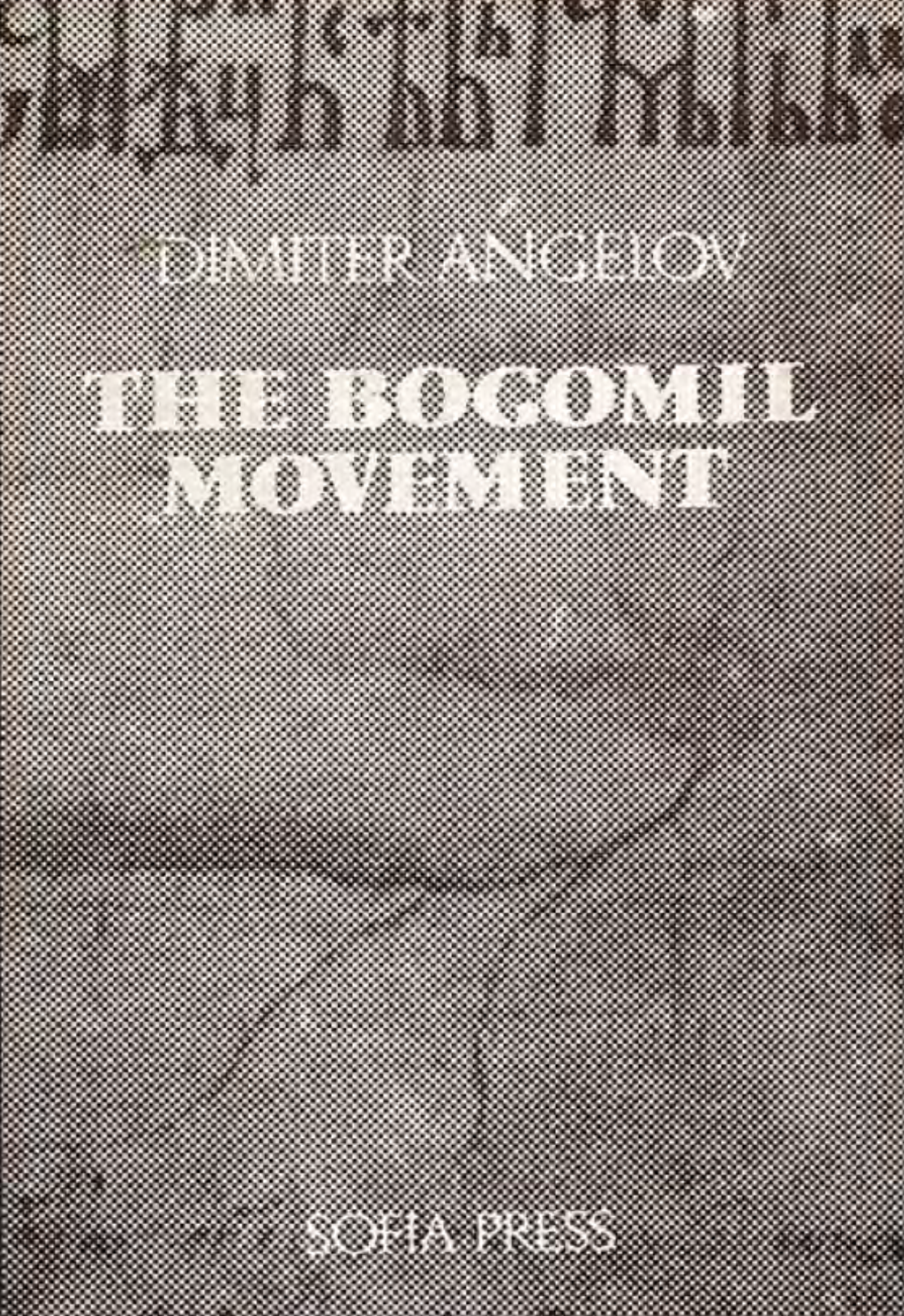

DIMITER ANGELOV

THE BOGOMIL MOVEMENT

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CONTENTS

HISTORICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF THE BOGOMIL MOVEMENT

The Bogomil movement was among the significant socio religious teachings in the history of mediaeval Europe. Set up in Bulgaria during the 10th century, it existed in the country for more than four centuries, as surviving sources demonstrate. (D. Angelov's detailed monograph on the Bogomil movement in Bulgaria, Sofia, 1980, 457 p. with an extensive bibliography.). It also spread to other countries in the Balkans – Byzantium, Serbia and Bosnia, where it appeared under different names. Bogomil views also found fertile ground in Western Europe, chiefly in Italy and France, where under the influence of local conditions, the analogous teachings of the Cathars and the Albigenses developed. The Bogomil movement also exercised a significant influence in Russia. This explains the great interest that has been shown in the movement by Bulgarian and foreign scholars.

The Bogomil movement first appeared during the reign of the Bulgarian Tsar Peter (927 969). This happened when the Bulgarian state, founded in 681, had been in existence for more than two centuries, and had become one of the main political and cultural factors on the Balkan Peninsula. Over this period, the country underwent various ethnic, religious and socio-economic changes. As we know, two ethnic communities – the Slavs and proto Bulgarians – were responsible for the foundation of the Bulgarian state, uniting in their joint struggle against their chief foe, the neighbouring Byzantine Empire. Gradually, Slavs and

proto Bulgarians merged, the Slav element, which in any case was much stronger in numerical terms, playing the dominant role. In the late 9th and early 10th centuries, we can already speak of the existence of a Bulgarian nationality with its own characteristics: a single language (Slav or Old Bulgarian), its own cultural identity, and a national awareness, whose terminological expression was confirmed in the national name of *Bulgaria.*

In the second half of the 9th century, when the process of the formation of Bulgarian nationality had considerably advanced, an important step – the adoption of Christianity as the state religion – was undertaken. This was in the reign of prince Boris in 865. The pagan religions of the Slavs and proto-Bulgarians were religated to a secondary position, being replaced by a new, strong institution in the Bulgarian state – the Christian Church and the clerical class associated with it. Monasticism also appeared.

Another important event from the same period was the introduction of Slavonic writing and letters. The credit for that belongs chiefly to scholars, disciples of the Slav apostles, Cyril and Methodius, who, after their banishment from Moravia, came to Bulgaria and founded two centres of learning, one in the capital Pliska (and later in the new capital, Preslav), and the other in Ohrid (South-Western Bulgaria). The number of educated people quickly grew, and within a comparatively short period a young Bulgarian intelligentsia came into being, consisting mainly of teachers and clergymen, who taught, preached and wrote in the Slav language spoken by the population at large. Books appeared as a powerful spiritual weapon bringing enlightenment and knowledge. A remarkable cultural boom could be witnessed, associated with the names of such prominent writers as Clement of Ohrid, Konstantin of Preslav, and John the Exarch.

These ethnic, religious and cultural phenomena were paralelled by the development of socio-economic and

political processes, which changed the Bulgarian state and Bulgarian society considerably from its original appearance. The final collapse of the clan and tribal set-up towards the end of the 9th century resulted in the permanent establishment of feudalism as the dominant socio-economic formation, with all its inherent contrasts in property and strata. The economically strong and politically influential *boyar* class owned a large portion of the land, and occupied the highest civil and military posts in the state system. The supreme boyar was the country's ruler, the tsar, in whose hands legislative, executive and juridical power were concentrated.

The ruling stratum also included the higher ranks of the clergy-metropolitan bishops and bishops, headed by the supreme eminence of the Bulgarian church, initially known as the archbishop, and later as the patriarch. The church's wealth lay chiefly in land, of which it was a collective owner, and whose products were enjoyed mainly by the higher clergy. This higher clergy also had numerous social and juridical privileges, some of the Bulgarian monasteries owning vast estates ensuring a considerable income.

The mass of the population consisted of urban and rural working strata. They were peasants, craftsmen, teachers and writers who created the nation's material and cultural wealth. These comprised the bulk of the taxpayers and soldiers upon whom the state's financial and political power relied. This stratum played a vital role in society, but had a rather unfavourable economic, social and legal status compared with the ruling classes. Wealth, rights and privileges were the fortune of the feudal secular and religious class which was numerically far smaller, but much more powerful and influential. On the other hand, the ordinary people had nothing but duties – to work tirelessly, to pay taxes, and to go to war. Particularly deplorable was the lot of the peasants who made up, so to speak, the backbone of Bulgarian society. Emburdened with taxes and statute

labour, they did not even, as we can see from a passage in presbyter Kozma's *Sermon,* have time for prayer. Apart from their regular taxes and statutory labour, they were emburdened with additional services both to the central authorities, and to their feudal lords – the building of bridges and fortresses, the upkeep of roads and buildings, the transportation of building materials, the provision of food supplies, and ensuring shelter and food for army units, royal and boyar suites, foreign emissaries etc. passing through the town or village.

The highly polarized structure of mediaeval Bulgarian society as it is presented in 10th-century sources led to a corresponding polarization of thoughts and sentiments, of world outlooks and ideology. We see on the one hand, the dissemination of views responding to the interests of the ruling strata – tsars, boyars and high-ranking clergy, of the rich and well-to-do: views preached by the church as the main pillar of the existing socio-economic order. They were based on the church's teaching of monotheism as the supreme principle in the creation and system of the universe. God is, according to the Bible the creator of the visible and invisible world (the macrocosm), and man (the microcosm). He reigns in heaven surrounded by the angels, his faithful servants, each of which performs certain duties. The world of heaven, according to the teaching of the church, was a kind of state with a supreme ruler and a strict hierarchy of superiors and subordinates.

Transferred to the sphere of worldly relations, the monotheistic principle was interpreted as meaning that the heavenly god determined who should be given power on earth. Earthly power was claimed to be of divine origin, the tsar and boyars were supposed to be elected by God. This was expressly written by Presbyter Kozma in his *Sermon,* quoting the psalter and the gospel to back up his argument. Hence also his conclusion that he who dares to oppose the rulers is committing a sin against god, since he is opposing

his will. Obedience was declared to be a supreme virtue, and instructions had to be fulfilled, even if given by a bad master. These were the church views on "power" contained in one of the works most characteristic of Old Bulgarian writings of the second half of the 10th century. They were views with a definite social purpose in the conditions of mediaeval Bulgarian society, which by the law of feudal estates was divided into rulers and ruled, into privileged and underprivileged.

