

**Philanthropic activity - building the basis
of scientific research in Bulgaria:
Donors of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
1869-1911**

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Abstract. The idea for establishing the Bulgarian Learned Society (BLS) in Brăila in 1869 was turned into reality due to the efforts and donations of numerous Bulgarian emigrant communities spread across Wallachia, Moldova, Serbia, Austro-Hungary, Istanbul, Russia, Ukraine. The objectives of the Learned Society and its funding during the initial years of its existence were closely associated with the name of Vasil D. Stoyanov and those of some more affluent traders, public figures and revolutionaries. Not only didn't the restoration of the Bulgarian state in 1878 break this tradition, but it further enriched it in terms of forms of expression, practices and the scope of philanthropic activity. By the time the Society was renamed Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), donors had helped establish the first three donation funds and marked the beginning of a succession of donations for decades to come. One of the most outstanding philanthropists in Bulgaria, Ivan Evstratiev Geshov, a renowned politician and long-standing president of BLS/BAS, paid off the mortgage of the building of the Academy, as a result of which, in 1911, BLS was renamed Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and continued to function as an independent and autonomous scientific institution.

Keywords: donation, donors, auxiliary members, Bulgarian emigration, donation funds

In the 1850s and 1860s, in the course of a comprehensive educational and cultural upsurge and the revolutionary events on the Balkans, the idea for the creation of a Bulgarian Learned centre came into fruition among the Bulgarian emigration. Following the example of other European nations which had their own Academies and Learned Societies, the progressive and democratic Bulgarian emigration in Russia, Ukraine, Wallachia, Moldova, Serbia, Austro-Hungary, Istanbul and other Bulgarian emigrant communities united their efforts and laid the foundations of a new organization which went down in history as the Bulgarian Learned Society (BLS). Led by the desire to create “*one national institution, whose single purpose is the dissemination of enlightenment among the people*” (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 4), representatives of the Bulgarian emigrant

groups gathered in the Romanian town of Brăila, where the sessions of the Constituent Assembly from 26 to 30 September / 8 to 12 October 1869 were held.

The founders held their sessions in the house of the Bulgarian patriot Varvara Hadzhiveleva in Brăila (Baev 2005, 118-119). Born in Yambol, she had left her native place, as many other fellow countrymen had done in the aftermath of the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829 and the ensuing Treaty of Adrianople, she had settled in Brăila and joined the Bulgarian emigrant community in the town. She became sponsor to the Bulgarian church "Ascension of the Lord" and donated the land on which the church was built. She held the firm belief that faith, education and knowledge represented the core of the national spirit. Varvara Hadzhiveleva opened the doors of her home to the patriotic initiative and in doing so she was part of the tradition of gratuitous donations to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

According to Marin Drinov, organizer of the Learned Society, the Society was founded as a result of the apostolic activity of Vasil D. Stoyanov (Fig. 1). While studying at Prague University Stoyanov was under the influence of the numerous Czech organizations and scholars as well as Bulgarian scholars and revolutionaries - Marin Drinov, Sava Dobroplodni, Dobri Voynikov, Georgi Rakovski and others. In September 1869, Vasil Stoyanov met Marin Drinov in Prague, whom he had not previously met in person. A decision was reached at the meeting to set up a society, to make it a "done deal", as Drinov put it, something which no enslaved nation had yet dared to do (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 42).

With the active support of M. Drinov and Vasil Drumev, Vasil Stoyanov tirelessly visited all the towns with Bulgarian communities in Wallachia and Bessarabia in search of moral and material support. In 1868, he set off to Bucharest and from there to Odessa and Brăila. Everywhere he went as an advocate of the idea of the Society, he encountered the support and agreement of the Bulgarian emigrant communities and managed to win over followers and adherents among the Bulgarian traders and entrepreneurs. Those were well-off people who donated money for its establishment and provided the initial financial support. The active campaign for the collection of material resource started in 1868 and actively went on into the first half of 1869. Recorded in the Kondika (the Book of accounts) (Fig. 2) of the future Society are the names of 322 patriotic Bulgarians, who expressed their readiness to donate and enthusiasm about the idea of its creation (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 1).



Fig. 1. Vasil D. Stoyanov (1839, Zheravna - 1910, Sofia) - a scholar and public figure, full member and documentalist of the BLS

Книжовно
Българско Дружество.

