

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALBANIAN DIASPORA IN BULGARIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALBANIAN EDUCATION, DURING THE NATIONAL RENAISSANCE

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Abstract

Albanian emigration abroad and especially outside the territories of the Ottoman Empire, during the Ottoman reign, was numerous. Bulgaria has attracted a considerable number of Albanian immigrants. The activity of Albanian's patriots, in development of education and culture takes an important role. Dhimiter Mole played a very important role in the organization and rising of awareness among the Albanians in Bulgaria. The activity of Albanian's patriots began leading by the societies that were created abroad. They had clear political objectives, to prepare the independence of the homeland from the captivity and protection of its division. The most important societies were "Deshira" society of Sofia and the printing press "Mbrothesia" of Bucharest.

Key words: *Albanian Diaspora, Deshira society, Printing Press Mbrothesia*

1. INTRODUCTION

During the Ottoman reign, the Albanian emigration abroad and especially outside the territories of the Ottoman Empire were numerous. Hundreds and thousands of people were forced to leave their motherlands and migrate in Romania, Bulgaria, and Egypt.

During this period there were migrations of Albanians in the USA and Russia. Bulgaria and other Balkans countries have attracted a considerable number of Albanian immigrants. After 1878, when Bulgaria won the autonomy from the Ottoman yoke, many Albanians were quite ruined in their homeland, among them small traders and different craftsmen chose Bulgaria to find work. As many Balkan Countries, even the Bulgarian capital city became a center, where many Albanians came to work and to get shelter.

The activity of Albanians patriots, in development of education and culture takes an important role. All the contribution of societies which acted abroad was published in Albanian. Although they had clear political objectives to prepare the liberation of their country from the captivity and protection of its division, they presented themselves as a cultural society, which also appeared in their statutes and program. These societies gave their contribution in development of education and culture.

Dhimiter Mole played a very important role in the organization and rising of awareness among the Albanians in Bulgaria, due to his emphatic work since he came in 1886.

Dhimiter Mole gathered around him a great number of Albanians. In 1888, Dhimiter Mole sent from Bucharest books in Albanian language and gradually began to contribute in the expansion of Albanians who were interested for the destiny of Homeland captivity. The Expatriates potentiated the old Albanian colonies that were in these countries, because of captive homeland, the National Movement developed the activity in illegal conditions, and the implementation of its program especially about the education and culture, was almost impossible, but an increasingly importance in these conditions took the Diaspora activity.

2. THE ROLE OF ALBANIAN EXPATRIATES ABROAD

Despite the many difficulties that had to be overcome, Albanian expatriates, kept contacts with the homeland and gave a great contribution to the National Movement and particularly in the development of education and culture.

The activity of Albanian patriots now began leading by the societies that were created during that period of time. Although they had clear political objectives to prepare the independence of the homeland from the captivity and protection of its division, they presented themselves as a cultural society which also appeared in their statutes and program. This thing was done to use legal tools, in the benefit of the Albanian movement and to avoid any obstacles that may arise by the pressure of the Ottoman government and the governmental institution of the country where the authorities acted. In the second half of the nineteenth century and concretely, after the League of Prizren, because of the wild Ottoman reaction and further, the economic situation became worse, emigrations abroad took ever numerous sizes. Although the most of Albanian initially set in the Bulgaria were illiterate or semi-literate, later set on in Bulgaria together with Albanians who knew to read and write the Albanian language.

The most Albanians located in Bulgaria, made manual labor, like Stonemason, gardeners, road workers the most of Albanian emigrants did small business, mainly in Sofia. Later in Bulgaria came Albanians who had finished normal school named "Nicholas Naços" in Bucharest. Dhimiter Mole played a very important role.

He gathered around him a great number of Albanians. In 1888, Dhimiter Mole sent from Bucharest books in Albanian language and gradually began to contribute in the expansion of Albanians who were interested for the destiny of the homeland captivity. In January 1893, it was created the Albanian society which was named "Deshira" society with its status and program. The purpose of the "Deshira" society was to expand knowledge in learning Albanian language and to open Albanian schools. This society established connections with other Albanian societies in Bucharest as well as national societies.

This society gave a great contribution to the development of education in Albania by sending books in Albanian. By the financial assistance such as national companies "Dituria e Bukureshtit" and other national companies, the printing presses named "Mbrothesia", they managed to publish thousands of copies of works such as didactic and Albanian literature of area, such as Primer in Greek, Tosk, "Historia e Skenderbeut" etc. In the newspaper "Drita" was notified that:

The majority of Albanian immigrants consisted on young craftsmen and workers, rather poor and not intellectual.

