училище (Sofia: Министерство на народното просвещение, 1926), pp. 85-87.
12. Bulgarians used the word grad to refer to both towns and cities. Only with regard to specific towns (e.g., Lom) was паланка (small town or township; now archaic) used. The Ottoman authorities classified settlements administratively, but seldom with any consistency. These administrative designations changed over time and did not necessarily reflect socio-economic realities. The handicraft and commodity-producing towns of Gabrovo and Koprivshtitsa, for example, remained officially villages until the 1860s. Towns are defined here as concentrated centers of 3,000 or more people for whom agriculture was not the basic means of livelihood.
lication. Of these processes, population movement, in terms of both natural increase and the migration from the countryside, was a salient aspect in the rise in the number and size of towns. The town population of the Bulgarian lands about doubled in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. Where migration from surrounding areas was at work, the demographic results for a given town might include significant numbers of artisans on the road to pauperization or the concentration of former peasants now engaged in various kinds of hired manual labor.

A second factor in urban development was the empire’s expanding market needs. This factor favored the rapid growth of handicraft towns among the Bulgarian mountain settlements, the bulk of whose populations became engaged in craft production. Thus, the industrious Bulgarians of Koprivshtitsa diversified their earlier stock-raising activities into a vigorous wool-textile industry. In Gabrovo, too, the combination of raw materials, entrepreneurship and market demand laid the foundations for what became a “flourishing guild and commercial city.”

Commerce per se was a third factor contributing to urban growth. Danubian settlements such as Lom, Ruse and Svishtov matured into large and busy ports with the expansion of river traffic and the construction of harbor facilities. As might be expected, the demographic consequences of the growth of these port cities included concentrated groups of merchants, warehousemen, office clerks, porters, etc. Commercial expansion likewise drew Bulgarians to inland commercial junctions such as Plovdiv and Adrianople, and

16. Tsonchev, Iz stopansko minalo na Gabrovo, p. 78.
to the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas. Unlike the Bulgarian character of the mountain settlements, the commercial cities tended to have cosmopolitan populations consisting of Turks, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians and others.

The fourth factor at work in the rise of towns and cities had to do with the administrative needs of the government. This bureaucratic factor could be a very powerful influence in the transformation of settlements. Shumen, the largest of the northern Bulgarian towns in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, lost its predominance after mid-century when the government designated Ruse as the capital of the new Danubian vilayet or province, a region which covered most of northern Bulgaria. Ruse's new lure enticed large numbers of Bulgarians and others in search of greater economic and social opportunities.

Towns in the Bulgarian lands ranged in size from several thousand inhabitants to several tens of thousands. An 1866 census listed Ruse and Shumen, both with slightly over 10,000 registered heads-of-household, as the largest cities of the Danubian vilayet. The same census indicated the presence of twelve middle-sized towns (those with taxable populations of between 5,000 and 10,000): Pleven, Vidin, Varna, Sofia, Svishtov, and others. Thirty-one settlements formed a third category covering places with up to 5,000 registered heads-of-household and including Turgovishte (4,812), Sevlievo (3,962), and Gabrovo (3,307). Many of the highland towns (Kotel, Elena, Triavna, etc.) fell into this third category. Towns outside the Danubian vilayet broke down in the same way as their northern counterparts: the large commercial and administrative centers (Plovdiv with 30,000 or more people); the middle-sized towns on the plain (Stara Zagora with 15,000-20,000 inhabitants; Kazanluk with 10,000 or more); and the smaller towns such as Koprivshtitsa (6,000-8,000) and Panagjurishte (8,000). The sixty or seventy towns in the Bulgarian lands in the third quarter of the nineteenth century strikingly underscored the rapid advances made by Bulgarian society during the period of its national Revival. If small compared to Western cities, these settlements surpassed the average Serbian town and, save for industry, carried out most of the functions of larger cities elsewhere.

22. Todorov (ibid., pp. 32-34) provides a careful analysis of census data for the Danubian vilayet. In this work he avoids the question of the coefficient necessary for arriving at the numbers for the total population from registers listing taxable citizens. The figures cited for the total population of other towns come from a variety of sources: Kosev, Novate istorii, pp. 107-08; N. Todorov, “Iz istorii na Karlovskoto abadzhiantso i gaitandzhiantso (30-70-te godini na XIX v.),” Izvestiia na Instituta Boti-Levski, 3 (1959), 142; Aleksandur Pavlov, “Ikonohimesko razvitie i sostoianie na gr. Kazanluk,” Sofia, Kazanlukhska družba “Rozova dolina,” Kazanluk v minaloto i dnes, I (Sofia: Pechatnitsa
As has already been established, small-commodity production and exchange dominated the urban economy of the towns in the Bulgarian lands. In the towns of the 1860s, these fields “showed an advanced process of division of labor and of stratification.” A broad occupational distribution of the towns of the Danubian vilayet has revealed that 48.8 percent of the registered population engaged in crafts, 16.9 percent in commerce, 19.9 percent in agriculture, 12.9 percent in miscellaneous activities (mostly in various kinds of hired work), and 1.5 percent in administration. The Balkan towns bustled with vitality as centers of production and exchange. Artisan shops hummed in dawn-to-dusk work, hawkers and buyers clamored in the bazaars, merchants thrashed out business deals in offices or coffee-houses, and porters rushed to meet arriving lighters in the ports. A foreign visitor caught the economic vigor of the Bulgarian town when, seeing and hearing the sparks and sounds of the Gabrovo metalworking shops, he called it a “veritable cyclops village.”

Town life had its disadvantages, of course. The quality of public hygiene was not high, although after mid-century the authorities were paying more attention to essential improvements such as drainage canals and water sources. Midhat Paşa, the Ottoman reformer who headed the Danubian vilayet for a time in the 1860s, attempted greater urban improvements, seeking to transform his capital of Ruse into a cultured city. But Ruse’s new sophistication often meant little more than more hotels, cafés, taverns, brothels (about thirty in 1870)—and a higher cost of living.

Lest the wrong impression be created by this general and quick overview of Bulgarian urban development, certain correctives and caveats need to be stated before one can move on to a more specific discussion of the internal stratification of the towns in question. As already noted, urban settlements in the Bulgarian lands varied widely in terms of size and function, factors which predictably had some greater or lesser impact on the composition and occupational distribution of the population. The entrenched rural pursuits of the townspeople likewise affected the town’s socio-economic appearance; and
some towns (Stara Zagora, Pleven, Vratsa, etc.), though busy with craft production, remained farming towns. The heterogeneity of the population is a major caveat to keep in mind. Only the mountain towns had a predominantly Bulgarian character. In other cities, Moslems and Greeks were numerous and sometimes in the plurality.

These and other considerations thwart any easy definition of the “typical” Bulgarian town. The homogeneous handicraft centers in the mountains have often been seen in this light, but to limit a study of the stratification of Bulgaria town society to these settlements would be to tell an unfinished story and to lose the richer and more varied social structure that occurred in the larger cities. Accordingly, to the extent possible, this study has as its concern the Bulgarian population of all cities and towns in the Bulgarian lands. Where mixed populations were present, its focus remains an ethnic one, though it might be added that some researchers have found general and specific similarities in the occupational breakdown of the population between Christian and Moslems.

The criteria being used here point overwhelmingly to a hierarchical model of society; and consistency and logic dictate the identification, isolation and discussion of the component parts of the Bulgarian town population in some sort of ranked order. This schema cannot be perfectly realized, however, and not only because Bulgarian society contained elements which do not easily fit into the basic framework suggested by the bulk of the population. In the period under review Bulgarian society was a dynamic one and class lines were shifting.