The church preached its views on wealth and the wealthy in a spirit that suited the rulers and the privileged. It was claimed that ownership of wealth in itself was not a sin, if this wealth was used reasonably by its owner and he showed charity to the poor. This was a convenient interpretation which largely negated the Biblical appeals ascribed to Christ for poverty and humility, giving away one's property and wealth, etc. Furthermore, in some religious tracts (such as the sermons by Kliment of Ohrid and Konstantin of Preslav), the idea was stressed that wealth was a "gift of god", and that the wealthy were favoured in the eyes of god, and that god generously endowed them with worldly goods as a token of grace. Here the Old Bulgarian clergy used a concept developed in the Old Testament which was clearly expressed in the tale of Job. Here again, as on the question of the nature of earthly power, things were linked with the will of the divine ruler. It is god who chooses who shall be rich and who poor, and it was through his will that the existing inequality of property was explained.

However, the views propounded by the church on the power of god as the sole creator and sovereign, of earthly rulers as being his select, and of the wealthy as being his favourites were resisted by those strata of Bulgarian society which were dissatisfied with the existing socio-political order and which sought a way of expressing their protest. These malcontents were mainly the peasants and urban

paupers, as well as some of the lower clergy whose position was unenviable. Thus the Bogomil movement came into being as a strong current of ideas opposing the official feudal and ecclesiastical ideology.

The Bogomil movement was founded by a priest named Bogomil. Our first reference to his activities is the so-called *Sermon against the Bogomils,* compiled by the Old Bulgarian writer Presbyter Kozma during the second half of the 10th century. "It so happened," he wrote, "that in the reign of the true believer Tsar Peter, there lived a priest by the name of Bogomil, although it is more exact to say *Bogunemil* (Godcursed). He first started to preach heresy in the Bulgarian lands." (1, 298).

The Bogomils were named after their leader, and that is how they are called in scholarly literature today.

Some references to father Bogomil are made in another Old Bulgarian manuscript, the so called *Sinodik* of Tsar Boril, written in 1211. It contained anathema against the movement's founder, against his disciple Mihail, and against other followers of his – Todor, Dobry, Vassilii and Peter. Father Bogomil's name is also mentioned in some Russian and Byzantine manuscripts, but otherwise very little is known about his life and work.

BOGOMIL DUALISM

Unlike the monotheism of the Bible, the Bogomil movement was based on a dualist conception of the world, i. e. it claimed that in the universe two principles exist and fight each other – good and evil. These concepts were elaborated in detail in Bogomil cosmogony, Christology and eschatology – that is, in a narration about the origins of the world and man, the struggle between good and evil, and the final destiny of man after The Second Advent. This narration was fully reproduced in a Bogomil composi-

tion known under the title of Gospel of John (or the Secret Book), probably compiled during the 11th century. Many details of Bogomil cosmogony, Christology and eschatology are also contained in the polemic work by the Byzantine theologian Euthymius Zygabenus of the early 12th century.

According to the Bogomils, in the beginning there was only the good god, who created the vast universe made up of seven heavens and four basic elements – water, air, fire and earth. He ruled the world he had created together with his friend Satanail or (Samail) and a host of angels in the various heavens. However, there came a time when Satanail started to envy his father and decided to become his equal by placing his throne in the seventh heaven. To achieve this he drew some of the angels over to his side, promising that he would reduce the taxes they paid to god as his servants. Satanail, according to the Gospel of John, asked the first angel whom he wished to bring over to his side: "How much do you owe your master?" To his reply "a hundred krins of wheat", Satanail said "take pen and ink and write down sixty" (2,100). The second angel, who owed god "a hundred jars of butter", had his tax halved by Satanail. "And so," concludes the compiler of the Gospel of John "Samail spoke thus even to the fifth heaven, and tempted the angels of the invisible Father."

However, the attempted rebellion of son against father failed: Samail's intentions were revealed, and he was thrown down to earth together with the treacherous angels. Turning from a good spirit into an evil creator, the plotter started to re-build the earth, which had until then been unorderly and desolate. He created the visible sky, the seas, the rivers, plants and animals. Finally he also had the idea of creating man in his own image in order that he may serve him. Thus Adam and Eve were created. The evil maker, however, only succeeded in creating their bodies, but was unable to endow them with souls, and so was forced to

beg his father to do so. God agreed, and sent down two souls with which Adam and Eve were brought to life. The souls were, according to the Gospel of John, two of god's angels, which entered the bodies of the man and woman. So, according to the Bogomils, man was the creation of two opposite forces – his flesh the work of the evil creator, and his soul inspired by god.

After the creation of the visible world, Satanail became the master of all mankind and all earthly kingdoms. At his instigation, the human race set off down the road of sin and crime.God, the Bogomils said, felt sorry for the people over whom the evil creator reigned, and sent his second son Jesus Christ to fight him and put an end to his tyranny. Born of the virgin Mary, Christ, the Bogomil preachers claimed, only ostensibly assumed human flesh, and only ostensibly behaved, lived and suffered like a man. In reality, he was "God's word" *(logos),* which had come with the mission of saving the world. Satanail tried to attract him to his side, by leading him to the top of a high mountain from which he showed him all the earth's kingdoms and promised him that they would be his if he subordinated himself to him and recognized him as master. Here the Bogomils used the well-known episode from the Book of Matthew on Christ's temptation by the devil. Jesus, however, was not tempted and then, at Satanail's bidding, was condemned to death and crucified. Having ostensibly died, the Bogomils said, Christ was resurrected on the third day and again returned to his father in heaven, leaving the "human flesh" in which he had temporarily clad himself in the air. However, it was known that he would return to earth in order to put an end to the rule of Satanail, and pronounce the Last Judgement. The evil maker would then be condemned, along with all sinners, to eternal torment in hell, while the righteous would enjoy eternal bliss in god's kingdom in heaven. This is how the eschatological tale in the *Gospel of John* ends.

An analysis of the cosmogonical, Christological and eschatological concepts presented in the Bogomils' main apocrypha, the Gospel of John shows that, although dualists, the Bogomil preachers did consider good to be stronger than evil. In chronological terms, good preceded evil (as God existed before Satan), and would in the final count impose itself as the only force after the condemnation of the evil doer to hell. However, in parallel with this conception, which is usually known as "moderate dualism", another tendency emerged among the Bogomils, which is known as that of the so-called absolute dualists. According to the latter, the principles of good and evil were created *simultaneously,* and the struggle between them would last forever, without a final victor. Guided by this conception, the absolute dualists rejected the idea of The Second Advent and the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgement in other words, those elements of the Christian eschatology which were accepted by the supporters of moderate dualism. The supporters of absolute dualism were, so to speak, convinced pessimists not only as concerned the existing state of humanity, but also as regards its future. They were pessimists in the sense that they saw no end to the overlordship of evil which, in their view, had existed since time immemorial, and would continue to exist just as strongly and unbreakably for ever and ever.

As we can see from this, the main difference between the teachings of the church and the Bogomils (regardless of whether they were moderate or absolute dualists) is on the question of who rules over the visible world and earthly realms. Unlike church dogma, according to which this world was ruled over by the good god, according to whose will earthly rulers were selected, the Bogomils proclaimed Satanail as the lord of the earthly realms.This claim drastically undermined the divine halo that had been placed over tsars and boyars, turning them into servants of Satan.

It had a clearly-expressed social bias in the spirit of the sentiments of opposition that prevailed among some quarters of Bulgarian society.

The second substantial difference between the teachings of the church and the teachings of the Bogomils was on the question of the human essence. Unlike the Biblical claim that the body and the spirit were both created by god, the Bogomils regarded the flesh as "evil" and considered only the spirit to be the creation of the force of good. This shows an express intention to give priority to the spiritual aspect of the human personality, which was presented as an expression of *good* in opposition to the physical and material principle, which was denounced as an expression of evil. This idea is also expressed in the Bogomils' theory that Christ was not a godlike man, but that he had merely assumed human flesh while in reality he was the "word of god' i.e. an essentially spiritual being.

The dualistic and spiritualistic views on which the Bogomil teaching was founded were, of course, nothing new. They were a continuation of the old gnostic traditions which had accompanied Christianity ever since its ancient times, and were expressed in various heresies. More specifically, Bogomil cosmogony, Christology and eschatology shows that it is linked with the two heretical teachings Messalian and Paulicianism, which appeared in the Byzantine Empire during the 8th-10th centuries, and whose preachers also came to Bulgaria after the adoption of Christianity as the state religion.. Paulism had a particularly strong influence, finding many supporters in Thrace, and above all in Plovdiv. The Paulicians were adherents of absolute dualism, and preached that the struggle between "good" and "evil" would last for ever, without a final victor. The Paulicians began to propagate their views among the Bulgarian population, as we see from the works of the Byzantine writer Peter of Sicily, immediately after the adoption of Christianity in Bulgaria, but grew particularly

insistent towards the middle of the second half of the 10th century. Father Bogomil, who was among the most learned of clergy, and came from the educated circles of Bulgarian society,was certainly well-versed in the fundamentals of this heresy when he began his preaching. He also had a good knowledge of the Massalanite theories, which were distinguished by their more moderate dualistic conceptions and their negative attitude to all that is physical. He also had a good knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, from which he drew many of his arguments. In other words, the Bulgarian arch-heretic had a rich heretical and canonical literature at hand which he used to build up his own teaching on.

However, in speaking of the appearance of the Bogomils, what matters is not so much the existence of ready heretical or canonical literature which the Bulgarian clergyman collected and developed into a system of his own but the fact that in the society of mid-10th-century Bulgaria there were already internal preconditions for the emergence and popularization of such ideas. The soil was propitious for the sprouting of a new teaching opposed to that of the church, and corresponding to the specific conditions prevailing in Bulgaria. In this sense, what father Bogomil and his followers did was to meet an objectively existing social necessity in which the external effect, expressed through the influence of older heresies, was an important, but not the only deciding factor.

THE BOGOMILS: SUPPORTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND OPPONENTS OF THE CHURCH AS AN INSTITUTION.