Later in Bulgaria came Albanians who had finished normal school of Nicholas NACOS in Bucharest.

From the people who knew to read and write in the Albanian patriotic activity of Sofia, a powerful influence had Dhimiter Nicholas Mole, from Boboshtica in Korca city.

Dhimiter Mole initially opened a small shop in Sofia, selling food products. Being very kind and dear to his compatriots he also won their sympathy, which continued to rise even more and they recognized him as a patriot.

His store often was used as a reading room where Dhimiter Mole read parts from various newspapers and he informed his compatriots about their beloved homeland.

3. THE CONTRIBUTION OF DHIMITER MOLE IN LEARNING ALBANIAN LANGUAGE

When Dhimiter Mole began to show compatriots about the letters of the Albanian language, the interest already became even greater because the Albanian language letters also created a great curiosity, because some of them did not believe that there were letters and lessons in Albanian language. But this curiosity ended quickly as a result of the hard work of Dhimitër Mole to teach his compatriots to read and write in Albanian.

The Cafe "Albania" of Adham Shkaba and the shop of food-producing sales of Dhimitër Mole were the two main centers where the Albanians spent much of their time after work, to talk about the bad conditions of their homeland. In the hall, in front of the Albanian Cafe, was hanged on the portrait of Skanderbeg that reminded the Albanians in Sofia not only the bravery of our national hero but also the suffering of our country. After 1888 Dhimitër Mole brought from Bucharest the newspaper "Shqipetari" and other books in Albanian language.

The patriotic activity of Dhimitër Mole, grown even more where instead of the shop, he opened an inn, which quickly became a shelter for many Albanians in Sofia.

During the evenings that inn, full of Albanians that came late from work, became a type of school where Dhimitër Mole, served as a teacher for them. Gradually it began to increase the desire of Albanians for learning about writing and reading the Albanian language. All this activity was developed in Dhimitër Mole's inn, and in the Cafe of Adham Shkaba.

This developed the national feelings and many Albanian in Sofia reflected the desire to work more for the benefit of the homeland. In Sofia, the Albanians had two main objectives which were;

"The unification of all Albanians wherever they were and the dissemination of knowledge and education in the Albanian language".

So, there was an immediate need to organize them in a patriotic educational or cultural society. Dhimitër Mole, Adham Shkaba Spiro Gore, Josif Bageri were the first who understood and worked for the establishment of this company in Sofia. Due to the establishing of this society as an immediate need, the Albanians in Sofia decided to organize a meeting on 1 January 1893, in the Inn of Dhimitër Mole which already became one of the loveliest places for Albanians.

In that meeting there were people from Gegë and Tosce expatriated from all the sides of Albania. The hall that would serve for the meeting was decorated very beautifully and it was only the picture of Skanderbeg hanged on the wall, the Albanian's leader in the fight against the Turkish.

The opening speech was held by Dhimitër Mole, who with his ardent speech touched the hearts of all Albanians. After him, also there was a speech from Adham Shkaba, Ligor Borova, Josif Bageri etc.

All the speakers supported the idea of creating a society.

4. THE CONTRIBUTION OF "DESHIRA" SOCIETY

"This society was founded in 1893 from some of people from South of Albania"

These gentlemen were not more than 30 people. This was also confirmed by the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Sofia, which in 23/10/1896 sent a report to the foreign ministry in Vienna that said:

"The company has approximately 30 members".

This company was created under the influence of the Albanians of Romania, which in this period had developed an extensive activity and had a rich experience. This is evidenced by the fact that a part of initiator of the society "Deshira" had acted there and had a great experience from our national movement. The society "Deshira" on the 06.01.1893 approved the statute with 32 articles. The section two of the statute contains:

The purpose of "Deshira" society was to spread knowledge in learning of the Albanian language and also to create Albanian schools in Albania.

The society entered very quickly in relationship with the patriots and the other Albanian societies outside Bulgaria, as with Sami Frasheri and Naim Frasheri in Istanbul, the society "Drita" in Bucharest. It also had relations with the patriots inside Albania. The society established branches in places where there were more Albanians, as in Varna, Plovdiv, Pleven, Rila etc.

Although that society was known for its cultural and educational nature, there were also present political perspectives. Since the beginning of the program it was stated that:

"The society was created by Albanians who were inspired by patriotic feelings and who wish to illuminate Albanian and Albanian nation"

It should be emphasized that in contradiction from Bucharest societies, where were accepted even strangers, the society "Deshira" of Sofia accepted only those who speak Albanian.

