

Studying abroad in Russia after the Crimean War (1853 – 1856). The role of the Slavic committees and the Russian government

Abstract

This paper reviews one of the aspects of the Eastern Question and the Russian foreign policy towards the Bulgarian community in the Ottoman Empire after the Crimean War (1853 – 1856). This article focuses on the Russian consul's activity on the Balkan Peninsula and especially how they managed to attract and send Bulgarians to study abroad in Russian high schools and universities. The text analyzes the work of the Slavic charity committees, which helped students during their education. The paper also comments on what the Russian administration anticipated from all those students after their graduation. It is proved that the administration expected them to provide pro-Russian policy and propaganda on the Balkan Peninsula and to bring a sentiment towards Russia.

Keywords

Ottoman Empire, Bulgarian Revival, Russian Empire, education, Eastern Question, Slavic committees

The topic of this paper deals with the practice of studying abroad and with the feelings those students, who chose to study abroad, developed towards their "second country". I was motivated to do this research by Barbara Jelavich's monograph "History of the Balkans"¹, in which she found that Russian influence

¹ Barbara Jelavič, *История на Балканите XVIII-XIX в*, vol. 1 (Sofia: Ахмат-Ах, 2012), 342-343.

rose on the Balkan Peninsula during the second half of the nineteenth century. That happened because many Balkan Slavs got their education in the Russian Empire. The purpose of this paper is to prove that Russian propaganda was spread through charitable educational initiatives and to shed light on the practical methods used to achieve that goal.

For the topic in question it is vital to illuminate the context in which the Russian Empire decided to engage in a battle over influence in the Balkans. The Eastern Question, or the struggle between the Great Powers for European Ottoman territories, was probably the central historical event that colored the background for the Russian attempts to secure political supremacy in the Balkans. During contentious times, the Great Powers tried to preserve the political and territorial balance between themselves. Until the 1850s they had led wars only against the Ottoman Empire, but in the second part of the 19th century the western Great Powers started to fight against the Russian Empire as well. In the Crimean War (1853 – 1856) the Orthodox Empire was defeated by a coalition which consisted of Muslim and Catholic countries. The Russo – Turkish confrontation originated before the 18th century when one of the main geopolitical targets of Russian politicians was to reach a “warm sea”. During the 1820s and 1830s, however, Russian politicians formed another thesis. Their aim then became the preservation of the weak Ottoman Empire. The Russo – Turkish wars from the first half of the 19th century made it clear that Constantinople could not be seized without the permission of other Great Powers. After the 1820s, the Russian Empire managed to become a hegemon in Southeastern Europe. That happened not only through conquest, but through diplomacy as well. For example, the Unkiar Skelessi treaty from 1833 allowed only the Russian Empire to use the Turkish Straits for military purposes.² This peaceful coexistence, at the time, benefited both empires. The Crimean War, on the other hand, broke out because of the rivalry among Great Powers like France and Russia for the right to protect Christians in the Middle East. In contrast to the other Russo – Turkish wars, in 1856 the Orthodox Empire had been defeated and it lost the right to protect the Christian population on the Balkan Peninsula. This meant that the Russian Empire stopped being the only Christian representative in front of the Sublime Porte. If Petersburg’s politicians wanted to restore Russian influence, they had to, first and foremost, restore the Northern Empire’s prestige.

This paper will analyze how the Russian Empire managed to create and develop an apparatus through which it became possible to promote Russian policies in Bulgarian lands. The paper will focus on the following five aspects of the story: how did the consulate’s network grow, how did the admission procedure for those who wanted to study in Russian high schools and universities look like; what was the role of the Slavic charity organizations; how many students actually studied in Russia and what happened with students who managed to graduate.³

² Aleksandăr Stojanov, *Руско-турските войни 1569-1878 г.* (Sofia: Спела, 2018), 396.

³ Those five aspects will be reviled in the article via what some scholars have already found about the admission process.