Characteristic of the propounders of Bogomil ideas was not only the dualistic conception of the world (both in its absolute and its moderate forms), but also their marked

attempt to stress the fact that they were based solely on the views of New Testament Christianity, i. e. the text of the Gospels and the activities and messages of the apostles. According to Bogomil and his followers, the Old Testament was of no value at all, and even harmful to use, since it was written at the instigation of Satan. The only thing they recognized in it was the Book of Psalms, as well as the sayings of some of the prophets. Information on this can be found in Presbyter Kozma's *Sermon,* in Euthymius Zugabenus' polemical works, and elsewhere.

Again on the basis of their claim that only the New Testament expressed true Christianity, the Bogomil preachers denounced the entire institution of the church. They did not recognize the decisions of ecumenical and local councils, spurned the writings of eminent theologians, and sharply criticized representatives of the church, arguing that they were servants of the force of darkness. Their attacks against the higher clergy, especially bishops, were particularly sharp. According to the Bogomils, they had completely forgotten their duty to be the shepherds of their flocks, but lived in luxury and idleness and led vain, useless lives.

The Bogomils' views on the role of the clergy are particularly interesting. Unlike the conception which the church continuously expounded that the faithful could not be saved without the intermediary role of the clergy as executor of specific ritual functions, the Bogomil preachers claimed that communion between the Christian and god could be direct, without the intervention of a special clerical body. This view can best be seen in a polemical work against the Bogomils of Asia Minor compiled in the mid-11th century by Monk Euthymius of the Church of the Virgin *Periblepta* in Constantinople. In a dispute with their opponents, the Bogomils said, according to Euthymius: Why should there be a priest? He is not necessary (3,76). One of the hereteics' main inferences was that many

clergymen were sinful and unworthy people, and that therefore their role as intermediaries between god and believer was of no use at all.

By rejecting the necessity of "mediators" the Bogomils preached that every man should and can penetrate deeply into the basic principles of faith, by familiarizing himself well with the writings of the New Testament. That concept of theirs, considered objectively, created favourable prerequisites for increasing the aspirations to literacy, spurred further the process of education and literature in the Bulgarian society in the Middle Ages. We should seek herein the most positive aspects of the Bogomil influence during that remote period of our historical past.

The concept of the Bogomils of a church cult was very brave for that time. Rejecting the church as a manifestation of the evil force and the clergy as needless, they also rejected a number of church rituals and symbols – baptism, sacrament, worship of the cross, icons and relics, the numerous church festivals etc. The entire system of rituals and regulations, considered, according to the church doctrine as being an absolutely obligatory prerequisite for the salvation of the soul, fell entirely under the blows of their negation.

The hostile position of the Bogomil preachers regarding the church cult is explained primarily with the negation, which is characteristic of them, of the material beginning, in the spirit of their dualistic and spiritualistic concepts. This becomes evident in analyzing the arguments which they point out. At the same time however, by speaking against the church rituals and symbols, the Bogomils used such arguments which spoke of a sobermindedness unusual for that time and a more realistic and critical view of things. Thus, for instance, by rejecting baptism, the Bogomils claimed that it is simply "water" and "chrism" which is neither harmful nor useful. The sacred unction wrapped in mysteriousness was compared by them with the oil of icon-

lamps which smelt very badly. They claimed that the bread and wine used in the Communion were ordinary food, not Christ's flesh and blood. They called the cross a piece of wood, which could as well be made into farming implements, adding that it was illogical to worship the device on which the Son of God was crucified. They called the saints's relics nothing more than the bones of dead people, identical to the bones of dumb animals. In contrast to the church doctrine that on the Day of Judgement the dead would be resurrected in their former bodies, the Bogomils claimed that the flesh, once buried, turned into dust and ashes, and could never be resurrected. They called churches and chapels ordinary buildings, and the Virgin Mary a woman like any other. This was one of their most outspoken views, zealously overturning the ecclesiastical myth about the miracle of Christ's birth. With the same outspokenness, the Bogomils also criticized the miracles of Christ, which were among the Church's strongest arguments in its doctrine of the omnipotence of god and his son. Christ, they said, had "neither healed the lame nor resurrected the dead", and the stories about his miracles contained in the Bible were, in their view, "mere tales and fables".

The abundance of such arguments enables us to see the Bogomils as being among the most outspoken opponents of the mystical and irrational essence of the church doctrine and the cult related to this. The element of criticism, based on the ordinary man's common sense, is indeed striking. Regarded from this viewpoint, the Bogomil movement contained a certain irrefutable humanistic element, contrasting sharply with the surrounding spiritual atmosphere imbued by dogmatic and conservative thinking, in which the authority of the Bible and the "holy fathers" was decisive.

THE SOCIAL VIEWS OF THE BOGOMILS

The Bogomils' social views were based on the dualistic conception of the world which they preached. Starting from the conception that the earth is the realm of evil, they levelled sharp attacks against the wealthy and powerful. Riches, they said, came from Mammon, i. e. the devil, and claimed that the representatives of earthly power were servants of Satan. Particularly indicative here is a passage from Presbyter Kozma's *Sermon,* in which he says: "The heretics denounce the rich and teach their followers not to obey their masters. They despise the Tsar, and order all servants not to work for their masters". (1, 342). These accusations show that the Bogomils assumed a stance completely opposite to that of church ministers on two of the most important questions concerning the mediaeval Bulgarian – the question of power and of wealth. While the church regarded the powerful as emissaries of god, and the wealthy as god's favourites, the Bogomils attacked them as bearers of evil and people hated by god. This interpretation provided a suitable basis for protest against inequality of property and feudal oppression. Particularly indicative are the Bogomils' appeals for disobedience to the Tsar and the masters. This reflects the dissatisfaction at statute labour, which was among the heaviest burdens of the rural population during this period.

One of the most characteristic features of the Bogomils' social views were their appeals for a life of humility – an ascetic life. Guided by the idea that they should give priority to the spiritual rather than the material, they declared themselves as opponents of sumptous food and drink, recommending moderate food, primarily vegetarian, some of them even abstaining from cheese, milk and eggs. They had a totally negative attitude towards wine. This is shown by *Varouh's Vision,* one of the commonest apocryphal

texts in Bulgaria, which was probably known to and used by Bogomil preachers. The vine, it says, was sown in paradise by Satanail, which was why it was used to make a beverage which harmed man. A different Old Bulgarian apocryphal text says that Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden was not to taste the fruit of the forbidden tree, but to drink wine.

The prohibition on excessive eating was supplemented by calls against sumptuous clothing, sparkling vestments and silk shirts. Similar Bogomil sermons are hinted at in Presbyter Kozma's work. Some sources, such as the *Alexiadis* by the Byzantine authoress Anna Comnena of the early 12th century, and Euthymius of Periblepta's polemical work, describe the Bogomils as wearing black habits, rather like monks.

The Bogomils' views on matrimony fitted in with their negation of everything to do with the flesh. Whoever had claims to perfection in the faith, should renounce marriage and live a life of complete celibacy. In condemning matrimony as an expression of the worldly, they also rejected it as a sacrament, i. e. as one of the main rituals of the church. We should note, however, that the strict ascetic morality preached by the Bogomils was binding only on the "consummate", whereas ordinary Bogomil followers, who made up the bulk of the movement, lived ordinary lives – getting married, having children, setting up homes, etc.

As a whole, the appeals of the perfect for an ascetic way of life – humble nourishment, humble clothing, no marriage – were an expression of protest against ownership of property and inequality, against the marked contrasts and highly polarized structure of mediaeval Bulgarian society. Here again, the "theory", was firmly linked with real life, and with the particular trends, sentiments and moods it reflected in the spirit of the religious way in which mediaeval man thought.

ETHICAL VIEWS OF THE BOGOMILS

In accordance with the New Testament, the Bogomils preached love and respect for others, moral purity, modesty, temperance, and tolerance. Thier code of morals can be judged from Euthymius Zygabenus' work: "The heretics first exhort those with little training and urge them to believe in God and the Father and the Holy Ghost and know that Christ assumed human flesh and gave the holy scriptures to his apostles. They advise them to follow the instructions of the gospels, to pray, to fast, to free themselves of all vices, to own nothing, to be meek, to speak the truth and to love one another". (3,101). The recommendations of the *Bogomil preachers described in the Catharist Missal* of the 13th century, which describes various rituals in dualist religious brotherhoods are in the same spirit.

As we can see, there were no fundamental differences between Bogomil ethics and the ethical views propounded by the Orthodox clergy. Their common source is the gospel. They both shared the humanistic concept that all men are equal as children of god, and had to love and respect one another. Nevertheless, they did have substantial differences. In the first place, they differ substantially on the important moral question of loving one's neighbour. In principle, in accordance with the New Testament, both priests and Bogomil preachers considered this to be one of the main obligations of a true Christian. However, the clergy placed love of god before love of man. Love of god, fear of god, pleasing god are appeals that we come across continuously in sermons, eulogies and other works of a religious nature by prominent Old Bulgarian writers throughout the Middle Ages. In the sermons of the Bogomils, as far as we can judge from references that have come down to us, there were no such appeals. To them the

basic recommendations were not love and fear of god, but love and respect for man, who stood at the centre of attention. To love one another was, as we have seen, one of the main obligations Bogomil preachers urged their listeners to observe. What they considered important was not so much the cult of God as an abstract ruling over the invisible world, but of man as a being tormented and tortured by Satan and his servants on earth. In this respect the Bogomils were closer to real life, to man himself, with his thoughts and feelings, joys and sorrows. The relationship between man and god, which was one of the chief features of the church's religious philosophical and moral doctrine, was left in the background by the Bogomils, who brought to the fore the relationship between man and man, regarded as a distinct philanthropy.

