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THE FIRST WAVE OF MODERNISATION IN BULGARIA, 1850 - 1920

(Summary)

The final stage of the Renaissance and the first years of the foundation of the young Bulgarian Principality are probably one of the most deeply researched periods in the Bulgarian modern history. A quick look shows over the existing scientific literature would show that for a mere century the Bulgarian historiography has filed a considerable amount of quality works covering different aspects of the political and social life of the Bulgarians in the decades before and after the liberation (1850 - 1912). A bit out the focus remain what we would call everyday life and quality of life for the population within the Bulgarian lands. The critical analysis of the publications, in which this topic is discussed, suggests at least three different approaches formed in time. 1. The most common theory is that the conditions for the Bulgarians prior to the Russian- Turkish War 1877.1878 were much more worse compared to the those after obtaining independency. 2. During the years of the torturing transition attempts were made to analyse more thoroughly the hypothesis of a poorer lifestyle prior to the liberation in comparison to the lifestyle after gaining independence. Because of the fragmentariness of the statistical data showing the economic development of the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire during the third quarter of XIX available for the scientists, the efforts did not lead to successful results. 3. The third and most recent theory is very logical. According to it the unprejudiced comparison of the economic state does not show any particular differences. Without claiming to have closed the topic, nor to have presented the only possible solution of the problem, in this article the authors

aim to prove each of the listed theories with the help of different documents and statistical data and offer a more comprehensive picture of the quality of life in Bulgaria before and after the Liberation.