After the Crimean War, Petersburg's foreign policy goals were reflective of the longing for the restoration of the old Russian influence and authority in the Balkan Peninsula and Europe. One of the ways to achieve that was through a process of cultural infiltration. If the empire wanted to succeed in that, it had to organize a group of "agents" who were trustworthy in the eyes of Russia. The founding of consular offices was one of the first moves Russia made in that direction. After the Crimean War, the Empire managed to adopt new doctrines for its cultural policy.⁴ Some philosophical and historical ideas such as Slavophilism had been used since that period. We can recognize the implementation of this idea in Russian efforts to attract local people to work for the Russian consulates and in their efforts to send locals to study abroad in Russia. Additionally, there was Pan-Slavism – a more radical form of Slavophilism. It defended the thesis that there had to be only one country for all Slavic people, ruled by one king. After the Crimean War, cultural infiltration became the official Russian policy, implemented through the new Slavic charity committees.⁵

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Following the Crimean War, the Great Powers realized that Bulgarians could be used to further their own interests in the struggle for supremacy in the Balkans. Political practice showed that during peaceful times education was a strong tool for the expansion of political influence.⁶ The Russian Empire tried to make a network of trustworthy "agents" in Bulgarian lands. These "agents" would become the most significant Bulgarian figures responsible for the execution of the above-mentioned policy. Perhaps the most prominent of them was Nayden Gerov (1823 – 1900). Simultaneously with all these processes, some Russian Slavophiles recognized the growing influence of the western, pro-Catholic and pro-Protestant propaganda on the Balkan Peninsula. These figures intended to rival this pro-western influence through charitable activities. In fact, even the Romanovs were helping some intellectuals who described themselves as Slavophiles. Through such examples we can recognize the roots of the collaboration between the charity committees and the ruling class of the Russian Empire. The Moscow Slavic Committee was founded on the 26th of January 1858 with an imperial decree. It became part of the Asian department, which belonged to the Russian foreign affairs ministry. Its mission was to establish connections with the Slavs from the Balkan Peninsula. After

⁴ Anna Čankova, "Щрихи от дейността на Найден Геров в навечерието и по време на Кримската война (1853-1856)", in *История*, vol. 6, ed. Albena Simova (Sofia: Азбуки, 2018), 572.

⁵ Andrej Andreev, "Руските славянски комитети и идеята общ "славяно-руски език", in *Проблеми на българската езикова политика*, ed. Kina Vachkova (Shumen: Университетско издателство "Епископ Константин Преславски", 2007), 239.

⁶ Rumjana Radkova, *За знания в чуждина* (Sofia: Издателство на БАН, 2019), 100.

the Crimean War, Egor Kovalevsky, who was an expert in Slavic matters, led the department. Through his appointment, the Russian Empire showed how important the Balkan Peninsula was for Petersburg.⁷ A report, written by the foreign affairs minister Alexander Gorchakov (1798 – 1883), and a resolution, prepared by the tsar Alexander II (1855 – 1881), made it obvious that all documents, written by the Moscow Charity Committee or addressed to it, had to pass through the Russian foreign affairs ministry. Nayden Gerov supported the Committee because he considered that this movement would be able to stop the foreign Catholic propaganda in Bulgarian lands. One of the ways the organization tried to rival western influence was by sending Bulgarian students to study in Russia. The Moscow Slavic Committee became an instrument in preserving and spreading Russian influence on the Balkan Peninsula. One of its aims was “to collect money for upbringing and educating young Slavs in Russia”.⁸ The Russian Empire started its systematic cultural infiltration of the peninsula. If they wanted to have their way with the Ottoman Empire, they needed to create, in the Balkans, a cultural and political establishment that would assist Russian endeavors against the Ottoman Empire.

In January 1856 N. Gerov wrote to M. Pogodin (1800 – 1875), one of the founders of the Slavophile movement. Gerov explained to him that the Crimean War instigated national feelings among Bulgarians and added that western propaganda threatened them. N. Gerov suggested that sending Bulgarian students to Russian schools might stop them from choosing Vienna or Paris as a place for studying abroad. However, Russian attention was mostly focused on Thrace and Macedonia, where western cultural and religious propaganda had been the strongest. In May 1856 Egor Kovalevsky became the Asian department's new director. N. Gerov presented him the awful conditions in Bulgaria. On the 11th of September 1856, through the Asian department, he asked Kovalevsky to enroll Konstantin Gerov (Nayden's brother) and Todor Zaprianov in a Russian school. The Moscow Slavic Committee's influence was strengthened because of the activities of Ivan Aksakov (1823 – 1886). He was the editor of the Committee's journal and the defender of the idea that every Slavic nation should develop its own national state.⁹

As I have mentioned, after the war, the Russian consulate's network on the Balkan Peninsula accreted. Outposts were founded in Plovdiv, Varna, Russe, Vidin, Turnovo (after 1862) and in Monastir (now Bitolia).¹⁰ These consulates, in the Ottoman Empire, had a right to defend Russian subjects from punishments, to represent Russian traders in front of imperial courts and to

⁷ Nina S. Kinjapina et al., ed., *История внешней политики России Вторая половина XIX века* (Moscow: РАН, 1999), 49-53.

