

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ITS INTRODUCTION AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT IN THE BULGARIAN SCHOOL DURING THE BULGARIAN RENAISSANCE**

*Research note*

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### **Abstract**

*The advance of qualitative changes in the development of the theory of physical education in the historical eras affect mainly the aims, tasks and principles of its main nature. The scientific knowledge of the history of the physical education, the development of the upbringing and education should be a basis for forming the professionalism in the teachers. The aim of the current article is to reveal, systematize and analyse the available written heritage about the problems of the school physical education in the Renaissance. Main method of the scientific work is the comparative historical analysis, and the study of literature sources which was conducted in the National Library of Bulgaria. The current article is only a part of a more broad research, named "The School Physical Education From the Renaissance to the Current Days".*

**Keywords:** *education, school plans, extracurricular activities, school pedagogy, school physical education*

The Bulgarian renaissance begins in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and continues to the Liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire. The education and science are related to the economic and cultural upraise of the newly formed bourgeois class. It has the necessity not only of higher education, but also from conditions for establishing the Bulgarian nationality. The infiltrating culture of different paths carries within the notion of a humanistic attitude towards the man, which is formed as a trend of striving towards a secular education and a new type of school.

This notion is a preposition for a new way of interpretation of the care for development of the human body and preserving the health, which are related to the physical education.

First references on the physical education in Bulgaria we found in the renaissance literature. Up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century the old Bulgarian literature was of a religious nature. The upbringing ideal of the educational schools, arisen in different places in the country before falling under the Ottoman rule, and later of the church schools, is representing the struggle of the rational to overcome the mystic of the religious philosophy in the Eastern Orthodox church. The desire to preserve the health through physical exercises and the necessity of physical improvement originate mainly from the folklore forms of physical culture and games.

The matter of physical education appears firstly in the written sources, intended for the needs of schooling. It has a text book of nature. As a most prominent essay after the "History of Slavic-Bulgarian" of Paisiy (1762) was the book of doctor Petar Beron (1775-1871) "Primer with some teachings (Beron (Берон), 1964). The idea of physical education in schools of a new type is presented and it is established as an inseparable part of the common education and upbringing.

Of our interest is the encyclopaedic text book of Neofit Bozveli and Emanuil Vaskidovich "Slavic-Bulgarian up-

bringing of children", that has been published in 1835. It consists of six parts, written by Greek sources, but consistent with Bulgarian conditions. Bozveli writes that physical education should be the first one, before all other types of school subjects. Together with the prophylactic physical culture, he speaks for its hygienic and aesthetic meaning (Bozveli (Бозвели), 1835).

There were 72 schools in the cities and 1432 in the villages during 1877. Until the end of the Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, the physical education was not included in the school plans of the high schools. It was not foreseen to be a school subject and exists in the daily regime of the pupils as extracurricular activities with games, exercises with simple gymnastic equipment, marching, bathing, swimming, slides, etc.

Accordingly the physical education in the middle schools a few years before the liberation of Bulgaria has been diminished to extracurricular activities.

The introduction of the physical education in the school plans is related to the establishment of the class and pedagogic schools. Their development is made mainly under Russian influence. Many Bulgarian young boys and girls, that have studied in Russian educational establishments, have contributed toward it. Graduates of Russian schools are Nayden Gerov, Ivan Momchilov, Lyuben Karavelov, Yosif Kovachev (Bobchev, (Бобчев), 1929).

Nayden Gerov establishes the first class school in 184 in Koprivshhtica. He creates three classes and introduces gymnastics in all of them.

The first pedagogic school with two years of teaching is established in 1869 by Yosif Kovachev in Stip. Even then in the teaching of pedagogic he includes some matters of moral and physical education. So the development of this type of schools is related to the introduction of the physical education in the school programs, even if it is not with proprietary program for its teaching. In 1871 after returning

from Russia Racho Karolev, Ivan Guzelev and others take on to reorganize the Gabrovo Men Class School, which becomes a high school with 7 classes, even if it keeps its old name as a Main School. A new program has been accepted and the subject of pedagogy has been included. The contents of the program for pedagogy is a practical attempt to form the components of the understandings of these days for harmonic upbringing. The physical education has been included as first and important part of this upbringing, put in front of the intellectual, moral and religious education.

Besides the school programs, the idea of physical education is included in the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature with medical-pedagogic and philosophy contents.

In 1855 in Prague the book of doctor Petar Beron "Slavic philosophy" has been printed in German language. In a special chapter of the book, "On pedagogy", three parts have been examined: gymnastics, pedevtics and didactics (Maslov, Beron & Селимовски) (Маслов, Берон & Селимовски, 1959). At the "gymnastics" part more important understandings are: 1. the life of man consists of growing and preserving the main organs of the organism, and so the first care should be to the food and the exercise; 2. the attitude of the ancient Greeks to gymnastics has been put as an example; 3. The big occupancy of children, that takes up the time for games has been underlined; 4. England has been presented as an example, where the longevity of life in the middle class has been longer; 5. considers the main aim of pedagogy "the health of the individual through the whole life".

In the 60s and 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the renaissance literature of Bulgarian language with the topics, close to the physical education, is mainly in articles of the periodical press. The special studies of our renaissance literature show that in 19<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgarian language around 2000 books have been printed, and 46 of them, as well as 158 articles in the periodic press have considered matters relat-

ed to the physical education.

Big part took the first Bulgarian pedagogic journal "School" (1871-1876). In it there were articles about the history of gymnastics in the ancient times, the health significance of gymnastics, the part of the school and teachers as well as the physical education.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the use of the means for physical education has been increased as a preparation of the people for the national-liberation battles. A bright examples in this matter are the life and activity of the great Bulgarian revolutionists G. S. Rakovski, V. Levski, Hr. Botev.

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