The question of women was another one where the Bogomils diverged greatly from church doctrine. The clergy, basing themselves on the Bible, considered women to be of lesser importance than men, as they were created from Adam's rib which turned into the prime cause for the original sin. This view representing in an unflattering light the mother of the human race – Eve, has been reflected broadly in church books, as an assessment which does not brook contradiction. The Bogomils view was considerably different. As has been pointed out they rejected the myth of Adam's rib and claimed that Adam and Eve were created in one and the same way – with a body created by Satanail and with a lofty and bright soul inspired by God. According to them, the falling into sin took place not in paradise created by God, but in a paradise created by Satanail. In that sense all arguments, according to the Bogomil teaching, referring to the humiliating assessment of Eve, were overthrown. Hence the conclusion that there are no grounds to place man in the foreground as a superior creation. This was a conclusion which at that time had a very strong impact and humanistic ring and was a step

forward along the road of equalizing the two sexes. Mention should be made of the fact that that conclusion was applied into practice and it is common knowledge that women on an equal footing with men were accepted as members of the Bogomil fraternities. Women took part in the rituals performed there – prayer meetings, mutual confession initiating listeners into the rank of "believers" and believers into the rank of "perfect". More often than not women also joined the circle of "perfect" with all rights stemming from them – to preach, to organize, to attract successors for their teaching etc.

The profoundly humane character of the Bogomil ethics was manifest in the extremely negative attitude of the Bogomils towards wars and bloodshed. The image of Cain, included in their cosmogony, is depicted as the image of the greatest criminal who acted at the suggestion of Satanail. According to the Bogomils it was a sin to kill not only people but also animals, with the exception of snails as the embodiment of evil power. Convinced opponents of murders and bloodshed, the Bogomils rebuked representatives of the church for the fact that wars were waged and people annihilated one another with their blessing. Here again, the Bogomils' preachings expressed certain moods in mediaeval Bulgarian society, and more specifically the peasants', to whom wars, invasions and feuds were the worst catastrophes.

The Bogomils levelled sharp attacks not only against killing and bloodshed, but also against the fanaticism of the church and the secular authorities in persecuting and destroying their opponents. Their standpoint on this question is especially evident from a manuscript of the 15th century referring to the doctrine of the Bosnian Patarins, which was related to that of the Bogomils. It describes a debate between a "Patarin and a Roman" (i. e. a heretic and a Catholic) on various questions, including that of persecuting and killing those who think differently. The

Patarin accuses the Catholic church and the bodies of worldly power related to it of transgressing the commandment to love one's neighbour, and persecuting and putting to the sword all those who oppose church dogma and have different views. The heretics said it was permissible to expose and persecute one's opponents with words, but not to kill them physically, as this was in contradiction with the holy doctrines of Christ.

TYPES OF BOGOMILS

One of the features that is most striking when we take a general look at the Bogomil movement is the existence of several groups of "heretics". At the top of the scale were the so-called "perfect" Bogomils (referred to in Byzantine sources as *τελείοι* and in Latin sources as *perfecti).* This is what we might call the highest rank, which contained the best-educated and the most dedicated Bogomils. Excellently versed in the contents of the "Holy Scriptures", especially the texts of the New Testament, they went from place to place, Bible in hand, to preach their views and win supporters. The *perfecti* were not only experienced, tireless campaigners, but also the main leaders of the Bogomil fraternities. Their private lives were led in complete conformity with the main requirement of Bogomil ethics, i. e. that of giving priority not to the material, but to the spiritual things in life. They did not marry, and those who were married broke off their marriages, they did not eat meat, drink wine, own property , and avoided merry-making. They were prepared at all moments to enter into sharp disputes with their opponents, to unmask them, to prove the correctness of their own ideas. In other words, they were not simply ascetes like monks, but above all fighters, people who did not run away from society, but strove to remain in it, in order to spread the "Bogomil word", to convince, to

exhort, to organize. Their followers saw to their very modest daily requirements of food and shelter. This is how we are shown the *perfecti* in Presbyter Kozma's *Sermon*, in Euthymius Zygabenus *Panoplia Dogmatica*, in Euthymius of Acmonia's polemic sermon, and others.

Apart from the "perfect", two other types of Bogomils are mentioned in contemporary sources – ordinary "believers" and "listeners". The former were already accepted in the Bogomil fraternities, and were allowed to participate in the rituals performed there. They had to observe certain religious and moral norms, such as fasting on certain days, praying frequently, being humble and observing temperance, not desiring excessive wealth, etc. Strict ascetic morality, however was not obligatory for them – they could own property, marry and have families. The "listeners", on the other hand, were those who did not yet participate in the life of the "fraternities", and were only allowed to attend sermons. No special way of life was required of them, and they remained the same as other people.

The fact that a Bogomil belonged to a particular category did not, of course, mean that he had to belong to it for good. Every "listener" had the possibility of eventually joining the "ordinary" believers, provided of course that he observed the required norms, while an "ordinary believer" could, for his part, after the relevant training, become one of the "perfect", meaning that they were willing to change their way of life completely. Passing from one group into another was marked by a special rite held within the fraternity.

The Bogomils' division into three categories is not only a sign of organization, but was a result of the very nature of the movement as an intricate social and religious doctrine, and of the fact that it embraced various sections of mediaeval Bulgarian society. This system of division reflected the evident contradictions between dogma and

reality, between theory and practice, between abstract concepts and real necessities. We see on the one hand the "perfect Bogomils", who preached patience, non-resistance, denial of material goods, and renunciation of matrimony and the family. But these dogmatic, abstract, theoretical concepts, although based on a strong religious philosophy, were not in a position to attract the mass of the people, to become their guiding norms of behaviour. Few were willing to wholly accept the ascetic ideal, to completely renounce home, clothing and leisure. So it is not surprising that the number of perfect Bogomils was very small, and that they were a minority among the mass of followers. Consisting primarily of poor people from towns and villages, they eagerly listened to the sermons of the wandering Bogomil preachers with their Bibles, stirred by their criticism of the authorities, and their denunciation of kings, boyars and bishops, against the rich and avaricious in general.This did not mean that they wanted to become ascetics, leaving their homes and families and abandoning their property. Bogomil ideas attracted them not so much from their ascetic aspects, but from their marked anti-authoritarian and social leanings. Hence, too, the characteristic divergence between the movement as a theory, and as a mass social movement. On the one hand, we have appeals for poverty, for reconciliation, for avoidance of bloodshed, while on the other we have the peasants' ambition to return their expropriated lands, opposition to feudal oppression and open calls for rebellion. All this proceeded under the banner of the Bogomil ideology, which was used "selectively" depending on the particular situation and the particular social environment in which it was being propagated.

BOGOMIL RELIGIOUS FRATERNITIES

Although wholly rejecting the institution of the church as something created at Satanail's inspiration, the Bogomils did not oppose all forms of organization. Basing themselves on the New Testament, they believed that the faithful should be bound together in religious communities similar to the earliest Christian fraternities, as described in the Book of Apostles and in the Epistles of St. Paul and other early Christians.

We cannot now say for certain whether the first Bogomil fraternities were founded during the 10th century, when the Bogomils first appeared in Bulgaria. All we know is that from the very beginning they had a certain organization, and were divided into the three above-mentioned categories of perfect, faithful and listeners. This can be seen in a letter written by the patriarch of Constantinople, Theophylactus, to the Bulgarian Tsar Peter, between 936 and 956. We also know that from the very beginning the Bogomil movement had a single leader, described in Byzantine records as the *protos, protodidaskalos* (first teacher) and by other designations. Thus the first teacher was Father Bogomil, and after his death, as we can see from the information in Boril's Sinodik, was succeeded by his disciple Mihail. "Arch teachers" of the Bogomil movement were also mentioned in subsequent centuries. In the 11th century a certain Marko (in Thrace) and John Chourila (in Asia Minor) were first teachers, while in the 12th century there was a teacher Vassilii in Thrace.

The movement's head leader was surrounded by his top aides, who were known as "apostles". Bogomil himself had such "apostles", as later did John Chourila of Asia Minor during the mid-11th century. Vassilii was also surrounded by apostles wherever he went. The apostles came from the "perfect", who were involved exclusively in teaching, and

who constantly travelled from one place to another to propagate their faith.

The Bogomil preachers spread their doctrine to an increasing number of towns and villages, and by the 11th-12th centuries there were many fraternities in different parts of Bulgaria, as well as in neighbouring countries. A western source of 1167 mentions four fraternities of Bulgarian Bogomils–Romana, Dragometsia (Dragovichia), Melinikva and Bulgaria. The first of these, Romana, was probably in Thrace, and the other three in Macedonia. The source tells us that the members of the Bulgaria Fraternity held moderate dualist views while those of the Dragovichia Fraternity were absolute dualists. Judging from a piece in *Boril's Sinodik,* compiled in 1211, there was a Bogomil fraternity in the town of Sredets (today Sofia).

References to the organization of these fraternities are scanty. All we know is that each of them had one main leader, known as a *dedets*. The afore-said *Boril's Sinodik* makes mention of the leader of the fraternity in Sofia. Latin sources render the title *dedets* as "bishop". One such "bishop" was Nazarii, leader of the Bulgaria Fraternity, who in 1170 took one of the main Bogomil apocryphal works, *Gospel of John* to Italy.

The *dedets* had his helpers, who were known as *starets* and *gost,* as we see from sources referring to Bogomil fraternities in Bosnia. It is probable that the Bogomil fraternities in Bulgaria had similar leaders, although there is not yet conclusive evidence of this.

Religious life in the fraternities was highly simplified, in accordance with the principles laid down by the gospels and early Christian communities. We can see from the Bogomils' main liturgical book, the above-mentioned *Catharist* Prayer Book, that only four rites were performed: 1. general prayer meetings, where sermons were also held; 2. mutual confessions by members of the frater-

nity; 3. the admission of "listeners" to the group of "believers", and 4. the initiation of "believers" to the rank of "perfect".

HISTORY OF THE BOGOMIL MOVEMENT IN BULGARIA

The First Bulgarian State and Byzantine Conquest

The Bogomil movement, which emerged during the reign of Tsar Peter (927-969), rapidly gained followers, primarily among the peasantry. The Bulgarian Tsar, alarmed by this, sent two letters to the Patriarch of Constantinople Theophylactus, to ask for advice on what measures to take to get rid of the emergent heresy. There followed severe persecutions as testified by Prezbyter Kozma. The Bogomils were caught and thrown into cells in chains.