⁸ Сонко Генев, *Славянските комитети в Русия и българското освободително дело 1858 – 1878* (Sofia: Издателство на Отечествен фронт, 1986), 19.

⁹ Sergej Al. Nikitin, *Славянские комитеты в России в 1858–1876 годах* (Moscow: Московска печатница, 1960), 43.

¹⁰ Nikolaj Genčev, *Българо-руски културни общувания през Възраждането* (Sofia: Лик, 2002), 129.

issue Russian passports. One additional new activity for the consulates was the selection of future students who would study in the Russian Empire. After the Crimean War, the consulates were no longer located only at the seaside or on the Danube River. They reached the Ottoman hinterland as well. The goal of the new consulates was to oppose the western Catholic and Protestant propaganda, which was already being spread through western schools and missions.

The consul's new activity, as mentioned, was the selection of Bulgarian students that would study in Russian high schools, seminaries, military schools and universities.¹¹ Those young men who wanted to start their education in Russia were required to send a written request to the local consul. It often happened that Bulgarian teachers persuaded their best students to write this request. They would also often try to persuade the consul that their own students were the most appropriate for an admission. During such occasions, the consul would ask the Russian ambassador in Constantinople whether there were free places for the students in any school in the Empire and if there were any available scholarships.¹² If someone wanted to be educated in the Empire, they had to satisfy some requirements. The future student had to have a high level of dignity; they had to know Biblical literature – meaning they had to understand religious topics; and finally, they had to know math and the old Slavic language used in the liturgy during that period. It was also important for the future student to be of good physical and mental health and at maximum twelve years old. It was recommended, but not obligatory, that they had to originate from a well-off family.¹³ These recommendations presented an unsurpassable barrier to most Bulgarians. Moreover, if a person wanted to start a university degree, they had to pass the admission exams.¹⁴ So, after the Crimean War, the Russian administration decided on exact rules for admission of those Slavs who wanted to study in their schools.¹⁵

A few years after the foundation of the first Slavic Charity Committee some other organizations appeared as well. These committees were founded in Petersburg, Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa, but the oldest one kept its leading role.¹⁶ Again, the Asian department subordinated the new Slavic organizations, which

¹¹ Čankova, “Шрихи от дейността на Найден Геров в навечерието и по време на Кримската война (1853-1856),” 573-574.

¹² Velko Tonev, “Руското консулство във Варна и новобългарското образование,” in *Българското възрождане и Русия*, ed. Dimităr Kosev (Sofia: Наука и изкуство, 1981), 562-563.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 571.

¹⁴ He was expected to complete six admission exams if he wanted to study at the Historical – Philological Faculty of the Moscow University.

¹⁵ The term “Slavs” was used broadly in the 19th century. For the Empire, “Slavs” were Orthodox Christians originating from the Balkan Peninsula. Greeks were not considered “Slavs”. In some primary sources “Slavs” were defined as “fellow believers”.

¹⁶ Andrej Andreev, “Московский славянски благотворителен комитет и западните религиозни мисии,” in *Сборник Религия и църква*, ed. Hristo Temelski (Sofia: Гутенберг, 1999), 135.

meant they were an integral part of the Ministry of Foreign affairs. Those committees again had a task to give scholarships to those students who wanted to study in Russia. The membership fee for the Moscow Committee was 5 rubles for the year 1860. The government paid twenty percent of the cost.¹⁷ The members of the Slavic charity organizations held high social and political positions in the Russian society. One of them was A. Bahmateev, who was the head of Moscow's educational region. Even princess Maria took part in the funding of some committees.¹⁸ The Slavic organizations appeared as charity committees and they quickly gained support from leading Russian public figures. Because of their involvement, those committees easily became part of the administration and a tool for influencing the Slavic population of the Balkan Peninsula. After the committee's appearance in 1859, three Bulgarians started their education in Russia financed by the imperial family as private scholarship students.

