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GREEK GOVERNMENTS' POLICY TOWARD THE POMAKS IN WESTERN THRACE

(Summary)

The author traces the policy of the Greek governments toward the Pomaks in Western Thrace since 1920 up to nowadays, a policy which varies according to the context of the Greek-Bulgarian and Greek-Turkish relations. For nearly a century Greece demonstrates a constant mistrust toward that population because it is connected by its language or religion with the neighboring states – Bulgaria and Turkey, which are considered as the two potentially most dangerous enemies of Greece. Putting the emphasis on the religious conservatism of the Pomaks, on their language with Slavonic origin or on their supposititious Greek descent aims to separate them from the Turks. But an accent on the language specificity runs a risk of bringing the Pomaks closer to Bulgaria and an accent on the Islam, would bring them closer to Turkey, with regard to the retreat of Kemalism in favour of religion in that state. That leaves the possibility to create a Pomak identity or – an ethnic “minority”, which will be protected in Greece. The Pomaks accept all this silently or maneuver between the different offers. The approbation nowadays of the “European” identity seems an elegant and noble way to avoid the categorical response to the question of their identity.