Мисля, за да се учреди Българско Друже-
ство съ целъ да разпространява въобще то просвъ-
щеніе между нашѣд Български народъ, е стѣкло въ-
же изработена отъ мнозина наши емигранци - Българи. *)
Осѣито отъ г. 1854 тогѣмо се е, така да рече, си-
стематически да се предприема и съ по-голямо внима-
ніе да се настава за едно такъво предприятие, как-
то на прѣмъ въ избраніе то на Седески то Българи,
на 2 Февруаріа 1854 г., между други други предположе-
но да се състави съ време и енергя одностелността
едно общество или капиталъ за една подобна
цель; поодиръ Парижскія Миръ на г. 1856 отъга тогѣ-
ш и въ Цариградъ наши нѣкои емигранци да дой-
ствуватъ за едно такъво предприятие, за което
на г. 1857 вече изразиха иже мисльта си въ На-

*) Видѣте страница 119.

Fig. 2. Kondika with the names of the sponsors supporting the creation

срещанието и сръмотелността го
 изматваха мо на твое-то на-
 правителство сръмото от управе-то.

Одеса, 11 Децември 1868 год.

А М Писма

С. Д. Мокшуби

Н. С. Мадарски

Павел Павлов

С. Павлов

М. Писма

А. Мокшуби

Н. Мокшуби

С. Мокшуби

М. Мокшуби

Сръмото Мокшуби

Мокшуби Мокшуби

By 1869, with the voluntary sacrifice of those Bulgarians, the gross capital of the Society had amounted to 3,000 roubles. In the list of sponsors, we see the names of Nikolay Toshkov, Stefan D. Toshkovich, the brothers Evlogi Georgiev and Hristo Georgiev, Nikolay Hr. Palauzov, Todor Puliev, Mina Pashov, Stancho D. Uvaliev, Spiridon Stomanyakov, Todor Minkov, Petar Odzhakov, Dimitar Bobov, Ivan Gyuzelev and many others. Written next to their names is the amount of the respective donation, ranging from 4 roubles to 15,000 roubles. Some of those people were reputable traders and public figures, others were writers, educators, luminaries and revolutionaries, e.g.: Vasil Drumev, Todor Peev, Dobri Voynikov, Rayko Zhynzifov, Ivan Kasabov, Lyuben Karavelov, Hristo Botev, Dimitar Tsenovich, Todor Ikonomov, Nesho Bonchev, Nayden Gerov, etc. Kept in the archive, as a sure sign of the patriotic nature of the BLS, are the receipts for the donated sums by famous Bulgarian patriots, among whom was the Apostle of Freedom Vasil Levski. On 3 January 1870 he donated for this noble enterprise 22 francs and 70 bani (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 547). With no existing public financial fund in the country, it was only through the voluntary sacrifices of the Bulgarians living in the big emigrant centres of the time that the foundations of the new academic institution were being laid.

Kept to this day, the Brăila archive collection in the Scientific archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) contains letters of appreciation to some of our first benefactors. It is from them that we learn about the generous donations and “*most treasured contributions*” of the auxiliary members of BLS (Snegarov et al. 1966, 156-157) Georgi Papazovich and the noble gesture of Maria Konstantinova (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 61), who donated all the financial means bequeathed to her by her parents to the Society (Velichkova 2009, 39-41).

Admittedly, the Society was faced with great difficulties in the early years of its existence - lack of experience, paving new pathways for the organization to follow, personal rivalries and difference of opinion between the separate emigrant centres about the character and purposes of the Society, and above all - chronic funding shortages. Many were the promises for generous donations recorded in the *Kondika* which turned nothing but empty. Even one of the seemingly most ardent supporters of the enterprise in the preliminary stage of the whole process, the Odessa trader Nikolay Toshkov, never fulfilled his commitments (Bozhkov et al. 1971, 14).

Despite all obstacles, relying on scarce financial means, the organization had its first full, corresponding and honorary members, as well as its own publication organ - “*Periodical Journal*” (1870). With the efforts of a circle of activists, which inevitably included Marin Drinov, Vasil Drumev (the future Metropolitan Kliment of Tarnovo), Vasil D. Stoyanov, Todor Peev, Nikolay Tsenov, and with the noble material support of renowned representatives of the Bulgarian emigrant communities and foreign adherents, the library, archive and museum collection were set up. The ambition of the Society, as postulated in its Statutes, was to assemble collections of old Bulgarian and foreign books, manuscripts, etc., which would comprise the so-called “*antique cabinet*”. It is this cabinet that epitomized today’s Academy archive and library, the future National museum of Archeology and Museum of Natural history at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Initially collected were documents recording the activity of the Learned