Committee scholarships were meant for seminaries, high schools, and universities. The students who graduated and used Russian scholarships were supposed to return to the Ottoman Empire. It was expected that those young men would become teachers or public figures and would implement pro-Russian policy in the Balkan Peninsula. It often happened that those students who were accepted to attend schools in Russia, wanted to study medicine or economy, but scholarships were not available for these university degrees. There were some examples of students who managed to get their diploma in Russia, but then faced different obstacles when they came back to Bulgarian lands. In a private fund under Nr. 29 related to Todor Minkov (1830 – 1906) in the Bulgarian historical archive in Sofia, a circular letter from 10th of September 1864 can be found. The document was from the beforementioned Asian department and it emphasized some problems that troubled Bulgarians when they came back from Russia. The author, Petur Stremahov, wrote to Feodor Nikolaev in Petersburg, that Odessa's Bulgarian trusteeship¹⁹ told the Asian department that Bulgarians, who had graduated in Russia were pursued by Ottoman authorities.²⁰ This often happened when they wanted to become teachers. So, it was not rare that those alumni started their own trade, which was more profitable than teaching. The Ottoman authorities easily identified Slavs who studied abroad and then, when they would come back, the Ottomans would try to block these alumni from actively engaging in public life on its territory. This happened even though teachers were appointed through a local Christian council with the right to control local primary and secondary schools.

An abundance of evidence supports the thesis that one of the main aims of Russian foreign policy was to educate a pro-Russian intelligentsia in the Balkans. In 1862 the education minister Alexander Golovin (1821 – 1886) recommended to Alexander II a new curriculum for South Slavs studying in the gymnasium in Nikolaev. He even founded a university in 1865 with the

¹⁷ Sergej Al. Nikitin, *Славянские комитеты в России в 1858–1876 годах*, 44.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹ A Bulgarian charity committee from Odessa.

²⁰ НБКМ – БИА, Ф. 29, а.е. 1, л. 22.

purpose of preparing the pro-Russian South Slavic intelligentsia. In 1863 a high school, led by Todor Minkov, opened in Nikolaev. He said, at the time, the following words about those students who were between the age of 12 and 22: “For that period they would pick up the habits, temperament and the outlook of the Russian society and would be brought up as a person who is devoted to Russia.”²¹ The circular letter mentioned Minkov’s boarding house as well as his recommendation that Bulgarian students should, during nights, rest together with their compatriots.²²

This recommendation might be related to the wish that Bulgarian students do not forget their home country and mother language. Between 1863 and 1866, students received forty scholarships for the boarding house. Evidence from the circular letter written by officers in the Asian department reveal that the Russian administration trusted Minkov.²³ The pupils were made to live together but were not forced to take part in social activities. It could be argued that this “policy of isolation” was not successful because the boarding house was closed in 1865. According to the record, students became too interested in ideas like liberalism and anarchism. In 1867, the school opened again, but this time as a private institution without scholarships. It existed until 1892 when T. Minkov retired.

Another similar example of Russian influence was Odessa’s Slavic Charity Society. The goal of the association was to help “young Slavs who come to Russia with the idea of studying and those Slavs, who by chance come here and who are searching for nourishment, can find help by intercession in front of the local authorities”, but only if “they are loyal to Russia”.²⁴ These words help us understand clearly the envisaged purpose of young Bulgarians studying in Russia, according to Russian elites. The value of the idea that through education young people might become pro-Russian public figures, was readily recognized by the Russian imperial administration. It is easy to recognize this idea in the circular letter written by the Asian department. We can read there that teachers in the boarding house strived to educate future Bulgarian public figures to see Russia and its subjects as fellow Slavs.²⁵

Another aspect, which must be presented in this paper is the number of Bulgarians who studied in Russia and who were helped by the Slavic committees. One of the first orders for assisting their admission was from the 21st of December 1856. It was an imperial decree to the chief in Kiev’s, Kharkov’s and Odessa’s educational region. They were supposed to find scholarships for Slavs and allow them to participate in seminars.²⁶ It is very likely that at

²¹ Genčev, *Българо-руски културни общувания през Възраждането*, 150.

²² НБКМ – БИА, Ф. 29, а.е. 1, л. 21.

²³ НБКМ – БИА, Ф. 29, а.е. 1, л. 17.

²⁴ Genov, *Славянските комитети в Русия и българското освободително дело (1858 – 1878)*, 61.

²⁵ НБКМ – БИА, Ф. 29, а.е. 1, л. 17.

