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Bulgarian teachers in Ploiesti in the 1860s-1870s

The historical events and personalities of the second half of the 19th century related to the organization of the new Bulgarian education outside the territories inhabited by ethnic Bulgarians have not yet been fully studied. The Romanian city of Ploiesti, in which the Bulgarian diaspora had made active efforts in the period immediately before the Liberation of Bulgaria, was chosen for the analysis and research.

The main research methods are as follows: cultural and historical retrospection, the biographical method, historical and pedagogical reconstruction of personalities and events.

The results clearly indicate that Bulgarian teachers in Ploiesti in the 1860s-1870s were the spiritual leaders of their fellow citizens; they set a personal example, worthy of emulation, both in literature and enlightenment and in their revolutionary activity; contributed to the development of education; preserved the Bulgarian national spirit and educated the younger generation in the spirit of patriotism.

The conclusions made as a result of the study make it possible to unite these teachers under one denominator, despite the difference in age, education, their cultural and ideological achievements. They are sincere patriots who have left their mark on the Bulgarian national liberation movement. Some of them played a key role in the Bulgarian social and political life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Key words: teachers, Romania, the Bulgarian diaspora, training, enlightenment

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Introduction

The second half of the 19th century was a kind of culmination of the national liberation movement in and outside Bulgaria. The ideas of ecclesiastical independence, spiritual enlightenment and the denial of slave oppression already had their holistic, formalized appearance, and the brightest minds of Bulgaria upheld them. In neighboring countries, where there were many emigrants, these ideas found fertile ground. In Romania, a number of centers of the Bulgarian diaspora were formed, newspapers and magazines were published, schools and reading rooms were founded. The studies of some Bulgarian scientists such as Nikolai Zhechev, Veselina Traikova, Marina Lyulyusheva, Ivan Radev, Blagovest Nyagulov, as well as foreign ones – Konstantin Veliki, Elena Syupyur, are devoted to the formation of national consciousness and education in the spirit of patriotism. However, they focus mainly on personalities and events related to the cities of Bucharest, Braila and Galati, but neglect those cities where a contribution to the history of the revolutionary movement was also made – these are Giurgiu, Alexandria, Ploiesti.

In the last of the listed cities, a Bulgarian levy was formed, which took an active part in the Russo-Turkish war in 1877, while the events of previous years are neglected. This led to the fact that the study was aimed at specific representatives of the Bulgarian diaspora in Ploiesti, who contributed to the development of Bulgarian emigration.

Materials and methods

The following research objectives have been set: to trace the history of Bulgarian education in Ploiesti in the 1860s-1870s; to distinguish its most prominent representatives and analyze their contribution to the educational and revolutionary activities of the Bulgarian emigration.

Educational and scientific resources published in the form of scientific papers, as well as publications, original and translated ones, in specialized periodicals, have been studied.

In this research work, the cultural and historical retrospection, the biographical method and the historical and pedagogical reconstruction of personalities and events have been used.

Results

The main event in the 1860s in Ploiesti for the Bulgarians living there was the opening of the Bulgarian school in 1865-1866, followed by the creation of a reading hall in 1869. They became spiritual and cultural centers. Their driving force was the teachers represented according to the chronology of their stay at Ploiesti school (the list in the table is presented on the basis of convergence between the data taken from various sources):

Table 1

Chronology of the beginning and the end of teachers' work at school in Ploiesti

Teacher	First year of work at school	Last year of work at school
Ivan Kasabov	1865	1867
Sava Bogorov	1865	1866
Alexander V. Chitakov	1867	1868

Rashko Blyskov	1869	1870
V. N. Bordeev	1869	1870
Atanas A. Chernev	unknown	1874
Ivan Kirshovsky	1871	1876/7

[1, pp. 113-214; 3; 8; 13; 14]

The biographies of some of these Renaissance figures are well known; others are the subject of discussion in the field of historical and pedagogical sciences.