As an official language of her own the "Deshira" society, would be Albanian language written in alphabet of Istanbul, and all other documents of the company starting from the program will be written with this alphabet. The emblem and the seal of the society would have the following content:

"Albanians from Deshira society of Sofia 1893"

In the middle it would have a heart with a cross.

Around it, it would have a crown, which had to be as a: **"Love, Covenant and Hope"**.

At the general meeting which was held on 20 June 1893, the society elected its Classis. By secret balloting was elected as a leader Ligor Prifti Borova, while Dhimitër Mole was elected as a secretary.

The Implementation of the program "Deshira" society was not easy, although the Albanians of Sofia were in an area that had won the autonomy, but they were still feared by the Turkish government which pursued and persecuted all who taught the Albanian language or tried to open Albanian schools.

Even though they were away from Albania, they had their family, relatives but the Turkish arbitrariness and wickedness knew no bounds. "Deshira" society of Sofia began the educational activity in the evenings when there were read books and newspapers in Albanian language.

This society should be focused on increasing the number of the members and not only with Albanians of Sofia but also with other people who were in other Bulgarian cities.

In 1894, during the meeting of the society in Sofia, all the members said that it was necessary to create a relation with the other centers of their patriotic movement in Albanian colonies abroad. At this meeting Spiro Gare should go to Istanbul to meet brothers Frashëri, to talk with them about the cooperation in the field of national movement.

When he returned from Istanbul, Spiro Gare had brought from there many Albanian books that were given Frashëri's brothers. Depending on Artistic and entertainment activities and the spread of learning Albanian language, served both for the unification of Albanians for raising their political and cultural attitude. The "Dituria" society of Bucharest and "Deshira" society of Sofia worked for the Albanian publication and spread textbooks, as literary works of Renaissance. A piece of the printed materials of "Deshira" society in Sofia through the Manastir and Struga, crossed to Dibra, Korca, Elbasan and were spread to other cities of Albania. The Patriot Seid Najdeni (Hoxhe Voka) had good relationships with the society in Sofia, through Joseph Bageri. He got from him Albanian books and notebooks that were published at that time. Those books and notebooks arrived to Skopje through Austrian post and then from there they came in Diber. In his memories, Hysni Najdeni, the brother of Seid Najdeni, writes:

Said Najdeni had many books that were coming not only from Istanbul but also from Bulgaria and Romania. From Sofia, Joseph Bageri from Reka, also brought him books.

Books coming from Bulgaria and Romania were distributed across different cities of Albania, as in Diber, Mat, Tirana etc. A patriot from Vlora, Ibrahim Shyty writes in his memories:

"I have known Seid Najdeni, well, the patriot from Dibra, and I have sent him many Albanian books that came into our shop from Bulgaria and Romania especially for him"

Considering the role and importance of the press in the struggle for education, culture and national independence this society in its early days of the foundation was engaged to give their help gathering materials from membership and other patriots, to establish a printing press.

5. THE ROLE OF THE PRINTING PRESS “MBROTHESIA”

Printing press was founded in 1897, and was baptized with the name “Mbrothesia” (Perparimi). An important role in printing activities of migrating colonies has had the printing press “Mbrothesia”.

“Mbrothesia” was established in Sofia, with the help of the society “Dituria” of Bucharest, “Deshira” society of Sofia, and also with the help of patriots as Kosta Jani Trebicka, and Christo Luarasi. These patriots before arriving in Sofia, they had been students of Nikola Nacos in Bucharest. Kristo Luarasi had worked in a printing house in Bucharest. Josif Bageri, writes:

"When we were working here in Sofia about national issues, Kristo Luarasi then was near Mr. Nichola Naco in Bucharest, where he taught Albanian language".

Having the experience of systematizing letters Kristo Luarasi will also be the major of the printing press "Mbrothesia", as well as being the manager and administrator.

With the financial assistance of patriotic societies, and especially of the society “Dituria” of Bucharest, the printing press "Mbrothesia " published thousands of copies of didactic works like the revival of Albanian literature as the: “Tosk and Geg primer”, “Bageti dhe Bujqesi ” " Historia e Skenderbeut”, Sami Frasheri’s book, “Shqiperia Çeshte, Çka qene dhe Çdo te behet ", "Valet e Detit”, of Spiro Dine, the newspaper “Shqypeja e Shqypënisë” , “Liria e Shqiperise” etc.. Even these books were distributed in all cities of Albania.

In 1897, it was published the magazine "Ditërrëfënjësi Shqip", and from 1898, a magazine entitled "Ditërrëfënjësi Kombiar", included the religious calendar, cultural material, literary, social, and various chronicles in Albanian language using the Istanbul alphabet.