The fluid social situation thus prevents a categorical statement as to what group stood at the top of Bulgarian town society in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. As is well known, Bulgarian society lacked any kind of hereditary aristocracy. On the other hand, though socio-economic transformation had produced a prosperous modern business class, representatives of this upper capitalist element could not and did not always take a clear upper hand in social affairs, at least as businessmen. Rather, the dominant element in a number of Bulgarian towns involved a group which continued to reflect both earlier patriarchal themes and the lingering consequences of the system of Ottoman rule. This element is known as the chorbadzhii.

Bulgarian historiography has not definitively resolved the question of the

social character and role of the chorbadzhii; and Bulgarian Marxist historians have engaged in a great deal of contention on this topic. Some of the sources of this contention are easy enough to fathom. Many of the chorbadzhii performed administrative functions which varied extensively from place to place. Furthermore, chorbadzhii existed both in villages and towns; and this older and apparently rurally based institution could not keep pace with the metamorphosis of settlements. Part of the difficulty can likewise be traced to corruption in the use of the term itself. The role they played as a traditional elite and often as staunch supporters of Greek hierarchs earned for chorbadzhii bitter attacks from the side of the progressive and patriotic intelligentsia, with writers coming to use the term loosely to designate every influential Bulgarian, regardless of class or occupation, who failed to measure up to their standards of patriotism. At the same time, however, and ironically, the word was finding usage as an honorific among some well-to-do working businessmen. A Ruse memoirist noted how his father, although a small merchant, was addressed as a chorbadzhia (although he was not “a chorbadzhia of the first hand, such as were the rich chorbadzhii, most of them national bloodsuckers”). Such merchants were often called “new” or “young” chorbadzhii to distinguish them from the established notables, but still the paradoxical usage of the term confused the class lines of mid-century Bulgarian society and created a situation which has continued to bedevil historians. The bulk of the evidence, however, makes it clear that the chorbadzhii were a traditional elite enjoying social, economic and administrative prerogatives which made them a force to be reckoned with in Bulgarian society.

Their administrative role, albeit confused, was the clearest aspect of the later development of the chorbadzhii, whose origins have otherwise remained

29. It is particularly the question of whether the chorbadzhii formed a separate class that has drawn different answers from Bulgarian Marxist historians. The interpretation given here is to a certain extent similar to the one formulated by Dimitir Blagoev, the founder, of Bulgarian Socialism. Zhak Natan, an economic historian writing in the 1930s and later, expressed a similar interpretation. But after 1944, with the Soviet historian Nikolai S. Derzhavin in the vanguard, the Marxist historians began to treat the chorbadzhii as a bourgeois phenomenon. Dimitir Kosev refined this view by placing the notables on an upper level of the bourgeoisie, and Goran Todorov followed with a consistent definition of the chorbadzhii as the “big bourgeoisie.” Christo Khristov has subsequently reinterpreted the class nature of the notables, rejecting the view of Blagoev and Natan, but also denying that the chorbadzhii formed a higher level of the bourgeoisie. He views the chorbadzhii as a “stratum” (not a class) of people whose main distinguishing feature was their administrative role. (See his “Kum vuprosa za klassite i klasovite otnosheniia v bulgarskoto obshestvo prez Vuzrazhdaneto: Proizkhod, socialna prinadlezhnost i rolia na chorbadzhite,” Izvestia na Instituta za istoria, 21 [1970], 51-85, which also contains a brief account of earlier interpretations with bibliographic references.)

30. See, for example, Makedonitsa, II, Br. 10 (1868), Netavisimos, IV Br. 31, 18 May 1874.


obscure. The term itself was one of several titles used by both state authorities and the people to designate elders and notables whom the imperial authorities turned to for advice about local customs, for enforcement, and for giving the appearance of local control. The chorbadzhii handled a number of local affairs, state and ecclesiastical. But neither the central government nor the Church formalized its use of community elders, and a wide variety of local practices existed. Sometimes chorbadzhii were appointed, sometimes elected. They carried out their duties individually, in groups of two or three, in their own councils, or as members of the government’s network of administrative councils. Only with the Tanzimat reforms of the 1830s and after did the government try to do something about the chaos of local administration—and the growing antagonism of the populace against the domination of the chorbadzhii in local affairs.

What was happening was that the rule of the chorbadzhii was no longer acceptable to the progressive elements of Bulgarian town society who now decided to challenge the arbitrary power and the obscurantism of the traditional elite. The chorbadzhii, on the other hand, had come to regard their tax-collection and other duties as signs of social rank, and they resented any kind of dependence on the hoi-polloi. Helped by their ties with state and ecclesiastical officials, chorbadzhii circles thwarted efforts to regulate their position and activities. A number of social disorders broke out, a turmoil that necessitated government intervention.

The Porte, however, had no general solutions immediately at hand. Pending a complete overhaul of provincial and local administration, it treated local disputes more or less individually. Thus, in 1857 the head of the Tûnovo district issued a new charter on the chorbadzhiliuk meant to end the many disputes that had broken out in that area. The decree stipulated that the chorbadzhii was to be elected to a one-year term of office, with a year’s interval before the office could be repeated. The measure assigned the chorbadzhii a
fixed salary, and forbade him to charge service fees, to demand corvée, or to require peasants to sell him crops at artificially low prices. Safeguards against abuse included public and certified elections, formal accounting, and procedures for official investigation where there was evidence of malfaeance. (The decree also made slander of the chorbadzhia a punishable offence, a good illustration of the factionalism then reigning in Bulgarian society.)36 But neither this 1857 decree, nor indigenous Bulgarian efforts to reform their own obshtini, succeeded in settling local disputes, for these struggles fed on social and economic cleavages as well as on administrative grievances.

The chorbadzhii were not simply functionaries. Some of them held office incidentally, and many not at all. Notables far outnumbered the available administrative posts, with tens of chorbadzhi families living in a given town.37 These families held themselves apart from the rest of the population, and they married amongst themselves.38 Ultimately the point was reached where a contemporary could remark that he “was a son of the first chorbadzhiia of Triavna, a chorbadzhiia in the full sense of the word, because not only was [he] a chorbadzhiia, ... he had his chorbadzhilik as an inheritance from his father and grandfather.”39

The chorbadzhii, furthermore, were affluent, but rich in special ways. They composed, in the words of one historian, a “special rich class of people.”40 Tax-farming was a major source of chorbadzhi wealth,41 as was large-scale moneylending. In the 1850s, for example, one Elena chorbadzhiia had 315 debtors.42 The moneylenders frequently foreclosed, thus adding to another facet of their wealth—landowning and land speculation.43

Their economic activities were one of the factors which indicated that the chorbadzhii seemed to form a separate layer of society, one qualitatively different from the rich bourgeoisie. Although there were some borderline cases among livestock dealers and tax-farmers—men who were the most influential chorbadzhii of all—the big merchants of the 1840s and later gradually overcame the limited economic practices of that group; and the middle merchant-ry also developed as a nouveau riche class, one with a progressive outlook and

36. Bobchev, “Kanun-name ot 1857 g.,” pp. 79-101, containing the published text of the decree. For a somewhat different reading of the motives of the decree, see Khristov, “Kām vūprosa . . . na chorbadzhite,” p. 73.
something akin to a modern business attitude. The typical local chorbadzhii, on the other hand, though he may have dabbled in other activities, relied on traditional sources of income and retained a patriarchal outlook. Even town notables dealt on the level of the village economy. With exceptions, primitive exploitation set the chorbadzhii apart from the new capitalist bourgeoisie.