Ivan Kasabov (1837-1911) was appointed the first head teacher of the Bulgarian school in Ploiesti; he held this position in Giurgiu till that time. The school parent committee concluded an agreement with him, which contained several important requirements:

- the main disciplines are taught in Bulgarian and in high school – in German;
- the introduction of new subjects will only occur with the consent of the parent committee and teachers;
- two months before the end of the school year, the agreement is re-signed or new conditions are included;
- the agreement is valid for one year [2, Sheets 27-29].

Ivan Kasabov is a well-established name in the Bulgarian educational and national liberation movement. He graduated from high school in Belgrade, where he began to study law. He participated in the First Bulgarian Legion, obtained a doctor's degree in law in Vienna. Then he moved to live in Romania. There he worked as a teacher in Giurgiu and Ploiesti, after which he left for Bucharest, became one of the leaders of the Secret Central Bulgarian Committee (1866-1868) and worked as a lawyer [2].

After the Liberation, Ivan Kasabov continued to be interested in training, was an international law lecturer at the University of Brussels, and his wife Maria Kasabova opened a girls' boarding house in Bucharest, where girls from Danube cities studied [3, p. 324].

In 1865, a Bulgarian school in Ploiesti was opened by another teacher – Sava Bogorov. He arrived from Măcin, where he worked for two years in a Bulgarian school, founded in 1849 by Nikola Batsarov. He left Ploiesti a year later [1, p. 127] and there is no record of his further life and professional activities.

Alexander Vasiliev Chitakliev (1848-1868) was born in Braila [3, p. 103], and according to other sources – in Ploiesti [4]. He grew up in a family of migrants from the city of Sliven, who are said to be descendants of the leader of the Hajduks – Dobri Voivode. He studied at the Bulgarian and Romanian schools. He impressed with his knowledge and was offered to become a teacher in Braila [5, p. 259]. At the beginning of his pedagogical activity, Chitakliev started his literary activity. His contemporaries talked about the play *Dobri Voivode* written in 1866, which, unfortunately, has not been found to this day. Another play *Stoyan-Voivode, after the Fall of the Bulgarian Kingdom: A Tragic Performance in 3 Acts*, signed by the author with the initials of H. D., was published with his financial support (Bucharest, 1866, 69 p.) [6]. This is about the work of the emigrant Hristo Kynchev Daskalov. Then he worked as a teacher in Ploiesti, where he became a member of the Bulgarian Secret Central Committee founded in 1867. He financed from his own resources the publication of the lithograph *The Battle of Vyrbovka* by Dembitsky. His dream came true – to join the squad (cheta) and fight with weapons in his hands for the freedom of the land of his ancestors. In 1868, he joined the squad of Stefan Karaji and Haji Dimitra, with whom he crossed the Danube. In a farewell letter to his father, he wrote: "Today I'm off

to our land, the land of my great-grandfathers, where they lived. There will be freedom, and I will fight for Bulgarian freedom" [7]. He died in the first battle under Karaisen village on July 7, 1868 [8].

Rashko Blyskov (1819-1884) was in good standing with the Bulgarian emigrant community. They were well aware of his publishing and educational activities. *The New Bulgarian Primer* (1856) and *The Three Stories for Children* (1860) had already been published and were used for educational purposes. He worked as a teacher:

- in Dylboki village, in the Starozagorsky District (1837);
- in Cherkovna, Provadia District, where he founded the first Bulgarian school (1841-1848);
- in Provadiya (1848);
- in Kalipetrovo (1850);
- in Rusa (1857);
- in Divdyadovo (1860-1862) [3; 9].

The chronology associated with his stay in Ploiesti is ambiguous. In the study, the authors rely on Syupur, who indicates the period from 1869 to 1870, and it turns out that she is right. This is confirmed by Rashko Blyskov's publications in periodicals.

His speech at the end of the school year during the awards for performance at the Bulgarian public school in Ploiesti was published in the newspaper *Otechestvo*. In the same newspaper in the September issue of 1869, he talked about school again, and only two months later in the newspaper *Dunayskaya zarya* – about the decline of the Bulgarian spirit in the city [10, p.19]. Here one can find an explanation of the frequent change of teachers – the irregular payment of their remuneration, which forced them to quickly leave the city and look for another place where they could work as a teacher.

