

## SUMMARIES OF THE SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS OF ALEKA STREZOVA

### I. MONOGRAPHS

**1. Последен по рода си. Д-р Георги Вълкович (1833-1892).** Велико  
Търново, Фабер, 2022. ISBN 978-619-00-1475-1

The monograph describes the biography and professional activity of one of the prominent post-liberation activists of the new Bulgaria. The study is based on rich evidence collected from various archival repositories, publications in the press, diaries and memoirs of contemporaries of the events, historiographical research.

The book aims to present in detail the life of one of the remarkable figures in our modern history. A man of two epochs, Dr. Georgi Voulkovich lived in two different worlds, the product of two different political systems, but his role in both places was guiding, and his contribution to the progress of his respective society distinctive.

Dr. Georgi Voulkovich was born on September 6, 1833 in the influential Renaissance Chorbadzhi family of Chalakovtsi, well-known celep and beğlikci, originally from Koprivshitsa, who moved to Plovdiv. From a young age, Georgi Voulkovich grew up in a dynamic social environment, and his parents and relatives were among the active contributors and promoters of education and culture in his birthplace. He graduated from the Imperial Military School of Medicine in Constantinople. His successful graduation opened before him the career of a military doctor in the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, however, his specialization in surgery in Paris coincided with the period of his more vigorous commitment to the Bulgarian liberation idea and the links he established with the ideologist of the Bulgarian revolution, Georgi S. Rakovsky.

The years between 1864 and 1870 were spent by Dr. Georgi Voulkovich as chief physician of the military hospital in Damascus. During this period of his life, he not only organized sanitary work in the main city of the Syrian province, but also found his place among the local governing and diplomatic elite. Returning to Constantinople, he remained close to the Turkish dignitaries, but at the same time became more and more closely tied to

the Bulgarian national cause. The 1870s marked his first official steps in diplomacy as part of the official retinue of the foreign minister Rashid Pasha in Russia, but also revealed his growth as one of the prominent faces of the Bulgarian community in the ecclesiastical struggles. Although he participated as an Ottoman military doctor in the Serbo-Turkish War of 1876, the ensuing Russo-Turkish War necessitated his exile from the capital.

After receiving amnesty in 1878, Dr. Voulkovich embarked on a new life path: he left for his newly liberated homeland, where his turbulent career as a statesman, politician and diplomat of the new Bulgaria began. He became a member of the Constituent Assembly in Tarnovo, which drafted the Bulgarian constitution. During the debates on the basic law, he ranked among the activists with conservative views who believed that Bulgarian society should walk a long and gradual path to self-government, to honor the supreme power in the person of the prince and the government.

After the end of the meetings in Tarnovo, Dr. Voulkovich returned to Plovdiv, where he became part of the Directorate of Eastern Rumelia, taking over the portfolios of the public buildings, agriculture and trade; he was also entrusted with the management of the post and telegraphs of the district. In the short period of his administration (1879-1881), he drew up a number of public administrative regulations in the various branches of his administration, which ensured good management and practical organisation of the office.

In 1881, after the proclamation of the Full Powers Regime, Dr. Voulcovich was invited to the Principality to take up the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Religious Denominations. Here, too, we witness his familiar ambitious and single-minded character in statecraft. Dr. Voulkovich organized the department according to the European model and paid special attention to the development of the bilateral Bulgarian-Ottoman relations. He represented the Principality at two important multilateral forums of European diplomacy, relating to the navigation of the Danube and the construction of the diagonal railway line that ran through Europe. He accompanied Prince Alexander on his Balkan tour and to the coronation of Emperor Alexander III in Moscow. He was one of the driving forces behind the 1882 Unificationist initiative, which unfortunately did not meet with the support of the East Rumelians because of their suspicion of the regime in Sofia. In the Principality, Dr. Voulkovich was again in charge of the post and telegraph department and became head of the newly founded Ministry of Public Buildings Agriculture and Trade. He drew up a detailed

law on post and telegraphs, organized the publication of a departmental thematic collection, and approved regulations on the rights and duties of entrepreneurs. However, the political games in the Principality doomed his activities: he was soon forced to leave his post and retire from politics.

