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## **The Women's Movement in Bulgaria in a Life Story**

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**ABSTRACT** This article is a first attempt to research the activity of Dimitrana Ivanova, one of the most prominent Bulgarian feminists and, for almost two decades, chairwoman of the major feminist organisation in the country, the Bulgarian Women's Union (founded in 1901). It explores the social conditions of her life and provides a perspective for the understanding of gender relations in modern Bulgarian history. The article highlights the key issues that were addressed by the women's movement in Bulgaria as well as the international context in which Bulgarian feminism was situated.

Dimitrana Ivanova died in 1960 at the age of 79. From 1926 to 1944 she had been chairwoman of the Bulgarian Women's Union (Bulgarskiat Zhenski Suyuz). For the public her name, admired by some and ridiculed by others, became a synonym for a stubborn and rebellious individual. Her life, which was dedicated to the woman's cause, spanned various phases of the struggle for women's emancipation in Bulgaria as well as two distinct periods: the 'bourgeois' epoch prior to World War II and the period of the communist regime. She had to overcome enormous obstacles in both. Paradoxically, while she was considered to be on the left in the pre-communist era, she barely escaped execution for being a prominent 'bourgeois' public figure (and having numerous contacts abroad) after the communists seized power. The story of Dimitrana's life is intimately intertwined with the history of the women's movement in Bulgaria; its narration involves an exploration of the women's movement itself, besides being indicative of the wider socio-political and ideological contexts in which the struggle for women's emancipation took place.[1]

Dimitrana Ivanova (née Petrova) was born on 1 February 1881, the daughter of craftsman and trader Petur Drumev and Stanka pop Todorova (her mother's name was indicative of her descent since 'pop' meant 'priest'). She was born in Rousse, one of the largest Bulgarian towns at the time, a busy and prosperous commercial and business centre with a cosmopolitan

outlook, located on the river Danube. She finished at the Varosh school for girls in Rousse in 1891 with high marks and went on to graduate from the high school for girls in Rousse in 1897.

At the end of the nineteenth century, high schools for girls in Bulgaria (called 'gymnasium' as in Germany) had six grades above the primary (four-grade) education, while high schools for boys had seven grades above the primary level. This would later serve as a pretext to deny women access to higher education at the Bulgarian University in Sofia, the first and, for a long time, the only university in Bulgaria (established in 1888). Dimitrana Ivanova was amongst those affected by this injustice when, in 1921, she wanted to enrol in the Law Faculty of the University. Although the University had begun admitting women in 1901 (high schools for girls had, by then, been 'equalised' with those for boys), the Dean rejected her with the argument that she had only completed a six-grade high school education. The Dean would not listen to Dimitrana's argument that she had in the meantime graduated from Zurich University, passed the state examination to become a high school teacher in Bulgaria (access to which required higher education), and had taught in various high schools for girls for 16 years.

Access to higher education was the leading demand of the burgeoning women's movement when it emerged in the 1890s (although its origins can be found in the epoch of the national revival under Ottoman rule). Protest against women's exclusion from education attained a partial success in 1896, when some university professors admitted women to their lectures as 'auditors' or 'listeners'. Bulgarian women had to wait until 1901 to be admitted as regular students. Dimitrana Ivanova, like other women who aspired to higher education in the 1890s, had to enrol in a foreign university.[2]

Dimitrana Ivanova went initially to the University of Bern, Switzerland, transferring soon after to Zurich, which had a stronger reputation for philosophy, her chosen subject of study. With some difficulty, since admission started at 18 years of age and she herself was only 16½, Dimitrana enrolled at the renowned Zurich University, as an 'auditor' for the first year and then as a regular student, the first Bulgarian woman to study there. With bitterness not devoid of pride, her memoirs tell of the numerous obstacles she had to overcome as a woman during the course of her university studies.[3] She finished the courses in pedagogy and philosophy at Zurich University (official documents to this effect are contained in her personal archive). However, with only a final examination remaining, she had to return suddenly to Bulgaria due to family misfortunes (her father's commercial difficulties and the serious illness of her older brother). She hoped to be able to return to Zurich in a short time to take her final examination but heavy blows – the death of her brother and the bankruptcy

of her father – prevented her from doing so. She was compelled to seek employment.