The publication of this magazine played an important role in the dissemination of knowledge and culture, in the dissemination of education and the establishment of national conscience. This magazine was distributed in all cities and villages of homeland, in exile colonies and day by day the interest became greater.

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EDUCATION

In the magazine of 1889, it was published an article titled "Ladies, we are people" who is devoted completely to the education of Albanian women:

Do you know sisters that we need to be taught more than men? We strongly need to learn more. Our boys till they became 10 years old, they are grown up by us. In this magazine an important part takes the necessity of education for Albanian women to learn about the reading and writing Albanian language. Due to the fact that women are the ones who take care of their children, they will be able to transmit the knowledge to their children. When we know to sing and write our language, we will teach our grandsons to play and so in a short time all the Albanian boys will know how to sing and speak in our beautiful language.

We will transform our homes to schools, to teach our children to sing. The Education of women elevates one nation by saving it from the extinction.

In another article entitled "The events of the slope" the magazine is against of learning foreign language and education in Albania.

In Albania, there are spoken four languages: Greek in Janine, Slavic language in the Vilayet of Monastery and Kosovo, Romanian in Manastir and Italian in Shkodra, bringing the division in our homeland.

In such situation, the way of the salvation is seen only by the opening of Albanian schools: All these bad things which we suffer today are transmitted by our enemies. These things come from the fact that we don't have schools in our language.

In another article “Drita” newspaper it was titled "Shkollat Kombetare 1893 in Kolonje", gives an

overview of the development of the Albanian national schools. Appreciating highly, the role of Naim Frashëri on writing the textbooks in Albanian language and their publication in Bucharest, it also demonstrates for the opening of five schools in 1893 in Kolonjë. It also reflects the data for teachers of these schools. It is an urge to learn Albanian:

"Well, come on all you brothers were you are and let's learn our language."

Except "Kombari Calendar", which was an annual magazine, the printing house "Mbrothesia" in Sofia, after the 1901 in the newspaper "Drita" was published "Shqipëria", "Shqypeja e Shqypënisë", "Zeri i Shqiperise" etc.

In the "Drita" newspaper which began to appear in November 1901, under the directions of Sahin Kolonja with the motto:

"Work for yourself, do not work for the foreign world", it invited Albanians to work for national rising and liberation. This newspaper in an article of its named "E Verteta" raises the voice against religious divisions of Albanians noting that a priest should know the Albanian language and then should preach the religion in Albanian language. In an article titled "Knowledge with their languages keeps alive one nation", appealed against foreign schools in Albania, and invited the Albanians to be educated in Albanian Language. The newspaper also gave a great importance on the education of Albanian women. In this article of the "Education for Women" it was said that:

"The education of women is one of the best things for raising a nation".

In the newspaper "Drita", in an article titled "Kombet e tjera dhe Shqipetaret", it was written that it should be opened the Albanian schools in all parts of Albania, to renounce from the foreign schools, such as Greek and Turkish ones etc.

In a series of articles published in the Albanian press, the patriots of the Renaissance, protested powerfully against the bad conditions in which were the Albanian people in the field of writing Albanian language and schools.

The Society, "Dëshira" developed and realized an intense activity in terms of publication with their various books, such as textbooks, various literary, genres such as novels, short stories, novels, reportage, general guidance, summary of folklore etc..

In 1900 in the printing house "Mbrothesia" was printed the textbook titled "Abetare e Gjuhes Shqype" (the primer of Albanian language.)

This primer is anonymous but all the tracks and sources indicate that its author is Said Najdeni. This primer is designed based on it of Sami Frashëri, so the Sami Frashëri's primer served as a basic manual for many textbooks during the Renaissance period. The primer was written in the Istanbul alphabet. This primer will also be republished three times, in the years 1908, 1909, 1910, in Sofia, was titled "Abetare Gegënisht". This primer is used in many cities in Albania, as in Tirana, Dibra, Elbasan, Krujë etc.

In the same year it was published in Sofia, another paper of Said Najdeni, titled "fe- rrëfjësja e Muslimanevet" This paper was written in Istanbul alphabet. Although this paper has title and religious views, is filled with the urge to learn the Albanian language, to manage the defense of freedom and national independence through the spread of language and national culture.

In this work it was encouraged the love for friends, envy waiver of other bad habits, openly opposing the theocratic and despotic policy of the Ottoman Empire, the Albanian people's religious divisions, strife etc. against each other. Said Najdeni through this work raised against the denigration policy of the Ottoman, to suppress and humiliate the figure of Albanians. Also it was raised awareness for the widespread of national education and the Albanian language.