The summer of 1885 was dynamic and different for the professional career of Dr. Georgi Voulkovich. He was appointed the manager of the Alexandrovska Hospital in Sofia. His short period as chief administrator was again filled with creative activity: he significantly improved the conditions of care for the sick, modernized the sanitary service and carried out a number of positive transformations. But the proclamation of the Unification on 6 September 1885 and the threat of war called Dr. Voulkovich back to where he was at his best: the field of the military doctor. He was entrusted by the Prince with the organization of the medical service and was named the chief physician of the Eastern detachment of the Bulgarian army. In an exemplary report to Prince Alexander I, Dr. Voulkovich set the parameters for the modern military medical service of the state.

The crowning achievement of Dr. Georgi Valkovic's political and public career was his diplomatic mission to Constantinople. Begun in 1886 during the Regency years of the Interregnum, it unfolded during the Stambolov government. Finding himself with an official mandate in the Ottoman capital, Dr. Voulkovich had the chance to continue and complete some of the policies towards his suzerain that had been initiated during his ministry, as well as to open new pages in bilateral communication. Several strategic directions in Bulgarian foreign policy are linked to his name. In the summer of 1890, in an excellently coordinated effort by the Bulgarian government in conjunction with the Exarchate, the Principality obtained Sultan's permission to send Bulgarian bishops to Ohrid and Skopje. In the brilliant political manoeuvre an important place was occupied by Dr. Voulkovich, who by his ability, tact and perseverance contributed to the favourable result of the diplomatic *démarche*. In the autumn of the same year he pushed the idea of Bulgarian railway penetration into Macedonia. Taking advantage of the current political circumstances in Constantinople, he not only saw bilateral cooperation in the matter (the Ottomans to build the Skopje-Kyustendil line and the Bulgarians to build the Sofia-Skopje line), but also proposed that the Principality transport Turkish troops along the line to attract the attention of the Ottoman rulers. His name is associated with the construction of the Bulgarian Church of "St. Stephen", and the idea of

building a Bulgarian hospital in Constantinople.

Because of his dedication to the Bulgarian cause, Dr. Georgi Voulkovich became a victim of assassination. On 12 February 1892, he was stabbed with a knife in the street of the diplomatic quarter of Pera and died two days later from his wounds. The assassination was organized by Bulgarian political emigrants and carried out with the knowledge of Russia. His death is a great loss to Bulgaria, which loses in his person one of its most able, intelligent and energetic statesmen.

**2. Българската дипломация. Институции и представители. 1879-1918.** С., „Авангард прима“, 2017. ISBN 978-619-160-862-1

The study examines the establishment and development of the Bulgarian diplomatic service from the Liberation to the end of the reign of Tsar Ferdinand I. It describes the structure of the Central Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religious Denominations, analyses its staffing and examines in detail the two normative acts that regulate the career: the Regulations for the Organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1897) and the Law on the Structure and Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1907). The establishment of the country's diplomatic network is also traced, first in the neighbouring Balkan states, then in the capitals of the European Great Powers, and during the First World War in the United States.

Attention is also paid to the organisation of Bulgaria's consular network. The issue of the financing of the Foreign Ministry is also discussed. The names of some of the foreign ministers who have left their mark on the modernization of the institution are highlighted, and a brief presentation is made on the social profile of the Bulgarian diplomat. The text presents the biographies of 76 representatives - foreign ministers and diplomats of the new Bulgaria. Many of them are unknown to the general public. The book is accompanied by tables and photographs.

## II. STUDIES AND ARTICLES

1. **Japan through the eyes of the diplomat: Stoyan Petrov-Chomakov.** – In: Japan and the European Southeast. Over a Hundred Years of Political, Economic, Cultural and Academic Interactions. Ed. by Ev. Kandilarov, M. Dimitrov. Sofia, St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 2021, pp. 59-65. ISBN 978-954-07-5232-7

The text gives Stoyan Petrov – Chomakov’s perception of Japan through three different perspectives: his recollections of a diplomat in Tokyo in the end of World War II, his skillful writer’s pen in his writings and his genuine and sensitive artist’s brush. His memoirs, his deep historical narrative about Japan and his beautiful drawings contribute to the better understanding of the Japanese life and culture and help people to get acquainted with a country barely known before World War II. The different talents of Stoyan Petrov – Chomakov depict a human Japan, with its strengths and weaknesses and encourage the dialogue between different nations.

