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**THE ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN THE BULGARIAN
PARLIAMENT (1879-1885)**

(Summary)

The article looks into the problem of the participation of the minorities in the election for the Ordinary and Grand National Assemblies and their work in the period 1879-1885.

The archival material and the material from the press and memories show that the rights to vote and to be elected, guaranteed by the Turnovo Constitution to the minorities, was seldom ensured in practice to them. The causes could be sought in the absence of ethnic quotes in Parliament, in the national character of the State, in the small number, lack of compactness and of education of the minorities, in the biased electoral laws and above all in the active repressive participation of the State in the different stages of the electoral process.

For this reason the minorities could not win seats in Parliament corresponding to their real ethnic or religious presence, could not set up their parties nor demonstrate some activity as parliamentarians. On the contrary, their place was in regional or provisional coalitions with the Bulgarian political parties during the election campaigns and as extras in the National Assembly. This role of marionettes was deliberately chosen by the minorities, aware of the impossibility in some other way to influence the activity of the legislative power, and by the Bulgarian politicians who, by politicizing the minorities, tried not so much to protect the ethnic peace in the country than to create conditions for neutralizing, isolating or assimilating the so-called “others”.