Society, old manuscripts, donated by patriotic Bulgarians. The Society Library was established with a view to building up a fund of old Bulgarian and foreign literature, newspapers and journals about the history of the Bulgarian people and country, necessary for the purposes of the Learned Society and the education of the Bulgarians. With no money available for purchasing books or other objects, the beginning was made with the donations of private individuals and scientific institutions. One of the first benefactors of the future Academic Library was Dr. Petar Beron, who was one of the most esteemed and authoritative Bulgarian scientists of his time (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 51, 64). He donated part of his works to the Society. His example was promptly followed by the Slavonic charitable committees in Moscow (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 153), Sankt Petersburg and Odessa, the Paris committee for sending free copies of French books to Slavs and Romanians, Stefan Toshkovich, who left part of his private library, Prof. Nikolaj Kuzhba from Kishinev (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 125), etc.

In 1872, the Secretary of the Society Vasil D. Stoyanov called on "the readers" and all Bulgarians to start collecting books and raise money for their supply (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 486a). Stefan Tsvetkov (a student in Odessa) responded to the appeal. He sent an old damascene manuscript to the Society library and provided funding for the publishing of "Bulgarian history" by Gavril Krastevich (SA of BAS, f. 1K, file 52). Another Bulgarian patriot - Raycho Chaparov, donated the first printed copy of "Kyriakodromion" by Sofronius of Vratsa. It was through donations that the publishing of "Periodical journal" was made possible (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 1, file 504) and a total of 12 issues were published (6 single ones and 3 doubles). For years, it acted as a guarantee for the existence of the Society, containing the publications of some of the most prominent luminaries of the time, e.g., Marin Drinov, Vasil Drumev, Vasil D. Stoyanov, Nesho Bonchev, Konstantin Jireček, Georgi Zlatarski, Tsani Ginchev, etc.

In the post-Liberation period (1878), the Society relocated its head office in the capital and slowly but surely asserted its status as an authoritative scientific centre. Philanthropic activity continued to be part of the course of its history. And this was a normal pattern because it mirrored the context of the historical moment, while at the same time, answered the material needs of the organization. In the period September 1880 - February 1881, upon the insistence of the Ministry of National Education and with the assistance of Evlogi Georgiev, the assets of the BLS were transferred from Brăila to Sofia to a special bank account in the Bulgarian National Bank (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 28, p. 45-50). In 1881, with a Parliament resolution, the government vowed to fund the publishing of "Periodical journal" with an annual sum of 12,000 leva. The needs of the Society, however, were much bigger - the books, archive, museum collections were kept in rented premises, the state subsidy for the journal was not received regularly, or even missing for a whole year, and pending debts for publishing services, royalties, reviews, stationary expenses, etc., reached frightful proportions.

The construction of a new public building was also under consideration. In the early 1880s, leading activists of the organization addressed a call to Sofia Municipality to allocate a building lot for the future central office. With a Ministerial decree No. 16 of the Sofia Urban Municipal Management dated 10 May

1883, approved by the State Council on 13 June 1883, the Municipality provided a building lot of 4,600 sq. m, which was located on Tsarigradska Str., in immediate proximity to the new Consulate of Austria-Hungary. The new building of the Society and a botanical garden were to be erected on this property (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 36, p. 9).