At the end of the 10th century, a serious threat faced Bulgaria. The Byzantine Empire was exerting growing pressure, and the Byzantine emperor Basil II aimed to conquer his northern neighbour. The entire Bulgarian nation had to prepare to defend itself from the blows of the invader. This gave the Bogomils a new status. Their sermons against internal oppressors (tsar, boyars and higher clergy), which characterized the movement in Peter's reign, now extended, by strength of an inner logic, to sermons against the invader who was threatening the country. The religious and social differences that plagued Bulgarian society were left in the background, heretics and non heretics, boyars and heretics united in a common front against the invader. In other words, the Bulgarians' sense of patriotism, shown when nation and country were under threat, took the upper hand. So it is not surprising that in

the reign of Tsar Samouil (997 -1014) there was no mention of persecution of the Bogomils, as the situation had changed radically, and not only Orthodox Christians, but also the numerous supporters of the Bogomils joined in the life or death struggle against the invaders.

Bulgaria's fall to Byzantine rule in 1018 placed a heavy burden on the shoulders of the Bulgarian people, as they had to maintain the Byzantine Empire's complex administrative and military apparatus. Byzantine clerks of high and low rank moved into the country, enriching themselves at the cost of the population and abusing their powers. The Byzantine feudal system, characterized by many taxes and duties, was introduced. The difficult living conditions of the Bulgarians under Byzantine rule, were further complicated by the invasions to which the country was subjected for almost two centuries. In the 1030s Pechenegs, and later Ouzes and Koumans, started invading the region between the Danube and the Balkan Range. The Bulgarian population also experienced mainly misfortunes when the Crusaders passed through the country in 1096 and 1147, as well as during the Norman invasions of south western parts of Bulgaria in 1081.

This created favourable grounds for the spread of the Bogomil movement whose anti -Byzantine leanings became increasingly marked. Here again, Bogomil preachers found the greatest number of supporters among the peasantry, since the burden of foreign oppression fell mainly on its shoulders. But in the 11th and 12th centuries, the Bogomils also spread in the towns. In the late 11th century, the Byzantine writer Anna Comnena speaks of a Bogomil population in Plovdiv, as well as of Bogomil supporters in the very capital of the Empire, Constantinople. We should also mention a piece of writing by the Byzantine legal interpreter Todor Balsamon of the late 12th century, which describes whole towns and villages as being swept by this anti ecclesiastical movement. In short, during the time of

Byzantine rule, the social foundations of the Bogomil movement expanded.

The main target of Bogomil preaching was the Byzantine higher clergy, headed by the bishop of Ohrid (in the southwest of the country) and the patriarch in Constantinople. The Byzantine church was the institution which gave ideological support to Byzantine rule over the Bulgarians, and that is why the heretics spoke primarily against its representatives. As a mouthpiece for the national aversion for the Byzantine clergy, the Bogomils started preaching, as we can see from *Panoplia Dogmatica* by Euthymius Zugabenus, that god's chief opponent, Satanail, who had previously lived in Jerusalem, had moved to the St. Sofia Cathedral in Constantinople. A change that was slight on the surface, but of great significance, showed where the Bogomils saw the root of evil.

The Bogomils preached against the secular authorities as well as against the Byzantine clergy, calling them servants of the devil and conductors of his evil intentions. All those who obeyed the rulers, were paying their respects to their master Satan, and were unworthy of salvation, they taught their followers.

In struggling against the foreign invaders, the Bogomils started during the 11th and 12th centuries to change their stand vis-a-vis the Bulgarian state. While previously, the heretics had regarded it with hostility, their sermons now assumed a different mood. Their previous renunciation was replaced by idealization of and admiration for the Bulgarian people's past and its rulers' policies and deeds. Indicative of this is an apocryphal work from the middle of the 11th century entitled *Tale of Isaiah,* and further known as the "Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle". It contains Bogomil features, such as praise of the ascetic way of life, loathing of war, etc. At the same time, it reveals the compiler's patriotic sentiments: he praises the reigns of Peter

and Simeon, and considers them to have been times of prosperity for the nation.

Hostility towards the rule of the Byzantines grew constantly, the Bogomils also having some hand in this. In 1040 an uprising broke out centred in south-western Bulgaria, led by Peter Delyan, son of Tsar Samuil. Bogomil followers were amongst the rebels. After the quelling of the uprising, they were forced to leave their homes and to flee abroad. This is mentioned in an Italian source known as the ***Bar Annals*** where we read that many heretics from Bulgarian lands fled to Sicily in 1040/41.

In the following uprisings the Bogomils, together with the Paulicians played a not inconsiderable role. In 1079 the population of Sofia rose against the foreign conquerors. The uprising was headed by a man named Leka, a Paulician from Plovdiv. The rebellious citizens murdered Mihail Bishop of Sofia, when he appeared before them in full church regalia and tried to persuade them to remain true to the Emperor in Constantinople. The murder of the bishop, as the highest representative of church power, shows that it was opposition both to the church and to Byzantium that had inspired the uprising, a mood which the sermons of the Bogomils and Paulicians had helped to incite. Such sentiments came to a head again a few years later, in 1084, when in the Plovdiv region an uprising was led by Travul, a former Paulician and prominent Byzantine dignitary. The uprising spread amongst the populace and the Byzantine administrators only succeeded in getting it under control with great difficulty. The fact that the event occurred mainly around Plovdiv, where the population was to a large extent Bogomil and Paulician, and also that it was headed by a Paulician, even if he had rejected his views previously, shows the indisputable role of the heretic dualists in its preparation and development.

The Byzantine writer Anna Comnena clearly illustrates

how the Bogomils and Paulicians became increasingly not only opponents of the Byzantine church, but also instigators of rebellions against Byzantine rule. When she describes the situation in Plovdiv and the surrounding towns and villages at the end of the 11th century, she noted that many heretics– Bogomils, Paulicians and Armenians – lived there, with differences between them as regards faith, but that "all were quite unanimous in their renegade intentions aimed against the state".

The Byzantine rulers were well aware of the dangers of the Bogomils' and Paulicians' activities, and decided to put a stop to them through cruel persecution. Particularly active in this respect was the emperor Alexius Comnenus (1081-1118). He first took steps against the Paulicians, and towards the end of his reign turned his attention to the Bogomils. In his reign, the Bogomil movement grew larger than ever. The main teacher and preacher of the Bogomils at the time was Vassilii, probably of Bulgarian origin. Together with his twelve disciples, or apostles, as they were called, he travelled the length and breadth of the Byzantine Empire, preaching the Bogomil faith with fire. According to Anna Comnena, the number of Bogomils grew daily, and Vassilii even found a warm reception in the capital. Alarmed by this heretical propaganda, Alexius decided to act firmly. Many of Vassilii's followers were caught, and shortly afterwards he himself was captured and brought to the palace for interrogation. With insincere words, the Byzantine autocrat lulled the old, experienced Bogomil into giving him a detailed account of his views, under the pretext that he himself wished to learn something newer and better. Unsuspecting, Vassilii started explaining the fundamentals of the Bogomil theory, while at the same time, concealed behind a curtain, an imperial scribe recorded every one of his words. When Vassilii had finished, the curtain was drawn and Alexius, in the words of Anna Comnena, "ceased his play-acting". He immediately

started a trial of the Bogomil leader, using as an indictment the words he himself had said and which the scribe had recorded. The trial was presided over by the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nicholas Grammaticus, and many senators and high-ranking military officials took part in it. Facing his judges, Vassilii maintained his views, and was finally sentenced to be burnt at the stake. The emperor's attempts to break his will and make him renounce his views in the last minute failed, and in the year 1111, in one of Constantinople's main squares, Vassilii died a martyr's death. His chief followers were incarcerated, and remained imprisoned for the rest of their lives.

Despite the harsh measures taken, the Bogomils kept winning more and more supporters, since the conditions that had led to the rise of the movement still existed. New harsh persecutions began in the reign of Alexius' successor, Manuel Comnenus (1143-1180). The main centre of heretic activities was, as surviving documents tell us, the south-west of Bulgaria (Macedonia). Judging from an account by the Byzantine legal commentator Todor Balsamon, the authorities in Constantinople again burnt many irrepressible Bogomils at the stake for boldly disseminating their revolutionary ideas.

The Second Bulgarian State

In 1186, a successful uprising led by the Assen brothers overthrew Byzantine rule in Bulgaria, thus reinstating the Bulgarian state. However, they did not succeed in liberating the entire country, as the new Bulgarian state only incorporated the lands between the Danube, Black Sea, Balkan Range and river Isker, with the regions of Thrace and Macedonia remaining under Byzantine rule. This task was undertaken by Assen and Peter's brother Kaloyan, the third member of the Assen dynasty

(1197-1207). First he waged wars against the Byzantines, and later against the Holy Roman Empire, which had just appeared in the Balkans, defeating Byzantium and taking over her Balkan territories, including the capital Constantinople (1204). The Bulgarian campaigns were a success, and after 1205, Kaloyan annexed a significant part of Thrace and Macedonia within the Bulgarian state.

During the war the with Holy Roman Empire, the Bulgarian Tsar came across the numerous Paulician and Bogomil populations inhabiting Thrace, especially Plovdiv, during the 13th century. And, as we have seen, the Bogomils and Paulicians had for years been bitter opponents of Constantinople and the Byzantine Church, their sermons having frequently led to uprisings. So it is not surprising that when Kaloyan entered Plovdiv, he and his troops were welcomed as liberators by the local heretics. There is an explicit record of this in a work by the contemporary French historiographer Geoffroy de Villehardouin. This confirmed the fact that under the conditions of foreign oppression, the Bogomils' religious and social views against feudal oppression were relegated to secondary place, making way for their patriotic sentiments that united the Bulgarians in their struggles against their Byzantine and Holy Roman conquerors. So the support given by the heretics to Tsar Kaloyan in his actions to liberate Plovdiv is quite conceivable. Kaloyan himself showed tolerance for them, and their ideas spread freely.