Towards the end of 1900, Dimitrana Ivanova received a posting as a teacher at the middle school in the small town of Popovo. For the next 2 school years she taught at the high school for girls in the town of Shumen and then for 3 years at the high school for girls in Tirnovo. Teachers were at this time emerging as a strong activist opposition and their frequent transfer was part of an attempt by the Bulgarian educational authorities to prevent the spread of leftist (socialist) ideas and the formation of more stable associations; these attempts to prevent activism caused wide discontent. In 1904, in Tirnovo, Dimitrana Ivanova successfully passed the state examination (required by Zhivkov's law of 1891) which, in addition to having higher education, was required in order to qualify as a regular high school teacher. She became a teacher with pedagogy her main subject and German language as a second subject. After many attempts Dimitrana Ivanova managed to transfer to her native town of Rousse in 1906, where her parents were living alone after the death of her two brothers. She remained there as a teacher at the high school for girls until 1916. In 1914 she married Doncho Ivanov, assuming his family name, as is still customary in Bulgaria. Her husband was then secretary of the Association for Trade and Industry in Rousse.

Dimitrana Ivanova's career was exemplary of the life of an educated Bulgarian woman at the beginning of the century, for whom teaching was the only professional field that was open. Even in this field there were restrictions for women: a law of 1899 forbade women teachers from working after marriage.[4] In 1904 the marriage bar was repealed, a victory for the women's movement as well as for the (leftist) teachers' movement in Bulgaria. Other restrictions and discriminative measures were introduced later, including a 10% lower salary for women teachers and a requirement that the number of women teachers in a given locality should not exceed that of men teachers (article 73 of the Law for People's Education). Dimitrana Ivanova, who retained a keen interest in the 'teacher question', later rallied the Women's Union against these discriminative laws. The restrictive article 73 was finally cancelled at the end of the 1920s after a protracted struggle, not least due to the efforts of the Women's Union. Yet other restrictions followed; a law of 1927 limited the careers of (married) women teachers, requiring them to leave after 20 years of work or on reaching 40 years of age. The clear purpose of this law was to decrease competition within the labour market in favour of men. The Women's Union directed by Dimitrana Ivanova voiced a strong protest, revealing the discriminatory nature of the law.[5]

Parallel to her professional activity as a teacher, Dimitrana Ivanova engaged in wider public and cultural activities, showing deep concern with

the problems of teachers and of women. From 1905 onwards she regularly contributed to the newspapers *Uchitelska probuda* (Teachers' Awakening) and *Zhenski glas* (Woman's Voice), which was the publication of the Women's Union. She also wrote for the professional journals *Uchitel* (Teacher) and *Uchilishten pregled* (School Review), the official journal of the Ministry of Education. In addition to women's issues, she published items on subjects such as child psychology, individual-centred education, and on the moral aspects of education (better rendered by the German word '*Erziehung*'). She read widely to enlarge her own knowledge and expertise. In order to keep up with newer trends in her discipline (and to maintain fluency in German) she attended courses in pedagogy and philosophy every summer in Germany and Switzerland. The war years (the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and then World War I) deprived her of this opportunity and travel abroad continued to be very difficult after 1918 since Bulgaria, amongst the defeated nations, suffered enormous deprivation and extreme inflation.

Dimitrana Ivanova's first serious engagement with the women's movement also took place in the years before the wars. Highly educated herself and with a keen sensitivity regarding sexual inequality, having more than once encountered discrimination because of her sex, her orientation toward the women's movement seems only logical. Dimitrana Ivanova chaired the women's society 'Dobrodetel' in Rousse (a member of the collective Bulgarian Women's Union) from 1908 to 1911. This association was engaged in quite traditional charitable activities typical of women's societies in Bulgaria at the time. It maintained an orphanage and a home for aged people and it set itself the typically vague goal of working toward the intellectual and moral 'uplifting' of women. As a representative of the women's society in Rousse she took part in the Congress of the Bulgarian Women's Union in Pleven in 1911, where the issue of electoral rights for women was debated. The Congress entrusted a committee, to which Dimitrana Ivanova was elected, with the task of studying the electoral rights of women from a legal point of view. The committee concluded, after consulting legal experts and analysing the law itself, that no constitutional change whatsoever was needed for women to acquire electoral rights since the Bulgarian Constitution did not exclude women from the electorate. In fact, Bulgarian women had to fight, not against written laws but against the tradition of interpreting the term 'citizens' to mean men alone.[6] This proved to be extremely difficult. The Women's Union under the direction of Dimitrana Ivanova later dedicated a great deal of effort to the suffrage struggle. Though partly enfranchised in 1937, Bulgarian women were finally granted full electoral rights by the communist regime: in the programme of the communist-dominated 'Fatherland's Front' of 17 September 1944 and then in the new 'Dimitrov's Constitution' of 1947. Yet, the same regime would empty these rights of meaning.