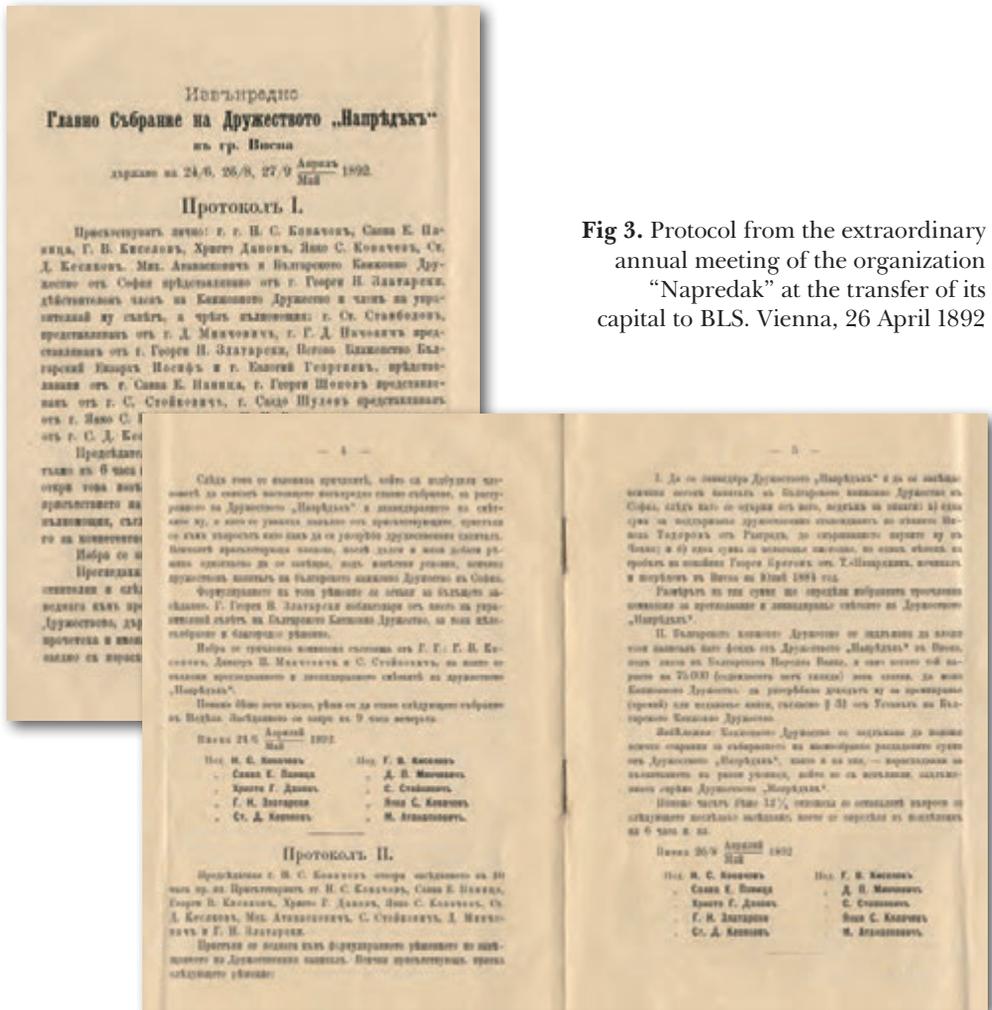
This gratuitous transfer of property ownership set a good start, but the construction was yet to be financed. It is a well-known fact that the first stage of the construction process in the period 1890-1892 was financed by the company capital and a bank loan. There were some odd free will donations, too. In 1886, passing through Bucharest, trader Angel Tsvetanov (unknown, village of Vetren, district of Pazardzhik - 1902, Paris), who had settled and lived in Paris for 30 years, donated 2,000 gold leva for the construction of the future building. His letter, addressed to the president of the BLS, is an expression of pure and unadulterated patriotism: *"I am happy to be laying a fraction of the groundwork of this national and philanthropic building for Bulgarian science"* (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 58, p. 1). Vasil Stoyanov gave a heartfelt answer: *"So deeply touched is every Bulgarian and so profound is the impact of this generous sacrifice on the Bulgarian public ... that through this act you become one of its first benefactors"* (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 58, p. 3).

In general, the donations for the BLS/BAS were made in the form of money (donation funds), real estate, material objects like old manuscripts, archive documents, photographs, books, etc. (Stoyanova, Velichkova 2015, 56-64). In the early years of the institution, most often the donation was in the form of books for the library. The number of sponsors of the publication organ of the Society was also growing. Those were some private individuals as well as societies, a number of Bulgarian municipalities, and international organizations, with which connections and collaboration had been established. By the summer of 1884, the Society had as many as 320 benefactors, which was an unequivocal proof of the wide scope of philanthropic activity. According to Article 7 of the Statutes of the Society (Ustav 1869) donors were people who had either donated a one-off sum of 500 leva, or had vowed to donate at least 50 leva on a yearly basis.

By the time the Society was renamed Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, three donation funds had been established. Although their number was not big, they marked the beginning of a long line of donations in the decades to come. The first fund was set up in 1892 and was called "Napredak" ("Progress") after the name of the organization which provided the financial means (Fig. 3). The organization was established on 1 May 1869 in Vienna by Bulgarian traders Sava and Nikola Panitsa, Petar Shulev, Nikola Kovachev, Georgi Kiselov, Grigor Nachovich. Later, the group of *"the accomplices"*, as they liked to call themselves, was joined by a lot more patriotic Bulgarians (Balgarsko druzhestvo "Napredak" 1892, 1-2). The aim, as outlined in the statutes, was *"to provide fixed annual financial support to Bulgarian students from Bulgaria, Thrace and Macedonia, as well as Moldova and Wallachia, for the period of their education in the educational establishments, in order for them to become teachers in their motherland"* (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 1157, p. 1). In the beginning, the *"accomplices"* donated 200 florins each and thus raised capital stock, which grew through the years. The Society

financially supported the education of many young people. After the Liberation this activity continued, but in the early 1890s a group of Bulgarians, closely affiliated to the organization, made a decision to transfer the capital stock to the Bulgarian Learned Society. On 24 May 1892, "Napredak" terminated its activity and transferred the fund, which totalled 202,213 leva, to the Learned Society in Sofia (Fig. 3). In the same year a donation fund was started. The will of the donors was for the interests on the donated capital to be used for publishing scientific research and award-giving. (SA of BAS, f 1K, inv. 2, file 1172; CSA, f. 177, inv. 1, file 769, p. 263).