As well as economic activities, a distinct lifestyle separated the chorbadzhii from the modern business class. Their dress was special, their bearing arrogant. On their tax-collecting rounds, the chorbadzhii sat astride magnificent horses and rode amidst lavishly uniformed guards. From diet to workday patterns, they lived their own kind of life.44

The haughty lifestyle of the chorbadzhii symptomized their hand-in-glove relationship with state and ecclesiastical officialdom. As the bishop's man in the parish, the chorbadzhii was involved in the collection of the diocesan tithe, and he kept the parish priest in place.45 As a loyal mainstay of the state in the locality, the chorbadzhii wielded not insignificant state power and was often able to command local and provincial officials. About chorbadzhii Stoencho Gruiglou of Kazanluk a folk song proclaimed that over the land "ruled two tsars, the first . . . in Tsarigrad and the second, Gruiglou, in . . . Kazanluk."46 The chorbadzhii expected total deference from the people. More than that, they wanted to be feared, as was feared the Botevgrad notable whose "glance was so sharp and penetrating, that no one could bear it."47

The chorbadzhii stood as something akin to a class in defending every iota of the power which brought them deference and wealth. Their self-protectiveness led to obscurantism and to a reactionary role in local affairs. A newspaper noted that "the chorbadzhii do not understand the currents of the age. . . . They want always to be such, as they have been until now."48 A publicist who understood well the mentality of the notables pointed out that they desired that "whatever happens [would] happen in their way. They never have patience for contradiction or discussion even by their equals, and [certainly] not from people who in their opinion should not try to show . . . that they too know . . . something." The notables wanted their opponents to say sim-

47. Patev, Iz minaiovo na Tetevensko, p. 122; see also Bulgarski istoricheski arkhiv, fond 129, edinitia 1, list 89.
48. Turtsiia, 4 Nov. 1864, cited by Kalaidzhiev et al., eds., Narodno chitalishte "Is- kra" Kazanluk, pp. 43-44; and see Pravo, VIII, Br. 37, 23 Nov. 1873.
Thus it is chorbadzhiia, it is you who know."  

Although some chorbadzhi earned a good reputation among their fellow townsman, most contemporary progressive opinion despised the rapacity, the arbitrariness and the pro-Greek behavior that characterized many of the notables. These spokesmen castigated the chorbadzhi for their abuses in collecting state and ecclesiastical levies, for their economic monopolies and for their expectation that petitioners would come "not with empty hands." Contemporaries attacked the notables for their habit of dictating social behavior, for instance the demand of the Kalofer chorbadzhiia that a bachelor doctor marry if he wanted to make house calls. The Bulgarian press reported with indignation many instances where the notables tried to control what was said in church sermons. Another source of antagonism against the chorbadzhii was their practice of driving out teacher after teacher, either at the urging of a Phanariot bishop or because they themselves distrusted new pedagogical ideas. It was practices of this sort which helped to instigate the local struggles to remove the chorbadzhii from control of local affairs.

In summary, therefore, one may tentatively suggest that at least in a number of towns the top rung on the Bulgarian social ladder was still held by a traditional elite, the chorbadzhii. This elite was set apart by its wealth, its lifestyle, by the prerogatives it enjoyed, by certain patterns in its economic activity, and by the anti-progressive nature of its societal and public role. In almost every area, however, the supremacy of the chorbadzhii was being contested by emerging new elites, the most powerful of which was that formed by the upper crust of capitalist businessmen.

Both the vagueness of the situation and the loose usage of the term chorbadzhii, it is true, meant that in certain areas there was an overlap between that group and other kinds of businessmen. The overlap seems to have held

49. P. R. Slaveikov, Gabrovskoto uchilishte i negovite půrvi popechiteli (Tsarigrad: [Published by the Gabrovo School Board], 1866), p. 64.
52. B. Mints, "Dûrzhavno-politicheskie i sotsialno-stopanske idei v bûlgarskata doosvoboditelna literatura," Sbornik za narodni umotvorenia, nauka i knizhnina, 16-17, 2 (1900), 23.
53. Obretenov, Spomeni, pp. 63-64.
55. Kalaftiev et al., eds., Narodno chitalishte "Iskra" Kazanlûk, p. 43.
56. Turtzija, VII, Br. 43. 11 Dec. 1871.
particularly true for the first of the Bulgarian big merchant capitalists, the livestock dealers of the Ottoman Empire, many of whom became or were known as chorbadzhi. By the early nineteenth century, Bulgarian meat provisioners had taken control of the supply of slaughter animals to the army and the large cities. Some dzhelepi, as these meat contractors were called, owned herds which numbered in the tens of thousands, and their vital role earned them many privileges from the side of the government. Furthermore, the state designated these suppliers as collectors of the tax on sheep, the beglik. With their armed collection squads which travelled all over the Balkans, but released from taxes themselves, the dzhelepi-beglikchii were the wealthiest and most powerful Bulgarians in the 1830s and 1840s.57

Toward mid-century, however, a change began to set in that in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was to put a newer and different cast on the upper levels of the Bulgarian merchant class. What happened was that some of the livestock dealers, and their offspring, mastered more sophisticated and more modern business operations. Unsatisfied with the commercial limitations of supply contracting and tax-farming, they began to diversify their activity and thus affiliated with other Bulgarian merchants who, originating from different milieus, were also climbing the ladder of commercial success and who were reaching the highest ranks of Bulgarian society by virtue of their wealth, the sphere and diversity of their business operations, and the ever-expanding role that their economic power and influence allowed them to play. These developments represented the final stages of a process that had been going on for some time in Bulgarian commercial circles.

One facet of this process was the crystallization of a sense of ethnic self-identity among Bulgarian merchants. In the eighteenth century, commerce in the Bulgarian lands was in the hands of merchants who, regardless of their ethnic origins, were known as “Greeks.” Bulgarian traders, in trying to be as much a part of the empire’s Levantine elite as possible, adopted the Greek language, Grecized their names and took Greek women as wives. Before the assimilation was complete, however, some Bulgarian merchants who worked abroad began, in the 1820s and 1830s, to sense their Slavic identity and to support the national Revival of their own people. Their efforts inspired their colleagues within the empire, who also now began to forsake their Greek ways for a rediscovered sense of their Bulgarianism.

Meanwhile, helped by a general economic upsurge, by international treaties and by the low prices of local commodities, Bulgarian merchants forged more and more links between the Balkans and the European commercial sys-

tem. Trade volume went up steadily, despite continuing dangers in travel, the absence of regular postal and credit services, and the slowness of transportation. Although failures were frequent, the lure of material success attracted many able Bulgarians into commercial fields of endeavor. Their enterprise eventually molded them into a wealthy, prestigious and influential social class, and one that was differentiated into at least three levels: the big merchants dealing in large-scale import-export operations; a middle group whose activities often included both wholesale and retail trade; and petty merchants and shopkeepers, retailers of one sort or another and certain other kinds of small businessmen.

The big merchants did business internationally or over a large part of the Ottoman Empire. This group was involved in exporting Bulgarian goods to other parts of the empire or abroad; and they imported foreign goods for local distribution. Some of them had originated as ordinary craftsmen who expanded their commodity-production (of woolen goods, for example) to massive proportions, and, without industrializing, became major entrepreneurs specializing in the marketing of the commodity involved. Already by the Crimean War, for example, Georgi Kisimov of Tūrnovo, who began as a simple handicraftsman sewing woolen clothing, had earned a capital of about one million grosh from his commercial activities. Although it is difficult to fix firm boundaries, it would seem that a capital of 75,000 or so grosh would represent the lower limit for membership in the group of big merchants (some of whom had capital totalling more than a million grosh).