Dimitrana Ivanova resigned as chairwoman of the women's society in Rousse in 1911 with the intention of dedicating more time to scholarly work. However, the war that broke out in 1912 frustrated her plans and gave another turn to her activities. Many scholars of European feminism have underlined its connections with nationalism.[7] The Bulgarian case was no exception in this respect. The women's movement in Bulgaria, in spite of its declared non-political and 'above-party' character, embraced and propagated the national cause. Thousands of women members of various women's societies in the country took part as nurses in the Balkan wars and in World War I (which Bulgaria joined in 1916). Women activists supported the political elite in the militarist course by campaigning for the nationalist cause in Bulgaria and abroad.

Dimitrana Ivanova shared this attitude and mood.[8] She took part in the Balkan wars as a nurse, first in the hospital in Rousse, then in the temporary hospital in Lozengrad, and finally in the field hospital in Baba Eski (where she also translated for German doctors). Though she gave birth to her three children during the War (in 1916, 1917 and 1918), Dimitrana Ivanova took an active part in the activities of the women's educational society 'Suznanie' (Conscience) in Sofia, where her family moved in 1916. The members of this society were engaged in preparing linen for the hospitals, arranging accommodation for refugees, and delivering hot meals at the central Sofia railway station. Dimitrana Ivanova received a job in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Health – as under-secretary in the Social Care Department – with the support of Iulia Malinova, who was then chairwoman of the Women's Union and wife of a prominent Bulgarian politician and one-time prime minister. She was soon dismissed, however, with no explanation other than the standard formula that it was 'in the interest of the office', which was characteristic of the partisan struggles of the time.

From this time onwards she devoted herself entirely to social and political activism. She edited, for a time, the newspaper *Zhenski vestnik* (Women's Gazette), which was the newspaper of the women's society 'Suznanie' and a temporary substitute for *Zhenski glas* (the publication of the Bulgarian Women's Union) that was banned for a time. *Zhenski glas* started appearing again from September 1920, with Dimitrana Ivanova acting as an editor-in-chief, and it was published without interruption until 1944. This was an extraordinary achievement given that few newspapers and journals managed to survive a situation of permanent financial difficulty (most lasted only a few issues). Dimitrana Ivanova also assumed the functions of secretary-treasurer of the Bulgarian Women's Union. On numerous tours around the country she campaigned for women's rights at public meetings and rallies.

She then decided that a study of law at Sofia University would enable her to better champion the women's cause and conduct the struggle more effectively. Her request to enrol in the Law Faculty in 1921 was rejected (as previously mentioned), but she was not a person to despair or give up. She presented her case to the Ministry of Education and was told that, technically, her educational record entitled her to study at the University, but because it was an autonomous institution it could make its own decisions regarding admissions. Dimitrana Ivanova then pleaded her case before the Administrative Court. Leaving out casuistry for the sake of brevity, the court decided that she could enrol at the University on condition that she re-sat and passed the school-leaving examination to 'equalise' her 6-year high school education with one of 7 years. With characteristic stubbornness, she passed the final examinations for the same high schools in which she had taught for 16 years, enrolling in the Law Faculty the same year. At this moment, as she wrote in her memoirs, 'the persuasion became deeply seated within me that I should fight against injustices towards women and against unwarranted formalism'.<sup>[9]</sup> She graduated from Sofia University in 1927, having worked during all these years for the Women's Union and editing its newspaper (perhaps the most demanding job), not neglecting the care for her family and three children. Her uncompromising character, self-abnegation and firmness in espousing the women's cause elevated her to the highest position in the 'bourgeois' women's movement in Bulgaria: that of chairwoman of the Women's Union, the largest and best-known women's organisation in Bulgaria. She succeeded Iulia Malinova, a long-time but more traditional leader of the Union, who had come under severe attack from the nationalist women's union, 'Love for the Fatherland' (which had been founded in the 1920s), and had acted to prevent the Women's Union from taking an ultra-nationalist course. Dimitrana Ivanova held the office of leader of the Union for 18 years from 1926 until the communist takeover in September 1944.