The fund was managed by the Governing Council (GC) of BLS/BAS, its accounts were managed by the financial officer, and the Secretary of the Society was responsible for the organizational matters. The fund had a special ordinance relating to the expenditure and accountability. The capital was in



a bank account in the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) and the interest on savings was kept in a current account in a bank of high profitability. The sum of money for annual expenditure was divided into three parts - for awards, publication of research works and reviewer royalties. The awards were presented annually, for research publications over a period of three years. In the first year, the awarded works were in the field of the Historical-philological Branch, in the second year - the Philosophical-social Branch and the third year - the Natural Science and Mathematics Branch. The money ranged from 250 to 1,500 leva. The research papers were assigned to two separate reviewers, the respective scientific branches designated research papers for award and publication, and the Governing Council was to give their approval. Every year, on behalf of the Governing Council, the Secretary reported to the General Assembly of BLS/BAS on the state of the fund, presented the proposals for awards and the publications to be subsidized (Kniga za daritelite 1937, 7-16). The General Assembly made decisions on the basis of the report, which were announced annually at a ceremonial meeting. Following this procedure, the fund "Napredak" published and awarded some of the first research papers of the future scientists Lyubomir Miletich, Aleksandar Teodorov-Balan, Nikola Sakarov, Boyan Penev, Marko Balabanov, Gavril Katsarov, Nikola Mihov, Anton Stoilov, Aleksandar Tsankov, etc. Additional support from the fund interests was awarded to writers, composers, artists and scientists who had made their mark in the development of Bulgarian culture. Among them were the distinguished names of Pencho Slaveykov, Peyo Yavorov, Yordan Yovkov, Dobri Hristov, Aleksandar Balabanov, Bogdan Filov, Nikolay Liliev, Kiril Hristov, etc. (Velichkova 2010, 130-133).

In 1908, in an attempt to relieve "*to some extent the enormous grief*" and commemorate her deceased husband, connecting his name to "*the activity which is yet to develop in our country in the battle against tuberculosis*", sponsor Anna Nicheva donated to BLS 4,000 leva with the idea to set up a donation fund (SA of BAS, f. IK, inv. 2, file 1176). There is no existing data about this benefactor - like many women from this time, her name was entered in the records as "*wife and housewife*", "*citizen of the town of Ruse*". The patron of the fund, Dr. Hristo Nichev, who had studied medicine in Leipzig, Germany, was the author of articles published in Bulgarian and foreign journals. For over 15 years, he had worked in the hospital in the town of Ruse, where he arranged for a special ward to be set up for patients diagnosed with tuberculosis. It was obvious that the fight against tuberculosis and its treatment were a priority in his career as a doctor, therefore his wife formulated the aim of the fund as follows: the interest on the amount of 200 gold leva "*is to be awarded annually for the best research paper on tuberculosis, written in Bulgarian, by a Bulgarian, Orthodox Christian, Bulgarian citizen*" (Stoyanova, Nikolova 2015, 142-143). In the period of 1909-1930 the fund awarded research papers annually. Among them were the works of prominent names in the field of medicine: Georgi Baev, Vladimir Rumenov, Haralambi Neychev, etc.

For the purposes of awarding research papers in the field of Bulgarian history, the noble gesture of the reputable publisher and public figure Hristo G. Danov really stands out (Fig. 4). He was famed for being the author, pub-

lisher, translator of textbooks, atlases and articles; founder of “Maritsa” newspaper, MP in the Regional Assembly of Eastern Rumelia (1882), mayor of Plovdiv (1896). For over half a century he had printed more than 1,000 publications. In a letter from 10 February 1908, addressed to the Secretary of the BLS, Danov offered to print for free the publications of the Society, until the amount without interest had reached 20,000 leva (Entsiklopediya 2011, 120-121).

The total sum of the expenses for printing the publications of the Society and Academy in Publishing house “Hristo G. Danov”, which amounted to 20,180 leva, was recorded in the revenue of the company as fund “Hristo G. Danov”. According to the ordinance of the fund, the interest on the fund money went to award research papers in the field of history which reflected the political, social and cultural life of the Bulgarian people. The

research papers were reviewed by two members of the Historical-philological Branch and were published in “Records of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences”.