2. **Сведения за българското революционно движение в османската дипломатическа кореспонденция, съхранявана в Османския архив в Истанбул.** – Във: Васил Левски, комитетската организация и османската власт. 1872-1873 г. Нови документи и изследвания. Съст. Пл. Митев, Д. Чаушева, М. Тодоракова. С., Национален музей „Васил Левски“ – Карлово, Издателство „Златен змей“, 2021, 208-236. ISBN 978-954-776-057-8

The text presents four unknown documents from the collection of the Harigjie Fund (Ottoman Foreign Ministry), kept in the Ottoman Archives in Istanbul, which relate to the revolutionary activities of the Bulgarians in the 1860s - early 1870s. The correspondence has been selected as an illustration of what kind of reports arrived at the Ottoman Foreign Ministry and what information they contained. Among the letters are a loyalist letter from a prominent Bulgarian from Tulcea to the Ottoman statesman Aali Pasha; two dispatches from the Turkish commercial agent in Odessa; and an intelligence report containing the names and occupations of the members

of the Bulgarian committee in Giurgiu in 1872.

3. **The Remembrance of the First World War in Bulgaria.** – Revue des études sud-est européennes, Tome LVIII/2020, 309-316. (ERIH Plus) ISSN 0035-2063.

The text sheds light on different aspects of remembrance of the First World War in Bulgaria. Various sources of historical past present the perception of this major event a hundred years later in Bulgaria. The account casts a glance on diverse materials related to the topic as for example well-known historical researches, new sources, governmental initiatives in celebrating the centenary, official narratives and less known sides of the Great War. The report doesn't mean to exhaust the matter, it just represents the existing spirits and the perception of this major event among the Bulgarians. The exposé shows the domination of the narrative of bravery, military victories, belligerent enthusiasm, bitterness at the unjust Treaty of Neuilly. Still, a new story line appears, connected to less common topics such as the social trauma, the story of women, the sanitary care etc.

4. **Български дипломати от Бесарабия от края на XIX – началото на XX век.** – В: Украйна и България в историята на Европа. Сборник наукoвих праць. Рец. Дм. Миколенко, Ол. Тригуб, Л. Якубова. / Украйна и България в историята на Европа. Сборник научни трудове. Рец. Дм. Миколенко, Ол. Тригуб, Л. Якубова. Киев-София 2019, 171-179. ISBN 978-966-02-8813-3; ISBN 978-954-2903-34-5

The text tells about four Bulgarian diplomats born in Bessarabia and their contribution to the establishment of modern Bulgarian diplomacy. They were all descendants of Bulgarian emigrants who came to Bessarabia after the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829. The fathers of the future diplomats were prominent men of their community. Their sons received an excellent modern education which enables them thereupon to be among the first to take part in the establishment of the new Principality of Bulgaria. The oldest one is Dimiter Grekov, followed by age by Haralambi Sirmadziev, then came Georgi Kalinkov and Alexander Malinov at the end. Four of them were men of law and three of them received a PhD on the subject which makes them influential and

significant representatives of their time. Two of them, Dimiter Grekov and Alexander Malinov, were prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs, the other two - Haralambi Sirmadzhiev and Georgi Kalinkov - diplomats of modern Bulgaria. The paper gives a short biography of the four men which stresses on their origin, education, profession they exercised and their contribution to the establishment of the new Bulgarian diplomacy. Grekov was the originator of the first modern structure of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Religious Denominations, Malinov proclaimed the Bulgarian independence, Sirmadzhiev was a devoted diplomat of the new Principality and Kalinkov - a loyal servant of the country and a generous benefactor of the society. The text aims to trace the connections between the mentioned representatives and to stress on the Bessarabian link in their political and diplomatic realization.