In assuming the honorific (and unpaid) office Dimitrana Ivanova had to sacrifice her personal plans and scholarly ambitions – she had begun work on a dissertation on property rights in the family – and devote full time to her public duties. Nevertheless, she developed a strong and lasting interest in the legal foundations of gender inequality and would, over the years, publish on virtually all aspects of the legal situation of Bulgarian women, comparing the state of affairs in Bulgaria with that abroad. She even founded and, for 2 years, edited the journal *Zhenata* (The Woman), which specialised in legal aspects of women's subjugated status.

As Chairwoman of the Women's Union, Dimitrana Ivanova understood its main goal to be 'the attainment of equal citizen and political rights for the Bulgarian woman and making a respected place for her in the public and the political life of the country' and she steered the Union accordingly.

This broadly formulated goal included a subset of aims and directions. A major one was the attainment of voting rights for women. After long, unsuccessful efforts, Bulgarian suffragists attained partial and qualified success. A law granting voting rights for women in local (communal) elections was passed on 18 January 1937 (not least, though hardly decisively, under the pressure of the women's movement). This law, promulgated by an authoritarian regime, which banned political parties, did not treat men and women in the same way and contained some degrading stipulations for women. Women were only accorded voting rights if they were mothers in a legal marriage (Article 5) and, while voting was obligatory for male voters, it was optional for women voters (Article 82, section 1).

The communal elections of 1937 were the first elections after the authoritarian coup d'état in 1934 and the Bulgarian Women's Union directed by Dimitrana Ivanova called upon its adherents to take part, voting for whichever candidates they supported. While this may seem a somewhat controversial decision under authoritarian conditions, it demonstrated that women were citizens and political agents in their own right.[10] With the restoration of the Constitution in the same year (1937), a new election law was drafted, which defined as voters 'all Bulgarian subjects, who have completed 21 years of age, men and women; the latter if married, divorced or widowed' (article 8). Thus, women's rights to citizenship were made conditional upon their relations with men. Women could only elect but not be elected. General (parliamentary) elections were held in 1938 (for the first time after 1934) with various restrictions, which led to boycotting by some of the parties. Dimitrana Ivanova undertook four campaigning tours around the country, urging women to vote. In some of the places she visited (Rousse, Tirnovo, Asenovgrad) her speeches were transmitted through loudspeakers in the streets. The Women's Union organised an election rally in Sofia (in the House of Lawyers), where she spoke on 'The role of the Bulgarian woman in the forthcoming elections'. The purpose of this was to propagate voting rights for women and to make people accustomed to seeing women vote and engage in politics.

Another commitment of the Bulgarian Women's Union under Dimitrana Ivanova's directorship was equality between the sexes in the field of education. Her personal reasons for such a commitment have been laid out already. Although the major fights over educational issues, such as access of women to higher education, were already won, there was always the danger of regression on particular issues. The Union took a determined stand against plans for the establishment of a different type of school for girls, purporting to prepare them 'for life' (i.e. to teach them traditional women's skills). The women-'equalisers' insisted that the educational reformist projects (in the late 1920s) should not differentiate between boys

and girls.[11] The acts of the Congresses of the Women's Union contained a number of resolutions on education.

A third major commitment of the Women's Union under Dimitrana Ivanova in the 1920s and 1930s (and again one intimately connected with her personal fate) was the struggle for the right of women-jurists to appear as defence lawyers in courts.[12] Even though women could graduate from the Law Faculty, they were not allowed to exercise the profession of lawyer in the courts. This was a very important struggle, law being seen as the epitome of all attractive and influential professions from which women were barred. Access to legal practice would imply recognition of women's professional qualities and enhance their public standing. Moreover, it would allow women to participate in public life in general. Again, the personal career of Dimitrana Ivanova (her legal education) made her specifically qualified to act as leader on this focal issue. Under her, the Union mobilised the support of well-known politicians, members of the bar, scholars and public figures, and lobbied in various ways for the admission of women jurists. Resolutions of the Women's Union (of 27 September 1933 and 28 July 1934) attest to the importance attached to the issue. However, there were powerful interests against women's admission to the practice of law and victory had to wait until later (under very different socio-political conditions).