²⁶ Nikolaj Genčev, “Българската национална просвета и Русия след Кримската война,” *Годишник на Философско – историческия факултет на Софийския университет* 66 (1975): 300.

the beginning of the 1860s around 109 Bulgarian students had already been studying in the Russian Empire.²⁷ Around 16 Bulgarians had been under the patronage of the Moscow Slavic Charity Committee in 1858 along with private families who helped 10 of them. Around 13 Bulgarians studied in Kiev's seminary in 1858 and 20 others in Odessa's seminary during the same year. These numbers, however, can be questioned because of the poor record keeping of the Slavic charity organizations. In a different period, different numbers of people embarked on their journey with the idea of studying in Russia. Some of them were expected to take part in admission tests, which proved to be too difficult while others started their education but, because of financial or health problems, could not finish it. In any case, the above-mentioned numbers are tentative.

In the period 1860 – 1862, Varna's consul Alexander Victorovich Rachinski played an important role in Bulgarian lands. He was one of the founders of the Slavic Charity Committee in Moscow and he was sent as a representative of the Committee to Bulgaria in 1858 with a task to oversee foreign propaganda in Bulgarian lands.²⁸ Alexander Rachinski was quite interested in Macedonia because of the pro-Catholic propaganda there.²⁹ He made a gift of 3000 rubles for Gerov's school in Plovdiv as well.³⁰ When he departed from Macedonia in 1859, he carried with himself five Bulgarians who started their education in Russia. Three of them stayed in Smolen's boarding high school with a scholarship from the Russian government while the other two boys started in Bell's seminary.³¹ On 12th of January 1860 Rachinski asked the ambassador in Constantinople to allow four Bulgarians to set off for Russia.³² The consul made the decision to assign them to Kiev's seminary. Even though Rachinski had been successful as a diplomat, he left his position. Since the summer of 1862, the consul in Varna was Alexander Olhin and in 1865 the same position was given to Vasily Niagin.³³ The consular position was neither well paid nor prestigious. Nevertheless, even with financial problems, Rachinski managed to cope with the difficulties and he can be described as a successful consul who helped both the Russian government and the Slavic charity committees.

Despite the opportunities mentioned above, there were many problems with studying abroad. For the period 1861 – 1862 only seventeen Bulgarians were admitted to study at the Moscow University with a scholarship of 1500

²⁷ Genčev, *Българо-руски културни общування през Възраждането*, 142.

²⁸ Nikitin "Славянские комитеты в России в 1858–1876 годах," 31.

²⁹ Tonev, "Руското консулство във Варна и новобългарското образование," 556.

³⁰ Andreev, "Московский славянский благотворительный комитет и западные религиозные миссии," 142.

³¹ Tonev, "Руското консулство във Варна и новобългарското образование," 561.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 552.

rubles.³⁴ After 1860, the Slavic committees recommended the foundation of a high school for South Slavs in Odessa. The foreign affairs ministry together with the education ministry had to provide the needed scholarships. The idea was to allow students from all Bulgarian lands to study in Odessa.³⁵ In contrast, it would have been inappropriate to study, for example, in Kiev because of the preponderance of western propaganda in that city. This propaganda might have had a negative effect on the young students.³⁶ The Russian Orthodox Church had prepared 75 scholarships for South Slavs who studied in seminaries and academies. In 1860, the Asian department sent an instruction to diplomats who were stationed in Bulgarian lands. They were allowed to send to Russia 20 – 25 Bulgarians who wanted to study in high schools, 75 Bulgarians for seminaries and 20 boys for military schools. It can be claimed that after 1860 there was an organized structure dedicated to sending South Slavs to study in Russia. After that year, the scholarship amount rose to 5000 rubles per year. This sum was given to vice-consuls who were supposed to recruit young students and send them to Russia. The above-mentioned circular letter confirms this. In that document Petur Stremahov, who wrote to Feodor Nikolaev, described that the South Slav's interest had risen so much that the government had to agree to form a special system for admitting all those candidates who wanted to study abroad.³⁷ Those young students had to attend classes in Odessa's, Kiev's, Kharkov's and Moscow's educational region. These were the lands nearest to Bulgarian territory so there were huge trade colonies of their compatriots. In 1865 a scholarship with an amount of 3400 rubles was given to those who were willing to study at the Moscow University.³⁸ It was estimated that around 220 young Bulgarians studied at Russian universities. Until 1878 around 91 Bulgarian teachers studied in Russian high schools. Thirty-two students studied in Odessa, in Kiev – fourteen, in Chisinau – five, in Izmail – two, in Moscow – one and in the high school in Nikolaev – fifteen.