One of the unique features in the emergence of the big merchants, and a phenomenon that can be partially explained as a consequence of Ottoman rule, was the fact that many of the most successful capitalist merchants tended, both for reasons of security and for greater opportunity, to settle outside of the Bulgarian lands. Perhaps the best example of this kind of merchant, but one who maintained a presence in his native town, was Khristo Tüpchileshtov. Born into a leading Kalofer family in 1812, Tüpchileshtov as a young man did well in the wool trade. He transferred some of his business to Istanbul in 1832, and in time the Ottoman capital became his permanent seat. Tüpchileshtov soon won contracts to supply foodstuffs to the sultan’s palace, the War Ministry, and the jails; he sold uniforms to the army; and he purchased the tax for large provincial areas. These lucrative and semi-guaranteed con-

58. Viržhiniia Paskaleva has published the best studies on Bulgarian commerce. Her varied publications are too numerous to list here.
60. See Liuben Berov, "Ikonomicheskite posleditsi ot Rusko-turkska voina prez 1877-1878 g.,” Bǎlgarska akademia na naukite, Institut za bǎlgarska istoria, Osnovdenieto na Bǎlgariia ot tursko igo, 1878-1938: Sbornik statii (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bǎlgarskata komunisticheska partia, 1958), p. 443; and see Kosev, Za kapitalisticheskoto razvitie, pp. 28-52.
tracts provided him with the capital to take up international trade in wheat, skins, silk, rose essence and other items. He dealt with Western mercantile houses in Istanbul and elsewhere, and at one point intended to open an office in London. His capital ran into the many hundreds of thousands of grosh.\(^1\)

Though now living most of the time in Istanbul, where he had become part of the empire's Levantine elite, Tupchileshtov continued to have considerable influence in his native Kalofer, influence wielded through regular correspondence and occasional visits. As well as in certain economic areas, this influence spilled over into community affairs (e.g., the hiring and firing of priests and teachers) and various personal and family disputes.\(^2\) Similar kinds of interest and involvement held true for Bulgarian merchants who worked in Romania, Russia and elsewhere.

The firm of Tsviatko Radoslavov in Svishtov can serve as an example of a big Bulgarian merchant located in the Bulgarian lands. Begun in 1855, the firm at first concentrated on trade in skins, grain, wax, spirits, etc. By the 1860s grain was the major item in the firm's business, and Radoslavov had warehouses in Svishtov and Nikopol and agents in Istanbul, Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest. Radoslavov also engaged in some tax-farming, an activity which presumably earned him profits which he could use to expand some of his commercial operations. Thus, he soon came to be exporting large quantities of grain "through Galati to Western Europe, chiefly to England and France, and sometimes also to Austria-Hungary."\(^3\)

Radoslavov's real estate was once assessed at a value of 761,200 grosh, a very compelling example of the property level which differentiated the big merchants from the bulk of the urban population.\(^4\) Radoslavov's diversified holdings included houses, shops, an inn, a casino, and such agricultural properties as fields, arbors and gardens. Big merchants such as Radoslavov owned houses worth several hundred thousand grosh. They were sumptuous residences, as evident today to the visitor to the Plovdiv ethnographical museum which is housed in the magnificent residence built in 1847 by A. Kuiumdzhioglu. Though their numbers were small, the big merchants had the wealth, the connections and the power that brought them a place in the highest echelons of the Bulgarian movement both locally and generally.

The middle group of merchants, meanwhile, might be defined as those who served a district or an empire-wide market on a smaller scale than did the

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\(^1\) Nachov, Khristo P. Tupchileshtov: Zhivot i negovata obshtestvena deinost (Sofia: Kaloferskata blagotvorna i kulturno-prosvetna družba v Sofiia, 1935).

\(^2\) Ibid., pp. 144-45, 188-89 and passim.

\(^3\) Kosev, Za kapitalistichesko razvitie, pp. 48-49; cf. G. S. Kozarov, "Edin kru- pen stopanski deets na bulgarskoto vzrasthane: Tûrnovski kozhukhairin khadzi Slavcho," Bulgarska misal, 9, Nos. 4-5 (April-May 1934), 261-78; 9, No. 6 (June 1934), 364-76.

\(^4\) Kosev, Za kapitalistichesko razvitie, pp. 48-49; see Berov, "Ikonomicheske posleditsi," p. 443; and Tsonchev, Iz stopansko minalo na Gabrovo, p. 157 and passim.
big merchants; and who usually possessed a capital of several tens of thousands of grosh.\(^65\) They shipped local items (woolen goods, spirits, iron, tallow, grain, woods, etc.) in return for other goods, some of which they retailed in their home towns. A predominant part of this group was composed of former small-commodity producers who expanded their production and eventually came to concentrate on commercial activities.\(^66\) Former craftsmen in the wool trades, for example, prospered by their ability to develop an excellent market for woolen goods among the Turks and Arabs of the Middle East. A Koprivshtitsa partnership distributed stockings, slippers, abas and other woolens through outlets in Istanbul, Bursa and Alexandria, as well as in Salonika and Serrai. With the profits from these exports, the firm bought European goods for resale both in Koprivshtitsa and in Egypt.\(^67\) Bulgarian merchants also transacted business at the popular and intensive fairs which attracted buyers and sellers from far and wide.\(^68\)

The middle Bulgarian merchants, or at least many of them, prospered. They dressed in the latest European-style clothing and lived in comfortable homes. These residences combined roominess with an organized approach to life that, while remaining very Balkan, betokened a kind of middle-class outlook. The rooms on the bottom floor were small and snug, well suited to the winter’s night. In the summer, the household moved upstairs, where breezes flowed from trellised verandas through larger and brighter rooms. Quite a few of these merchants also had the status that came from travel, particularly the travel to the Holy Land that brought with it the right to bear the esteemed honorific of khadzhi.\(^69\) The middle merchants formed a significant and constant component of a town’s leading citizens; and in community and national affairs their behavior was that of innovators and modernizers for whom ethnic rights went hand in hand with reforms and advancement.

Much more difficult to characterize is the group of petty traders which constituted the largest part of the merchant or commercial category of the population. These businessmen were most often retailers (e.g., grocers); but such other pursuits as tavern-keeping inn-keeping and small-scale money changing are often included in this general grouping. This was a great deal of overlapping activity among small-scale businessmen. A memoirist from Sevlievo has thus described how his father who started out as a shoemaker eventually became the owner of a grocery store joined together with a tavern. Simultaneously, he was a partner in a meat shop. And this was not all. The family

\(^{65}\) Tsonchev, Iz stopanskoto minalo na Gabrovo, pp. 157-85 and passim.
\(^{66}\) See below.
\(^{67}\) Madzharov, Spomeni, p. 214 and passim; Todorov, Balkanski grad, pp. 256-61.
\(^{68}\) Todorov, Balkanski grad, pp. 390-405.
in question owned three arbors which produced cherries, grapes, vinegar and brandy—all of which were sold at a profit; it cultivated three fields and it raised silkworms. Another contemporary has left a description of the business run by his father and uncle in Kazanluk, a store which retailed tobacco products, groceries and glassware; and, after 1860, books as well. Inn-keeping, which was fairly widespread among Bulgarians, provides a case where ethnic considerations affected occupational distribution, for pursuits involving the sale of spirits were closed to Moslems. As well, the economic role of a given town or city could also alter the occupational distribution of small-scale businessmen.