The three existing donation funds in their own right outlined the main direction for further stimulation of the support for science - recognizing and rewarding scientific achievement.

Joining the efforts and contributions made by the first sponsors, who remained in the historical records of the successful years in the development of BLS, was the figure of Ivan Evstratiev Geshov (Fig. 5). “*I am profoundly convinced*”, wrote Ivan Geshov, “*that the only salvation way for Bulgaria is to work for the rebirth of its national spirit, for the culture of the minds and hearts of its sons, so that they can thoroughly embrace the principles and perspectives I have committed myself to. Therefore, I consider it my sacred duty to do everything within my powers to perpetuate this service even after my death*” (CSA, f. 568, inv. 2, file 4, p. 1). This excerpt from his will, made on 1 September 1923, was a sincere synthesis of the personal philosophy of life of this outstanding statesman, businessman and public figure.

Born in Plovdiv in 1849, he finished primary education in his home town, where his teacher was the renowned educator of the Bulgarian Revival Yoakim Gruev. He studied financial and political science in Manchester and in 1872 returned to Plovdiv to work in the trade business. During and after the April Uprising (1876), he actively informed the European public about the situation on the Bulgarian lands, for which he was arrested and sentenced to death by the Ottoman rulers in 1877. He was amnestied after the signing of the San Stefano peace treaty and became an active participant in the public and political life after the Liberation. Among the big group of activists who contributed to the



Fig. 4. Hristo G. Danov (1828, Klisura - 1911, Plovdiv) - publisher, translator, public figure, founder of one of the first donation funds of BLS



Fig. 5. Ivan Evstratiev Geshov (1849, Plovdiv - 1924, Sofia) - sponsor and long-standing president of BLS and BAS (1898-1924)

building of the Bulgarian state at the turn of the 19th century into the 20th, Geshov stood out with the breadth of his ideas, his sense of responsibility and integrity, which inevitably transpired in his active work as a state and party leader. The scope of his public involvement was amazing. In his lifetime, he had held numerous political and public positions - chairman of the Regional Assembly of Eastern Rumelia, director of the regional finances, head of BNB, declared unchangeable leader of the People's Party for 20 years, its ideologist; MP in 11 ordinary national assemblies, and in the Fifth Grand National Assembly, minister in several cabinets, prime minister in the critical 1911-1913, legislator who wrote laws outlining the development of the country for years to come. His public activity was supplemented by the participation in tens of societies and committees, his extensive activity as publisher and contributor to

many publications, business development researcher, an unchangeable chairman of the Bulgarian Red Cross Society for a period of 25 years. The guiding principles which defined his work can be formulated as follows: *"In my youth and in my ripe years, I fought against foreign yoke, I fought as well against the yoke of ignorance and cruelty, lower instincts, the destructive mentality, inherited from the years of political yoke, the popular opinion that our country is somebody else's, that it is not our own, the tendency to place our own interests first before the interests of the common good"* (CSA, f. 568, inv. 2, file 4, p. 1).

Taking stock of his public life in his will, Geshov placed an emphasis on his role in the development of BLS/BAS. This role was truly outstanding. Corresponding (1881) and full (1884) member of the Society, he was part of its leadership in the first years after its relocation from Brăila to Sofia. Initially, he was financial officer and member of the Governing Council, and later - chairman of the Governing Council from 1898 until his death in 1924. In later years he was rightfully credited by his contemporaries for being a "Chairman by calling". With his broad intellectual horizons, his visionary insight, leadership style, business skills, the scope of his personal contacts in the country and abroad, with his authority and influence as a politician and public figure, he made a huge contribution to the growth of the Society as a European scientific institution, encouraging scientific research in Bulgaria.

Philanthropy was inherently present in the outlook on life of this outstanding Bulgarian. Throughout his life, he supported with generous donations different societies, community centres, churches and hospitals, provided funding to newspaper, book, and journal publishers. We are going to mention just a few of his acts of generosity. In 1897, he donated a house in Plovdiv to the Women's charitable society "Postoyanstvo". He funded the building of a library in Chepelare and the community centre "Slavyanska beseda". He also sent 10,000 leva as financial help for the fired lecturers during the University crisis (1907). For twenty years, he donated money to the Sofia Society for free school dinners. He also helped financially to build the monument to the victims of the Serbo-Bulgarian war (1885) in the town of Vidin, the monument to the Tsar Liberator in Pleven and many others. In his capacity of a long-standing chairman of the Bulgarian Red Cross Society, Geshov donated 100,000 leva for charitable causes. As a universal successor of Evlogi Georgiev, and with his personal material support, the construction of the hospital in Tsarigrad was completed and fully equipped. Ivan Evstratiev Geshov organized the construction, equipment and inauguration of the textile factory in Karlovo, intended to support the schools in the town.