With Dimitrana Ivanova as chair between 1926 and 1944, the Women's Union grew in influence amongst civic organisations and helped to shape social and ideological trends. Her personal contribution was outstanding. She published extensively on various aspects of the 'woman question' (as it was traditionally called) in the Union's publication *Zhenski glas* and in renowned Bulgarian periodicals. She also gained recognition for her public lectures, which were delivered in Sofia and other towns, and subsequently published as pamphlets (e.g. 'Is it time to give women voting rights?', 'Our demands to the National Assembly', 'The duty of the Bulgarian woman today', 'Crowning of the successes of the women's movement'). She also edited a volume dedicated to the 30-year existence of the Bulgarian Women's Union in 1931.

Dimitrana Ivanova maintained extensive foreign contacts and contributed to the international standing and representation of the Bulgarian Women's Union. She herself became a member of the Board of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship. She was elected at the Congress in Constantinople in 1935 and re-elected in 1939 at the Copenhagen Congress. Thus, the Bulgarian women's movement was represented at an international level, both through this organisation as well as through the International Council of Women. Dimitrana Ivanova also maintained extensive contacts with activists of women's movements in other European countries. Articles in *Zhenski glas*, some of which she authored,



assessed the state of the women's movement in a number of countries, demonstrating her close observation and familiarity with the issues.

In addition to the public standing of women, Dimitrana Ivanova was intensely concerned about the position of women in private life, the family and the household. This encompassed possibilities for women's personal development, the ethics of male/female relations (she revolted against the double moral standard), the role of wife and mother, and the social protection of mothers and children. In 1917-18 she became a member of the social-reformist 'Society for the Struggle against Youth Delinquency' and was co-founder of the 'Union for the Protection of Children' in 1925 (and a member of its Board until 1935). Finally, she was involved in social-reformist legislative projects for social protection in the 1930s, a sign of the move towards welfarism. She also took part in the peace movement of the 1930s, against militarisation and war.

The burden of work Dimitrana Ivanova took on was overwhelming and would be simply impossible for most people. Apart from the characteristic self-abnegation and devotion she put into her public commitments, she fulfilled her duties towards her family – her husband and her three children – which were extremely demanding in this rather patriarchal place and epoch. Her whole time was divided between 'the two stations in my life' – the Union and home – with hardly any free time or recreation. In addition she had to face widespread misunderstanding and animosity, the more embittering and disappointing when it came from women, the improvement of whose lot she had devoted her time and efforts towards.

In the 1920s and 1930s she was a well-known figure in the public eye. Her first name – Dimitrana – became a designation for women who 'know too much' and 'speak too much'. Newspapers appeared with supplements entitled derisively 'Dimitrana knows everything'. She received cartoons, depicting her with a lock on her mouth. Angry husbands sent her threatening letters because she taught their wives 'to know too much'. One may see this as a clear indication of a dominant patriarchal culture, where women were relegated to silence (a sign of subordination as well).[13] Anecdotes about her circulated. The premier minister was heard to shout from his office in the National Assembly, telling his party deputies to run fast because Dimitrana had arrived. Caricatures of her were published in the press. One depicted her carrying a slogan inscribed 'civil marriage', with the Patriarch chasing her in anger. Even very old women felt obliged to show indignation with 'her' views that 'men should have mistresses, not lawful wives' (an interpretation that was not only theirs, but of the ill-meaning general public as well).

The communist regime brought an adverse turn in the fate of Dimitrana Ivanova. In the very first days she became the victim of personal revenge, like many other socially prominent figures of the 'ancien regime'.

She was arrested on 28 September 1944 (as it turned out on accusations made by a woman who had a long-standing rivalry with her) and was kept in the police department for 2 months (until 21 November 1944). During her stay there she observed scores of cases like her own, of people 'denounced' by 'informants' and imprisoned without trial and verdict. She met Fani Popova-Mutafova, a woman writer known for her rightist views, who was amazed to see Dimitrana Ivanova, known for her leftist sympathies, in prison. For the new rulers it was enough that Dimitrana Ivanova had numerous contacts in Germany to suspect her of pro-German and pro-fascist sympathies and many times she was urged to 'confess'. In spite of the absence of any incriminating facts she was transferred from the police department to the central Sofia prison, where she spent more months in the agonies of uncertainty (until 13 January 1945). In all probability due to the energetic intercession of one of the regents – the communist intellectual Todor Pavlov – she was saved from a death 'verdict', i.e. an arbitrary decision to murder her without trial in the habitual manner of the new regime.[14] Released after almost 4 months on the condition that she leave Sofia immediately, she settled in her native town, Rousse, in the home of her niece. Shortly afterwards her friends and relatives managed to arrange for her to return to Sofia, on grounds of her worsening health condition.