Naturally, the petty businessmen ranked far below their more successful compatriots. They did not enjoy the same standard of living or lifestyle, and for many life was a day to day struggle; and it was necessity rather than choice that dictated the simultaneous pursuit of varied income-producing activities. On the other hand, they were not poor and they were able to accumulate moderate amounts of property. Their status, meanwhile, mirrored their relative economic level; and it is interesting to note that Ottoman authorities distinguished between these “shopkeepers” and the more respected “merchants.”

Some patterns of behavior held true for all levels of the merchant class. Their travels helped these merchants to become agents of social change. They innovated in matters as mundane as dress and as consequential as the spread of progressive attitudes among a people still influenced by a deep sense of tradition. Acquaintance with advanced societies convinced Bulgarian merchants of the value of education and culture. They proceeded to better themselves in a number of ways, including the learning of languages. An English visitor to Bulgaria shortly after the Liberation observed that the Bulgarian “merchants and professional men . . . [would] bear comparison with men in a similar position in any other country in Europe. . . . [T]here are few among them who cannot speak French, German or English.” What they did to advance themselves, moreover, the merchants did many times over to further a patriotic secular culture among their people. Businessmen funded the construction of schools, subsidized publications, and supported the foreign edu-

70. Peshev, Istoricheskite sUbitiia, p. 14; see also Obretenov, Spomeni, pp. 40, 43 and passim.
75. Todorov, Balkanskiat grad, p. 371.
76. Madzharov, Spomeni, pp. 45, 71; Bozveliev, Spomeni, p. 11.
cation of many young Bulgarians, their own sons included. These businessmen were also active in the struggle against chorbadzhii domination of local affairs.

The merchants also raised the level of Bulgarian economic culture by introducing new techniques and instruments. Unlike the Greek trader who shipped foreign goods, moreover, Bulgarian businessmen often dealt in Bulgarian commodities and thereby stimulated various branches of the native economy. On the other hand, the business class as a whole failed to use its capital to introduce mechanized production on any significant scale.

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the merchantry functioned as the primary economic mover of Bulgarian society and aspired to its social pinnacle. Ottoman officialdom deferred to merchants even more than to the respected guildsmen, the group which would come after the merchants in most models of Bulgarian social stratification.

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The transition from merchants to artisans, like the one from chorbadzhii to merchants, must be a conditional one, for here too there was a considerable overlap. Many Bulgarian merchants, though set apart by the decisive commercial preponderance of their operations, had emerged from the ranks of craftsmen and continued to function as handicraft producers and even as members of guilds. Another kind of problem relates to the classification of those Bulgarian craftsmen who worked not in commodity-producing fields but in various trades and services (as dairymen, butchers, bakers, masons, carpenters, etc.). Given the central importance of the guild (esnaf) as an institution of Bulgarian life, and the self-identification of tradesmen as guildsmen first and foremost, it seems appropriate to use guild membership as a common denominator regardless of the type of specific occupation.

As a group, artisans composed the most numerous element in Bulgarian town society. The long history of crafts and trades in the Ottoman Empire had intensified in the second half of the eighteenth century. Population growth, role differentiation, market expansion and increased state purchasing stimula-

78. See, for example, BULGARIAN ARCHIVES, fond 49, edinita 92, list 6; G. Khristov, SVISHTOV V MINALOTO, 86-1877 (SVISHTOV: N.P., 1937), p. 177; Iz arhiva na NAIDEN GEROV, ed. T. Fanev, 2 vols. (Sofia, 1911-14), I, 985.
79. Tsonev, Iz stopansko minalo na Gabrovo, p. 77.
81. On a train filled with Turkish officers during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, Mikhail Madzharov and his father immediately let it be known that they were merchants. It was a way of avoiding possible trouble in a strained atmosphere between Bulgarians and Turks (Madzharov, SPOMENI, p. 329).
82. Todorov, BALKANSKIAT GRAD, p. 259.
ted most craft-related pursuits. Coinciding with Bulgarian movement into the towns, the rising potentials for handicraft production and artisan skills encouraged the Bulgarians to expand and to diversify their participation in such fields to the point where they came to dominate many of them. All the time, the guilds associated with these professions maintained their institutional vitality.84

Thanks to state protection and to the weight of time-honored practice, guilds exercised both social and economic power in the nineteenth-century Bulgarian community. A londzha of council of masters headed the guild. Into its purview came esnaf affairs (promotions), professional matters (the determination of prices), disputes, and—where other communal or ecclesiastical authority was neither present or effective—divorces and civil cases. The guild acted as a tax-collector for its membership. It built up its own treasury by dues, and used these funds to purchase raw materials in bulk, to provide loans, and to support local cultural activities. In general, Bulgarian guilds were professional organizations which looked after most of the interests and needs of the artisans they grouped together.85

But the guilds also offered something more abstract but no less important for placing craftsmen in Bulgarian town society—that blend of professional and personal attitude toward life known as the esnaf morality. A love of work permeated the artisan ethic. The craftsman was a man for whom labor was the key to self-respect—and self-sufficiency was the surest mark of a good person. He spent his life working sixteen-hour days to build up his position and his reputation. Another consequence of the artisan’s approach to life was a spirit of frugality. The guildsmen saved, kept tight accounts and lived simply. He held high standards of personal and public behavior; for not only was he a useful individual, he was also a morally clean person, standing apart by his strict observance of fasts, his religiosity and his honesty. His personal stature and his conscientious performance of his trade raised the handicraftsman in the eyes of outsiders and brought him the respect of Ottoman officials.86

He and his guild treated their common funds as sacred property, an attitude in sharp contrast to the financial malfeasance of many local state and ecclesiastical dignitaries.

Relating to one another as to equals, the tradesmen incorporated democratic procedures into their guilds. The council of masters worked on the principle of collective decision, and yearly assemblies reasserted, at least sym-

85. Tishkov, Istoriia na ... zanaiatchistvo, pp. 12-18.
86. See the excellent sociological discussion of the guilds in Khadzhiiski, Bit i dushevnost.
bolically, the ultimate authority of the guild’s membership. Most guilds were “foyers of internal freedom.” Here too there was a great contrast between the guilds and the arbitrary rule of paşas, bishops and chorbadzhi; indeed, this dichotomy served as one of the major causes of the many disputes for control over local affairs. Guildsmen in many communities formed the vanguard in the campaign against chorbadzhi misrule.

A related sign of the activist and patriotic role of guildsmen in local affairs (and at the same time an indication of the prosperity of guildsmen) was the extensive guild participation in the cultural rebirth of the Bulgarian people. The guilds supported monasteries and schools, and they took advantage of their state backing and their available funds to protect and sustain the Bulgarian movement for a separate church, one free of Greek control.

This pattern of guild behavior held generally true for the many different guilds that existed, for there were about one hundred separate crafts and trades being practiced in the Bulgarian lands by the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Typically Bulgarian tradesmen included tailors, furriers, tanners, dyers, cobblers, cooperers, coppersmiths, carpenters, bakers, packsmakers, potters, blacksmiths, braziers, tinsmiths, and various wool workers. Particular trades grew strong in different areas, sometimes due to geography, but more often the result of synergistic development with other branches of the economy. Thus, Kazanlük braziers and tinsmithery followed from that area’s production of rose essence. By far the best example of economic interdependence was that between Bulgarian sheep raising and the wool crafts.

The wool-textile industry formed the economically and historically most important branch of Bulgarian handicrafts; and the social impact of the growth and differentiation of this area of activity was profound. Wool manufacture took in the production of general purpose cloth, clothing, carpets, and the braids (gaitan) used with Middle Eastern dress. State purchase of uniforms and bedding stimulated wool manufacture, as did Bulgarian cultivation of a market that extended to Asia Minor. The introduction of the iron-toothed wheel also spurred production.