However, the official attitude towards the Bogomils changed radically after Kaloyan's assassination, when his nephew Boril (1207-1218) usurped the throne. From the very outset, the new ruler started to persecute those who had supported the rightful dynasty, thus provoking opposition from the boyars who had been faithful to the Assen dynasty. The Bogomils were also persecuted, Boril perceiving them as his main enemies. In response to this repression, the Bogomils resumed their strong attacks against

tsars, boyars and higher clergymen as servants of Satan. The council in the capital Turnovo held on February 11, 1211 marked a peak of the persecutions. This council presided over by Boril himself, condemned the Bogomil doctrine and an anathema was pronounced against its founder, father Bogomil. At the command of the Tsar, the so-called Sinodik on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, used in the Byzantine church services at that time, was translated from Greek into Bulgarian. It contained anathema against various heresies (Aryanism, iconoclasm, etc), and this was now supplemented by the church's curse on the Bogomil movement and the verdict pronounced on its followers at the council of Turnovo.

Under Boril's successor Ivan Assen II (1218-1241), persecution of the Bogomils abated. The Bulgarian Tsar was even accused by Pope Gregory IX of ruling a country full of heretics. Ivan Assen II's tolerance towards the Bogomils was in stark contrast to the state of affairs in the Catholic west at the time. The Inquisition, set up early in the 13th century, was active there and considerable numbers of Cathars, whose doctrine was almost identical to that of the Bogomils, were burned at the stake.

References to the spread of the Bogomil movement in Bulgaria in the second half of the 13th century during the reigns of Ivan Assen II's successors are scanty. Bogomil supporters probably took part in the great anti-boyar uprising led by Ivailo (between 1277-1280), although we have no direct data on this.

Further information on the history of the Bulgarian Bogomil movement can be found in documents dating to the mid-14th century. At that time in the capital Turnovo, as we read in the biography of Theodosius of Turnovo, a prominent hysechast theologian, there were two Bogomil preachers – Kiril, known by the name of Bosota, and his disciple Father Stefan. They propounded dualist views, opposed marriage and renounced the cult of the cross and

icons, praised poverty as a supreme virtue and taught that it was unnecessary to be concerned for food and clothes. In other words, they expessed the views typical of the doctrine of the "perfect" Bogomils.

The two Bogomils' activities were not confined to the capital, but also extended to other towns and villages. "They travelled," we read in Theodosius' biography, "around towns and villages, and without shame lectured the people." (4,21). In 1350 a church council was called to put an end to their heretical activities, Kiril and Stefan's views were anathematized, and they themselves were banished from the country. But Bogomil preaching continued, forcing the church to call a second council in 1360, at which their doctrine was again condemned. The Bogomils were most numerous at that time in northwestern Bulgaria. According to a Franciscan monk writing in 1365, almost one-third of the local population held the dualistic views of the Bogomils and the kindred Paulicians.

In 1396, the Bulgarian state was overrun by the Ottoman Turks. The new rule that was instated had not only a typical military-feudal system, but also a new governing religion and church – Islam.

One would think that the harsh social and religious oppression imposed upon the Bulgarian within the Ottoman Empire might have strengthened the role of the Bogomil movement, giving its views even greater weight. In reality, however, as the course of events shows, Bulgaria's fall to the Ottoman Empire meant the gradual decline of the Bogomil movement. This can be explained by the change of historical conditions, particularly by the fact that the Bogomils' chief ideological opponent – the Orthodox Church – had now been relegated to second place. Under these circumstances the Bogomil doctrine, which had been built up in order to renounce the church's spiritual suzerainty, lost its meaning. The Bogomil movement had emerged and developed in a specific situation, when

people's minds were ruled by the dogma of an all powerful church institution which worked hand-in hand with the feudal aristocracy and the Tsar. After Bulgaria was conquered by the Turks, the situation changed radically, thus depriving the Bogomils of the basis for further activity. Now there was a different enemy, with a different religion – Islam – and this necessity also changed the conditions for resistance. In the event, the banner in the struggle against the oppressor was taken up not by heretical doctrines, but by Orthodox Christianity and its church. Christianity now became the ideological and theoretical foundation for the enslaved population's confidence and hope. And this was the role it performed throughout almost five hundred years of Ottoman rule. The Christian religion became one of the salient features of the Bulgarian nationality and one of the main factors in its survival through centuries of foreign domination.

Of course, the Bogomil movement did not vanish overnight with Bulgaria's fall to Ottoman rule, nor did it vanish without trace from the minds of subsequent generations, or from the way of life or literature. Numerous dualist legends and apocrypha, which have come down to our day, and names of places related with the Bogomil movement survived through the ages. Supporters of the dualist world outlook continued to be active, mainly the Paulicians in Thrace, who later settled in Northern Bulgaria, and during the 16th and 17th centuries adopted Catholicism. In the 15th century we hear mention of Bogomils in Macedonia, known as *kudugeri* and *torbeshi*. But heretical activities were already quite limited in scope, and gradually died out completely.

THE SPREAD AND INFLUENCE OF THE BOGOMIL MOVEMENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES

The Balkan Peninsula

The Bogomil movement would not have been of such great interest if it had remained confined solely within the Bulgarian state. As we know, as it developed over the centuries it found ground for dissemination and influence in other countries, developing from something specifically Bulgarian into an ideology of European significance.

The first place to which the Bogomil movement spread was the Byzantine Empire. Bogomil preachers are first mentioned in Byzantine Thrace and Asia Minor in the mid-11th century. Valuable information on the Thracian Bogomils and their religious fraternities has come down to us in *On the Works of Demons* by the Byzantine historiographer Michael Psellus (1018-1092), while the monk from Constantinople, Euthymius of Akmonia, gives us a detalied account of the Bogomils in Asia Minor. The Bogomils were apparently headed by a John Chourila, born in a village close to Smyrna. His sermons drew not only a large number of peasants, but also many towns people. The heretics of Asia Minor, apart from "Bogomils" were also known as *fundagiagiti*.

In the early 12th century,the Bogomil movement flourished in the Bulgarian regions of Thrace and Macedonia, then under Byzantine rule.. It was then that Vassilii, as we have seen above, who was condemned at the council of Constantinople and burned in 1111, worked as a vigorous Bogomil preacher. Fresh persecutions of the Bogomils were carried out in the reign of Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180). Nevertheless, the "Bulgarian heresy" could not be eradicated. It continued to spread in Byzantium over the following centuries. We find evidence of this in the letters of theMicean patriarch Germanus II

(1222 - 1240), in the historical work of Nikiphorus Grigora (14th c.), and also in some other sources. The last references to the Bogomil movement in the Byzantine Empire are to be found in the polemical work of the bishop of Salonica Simeon, which was entitled *Against All Heresies,* which speaks of Bogomil religious fraternities in the environs of Salonica. Along with the name "Bogomils", we also find antother designation, *kudugeri.*

Outside Byzantium, the Bogomil movement also found a favourable climate for development in Serbia. It emerged here mainly in the second half of the 12th century, which can be explained by the fact that at that time conditions favouring its dissemination came into being. Sources tell us that the feudal system had already gained strength in Serbia by then, and that the Orthodox Church played an increasingly stronger role. Under these circumstances, a growing role was played by that "foul and accursed heresy", as a contemporary source described it. The Governor of Serbia Stefan Neman (1168-96) was forced to convoke a council at which the heretics were anathemized and condemned to various penalties. And it was probably in connection with persecution of the Bogomils that an abridged Serbian version of Presbyter Kozma's *Sermon* then appeared, containing a denunciation of their views. Characteristic of this edition is that it dwells mainly on the Bogomils' attacks against the Tsar, boyars and higher clergy. This shows that in Serbia, as in Bulgaria, the Bogomil movement had a sharp anti-authoritarian nature, and that it was aimed primarily against the secular and religious authorities.

From surviving source we find that, despite relentless persecution, the Bogomil doctrine continued to spread in Serbia during the 13th and 14th centuries, and that its followers there were in constant battle with the church. In response to this came the ecclesiastical council of Zica (a monastery near Krajevo in Yugoslavia) in 1221, the then

leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church, archbishop Sava, formulated strict and obligatory dogma for the Orthodox Faith, stigmatizing the heresy. At that time also, the Serbian Orthodox Sinodik was also finally completed, its aim being to renounce anti-church doctrines, including the Bogomil doctrine.

From Serbia, the Bogomil teaching penetrated into neighbouring Bosnia. There, its followers, who were most frequently known as Patarins and Kudugeri, spread their ideas for over three centuries (from the late 12th to the mid-15th century), until the Bosnian state fell to the Turks. As in the other Balkan countries, in Bosnia the Bogomil movement also flourished under the feudal system, with the existence of two radically opposed social classes – the dependent serfs and the feudal aristocracy. This explains its marked social character. Along with this, however, the Bosnian Bogomil (or Patarin) movement developed at the time of a very strained international situation: the constant threat to the Bosnian state of attack and destruction by its northern neighbour, Hungary. The period from the beginning of the 13th to the mid-15th century is known for numerous wars and clashes between Bosnia and Hungary. Bosnia was also distinguished by a further characteristic: the sharp contradictions between the central authorities and the local feudal lords with their aspirations for autonomy. These contradictions came to a head after the death of the Bosnian king Tvrdko in 1391.

For these reasons, the Bogomil movement in Bosnia differed from that in mediaeval Serbia and Bulgaria. Its history in that country took a different course. Here it succeeded in becoming the leading religion for a certain time, organized under the patronage of the local feudal lords into an independent "Bosnian Church". This church reflected the sentiment of part of the Bosnian aristocracy for greater independence from the central authorities, and the striving to protect the country from external foes. In

accordance with the Bogomil tenets, the movement's representatives did not own estates with serfs, nor did they collect church taxes from the population. The leader of this church was known as a "ded", who had helpers, called *gosti, starci* and *stroinici*. Some of the Patarins, who called themselves "good Christians", led a strictly ascetic way of life, eating scantily and dressing humbly. Thus they resembled the Bogomil *perfect* in Bulgaria and Serbia. The remaining followers lived ordinary lives.

In Western Europe

The influence of Bogomil ideas was felt in a number of West European countries, as well as on the Balkan Peninsula. Dualist views spread from the 12th to 14th centuries to various places in Germany, England and the Iberian Peninsula. However, the Bogomil influence was strongest and lasted longest in northern Italy and the south of France, where the Cathar Movement emerged (also known as Albigenses, after the town of Albi in southern France).