Rashko Blyskov continued his outreach activities, editing the journal *School* (1870-1875) – the first specialized Bulgarian periodical on educational and pedagogical problems [11, p. 488]. In free Bulgaria, the journal *Instructions for Teachers and Parents* (1880-1882) was published [6; 9].

Atanas A. Chernev (unknown – 1881) worked as a teacher in Ploiesti and Oltenice [1, p. 213]. In the Bulgarian periodical press there is evidence of a responsible attitude toward his educational duties and a critical approach to everybody who neglects them:

- the newspaper *Narodnost*, 1868, issue 34, p. 136 – published a school speech written by Chernev and made by a student Yu.P. Kisimov – this is Yuri Kisimov, a son of Pandeli Kisimov, who was born in 1856;
- the newspaper *Dunayskaya zarya*, 1869, issue 23 – refutes information not verified by the editors about the state of the school in Ploiesti;
- the journal *School*, 1875, book 3, p. 23 – focuses on the author's conviction that the split between the "young" and the "old" leads to the decline of Bulgarian schools in Romania [10, p. 371].

As a teacher in Oltenice, Atanas Chernev founded the local reading hall. He is an author of the brochure *Ruschushkiye Dungeons or the Bulgarian Revolution of 1867* (Bucharest, 1876, 142 p., published by the Bulgarian reading hall "Progress" in Oltenice), which was classified as an emerging genre – memoirs [12].

His revolutionary activities are relatively poorly studied. As a chairman of the local revolutionary committee, he liaised with other Romanian and Bulgarian cities. In the memoirs of Nikola Obretenov [13, p. 230], his will to create Tanyo-Voivode's detachment was mentioned, which was formed in Oltenice and went to the Bulgarian coast on the night of May 16-17, 1875. His task was to move parallel to Hristo Botev's detachment and attract

like-minded people to support the uprising in Eastern Bulgaria. After three battles on May 27, 1876, the detachment was finally defeated [14].

N.V. Bordeev was born in Bessarabia. He graduated from the Bolgrad school, worked there as a teacher until 1869, and then – as a teacher in Ploiesti in 1869-1870 [1, p. 128].

In his publication, he mentioned the reason for leaving a better school in Moldova. In a letter addressed to the editorial office of the newspaper *Otechestvo* (1869, issue 6, August 29), he talked about the decline of schools in Bolgrad [3; 10].

Undoubtedly, Ivan Kyrshovski (1839-1914) is the most flamboyant personality among the Bulgarian teachers in Ploiesti. Having arrived in Ploiesti, he already had a bright revolutionary biography. He was born in the city of Elena and at the age of 15 met a prominent revolutionary Georgi Rakovsky, which predetermined his fate. He participated in Captain Dyado Nikola's rebellion (1856), joined the First (1862) and Second Bulgarian Legions (1867-1868). He was a clerk in Panayot Khitov's detachment (1867), where V. Levski was a standard bearer [15]. In the 1870s, his patriotic activities became somewhat different. He became a teacher – first in Giurgiu, and then in Ploiesti [1]. In the memoirs of his contemporaries, Ivan Kyrshovski is an erudite person. He was fluent in 7 foreign languages: Turkish, Greek, Russian, Serbian, Romanian, German, and French. He was one of the founders of the Bulgarian Literary Society, now the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He edited and published newspapers, including in Romanian. A graduate of Elena "Daskalolivnitsa" ("the place where teachers are educated"), Ivan Kyrshovski also had accumulated teaching experience in various Bulgarian and Romanian villages: he worked as a teacher in Elena (1856), Elkhovo, Milevo (1856-1859), Cerna (1861-1862), Khyrsovo, (1865-1867), Giurgiu (1868-1869). In Cherna village, under his leadership, for the first time, the population celebrated the feast of Cyril and Methodius in 1861 [15]. A number of publications are evidence of his interest in training during his active revolutionary activity.

- the newspaper *Narodnost*, 1869, issue 26 – "A song in honor of Saints Cyril and Methodius";
- the newspaper *Narodnost*, 1869, issue 31, p.124 – "A song performed at the school in Giurgiu after the exams in 1869";
- the newspaper *Dunayskaya zarya*, 1869, issue 41/42 – "Training in Giurgiu";
- the newspaper *Pravo*, 1870, issue 8 – about training and school curricula in Elena;
- the newspaper *Pravo*, 1870, issue 37 – participation in a polemic about training in Elena [10, p. 229].