The wool-workers of the towns of the Stara planina, to cite the example of but one area of production, followed a yearly work cycle in which they were itinerant merchants as well as producers. After intensive manufacture during

the spring and summer, masters and journeymen assembled in the fall in caravans for the trip south. Those who went as far as Asia Minor spent a month on the road or on the sea, selling their wares as they went. Toward the end of winter they trekked homewards, where in their absence the women and apprentices had been rebuilding the stock of such simple items as stockings and sashes.92

The ability of the wool craftsmen to go out and find markets helped sustain a high level of production. In Tŭrnovo in 1858-60, the wool industry employed 400 people in about sixty or seventy shops, and this intensive manufacture bolstered such related crafts as dyeing.93 But even the wool trades, like other branches of production, were rocked from time to time by the state's failure to maintain a sound monetary system and by the influx of Western manufactured goods resulting from unequal trade treaties agreed to by the Porte. On the whole, however, the Bulgarian handicraft industry remained in high gear until after that country's liberation in 1878.94

The economic boom and the specialization of production, combined with the failure of Bulgarian commodity-producing guilds effectively to enforce equalizing regulations, led to significant differentiation and social mobility.95 This trend was most marked in the wool-related fields. Market demand saw some masters take up more intensive production in shops which employed ten, twenty or more journeymen and apprentices. More and more, however, the master himself was concentrating his attention on the sale of the goods produced and on the acquisition of the larger amounts of raw material that were becoming necessary. As they demonstrated success in the commercial end of the business, these masters saw themselves entrusted with the sale of the production of other craftsmen (and the opportunity to retain guild offices for a number of years, another outward sign of stratification). They accumulated greater profits, money which they could use either to expand their own production or as founding capital for essentially commercial enterprises. Joining the merchant class completed the social evolution of the most successful and influential craft producers.96

92. Khr. P. Popov, Grad Klisura v Aprilskoto văzstanie: Ocherk za minaloto i nastojašte na grada (Sofia: Pechatnitsa S. M. Staikov, 1926), pp. 7-8; Nikolai Todorov, "Za niakoi promeni v xaraktera na tsekovata organizatsia u nas prez pūrata polovina na XIX v.," Istoricheski pregled, 14, No. 4 (1958), 49.
93. Natan et al., Ikonomikata, p. 232.
96. Nikolai Todorov, "La genese de capitalisme dans les provinces bulgares de l'Empire Ottoman au cours de la première moitié du XIXe s.," Bulgarska akademii na nauke, Institut za istoria, Etudes historiques, 1, 229-30; idem, "Iz istoriata na Karlovskoto abadzhihsto i gaitandzhustvo (30-70-godini na XIX v.)," Izvestiia na Instituta Botev-Levski, 3 (1959).
True, the social and occupational transformation was not always clear-cut. Some of the biggest artisan-merchants continued to identify themselves as simple guildsmen rather than as independent businessmen. Furthermore, the new bearers of capitalist interests did not try to destroy the guild system from within. In the opinion of Nikolai Todorov, the continuation of capitalist elements within the guild was another peculiarity of the Ottoman system. For fiscal and logistical reasons, Todorov argues, the Porte backed up the power of the guilds, and rather than fight these state-supported institutions from without, the emerging Bulgarian bourgeoisie decided to develop their capitalist interests from within.

(Here it is probably appropriate to point out that capitalist development in commodity-production fell short of even the beginnings of industrial production in any true sense of that phrase. Some of the capitalist entrepreneurs who emerged from artisan ranks built up massive putting-out operations, but factory production proved almost stillborn. Excluding flour mills, only about eleven factories using steam power and machinery were in operation in the Bulgarian lands in the 1870s. Accordingly, there was no working class or proletariat to speak of.)

Deserving of somewhat separate mention would be those Bulgarian guildsmen engaged in various services and trades. With some exceptions, these areas lacked the same opportunities for differentiation enjoyed by the commodity-producing crafts. With circumscribed potentials for expanding their activity, these Bulgarian townspeople stood at a level about even with or slightly below the bulk of the small-commodity producers and the majority of the petty shopkeepers.

Apprentices and journeymen made up the lowest stratum of the artisan grouping. In terms of the social stratification of Bulgarian town society, journeymen and apprentices would seem to belong to this category, although some researchers include them in the ranks of hired manual labor. As noted above, in spite of the growing outside competition, Bulgarian crafts continued to prosper in the third quarter of the nineteenth century; and the potential was present for promotion within the guild. The attitude and expectations of journeymen and apprentices could not but be affected by the possibility of advancing to the rank of independent master. Undoubtedly, as assistants they endured harsh and demanding conditions of work for little

97. Kisimov, "Istoricheski raboti," 4, No. 9, 920; 5, No. 5, 415.
99. idem, Balkanskiat grad, pp. 230-94.
100. Kosev, Za kapitalizheskoto razvitie, p. 119.
remuneration. Apprentices sometimes received no pay at all. In return for food, lodging and some training, they worked mostly as servants in the master's household.\footnote{Kozarov, “Edin krupen stopanski deets,” pp. 263-65; Bozveliev, Spomeni, pp. 71-76; Popov, Grad Klisura, p. 9; Natan et al., eds., Ikonomikata, p. 249; Snegarov, “Po voprosa za klassite,” p. 209.} Journeymen received more responsibility and some pay, perhaps several hundred grosh a year (or in the neighborhood of from one-tenth to one-twentieth of the income received by their masters).\footnote{Natan et al., eds., Ikonomikata, p. 249; Pavlov, “Ikonomichesko razvitie . . . na gr. Kazantip,” p. 302.} To repeat, what was important for many journeymen was that there was a goal in sight, one that promised the reward of success. One memoirist thus recalled how in 1870 at the age of twenty his master sent him to go to the town of Orkhanie to set up on his own as a tailor. His “guild had prepared a good welcome. They found [him] a table, a shop in the marketplace, apprentices and so on . . .”; and he soon established himself as a respected citizen.\footnote{Patev, Iz minaloto na Tetevensko, pp. 120-22; cf. Kozarov, “Edin krupen stopanski deets,” pp. 263-65.}

For some apprentices and journeymen, it is true, there was no way out; and, effectively speaking, they did join the ranks of hired manual labor, the category which formed the lowest recognizable group in Bulgarian town society. Other major components of this group included even some artisans who could not find steady work in their own locality and who as migrants to near and distant cities had to hire on with more successful producers. One researcher has thus discovered that in the 1860s close to three hundred artisans and assistants had come to Turnovo from nearby settlements, and then moved elsewhere in a continuing search for work.\footnote{Todorov, Balkanskiiat grad, pp. 352-54.} Two other ascertainable elements in the hired labor category were represented by individuals who practiced routine manual tasks in an urban setting (carters, porters, warehousemen, cleaners) and, more uniquely, by those Bulgarians, often former peasants, who worked in the agricultural pursuits that were practiced in Bulgarian and other Balkan towns.\footnote{Todorov, Balkanskiiat grad, pp. 280-93, for a discussion of the whole question; and Kiril Lambrev, Polozhenieto no rabotnicheskata klasa v. Bt?lgariia ot Osvobozhdenieto do nachalota na XX vek (1878-1804) (Sofia: Bulgarska akademiia na naukite, 1954), p. 25.} Only in a few places did there appear small numbers of workers who might be considered the beginnings of an industrial proletariat.\footnote{Gandev, Aprilskoto vustanie, pp. 17, 26; Todorov, “The Balkan Town,” p. 50.}

As is often the case, history has bequeathed only scanty information on the life of the hired manual workers. Marxist historians habitually refer to this group as the poor stratum in the town,\footnote{Ibid., p. 355.} and some researchers have supported this conclusion with statistical analysis.\footnote{Todorov, Balkanskiat grad, pp. 355-56.} For these elements...
of the population, life was indeed a hand-to-mouth existence; and there was little prospect for a better future. These individuals received low incomes, with most ordinary laborers making several hundred groš a year (and factory workers doing slightly better). In part of the Bulgarian lands hired labor was often migratory labor; and such groups tended to concentrate in the larger cities. The poor played little role in public life, not even (as Marxist historians are now coming to admit) in Bulgarian revolutionary struggles.