Even under the new repressive regime Dimitrana Ivanova did not give up fighting. Dramatically forced to resign from the Women's Union (which was taken over by the communists and later disbanded), she continued fighting on her own and for herself. Taking advantage of the new regime's proclamation of 'equality between the sexes', Dimitrana Ivanova tried to gain the right to practise law (as a defence lawyer). In fact, she had fought for this for four decades, even before she graduated from the Law Faculty. She served the 1-year 'apprenticeship' (a learning period) required for becoming a practising jurist and was accorded the right to appear in court as defence lawyer in August 1946. However, with the consolidation of the communist regime (and the crushing of the opposition) 2 years later, she was erased (by an extraordinary Committee) from the list of the Collegium of defence lawyers. It was argued that as chairwoman of the Bulgarian Women's Union she had 'carried out pro-fascist and pro-Nazi activities during the War', that she had never practised as a defence lawyer previously, and that she did not earn her income from it. After a long dispute the ominous political motive was dropped from the decision, which was a relief. Yet she remained barred from the practice of lawyer.

In the years after 1944 Dimitrana Ivanova worked on a book provisionally entitled 'The Legal Protection of Women's Labor' – which contains valuable information on the 1930s-1950s – and prepared other texts on the same subject. However, under the new regime she was denied the right to publish not only books but also newspaper articles (even in

literary newspapers such as *Literaturen front*). Moreover, during her arrest in 1944 she was excluded from the Union of Journalists, of which she had been a member since 1922. Ivanova's exchange of letters with this Union continued for more than a decade until, in November 1959, some months before her death, she finally received notification that her membership had been restored.

Not only is Dimitrana Ivanova's personal life story closely entangled with the history of the women's movement in Bulgaria but it also highlights the issues from which it drew its agenda (including the impulse and anger behind them) as well as the chances for their realisation. She lived in a largely patriarchal society, where inequality was considered 'natural'. That spheres of activity and life chances for men and women (professional chances in particular) were different, and that this was the 'order of things', was hardly doubted. In fact, the sexes were considered to have an essentially different 'destination'. Against ingrained prejudice, reflecting entrenched power interests, and only at the expense of great effort, could women's fate be changed for the better, first in relation to education, then regarding professional chances, citizenship and political rights. The position of Bulgarian women in the domestic sphere and in family life remained almost untouched.[15]

Dimitrana Ivanova's life story, like the history of the women's movement in Bulgaria, was shaped by mightier political trends – leftist, nationalist, authoritarian – as well as by particular political constellations. It is quite sobering to see women's rights in Bulgaria furthered not by democratic parties and regimes, not even by demagogic and opportunist interests, but by authoritarian regimes (after the coup d'état in 1934, then under communism). Ironically, the moment of greatest formal triumph for women's equality in Bulgaria (voting rights, professional chances, social benefits) coincided with the crushing of the autonomous women's movement and the silencing of women by the communist rulers who, once again, were to speak 'for them'. Dimitrana Ivanova's fate after 1944 was symptomatic. The forced end of her public activities signified the end of the autonomous women's movement in Bulgaria, her life story merging one more time with the wider history of the women's movement.

### Notes

- [1] The life story of Dimitrana Ivanova has been reconstructed here from documents contained in her personal archive at the National Library, 'Ciril and Method', Bulgarian Historical Archive, NBKM-BIA, f. 584. The archive contains several thousand pages of material, which have not been fully catalogued. It includes autobiography, official documents (both personal and relating to the Bulgarian Women's Union), newspaper cuttings and

correspondence. All documentary evidence referred to in this article is located in the personal archive, unless otherwise attributed.