Sixty-seven Bulgarian teachers graduated from Russian universities. They studied in Moscow, Kiev, Petersburg and Odessa.³⁹ As it was mentioned, it is almost impossible to find out exactly how many Bulgarians studied in Russia. Some of them started their degrees without any help from the Slavic committees, but when they ran out of money, they often looked to the charity committees for help. More than a half of them did not manage to complete their education because of the health or financial problems. Despite that fact, around 40 percent of the Bulgarian intelligentsia was to some extent educated in Russia.

³⁴ Genčev, *Българо-руски културни общувания през Възраждането*, 148.

³⁵ Tonev, “Руското консулство във Варна и новобългарското образование,” 567.

³⁶ Genčev, *Българо-руски културни общувания през Възраждането*, 146-147.

³⁷ НБКМ – БИА, Ф. 29, а.е. 1, л. 21.

³⁸ Genčev, *Българо-руски културни общувания през Възраждането*, 160.

³⁹ Krasimira Daskalova, *Българският учител през Възраждането* (София: Изд. на Софийския университет “Св. Климент Охридски”, 1997), 53.

During the period under scrutiny in this paper, there were also examples of western propaganda in Bulgarian lands. These pro-western efforts gained strength after the Crimean War. They were related to the “Uniat movement” (an effort to convert Orthodox Bulgarians to Catholicism). In addition, some American sabbatical schools opened their doors to young students. American charity missions started a movement in Thrace and Macedonia. During the 1860s Bulgarians became more interested in German and Austrian universities and high schools.⁴⁰ During the 1870s we can distinguish a decrease in the number of those who wanted to study in Russia. During the 1860s and 1870s around 3000 Bulgarians graduated as teachers in Russia. Some Bulgarians who had studied in there after their graduation became scholars and stayed in the Empire.⁴¹ It can be concluded that during the 1870s Russia stopped being the sole Great Power to dominate the development of the Bulgarian cultural sphere. The Orthodox Empire faced competition from western ideas, which were supported even by the Ottoman Empire. Such high schools and academies were founded during the 1860s. In the end, it was cheaper to study in the Ottoman Empire than in Russia.⁴²

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One can conclude that after the Crimean War, the Russian foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire and its subjects changed. The growing consular network was a small but important part of that change. Those new Russian representatives encouraged young Bulgarians to start their education in Russia. The decades following the Crimean War can be divided into two periods, with the year 1870 being the more or less clear delineation between them. During the first period, Bulgarians were primarily interested in Russian schools and universities, but during the second period, students became impressed with Western schools as well. This situation, in which one part of the national intelligentsia was educated in Western Europe and the other part in Russia, created a serious division in the Bulgarian society. One part of the intelligentsia was Russophile, while the other was Russophobe.

This division became evident after the year 1878. Liberated due to the Russo – Turkish war in 1878, the young Bulgarian state did not have any experience of self-government. The Russian administration tried to prepare the

⁴⁰ Rumjana Preshlenova, “България в балканската образователна политика на Австро-Унгария,” in *Studia balkanica*, vol. 23, ed. Vurban Todorov (Sofia: Акад. изд. Проф. М. Дринов, 2001), 614; Rumjana Preshlenova, *По пътищата на европеизма: Висшето образование в Австро-Унгария и българите (1879-1918)* (Sofia: Парадигма, 2008), 18-19. About this issue see also: Rajna Manafova, *Интелигенция с европейски измерения* (Sofia: Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, 1994); Ivan Tančev, *Българска държава и учението на Българи в чужбина 1879-1892* (Sofia: АИ „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 1994).

⁴¹ Marin Drinov (1838 – 1906), for example, became a history professor in Khar'kov.

⁴² Radkova, “За знания в чуждина”, 275.

country for independence. The task was complicated, and the Empire used Russian educated individuals for that purpose. Still, the Russophile and Russophobe movement appeared before 1878. The struggle between these two groups led to many social jolts, which threatened Bulgarian independence in the period 1885 – 1894. Some politicians at the end of the 19th century received a pension from the Russian Empire (for example, Dragan Cankov). The Orthodox Empire even funded a coup against the first Bulgarian prince Alexander I (1879 – 1886). In conclusion, it might be said that in the second half of the 19th century, Russian foreign policy in the Balkans centered on educating Bulgarians in Russian schools and universities so as to create a pro-Russian local intelligentsia. Those students who came back to Bulgaria, intentionally or not, became pro-Russian propagandists. All this shows the influence of education as a tool of propaganda and the strength of Russia's soft power.

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