All of the groups discussed above fall more or less comfortably into place, since (with the partial exception of the chorbadžii), they were based on occupations tied to commodity production, exchange or trades. Bulgarian town society also contained other though smaller groups of individuals working in administrative or quasi-administrative fields, in the professions, in clerical work, in cultural fields, and in certain other areas. Here we shall discuss only those cases where there was a significant group representation.

The lower clergy was one such field. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the influx of secular and well trained teachers put monks and priests in an unfavorable light, as did the appearance in parts of the Balkans of Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries. However, these developments had no noticeable impact on the number of priests. Towns and cities usually had several churches (ten in Plovdiv, five in Tărnovo, etc.), and these parishes were often served by a group of priests (five in Klisura, twelve at one time in Chepalare, etc.). Questions of religious motivation aside, the relative security of clerical life attracted Bulgarians to this field. Unlike the village priest who sometimes lived close to poverty, those in town parishes earned moderate incomes. They built comfortable homes and had the means to support the education of their children. Also indicative of the status of the clergy was the fact that...

114. Konstantin Kosev, Nikolai Zhechev, and Doïno Doïnov, Istoriia na Aprilskoto vûstanie, 1876 (Sofia: Partizdat, 1976), pp. 82-84, 104.
116. T. Draganova, "Gradskata obština v gr. Tûrnovo prez XIX v.," Izvestia na Okruzhiia muzei- V. Tûrnovo, 3 (1966), 74; St. N. Shishkov, Plovdiv v svoeto minalo i nastoïashche (Plovdiv: Tûrgovska pechatnitsa, 1926), p. 132; Patev, Iz minalo to Netevsko, p. 75; Popov, Grad Klisura, p. 7.
a number of former teachers became priests (sometimes, it is true, after losing their jobs to better trained educators). Priests had traditionally enjoyed some prestige in Bulgarian society, though they were increasingly caught in a difficult bind. On the one hand stood the domineering chorbadzhii who did not hesitate to interfere in parish affairs and even in liturgical practices. On the other hand stood the rivalry for control of local cultural affairs represented by better educated Bulgars who at this time were arriving to work as teachers.

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The teachers who usurped the former cultural role of the clergy composed the largest element of the Bulgarian educated elite. Well over a thousand Bulgarians taught school at some point in the middle decades of the century. Larger towns sometimes employed a dozen or more teachers in their various schools; and a number of villages now had some kind of primary teacher.

Considerable differentiation occurred among these teachers. The first teachers were the cell-school or literacy teachers, men who were often barely literate themselves and who taught boys to read and write at the same time they practiced a craft. Next came those teachers, usually called daskali, who pioneered modern primary schooling by introducing the Bell-Lancaster method. But these teachers dominated Bulgarian education only for a short time. Already in the 1840s the first foreign-trained Bulgarians were returning home to open "class" or middle schools, and to take over the leadership of local schooling.118 "Class"-school teachers disliked to be called daskal. They looked on themselves as modern educators, and they conducted themselves in the style of the teachers they had encountered abroad.119 The best-qualified "class"-school teachers received the designation "chief teachers." As well as the middle school, these men administered a town's primary institutions.

Tabulation of biographical information for ninety-five middle school teachers has shown that they were young men for the most part; and they boasted, for their time and place, impressive educational qualifications. Sixty-three of these teachers had obtained all or part of their secondary education in foreign schools. Forty-four members of the group had higher foreign education.120 By the 1860s and 1870s, higher education was becoming a requirement for the "class"-school teacher in the Bulgarian towns.121

Though they had better training and a more professional appearance than

118. Iurden Nenov [Iurdanov], "Avtobiogrfiia," Sbornik za narodni umotvorenia, nauka i knizhnina, 13 (1896), 361.
120. More details on the methods used to assemble such biographical information can be found in the author's "The Formation of a Nationalist Bulgarian Intelligentsia, 1835-1878," unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, University of Wisconsin, 1974.
121. Cf. Iz arkhiva na Naiden Gerov, 1, 124.
the *daskali*, the "class"-school teachers proved not immune to the frequent moving about that characterized the earlier teachers.\(^\text{122}\) The middle-school teachers in the study group had an average of almost four different posts in the pre-1878 teaching careers (eighty cases determinable out of ninety-five individuals); and their length of stay per post averaged out at less than four years, with thirty-four of the teachers staying less than an average of three years at each of their posts. These figures second the testimony of other sources on what was in effect the rampant job instability of even the best qualified Bulgarian teachers. This problem originated in the strained relationship that existed between the educators and the school officials of the communities for which they worked.

The teachers collided with the initial group to control school affairs, the *chobbadzhii*, whose ranks contained not only obscurantists, but also supporters of the Greek domination of the Orthodox *millet* and of Christian cultural life in general. But it was not only the teachers' dedicated patriotism which caused problems; for an even more basic conflict of attitude also antagonized relations between elders and what seemed to them to be querulous young agitators.\(^\text{123}\) The *chobbadzhii* who infuriated teachers with their refusals to allow educational innovations were in turn chagrined when defied by inexperienced intellectuals. With their collusion with local Phanariot bishops, the *chobbadzhii* clearly had the upper hand in such situations. They could forbid teachers to sing in church, they could stop their pay, and they could have them arrested; for unlike the trust they showed toward merchants and artisans, Ottoman authorities treated teachers with suspicion.\(^\text{124}\)

A conceivable solution to the plight of patriotic Bulgarian educators suffering the persecution of the *chobbadzhii* and bishops lay in helping the progressive elements of town society to seize control of local affairs. Such alliances occurred in many localities, with teachers telescoping their cause and interests into already raging social and administrative disputes between the old and new forces in Bulgarian society.

Teachers usually had a role in the restructuring which followed in the aftermath of these social battles.\(^\text{125}\) Nevertheless, the changes in local educational administration seldom proved to be the panacea educators desired. Teachers still had to contend with community councils and school boards


dominated by the business class, a social group whose outlook on educational questions failed to coincide with that of idealistic intellectuals. Businessmen, though aware of the practical value of education, were willing to spend only so much on its behalf; and when the community's limited revenues failed to keep up with growing educational expenditures, they cut back. That kind of attitude upset the teachers, for it directly affected their own status in the community. Whereas in the struggles against the chorbadzhi the teachers had been turned to for advice and inspiration, they now saw themselves as the target of retrenchment.

Threatened teachers once again rose in defense of their interests. They cast their case in patriotic and progressive terms, and they embarrassed local officials with accusations of backwardness and lack of ethnic pride. But their own personal and professional interests dictated their specific disputes with school boards, beginning with the question of salary.

For teachers generally, salaries themselves ranged considerably. Depending on their experience and reputation, elementary teachers received as high as 7,000 grosh a year. Forty-eight recorded salaries for daskali in the third quarter of the nineteenth century averaged out at more than 3,500 grosh. The “class”-school teachers earned much more. Sixty recorded salaries for this group resulted in an average of more than 6,200 grosh. Best paid were the “chief teachers,” often with a salary of 10,000 grosh, and with some paid as high as 15,000. In terms of contracted salary, teachers fell into the middle and upper-middle income bracket of the town population.