In these countries there had long been conditions favouring the emergence of anti-church doctrines. Even in the early 11th century we see isolated instances of opposition to the church in some regions of France and Italy, with sermons being read against church dogma, which went down well with the common people. The rejected religious rites and sacraments, challenged the church's right to titles, recommended an ascetic lifestyle, preached against bloodshed, etc. We have records of such sermons from the years 1004, 1019, 1028, 1047 and throughout the first half of the 11th century. It has not yet been established whether these anti-ecclesiastical views were purely local in origin, or whether they were influenced by the Bogomils, whose ideas had by then spread throughout the Balkans. We have evidence of economic and cultural relations between Italy

and the Balkans in the 10th and 11th centuries, which might indicate that views similar to those of the Bogomils might have spread from East to West, and that they thus arose not solely as a result of local conditions. However, this question has not been conclusively settled yet.

However, as far as the anti-church doctrines of the Cathars are concerned, which developed in Italy and France from the middle of the 12th century on, their connection with the Bogomil movement is indisputable. There are obvious similarities which enable us to regard the Cathars as a type of "Western Bogomils". Above all, they have in common a dualist world outlook and the idea that the world is under the power of evil. Furthermore, among the Cathars, as among the Bogomils, the dualist belief was widespread, and both movements had their adherents of extreme dualism. Both doctrines held the belief that true Christianity should be based on the New Testament alone, and that the Old Testament had been written at the instigation of the Forces of Evil. They also shared the belief that the spiritual is superior to the material, and that the former was the only way to man's salvation. Hence, too, the Cathars' calls for a humble and ascetic life, and renunciation of worldy goods, fine clothes and excessive eating. Both had the same negative attitude to church rites and symbols, the church institution and its higher servants (popes, metropolitans, bishops). Like the Bulgarian Bogomils, the Cathars were divided into the "perfect" and "listeners". The "perfect" were the chief preachers and organizers, and the rules of ascetic morality were binding on them – they did not get married, did not eat meat or drink wine, and renounced material goods. The ordinary followers, on the other hand, lived in the same way as other people did.

There are further striking similarities between the Bogomil movement and Catharism from the viewpoint of organization. The religious fraternities in Italy and France

resembled the Bogomils in all ways, and performed the same rituals (prayer meetings, mutual confessions, and initiation into the group of "believers" and "perfect").

The almost total typological similarity between the Bulgarian Bogomil movement and Catharism in Italy and France point at an organic link between the two movements. And indeed, a large number of facts show that the French and Italian Cathars alike were well aware of the views of the Bulgarian Bogomils, and adopted patterns in the construction and dissemination of their own dualistic doctrine.

The Bogomil influence was first felt in Northern Italy (Lombardy). Towards the 1160s, a preacher named Marko who had come from Bulgaria was active there. With his views he belonged to moderate dualism, a current which was practised by the Bulgaria Fraternity. It was under his influence that the first Catharist religious communities in Italy were formed. They practised moderate dualism, and the main one was situated in Concorezo (near Milan). Later, however, absolute dualist views preached by a certain Nikita, a member of the Dragovish fraternity also spread among the Cathars. Debate ensued between the two currents of dualism, and in order to put an end to the squabbling, in 1167 a council was held in Saint-Felix-de-Caraman (near Toulouse). Meanwhile, Catharism had spread into France, where religious fraternities were also springing up.

Links between the Italian and French Cathars and the Bulgarian Bogomils continued even after these events. It is known that in 1190, the leader of the Bulgaria Religious Fraternity visited the Cathars in Concorezo and presented the local Catharist bishop Nazarius with the Bogomils' main apocryphal work, *Gospel* of John (The Secret Book), which later was probably translated into Latin. In other words, the Bulgarian Bogomils supplied their Italian counterparts with the literature they needed to spread their

doctrine. Bogomil books from Bulgaria also appeared in France. There too, the *Gospel* of John was distributed as the main apocryphal work, although it was subjected to a few changes in its content.

The indisputable link between the Bogomil movement and Catharism and the fact that the roots of Western dualist heresy should be sought in Bulgaria can also be inferred from various direct references by Catholic clergymen during the 13th and 14th centuries, i. e. the time when both the Bogomil movement and Catharism were at their height. The famous Catalonian preacher and opponent of the dualists Durand de Huesca, for example, noted in a polemical work compiled in 1228-1229 that at that time, the Italian and French Cathars were divided into three groups: one group, he writes, "was subordinate to the Greek heretics,the other to the Bulgarians, and the third to the Dragovets" (5,138). By "Bulgarians" and "Dragovets" he obviously means members of the Bulgaria and Dragovish fraternities, while by Greeks he probably means the Greek dualist fraternity which existed in Constantinople at the time. The famous Italian clergyman and inquisitor Anselm of Alexandria also sought the roots of Catharism in Bulgaria. In his treatise *On Heresies,* written between 1260 and 1270, he dwelt on the origins of dualistic anti-church doctrines, stressing that there were three main dualist fraternities which had infected the people of the West with heresy – the Philadelphia, Drugonzia and Bulgaria fraternities.

We again come upon evidence of the link between the Cathars and the Bulgarian Bogomils in an essay by Stephen of Bourbon, a prominent French clergyman of the second half of the 13th century. He noted two kinds of heretics as existing in France at the time – Waldensians and Albigenses, who were also known as Patarins and Bulgarians: "Valdenses scilicet et Albigenses dicti Patareni vel Bulgarii" (6, 275). He then speaks of Manes, the

founder of Manichaeism, the oldest dualist heresy, afterwards returning to the question of the heretics in France to specify a few more things about their names. Some, he said, were called *albigenses,* others *cazari* or *patari,* and others *katari* or *katharisti* (6,300). And apart from that, the French theologian adds, they were also called Bulgarians, as their special refuge was Bulgaria ("dicuntir etiam Bulgari, quia latibulum eorum speciale est Bulgaria (6,300)."

One of the most important pieces of evidence on the leading role of the Bulgarian Bogomil movement in the emergence of Catharism in Italy and France, is the well-known essay by Rheiner Sakoni, a former Cathar, who afterwards became an avowed enemy of the heretics. In his essay of 1250 he gives interesting details on the views of the Cathars and their organization, dwelling also on the question of what kind of dualist fraternities existed at that time on the Balkan Peninsula, in Asia Minor, France and Italy. Rheiner lists sixteen fraternities (he designates them by the word "churches" – *ecclesia),* and gives their names: the church of the Albanenses of Dannezacho, the church of Concorezo, ecclesia Baiolensium or Baiolo, the ecclesia Vincentina or of Marchia, ecclesia Florentina, ecclesia Valle Spoletana, the church of France, ecclesia Tolosana, ecclesia carcossonensis, the Albigensian church, the church of Slavonia, the church of the Latins in Constantinople, the church of the Greeks in Constantinople, the church of Philadelphia in Romania, the Bulgarian church (ecclesia Bulgariae), and the Dragovish Church (ecclesia Dugunthiae). All this, concludes Rheiner, derives from the last two (et omnes habuerunt originem de duabus ultimis (7,169). We have no reason to doubt the authenticity of this information, as is given by one of the experts on dualist doctrines of the 13th century.

The fact that the Bulgarian Bogomils were closely connected with the Cathars in France and Italy and that the

Bulgaria and Dragovish fraternities played the role of ideological and organizational centres of all dualistic heresies of 12th and 13th-century Europe, led to the popularization of the word "Bulgari" in the West as meaning heretics. The term of speech was first used in this sense by the French chronicler Robert d'Auxerre in a text of a chronicle dating from 1201. Later on, the word "Bulgari" in various forms, Latin of Provencal – bulgri, bugari, Burgari, Bugares, Bogri, Bogros etc. are found in other works by French authors. The name "Bulgaria" also started being used to mean "land of heretics".

When we speak of the relationship between the Bogomil movement and Catharism, we should always bear in mind that however strong the ideological influence from Bulgaria was, dualist doctrines could not have taken root in Italy and France if there had not been suitable conditions for this. And these preconditions were the high level of feudalism in both countries and the rule of the Catholic Church with its great wealth and strong political influence. It was above all the peasants who could not put up with their hard lot and struggled against this church. However, cities also played an important role in the emergence and spread of dualist heresies. Urban life in Italy, especially during the 12th and 13th centuries, was strongly developed, and opposition to the church could quite easily flame up among artisan and merchant quarters, with their striving for economic expansion and greater independence from the feudal ecclesiastical and secular aristocracy. Even some members of the feudal ruling class, mainly in the south of France who felt hostility towards the absolute power of the French king, joined the Cathars: they were further attracted by the notion that they could lay hand on the vast estates of the church, and for this reason were inclined to have views directed against the institutionalized church.

In other words, the socio-religios doctrines of the Cathars in Italy and France, which were based on models

borrowed from the Bulgarian Bogomils, had their own soil for development, and at the same time acquired specific features of their own both as a theory and as practice. This can be illustrated by an example concerning the cosmogonical ideas of the French dualists. As we have seen, according to the compiler of the *Gospel of John* (The Secret Book), one of the primary Bogomil apocrypha, Satanail, in order to win the angels over to his side in his attempt to dethrone god and to take his place, promised them that if they supported him he would reduce the taxes they paid to their heavenly master as his subjects. This episode in the "Secret Book" reflects feudal life in mediaeval Bulgaria, and struck a note among the obligation-burdened rural population, to whom a reduction of taxes was one of the most desirable things. For this reason it was quite obvious to them that a promise to reduce the angels' taxes would be one of the main temptations for joining in the revolt against god. In the South of France, however, where not only peasants, but also a considerable part of the wealthy citizenry and aristocracy striving to acquire some of the church's wealth in order to strengthen their position against the king's aspirations for centralization, were also attracted by Catharism, the episode of Satanail's temptation of the angels underwent considerable alteration. One text in the records of the French Inquisition from the beginning of the 14th century cites Satanail as promising the "good spirit", "fields, vines, orchards, gold, silver and all sorts of worldly goods, as well as wives for every one of them" if they sided with him (8, II, 34). In another version of the plotter's instigation we read how Satanail promised the angels "much wealth – wives, sons, sheep, oxen and property on this world" (8, III, 219). And in a third version of the same story, this one being of special interest to us, we read that the conspirator promised to make those who gave him support either "kings", or "counts", or "emperors" or "rulers of men" (8, III, 490). As we can see, the modest

promise in the Bulgarian edition of the *Gospel of John* of a reduction in taxes, geared to listeners and supporters mainly among the peasantry, is in the cosmogonic ideas of the French Cathars, replaced by promises of major material goods: land, gold, silver and high rank. Of course, there is nothing surprising about this change. It stems from the fact that the French Cathars preached their doctrine in a different environment from that of the Bulgarian Bogomils, and that a not inconsiderable part of their followers were wealthy townspeople and feudal lords, whose main aim was to increase their wealth and political might. This modification in the cosmogonic tale of the "temptation" of the angels is convincing proof of how even directly related ideologies undergo considerable alteration and acquire their own specific traits in accordance with their social milieu.

