

SCHOOL AND SCHOOLING IN THE KINGDOM OF BULGARIA: PHOTOARCHIVES – PART 2 (EDUCATION IN URBAN AREAS)

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Abstract. At the Research Laboratory on Chemistry Education and History and Philosophy of Chemistry, University of Sofia, a collection of photos and other documents illustrating the school and schooling in the Kingdom of Bulgaria (1878-1946) has been established. These photos have a historical value. Some of these photos presenting various details of the gymnasia education are shown. The publication of such materials will continue in future.

Keywords: Kingdom of Bulgaria, educational system, gymnasia, pedagogical schools, school life

At the end of nineteenth century and in the years later any foreigner visiting Bulgaria manifests his/her opinion that "the Bulgarians are the most promising of all the Balkan people" [1]. James David Bouchier - one of the big friends of Bulgaria, wrote: "During the thirty years of its troubled existence the young Bulgarian State has made almost phenomenal progress. Education has advanced rapidly; public works have been instituted in a large scale; the country has been covered with a network of railways; wealth has undoubtedly increased, and order has been maintained, often in circumstances of great difficulty. The military organization receives high praise from foreign experts...The Bulgarians indeed worked wonders" [2]. The expenditure for educational purposes during the year 1912 reached five million dollars. Bulgaria far exceeded the other Balkan states in the matter of national and municipal expenditures for the education of children. The amount spent for educational purposes in 1912

averaged \$1.20 per inhabitant. For Serbia during the same period it was sixty cents per inhabitant; Greece, fifty cents; Montenegro, forty cents, and Turkey, twenty cents [3]. Therefore, the Kingdom of Bulgaria possessed one of the finest educational systems in the world despite that the Bulgarians themselves considered their educational system and methods far from the ideal [4].

With so many superlatives about the Kingdom of Bulgaria, its people and their social life, it is quite strangely that the today's Bulgarians know nothing about their country in the period before the WW2.

The secondary school period covers five years spent in two kinds of schools: general (gymnasia), and special (pedagogical schools). There are separate schools for boys and for girls, as well as coeducational schools. Admission to the secondary schools is open to graduates of the progymnasia. The subjects offered in the gymnasia are: Bulgarian language and literature, philosophy, propaedeutics and education, either French, German, or English, Latin, Greek, Russian, mathematics with geometrical drawing and descriptive geometry, Bulgarian and general history with history of Christianity, national and general geography, citizenship with political economy, physics, chemistry, natural science, drawing, singing and music, gymnastics, handwork, and stenography. There are three kinds of gymnasia: classical with Latin and Greek, semi-classical with Latin only, and real, without either of these languages. In the pedagogical schools teaching in the first three classes is general in scope, and in the two remaining classes, VII (now 11) and VIII (now 12), specialized. In these schools are studied the following subjects: Bulgarian language and literature, pedagogy, psychology, logic and ethics, religion, French, German or English, Russian, national and general geography, citizenship, physics, chemistry, natural history, hygiene and popular medicine, farm economy, cooperative theory, drawing, modeling, handwork (fancy work for girls), singing and music, gymnastics with lectures on physical training, and stenography (cf. [5] for the chemistry programme; a pedagogical school-leaving certificate is also shown there). To every pedagogical school there is attached a model primary school for practice work and training.

Recently, The New Education Library (NEL) has been established at the Research Laboratory on Chemistry Education and History and Philosophy of Chemistry, University of Sofia. Within the Library, there exists a Section of Photo- and Paper-archives. The present contribution presents some of the items of that Section. With such photographs and documents an interest of the young generations to the period of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom is aimed to be revived. The snapshots and old documents themselves have a great power. Old photographs hold a special mystery. Being able to study scenes and faces from the past and to know how something or somebody looked so long ago makes you feel almost as if you had been there yourself or known that person in some fleeting way. As if you could smell the air or hear the voices, feel the wind, the press of a hand.

1. 'Antim I' gymnasium for girls in Vidin (VIII class just before graduation, 1939)¹⁾



2. The Pedagogical School in Lovech (1930s)²⁾









3. The Pedagogical School in Samokov²⁾





4. Schoolmates with their teachers (1920s and 1930s)³⁾





5. School activities³⁾





5. School documents⁴⁾





NOTES

1. The photograph belongs to Lubka Tosheva, nee Ignatova (1921-1994) - author's mother.
2. From the family album (presented by Dr. L. Boyanova, Research Laboratory on Chemistry Education and History and Philosophy of Chemistry, University of Sofia; Boyanova's mother (Maria Hristova, nee Sadrazanova (1912-2007) graduated from the Pedagogical School in Lovech and her father (Boyan Yosifov) graduated from the Pedagogical School in Samokov).
3. Source: <http://lostbulgaria.com> (Mr. Peyo Kolev).
4. A School-leaving certificate (1929) from the 2nd Gymnasium for boys in Sofia (holder: Doc. Dimitar Vladov (1910-1965), Faculty of Chemistry, University of Sofia).

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