What, then, was the source of salary disputes? To begin with, as a result of their higher education some teachers developed farfetched salary expectations; and when they returned to Bulgaria they simply felt that they were not paid enough. But by far the greatest source of salary problems was the casual attitude taken by school officials toward the timely payment of the teachers. When school boards ran out of money—which they often did with the limited powers of taxation—elders and businessmen shrugged, saying that there was nothing they could do. Bitter experience taught teachers to try to demand their salary in advance. Otherwise, when a crisis occurred, their sole alternative was to resign.
The controls which boards attempted to impose on teachers was another major area of discord; for the teachers saw themselves as the ones possessing the training, the knowledge and thus the right to guide the school's internal life.131 Discipline was a sore point, as was the issue of the teacher's social behavior and extracurricular activity. Teachers regarded these controls as insults to their maturity, and they objected as well to the heavy-handed and insensitive manner in which they were sometimes treated.132

Teachers could sometimes sway public opinion, and these issues fueled the factionalism which racked the Bulgarian community up to the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878. Reports of this turmoil filled the pages of the Bulgarian press. The cleavage lines had shifted, with teachers and their supporters (clerks in business offices, some activist young merchants, aware guildsmen and older students) locked in battle with the business elite (whom, revealingly, teachers characterized as chorbadzhii).133 School life suffered numerous interruptions.

Another result of the constant turmoil was the disillusionment it brought to the teachers themselves—no matter what their own responsibility. Disenchantment and the search for better opportunities took a number of teachers into different careers,134 while those who stayed in the profession moved about frequently in the quest for better working conditions.135 The more the teachers changed positions, the greater their instability—the greater their potential alienation. A further cause of job instability was the glut of educated Bulgarians in search of work as a result of the lack of other professional opportunities. Turnover in the teaching profession was high, jobs eventually became scarce, and by the 1870s a not-insignificant group of underemployed or unemployed former teachers had come into being.136 Though not all teachers were affected by career frustrations; the expressed discontent of a number of them would seem to have been a factor in their radicalization and participation in revolutionary conspiracies.

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Apart from teachers, the other significant professional group present in Bulgarian town society was that of doctors. The acceptance of Western medicine came sooner to the Ottoman Empire than did the acceptance of other


133. Uchilishte, V, Br. 3, 15 June 1875; Turtšia, I, Br. 32, 27 Feb. 1865; Naprednik, X, Br. 66, 1 Nov. 1875; Pravo, VII, Br. 12, 29 May 1872.


modern European practices. The government itself set up a medical school; and it assigned doctors to provincial and local governments as health officials. Cultured local businessmen also saw the need for modern medicine, and they encouraged physicians to settle in their communities.\footnote{Nachov, Khristo P. Tüpchileshtov, p. 192.}

The majority of Bulgarians who studied medicine attended the Ottoman medical school; but most spent their subsequent careers in the Ottoman army in distant parts of the empire. Only two Ottoman-trained doctors showed up in a study group of twenty-five doctors compiled on the basis of available information.\footnote{See note 120 above.} The remainder had degrees from schools in France (9), Russia (5), Romania (4), Austria (4) and Germany (1). Of the twenty-five Bulgarian doctors included in the study group, only ten spent most of their careers in the Bulgarian lands.

Doctors who worked in Bulgarian localities had several sources of income. The government post of city doctor paid (in 1864) 12,000 grosh a year, a good income base on which to build from private practice.\footnote{Iz arkhiva na Naiden Gerov, I, 710.} Bulgarian physicians had to compete with Greeks and foreigners for these government positions, and like the others they used bribery, favor and the intercession of powerful compatriots. A doctor in Koprivshtitsa thus asked the Russian consul in Plovdiv to help him force out a local Albanian on the pretext that he was a spy for Bulgarian enemies.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 710-11; cf. Ibid., pp. 15-16; At. Shopov, ed., “D-r Stoian Chomakov: Zhivot, deinost i arkhiva,” Sbornik na Bulgarskata akademii na nauke, 12, No. 8 (1918), 479-80.} Doctors hired directly by Bulgarian obsh-tini used the threat of leaving to assure themselves hefty retainers.\footnote{M. Iv. Madzharov, “Edna zdravna organizatsia predi Osvobozhdenieto: Spomen ot Koprivstitsa,” Búlgarska misul, 21, No. 4 (April 1937), 242-46; Nachov, Kalofe, p. 259.}

Despite their sizable incomes, several doctors came like the teachers to perceive their life as a series of frustrating attempts to win material security and status. From Túrnovo in 1857, where he was competing for the post of city doctor, Vasil Beron grumbled about the “kind of reward received by every learned person who comes to live among our still uneducated fellow countrymen.”\footnote{Iz arkhiva na Naiden Gerov, I, 15-16.} Where, however, doctors did establish themselves, they possessed the respect of authorities and the community. Teachers and schoolboards sought their advice on educational affairs, and they had a hand in various kinds of patriotic cultural activities.\footnote{Iliev, Spomeni, pp. 61-62; Khristov, Svishtov, p. 201; Karolev, Istoria na Gabrovskoto uchiliisko, p. 33; Arkhiv na Naiden Gerov, 1857-1876, 2 vols. (Sofia: Bulgarska akademii na nauke, 1931-32), I, 68.}
groupings in this miscellaneous category covered those literate Bulgarians who worked as clerks and secretaries in business offices. Isolated Bulgarians had careers as consular officials; some had jobs as railway clerks and telegraphists; and, after 1872, a few Bulgarians found posts with the Bulgarian Exarchate. In some locations, in Ruse for example, individual Bulgarians had positions in Ottoman provincial administration.

Finally, a case can be made for including students as a distinct social category in the Bulgarian town. The nature of contemporary schooling produced fifteen- and sixteen-year olds who considered themselves to be mature students rather than adolescent pupils. Students were set apart from much of the population by the level of their education; moreover, the content of that learning had also instilled in them a sense of patriotic and social activism. Students participated in the local struggles against Greek cultural domination and against chorbadzhii control. When, for example, in 1864 the Stara Zagora notables drove off the teachers and closed the school, a group of students took to the streets to protest. Although some older students were involved in political conspiracies against Ottoman rule, most of their activism took the direction of self-development and the formation of student societies.

In summation, it is clear that Bulgarian town society possessed a relatively complex social stratification, a stratification that accurately mirrored deeply rooted trends in Bulgarian life. Against the nineteenth-century Balkan context, a wide range of occupations existed; and there was also a deep differentiation with respect to wealth, property, lifestyle and status, with a number of gradations between the top and bottom of society. These differences manifested the dynamic nature of Bulgarian economic activity which, in creating the possibilities for individual advancement, also generated a noteworthy degree of social mobility. The formation of new groups with disparate outlooks on life found expression and reinforcement in the public life of Bulgarian communities.

Thanks to their vibrant socio-economic and public life, towns served a sine qua non role in the Bulgarian national Revival. The urban economy supplied the Bulgarian people's most vigorous productive forces and its most active and aware social groups. The towns and cities in the Bulgarian lands, on the basis of their economic, social and organization strength, acted as a hub from which spread the radials of the confident and strong ethnic self-awareness that was shortly to lead to the establishment of an independent Bulgarian nation-state.

York University

144. Iliev, Spomeni, p. 67; Madzharov, Spomeni, p. 272; Vasil'ov, Zhivot, p. 12.
145. Iliev, Spomeni, pp. 52-53.