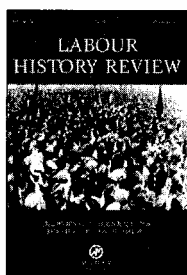
- [2] Somewhat surprisingly, women were not excluded from the stipends of the Ministry of Education given for studies abroad. Dimitrana's studies, however, were financed by her family.
- [3] Dimitrana Ivanova's 'Memoirs', an unpublished handwritten manuscript of several hundred pages, are contained in the personal archive. NBKM-BIA, f. 584, a. e. 1.
- [4] See *Durzhaven vestnik* [State Gazette], 151, 16 July 1899; *Uchilishten pregled* [School Review], 4, 1899, No. 9, p. 1021.
- [5] D. Ivanova (1926) Iskat da izgoniat uchitelkata ot uchilishteto, *Zhenski glas*, 23, No. 13-14, 5 April 1926, p. 2; D. Ivanova (1927) Po uvolnenieto na uchitelkite, *Zhenski glas*, 24, No. 8, 1 January 1927, p. 4.
- [6] D. Ivanova (1929) Nashata Konstitutsiia i pravata na zhenata, *Zhenata*, 1 May 1929, No. 5, pp. 97-99. In fact, the problem was similar to the one encountered by French women after the revolution of 1789, who had to fight to broaden the interpretation of the meaning of 'citizen' to include women as well. On this problem, see, for example, Karen Offen (2000) Challenging Masculine Aristocracy, in Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: a political history*, pp. 50-76 (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- [7] The cases of the women's movements in Norway, Finland and Bohemia (Czech lands) are considered by Richard Evans (1977) *The Feminists. Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920*, pp. 82-83 & 102 (London: Croom Helm). Sharon Wolchick also points out that the women's movements in pre-communist Europe stood under the strong influence of Marxist parties and movements and were characteristically subordinated to national and national-liberation tasks and priorities. Women often saw themselves as part of a broader community, whose needs came first, preceding women's goals proper. See Sharon Wolchick & Alfred G. Meyer (Eds) (1985) *Women, State and Party in Eastern Europe*, p. 49 (Durham: Duke University Press). On the relationship between the Bulgarian women's movement and nationalist ideas, see Krassimira Daskalova (2002) Women, Nationalism and Nation-State in Bulgaria (1800-1940s), in Miroslav Jovanovic & Slobodan Naumovic (Eds) *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: historical perspectives on womanhood and motherhood in the 19th and 20th centuries*, pp. 15-38 (Belgrade and Graz).
- [8] As early as 1902-03 she was a member of the Macedonian Society in Shumen. (Macedonia was considered to be the irredenta for Bulgaria.)
- [9] D. Ivanova, Memoirs, see note 3.
- [10] The Bulgarian Communist Party made an attempt to dissuade the Women's Union from taking part in these elections by sending its representative, Sava Ganovski, to speak to Dimitrana Ivanova. However, the leader of the Women's Union replied that women had to take part in the elections

because it was their first chance and they could hardly expect to attain full voting rights in the near future if they did not vote on this occasion.

- [11] Izlozhenie na Bulgarskiia Zhenski Suiuz do G-na Ministura na narodnata prosveta ... (An exposition of the Bulgarian Women's Union to the Minister of Education ...), *Zhenski glas*, 26, No. 9, 15 January 1929, p. 2; D. Ivanova (1929) Nov udar vurkhu devicheskoto obrazovanie, *Zhenski glas*, 26, No. 10-11, 20 February 1929, p. 1.
- [12] There are more than a hundred articles on this topic, published in the newspaper *Zhenski glas* and the journal *Zhenata*. See, for example, D. Ivanova (1923) Za zhenite advokati, *Zhenski glas*, 21, No. 6, 15 December 1923, pp. 1-2; D. Ivanova (1925) Pravoto na advokatstvo na zhenite-iuristki v Narodnoto subranie, *Zhenski glas*, 22, No. 17-18, 1 July 1925, p. 2; Kum iuristkite ot redaktsiata na v. 'Zhenski glas', *Zhenski glas*, 24, No. 13, 15 March 1927, p. 3; Zhiva Georgieva (1929) Muzhete, advokaturata i pravorazdavaneto, *Zhenski glas*, 26, No. 8, 1 January 1929, pp. 2-3.
- [13] On the meaning of silence in different cultures and historical epochs, see Peter Burke (1993) Notes towards a Social History of Silence, in Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- [14] Her son saw the inscription 'za ozemliavane' ('destined for the earth'), written on the upper cover of her police file.
- [15] See Krassimira Daskalov (1999) Bulgarian women in movements, laws and discourses (1840s-1940s), *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 27, 1-2, pp. 180-196.

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