During this period in Sofia were published papers of Mid'hat Frashëri, as "Make the best free throw it in the sea," Practical Model for the English language ", " Dhe tregonjë ". In 1901 was published the handwriting of Nuçi Naci, entitled "Korca dhe fshatrat perreth sajë". In the same year in Sofia was published the work of Gjerasim Qiriazi titled "Hristomathi", that was divided in four parts. In 1899 it

was published in Sofia the famous paper of Naim Frasheri "Historia e Shqiperise".

In 1902, was published another of his paper, "Albania". In 1902 the publishing house "Mbrothesia" in Sofia, was published the famous paper of Sami Frasheri "The primer Tosk". In the same printing house "Mbrothesia" in Sofia was also published an important paper of Naim Frasheri "Deshira e vertete e Shqiptareve". In this printing house for the first time in Albanian, was published the famous drama of Sami Frasheri "Besa". In 1909 in Sofia will be published also the newspaper "Shqypeja of Shqypënisë" which was a political, cultural, literary, and educational notebook in Albanian.

In 1910 in Sofia will be published the paper of Joseph Bageri "Kopeshti i Malesorit". Regarding to the political orientation "Deshira" society in Sofia, sent a petition to the English government on September 18. 1896 saying:

"We ask only one thing, to live our lives", that means, to enjoy the freedom, to be all together and to protect against the unscrupulous intrigues of the neighbors whose claims were not justified ever.

To achieve such a thing it was a need to be implemented in some reforms such as the union of vilayet of Kosovo, Manastir, Janina and Shkodra, where the majority of population was Albanian, in a single vilayet under the administration of a smart Vali. The Vali should be Albanian to have the right to practice the religion in a language they want. The establishment of schools as in the city and also in the villages, where the official language should be Turkish, would be taught together with the local language and a modern language that should be chosen by the desire of the government. On 1 January 1898, in another petition that was addressed to Albanians abroad and in Albania, from the Albanian societies in Italy, Bucharest, Egypt, society "Deshira" of Sofia said:

"All Albanians as many as we are in the world, where the bad destiny has distributed us whatever our religious beliefs are, we all ask unanimously and with a same opinion, Sultan Abdulhamid Hanit II, the autonomy of the Albanian lands".

They ask from the Ottoman Empire that the four vilayets of Shkodra, Kosovo, Manastir and Janina recognized the Albanian language as national language and allow them to open the Albanian national schools. So now are presented clearly the political objectives of Albanian companies, established outside homeland. On 24, September 1908 in Sofia was created a program for Albanian patriots in the challenges of recognition of the national rights.

Under this program it was asked to organize a meeting in any city of Albania, from all those who have worked on writing the Albanian language, and to establish a common alphabet. It should be required that, all foreign schools in Albania, in the first three years should be taught only Albanian language.

In the second part of the autumn, Albanian emigrants that lived in Sofia were gathered to discuss the difficult situation that the Albanians, were passing under the Ottoman regime, because there were being closed as well as schools that Albanian people had opened with many difficulties. The Young Turks now hold a hostile attitude towards Albanians and Albanian National Movement. This was reflected both in the arrests of patriots, the stopping of Albanian press that published abroad the papers which later would not be allowed to enter in Albania. The government had forbidden the press of the Albanian nation.

Then Albanian immigrants in the Sofia protested against the policies and measures that were taken by the Turkish. There were addressed requirements to Europe and America to stop making this by Turkish people. They required also the freedom of implementation of the Albanian language.

We want a full freedom of learning the Albanian language in our national schools with Latin alphabet, we all protest against the measures that were taken by the Ottoman government, which with a new system aimed to "destroy" the Albanian nation.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion we can say that the compatriots that were organized in societies invited all the Albanian people to join them and to protest against the barbarism of the Ottoman Empire by sending

them resolutions to be published "Shqypeja of Shqypenise" in the newspaper.

The "Deshira" society of Sofia that was founded in the 1893 developed abroad political, cultural, educational and publishing activities.

In the printing house "Mbrothesia" were not only printed but also distributed in Albania and the Albanian colonies abroad, more than 50 books in Albanian. These publications spreading massively, gave a great contribution to the spread of education and the development of the Albanian national consciousness. Books, primers and other school texts, gave a contribution in opening the Albanian schools, raised up of the national consciousness and became an integral part of the war for being independent from the Ottoman Empire, Albanian writers and poets operating in the Bulgaria, had put all of their creative activity, on the benefit of the national cause.

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