Part of his philanthropic activity were the numerous acts of charitable contribution to the scientific institution. As a financier and banker himself, among all his other engagements, Geshov closely monitored and kept abreast of the financial needs of the institution: lack of state subsidies, irregular transfers or insufficient financing, small amount of the share capital, the growing needs for finance for publishing, organizing different celebrations, expanding international contacts, etc. He provided help whenever possible and according to his priorities. On 25 September 1898 the GC of BLS recorded the decision of its member Ivan Evstratiev Geshov to donate the sum of 12,000 leva, "*recorded in the Kondika of the Society as voluntary contribution by the late Evlogi Georgiev*" (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 738, p. 18).

In his capacity as president of BLS/BAS, he annually added to the state subsidy and supported the publication of "Periodical journal". In 1899, he gave to the GC 1,000 leva for the purpose of organizing a writing competition for a fiction book about the life and work of Knyaginya Marie Louise. However, all the received entries were rejected and the money was redistributed to be used for further publication initiatives of the Society.

Thus, we arrive at the most outstanding contribution of Ivan Evstratiev Geshov in 1908. Despite the difficulties, mainly financial ones, voices were heard as early as 1907 about renaming BLS into Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. At the General Assembly of the institution in 1907, a commission was elected to explore the possibilities in this direction. The commission reached a conclusion that the material resources were insufficient to financially support an Academy, because of an existing mortgage on the building of the Society. At the next regular Assembly meeting on 20 January 1908, President Geshov made a commitment to pay off the debt, and because of his absence at the meeting, his decision was declared in an open letter (Fig. 6) to the participants (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 740, p. 33-34).

София, 19 Януари 1908.

До Управляващият Съвет на Старополюска Казармена Фрунзевска,

Почти

Господине Председателю,

Днес дойде на 2. Инспекцията, проведена в зградата на същата на 13 ноември, се касае за Класната, която се върне: в зградата на пощата по време на Фрунзевското на, за да върне въпроса за прилагането му в Академията, рече да не става още прилагането въобще не се образува изобщо форма. Където има въпрос за се предава друга, в второто заседание на изобщо събрание, за да улесни задължен на Фрунзевското и два пъти повече на тази форма, която да не прави още повече Фрунзевското самостоятелно извършване се възстанови средствата да може да функционира като съвременно съвременно Академията, така и така да Ви даде, и се задължи да излезе чрез изобщо днес - около 120,000 лева - на Старополюска Казармена Фрунзевска Клас Балканска, се улесни, и др. днес, която се изобщо изобщо изобщо с това основането му, но ще се върне за Академията

Има да каже още от сина така от изобщо Фрунзевското днес за същото от всички задължене днес и за изобщо изобщо в отговор на какъв ден изобщо.

Ив. Ев. Гешов

Fig. 6. A letter from Ivan Evstratiev Geshov to the Governing Council of BLS about his donation of 120,000 leva for the purpose of paying off the mortgage of the building, 19 January 1908

With this generous act Ivan Evstratiev Geshov paved the upward path of growth for the institution (Velichkova 2014, 20-26). His contemporaries were fully aware of the enormity of this act. Years later, assessing Geshov's contribution, Stefan Bobchev would point out his expert and wise management, the fact that his "*material gifts and contributions made it possible for the Society to grow into an Academy*" (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 955, p. 31).

The efforts bore fruit and on 6 March 1911, President of the Society Ivan Evstratiev Geshov had the honour and pleasure to open the solemn Assembly of BLS in the hall of "Slavyanska beseda" society. In the presence of all the members of the Society, many official figures among whom Tsaritsa Eleonore, the successor to the throne Boris, Knyaz Tarnovski (Prince of Tarnovo), Kiril, Knyaz Preslavski (Prince of Preslav), and a numerous audience, he announced the renaming of the Society into Academy of Sciences.