In Russia

The Bogomil movement also found suitable soil for development in Kievan Russia. Here again, the chief prerequisite was the development of feudalism and the existence of a powerful institutionalized church designated to give ideological support to the existing socio-political system. Hence the emergence of inner contradictions which caused a series of outbreaks of unrest in town and country – in 1024, 1066-1068, 1071 and 1088. These revolts had religious as well as social causes, reflecting dissatisfaction among those strata of the population among whom pagan sentiments were still alive. Newly-Christianized (in 988), the Russian people had still not forgotten its old beliefs. The monotheic Christian ideology was unusual and inconceivable to many of them. Many also reacted negatively to the appearance of a church estate enjoying privileges and distinguished in its own way from the rest of the people. This was the basis on which a strong opposition

formed to the church, an opposition which can be termed a unique mixture of pagan and anti-aristocratic sentiments, i. e. a mixture of religious and social elements.

Eventualy, side by side with the pagan reaction which was expressed in the upheavals during the 11th century, dualistic views also started gaining ground – i. e. , the role and influence of Bogomil ideas started to be felt. This can be seen from some episodes described by the Russian chronicler Nikon, which shows that there were among the populace dualistic views on the creation of the earth by two opposite forces – god and the devil – as the Bogomils preached. Of particular interest here is Nikon's account of a conversation between an inhabitant of Novgorod and a magician. It is characteristic that these dualistic beliefs were closely interwoven with pagan beliefs, and that their propagators are usually described as *magi* (sorcerers, wizards). This is a peculiarity in the formation of heretical ideas in Kievan Russia which is not so clearly manifest in the Bulgarian Bogomil movement.

Apart from the above-mentioned chronicles, other sources also provide data on the emergence of heresies in 11th-century Russian society. An interesting item in this respect is the *Slovo nekoego hristolyubetsa i revnitelya po pravoi vere* (Sermon of a True Believer of Christ) and the *Slovo Yoanna Zlatoestogo* (Sermon of John Chrysostom). These two works draw attention to the threat posed by heretical beliefs, and also describe various features of heresies and heretics which indicate a direct Bogomil influence. A remarkable fact is that in the *Sermon of a True Believer,* "Bulgarians" are indicated as enemies of Christianity.

We can also see that the Bogomil teaching found a good reception in Kievan Russia from the fact that from the 11th century on, Presbyter Kozma's *Sermon* was much-read in the local church quarters. Copied, whether entirely or in part, this work was greatly appreciated by the

Russian clergymen, as they could use it to fight the heretics and demonstrate the harmfulness of their views.

Along with the first phase of Bogomil influence in Russia, which can be felt mainly in the events in the history of Kievan Russia during the 11th century, we can speak of a second, later phase, which dates to the second half of the 14th and early 15th century. This was when the Strigolnik heresy emerged and spread. The first centre of this heresy was Novgorod, and its main proponents were two clergymen – the deacons Karp and Nikita, condemned to death in 1375 as heretics and thrown from the high bridge over the river Bolkhov. Destroyed in Novgorod, the Strigolnik doctrine re-appeared in the early 15th century in Pskov. Its followers, despite their persecution, doggedly maintained their views. We can view as continuation of this heresy the new group of opponents of the official church in Novgorod headed by Zakhara, Alexii and Denis, which appeared in the late 15th century. Again in the late 15th century, views similar to the Strigolnik heresy started to appear in Moscow. One of the most active preachers of this heresy there was Todor Kuritsin, frequently mentioned in anti-heretical manuscripts which were written to undermine his views and those of other free-thinkers.

A comparison between the Bogomil movement and the Strigolnik movement in Russia reveals a striking typological similarity. Here are two socio-religious trends with identical basic features – dualist conceptions, severe criticism of the church institution, a marked trend towards a more rationalistic interpretation of church dogma, rituals and symbols, and the attempt to underscore the direct link between "god" and "believer", i. e. to regard the soul's salvation as the affair of the individual, and the reduction to a minimum of the cult and ritual side of religion. There is a particularly remarkable similarity between the Strigolniks and the supporters of Bogomil absolute dualism, whereby both reject the canonical eschatological tale, i. e. the

Resurrection and the Second Advent and Last Judgement. Both Bogomils and Strigolnik were well-versed in the scriptures, in particular the New Testament, which they both regarded as the foundation of true Christianity. Common to both movements was also the high moral standpoint from which they fought against the corruption of the clergy. Both Bogomils and Strigolniks shared an attitude of scepticism which led them to constantly check the contents of the "holy books" and continuously strive to find a more acceptable interpretation. In general, we can speak of a drive towards activating the individual through his liberation from the binding force of the cult and ritual side of religion and enabling him to speak more openly on the question of faith, and be more critical of claims considered to be the truth at the highest level common to both movements. And this in essence means that both movements had an underlying humanistic element which developed in the conditions of the ruling mediaeval church viewpoint.

CONCLUSION

The present study of the essence and history of the Bogomil movement in Bulgaria leads us to the conclusion that it was one of the most significant expressions of philosophical, religious and social thought during the Middle Ages in Europe. The main grounds for the emergence and spread of the "Bulgarian heresy" were three: on the one hand, there were the conditions specific to Bulgarian society in the middle of the 10th century, which resulted from the development of feudal relations and their inherent contradictions. On the other hand, there was a high level of enlightenment and literacy, which enabled people to get a deeper insight into the clerical philosophical, social and ethic problems connected whith the Christian religion, and

favouring the development of theoretical thinking. And finally, there was the effect of "alien" heretical doctrines, in particular of the Paulicians and the Messalians. That, in most general terms, was the basis which gave rise and impetus to the doctrine and movement of the Bogomils for almost five centuries.

Two main features distinguish the Bogomil movement as a socio-religious doctrine: its dualist and spiritual views on the one hand, and the idea it entailed of a return to "early Christianity" in the spirit of the examples and recommendations of the New Testament. This was the basis on which the Bogomil credo in all its elements – cosmogony, Christology, eschatology, social and ethic conceptions, and organizational principles – had evolved. These were, so to speak, its nucleus, which enabled its proponents to fully develop their anti-church and anti-baronial views as an expression of the thoughts, feelings and sentiments of those quarters of Bulgarian society which had their reasons for dissatisfaction with the status quo. In this light, the Bogomil movement might be described as one of the most outstanding doctrines opposing the mediaeval church, showing a potential not only of waging an ideological battle, but also of taking practical measures, i. e. of moving from theory to practice. That is why the movement had such a strong impact for its time, turning from a self-enclosed heresy devised by a limited circle of experts on religious-philosophical questions into a movement embracing large sections of society. This fact can be proved not only by examples from the history of mediaeval Bulgaria, but also from the history of other countries where the Bogomil movement found root. Of course, in this transfer from theory to practice there were some characteristic changes, depending on the particular environment it appeared in. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Bogomil sermons in Bulgaria, whose basic target were the internal oppressors (tsars, boyars and higher

clergy), was directed with no less force also against foreign oppressors and invaders. Indicative in this respect was the period of Byzantine domination, when the Bogomils were among the most relentless fighters against the foreignrulers.

An analysis of the religious, philosophical, social and ethic outlook of the Bogomils shows three main aspects – criticism, rationalism and humanism. Mistrust and doubt in the authority of the Bible and of theologians, a sober attitude to church rituals and symbols with their shroud of mysticism, condemnation of killing and bloodshed, and opposition to subordinating attitudes towards women are among the most impressive features of Bogomil sermons. These attitudes were very radical for their times, and enable us to make a positive judgement of the Bogomil movement and its attempt to achieve a breakthrough in traditional thinking and to go beyond the framework of the intellectual atmosphere of the Middle Ages. In this respect the Bogomils were even to a certain extent ahead of our modern times without, of course, being in a position to cause a reversal of the governing ecclesiastical and feudal world outlook of the age.

Born on Bulgarian soil, the Bogomil movement proved to have a strong potential for affecting other countries and nations. This is quite understandable if we take into account the fact that in the mediaeval European world, at the time when the Bogomil doctrine was being born and disseminated, the socio-economic, political and religious prerequisites for the appearance of the "Bulgarian heresy" were identical or at least similar. Feudal relations ruled everywhere, at various degrees and levels of perfection, and everywhere the role and influence of a powerful institutionalized church was felt, against whose religious and socio-political ideology dissatisfaction and protest arose at differing levels and with differing force. Such was the situation in the Balkan states, Italy, France and Russia. Hence the Bogomil movement's vitality as a theory of opposition

suitable for different countries and nations, a theory which in places grew into practical struggle and opposition. Obviously, when the Bogomil movement did go outside the borders of Bulgaria, it did not retain its original form but changed according to the specific conditions prevailing in the country in question. It changed, figuratively speaking, from a "Bulgarian phenomenon" into a different kind of phenomenon, whether "Byzantine", "Bosnian", "French" or "Italian", its adherents usually changing its name, too. They called themselves Patarins, Cathars, Kudugero, Albigenses, etc.The idea, however, lived on – both among supporters and opponents of medieval dualist doctrines – that their country of origin was Bulgaria, and that that was where the first dualist fraternities, from which heretical ideas spread over a vast territory in Western and Eastern Europe, were set up. And that is where the great historical significance of the Bulgarian Bogomil movement lies, a movement by which a small country made a significant contribution to ideological thought in the world of mediaeval Europe.

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