In articles written during his stay in Ploiesti [16] and published in *Macedonia* and *Otechestvo*, he criticized the lack of national consciousness in some Bulgarians and called for greater social activity.

Ivan Kirshovsky is one of the organizers of Botev's detachment. During the Russo-Turkish War, he enlisted in the national levy, but was appointed translator at the Russian headquarters. After the Liberation, he was a publicist, social activist, deputy. In 1889 he published the first book of the failed series *Instructive Books for Young Children* [6] His memoirs were enriched with recollections of personalities and events of his time.

Pandeli Kisimov (1832-1905) also worked as a teacher in Ploiesti in an unspecified chronological period; he lived there with his family. Perhaps he taught in a Romanian school, as the period of 1862-1863 was mentioned [1]. Subsequently, his name was indirectly mentioned in 1866-1868, but it is possible that he was there on trade matters. This is known from his letter to Hristo Georgiev in Bucharest in 1868, where he talks about the possibility of

hiring a gas factory in Ploiesti. However, the fact remains that his son studied at a Bulgarian school [3, p. 334; 17, p. 113].

Information on the foundation, development and closure of the reading hall in Ploiesti can be found in the periodical press. Thus, it was found that it was opened in 1869 and ceased to function in 1871. The problem was also financial – the more prosperous Bulgarians refused to finance it and, it stopped its activity.

Results and discussion

The contextual biography of Bulgarian diaspora teachers in Romania, used for research purposes, reflects the atmosphere and social conditions of life. It reconstructs the life of a particular person in its dynamics, shows internal contradictions. This approach is characteristic of historical anthropology and sociology, but through the biographical method, it becomes part of historical and pedagogical research. Thus, not only the chronology of the appearance of Bulgarian teachers in Ploiesti was determined and supplemented, but also data on the previous and subsequent periods of most teachers' life were found.

Teachers of the Bulgarian school in Ploiesti, who worked in the 1860s-1870s, can be grouped as follows:

- teachers (Bogorov, Bordeev);
- teachers engaged in literary activities (Blyskov);
- enlightenment figures (Kasabov);
- revolutionary figures (Chitakov, Chernev, Kyrshovski).

The last group of teachers is included in the various stages of the national liberation struggle in Bulgaria associated with the use of detachment and committee tactics. Using archival sources, the study helped to reveal their contribution to two significant historical events – the heroic battles of Stefan Karaji and Hadji Dimitar's detachment (1868), as well as participation in the organization of Tanyo-Voivode's detachment (1876).

For some of the teachers, this was the first, for others – another professional manifestation within the framework of their holistic pedagogical activity. Despite this, according to contemporaries' estimates, all of them were responsible for their teaching duties and even helped in teaching at a local Romanian school.

When creating a school in Ploiesti, for the first time in the history of Bulgarian diaspora formation, a civil agreement was concluded that clearly defined the responsibilities of teachers and public members, who were obligated to help education, but also had claims against the teaching process. A similar type of social contract was used later in liberated Bulgaria.

A part of teachers who were active employees of the Bulgarian periodical press [18; 19] gave a critical assessment of the state of the Bulgarian education in Ploiesti. The reason included poor financial conditions, clergy hostility, the lack of a fighting spirit among their fellow citizens of Bulgarian origin. However, in a matter of a few months, the situation changed drastically, and Ploiesti turned into a kind of capital of the Bulgarian levy [20], where hundreds of emigrants became volunteers in the War of Independence.

Conclusion

Bulgarian education in Ploiesti is part of the educational policy of the Bulgarian emigration in Romania, but there is a well-known peculiarity dictated by the specifics of the economic

and cultural needs of the emigrants in this city, their ability to defend their national identity.

Bulgarian teachers are perceived not only as teachers at school, but primarily as spiritual and ideological educators, leaders. They were active members of educational and revolutionary organizations, captivating the younger generation through their own example.

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