His overall contribution and activity in the following years were substantial. Apart from all the open events, Geshov also attended the meetings about the changes in the Statutes, took part in the writing a new bill for BAS, which became a law during his term of office as Prime Minister. The actual petitioner in the Parliament was the Minister of National Education Stefan S. Bobchev, but it was to a considerable degree influenced by Geshov's vision for the development of the institution. The bill was accepted unanimously by all the parties in the Parliament and entered into force upon its publication in the "State Gazette" on 1 February 1912. Cases of donation continued to grow and on 25 June 1920 the Bulgarian Trade Bank reported a new donation on his part of 50,000 leva (SA of BAS, f. 1K, inv. 2, file 1118).

Although he had withdrawn from active participation on the political scene, tired and unwell, disappointed by the efforts for achieving national unity, he turned to charitable activity more and more often. Geshov had always been generous and supported various causes and organizations, but it was in his twilight years that he made his most generous donations. In the first months of 1914, he donated 245,520 leva for the construction of a boarding house for students, sons of disabled veterans, officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the First and Second Balkan War (1912-1913). The completed four-storey building on Graf Ignatyev Str. of 450 sq. m was named "Ivan and Maria Geshov House". The house was officially inaugurated on 11 March 1926 - exactly two years after Geshov's death on a ceremony in the presence of the Tzar, politicians, public figures and citizens. From the autumn of the same year it started serving its purposes as a boarding house for poor students who, having successfully passed the entrance exams, were accepted to Sofia University, the Musical Academy and the Art Academy. In case there were no sons of veterans for the respective year, then the sons of other poor Bulgarians were eligible for admission to the boarding house.

The last will of Ivan Evstratiev Geshov contained instructions in favour of three institutions - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the above-mentioned boarding house for disadvantaged students and the Bulgarian Red Cross Society. First in the list of donations was the house on Serdika Str. in Sofia. His will was that the Academy should sell the house "*when the construction works begin (what is meant*

is the next extension to the main Academy building) and use the money for the building, and on condition that a book about my activity is published no later than two years after my death and every two years to provide or fund, through paying royalties or otherwise, the publishing of: 1. My studies and articles; 2. Studies dedicated to the guiding ideals and ideas which have highlighted my life; 3. Books on Bulgarian history about the years I worked as a publisher and public figure for my country” (CSA, f. 568, inv. 2, file 4, p. 1). Executor of the will was his son Evlogi.

The Academy took possession of the building on Serdika Str. and the money collected from the rent (from the point of Ivan Geshov’s death until it entered into possession of the house) and strictly followed the will of its long-standing president and benefactor. A decision was reached not to sell the building, but rather maintain it and redecorate it to increase its profitability. It is still being used today for the needs of the Academy and remains a material proof of a noble legacy.

According to his explicitly stated will, the money received from the building was used to establish “Ivan Geshov” fund. Using the money from this fund, and under the editorship of the Secretary of the Academy Ivan Peev-Plachkov, the books “Ivan Ev. Geshov: views and Work” (1926) and “Ivan Ev. Geshov: Memoirs and Studies” (1928) were published. In 1936, the interest money on the fund was used to publish Dabko Ustagenchev’s work “Implementation of the Geneva Convention in the Serbo-Bulgarian War”. Awarded by the fund were the research publications of Kosta Bobchev, “Industrial Politics” (1933), Todor Girginov’s “Historical Development of Contemporary Bulgaria” (1933), Dimitar Yotsov’s “Count Ignatyev and Our Liberation” (1940), Asen Kraynikov’s “The Macedonian Question” (1939), “Russia, the Great Powers and the Bulgarian Question after the Election of Knyaz Ferdinand (1888-1896)” (1942).

The generous acts of donation, which helped lay the foundations of Bulgarian science, continue to this day. Due to the material help, gratuitous donation, efforts, hard work, experience and personal connections of the Bulgarian emigrants and patriots, the Bulgarian Learned Society was established in Brăila in 1869. Until the Liberation in 1878, the Society, supported largely by personal donations, expanded its activity, started academic library and archive, published “Periodical Journal”, which turned into a meeting ground for educators and scientists. The generous acts in favour of the young Bulgarian science on part of BLS continued to grow well into the years until the institution was renamed Bulgarian Academy.

The auxiliary and beneficent members of the Academy, despite not having an immediate answer to the overall problems with the financial support of the organization, helped and encouraged the development of scientific research. Their presence was indicative of the growing authority of the future Academy. In those initial years, the first donation funds were established, research papers were awarded, and academic and cultural exchange increased.

Alongside the contribution of the first donors to the successful development of the Academy, the names of a number of benefactors stood prominent, among which that of Ivan Evstratiev Geshov, a long-standing president of BLS/BAS and philanthropist on a national scale.

All the initiatives and prospective endeavors which were undertaken in the first decade of 20th century were to grow and show their full-scale potential in the decades to come.

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