#### **5. Българските дипломати в Цариград: просопография (1887-1918).**

– В: Империи и имперско наследство на Балканите. Сборник в чест на 70-годишнината на проф. Людмил Спасов. Т. II: Ново време и съвремие. Съст. Д. В. Димитров, С. Кацаров, Р. Пенджекова-Христева, Д. Борисов. Пловдив, Фондация Българско историческо наследство, 2019, 171-183. ISBN:978-954-8536-33-2

The text focuses on the prosopography of the Bulgarian diplomats in Constantinople during the reign of Prince/Tsar Ferdinand I (1887–1918) in regard to the figure of the modern Bulgarian diplomat. There were eleven diplomatic representatives in Constantinople during that period. Most of them descend of a merchant's background. Their fathers were also prominent public figures during their active years. The Bulgarian diplomats have received an excellent education in foreign schools in the Ottoman capital and in important universities in Western Europe. Before entering the diplomatic corps some of them followed a politic career or were high-ranking officials of the newborn Principality. A new group also grew up: that of the career diplomats, those one who started their professional activity in the Ministry of Foreign affairs and Religious Denomination. All of the mentioned diplomats were well fit for their post of destination and fulfilled their duty with respect devoted to their home country.

**6. Българските дипломатически агенти в Австро-Унгария (1889-1909).** – В: Централна Европа и Балканите, XIX – XX век. Сборник в памет на проф. Милчо Лалков. Съст. и научна редакция Ив. Първев, Н. Кайчев, М. Баръмова. С., УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2019, с. 103-114. ISBN 978-954-07-4720-0

The text presents the biographies of the first Bulgarian diplomatic representatives in Austria-Hungary during the years of the vassal Bulgarian Principality, from the opening of the agency during the reign of Stefan Stambolov in 1889 to the recognition of Bulgaria's independence in 1909. Bulgarian diplomacy opened its first diplomatic agency in the capital of a great power in Vienna, so the selection of suitable persons for the diplomatic post there is of particular importance. The biographies of nine representatives in the Austro-Hungarian capital (Grigor Nachovich, Dimitar Minchovich, Mihalaki Georgiev, Dimitar Stanchov, Kharalambi Sirmajiev, Konstantin Pomenov, Milan Shishmanov, Ivan St. Geshov, Mikhail Sarafov) were presented. The text examines the diplomatic nominations and analyses how each representative contributes to the development of bilateral relations.

**7. Българската дипломатическа служба 1879-1944 г. – сп. „Дипломация“, бр. 23 (2019), 11-19. ISSN 1313-6437**

The text summarizes the history of the establishment and development of the Bulgarian diplomatic service in the period of the new Bulgarian history from the Liberation until 1944. Departmental legislation is described and space is given to the question of the Ministry's funding. Particular attention is paid to the personalities of Bulgarian diplomacy, both among the foreign ministers, reformers of the ministry, and among the diplomats. Issues such as the recruitment of diplomatic staff, the modernisation of the service, the staffing of the ministry, and the building that houses the department are discussed.

8. **Родът Хаджимишеви в Солун.** – В: Солун и българите: история, памет съвремие. Съст. и ред. Ю. Константинова, Н. Данова, Й. Желев. София, Институт за балканистика с Център по тракология – БАН, 2019, 472-493. ISBN 978-619-7179-10-1 (Web of Science)

The Hadjimishev Family comes originally from Veles, Macedonia. Since the 18th century they have been known as prominent tradesmen in their own hometown. Towards the end of the 1870s, mostly for economic reasons, they moved to Salonica, an important trade center on the Aegean coast of the Ottoman Empire. They continued to expand their business, becoming one of the best-known drapery trade houses in the city. Meanwhile, they became prominent public figures in the Bulgarian community and took good care of the educational and spiritual needs of their fellow-citizens. At the beginning of the 20th century life in Salonica became harder because of the fierce confrontation between Bulgarians and Greeks, both seeking more political influence in Macedonia. After the unsuccessful attempt of murder against their father Todor Hadjimishev, his sons left the city looking for a better future. This was their farewell to Macedonia where they never returned.

9. **The Establishment of Bulgarian-Japanese Diplomatic Relations and First Bulgarian Diplomatic Representatives in Tokyo (1942-1945).** – In: World War II Re-explored. Some New Millenium Studies in the History of the Global Conflict. Ed. Jaroslaw Suchoples, Stephanie James, Barbara Törnquist – Plewa. Berlin, Peter Lang GmbH, 2019, pp. 319-336. ISBN 978-3-631-77767-1

The paper discusses the establishment and development of Bulgarian-Japanese diplomatic relations at the end of 1930s and the first half of the 1940s during the time of the World War II when the two countries were allies in the global conflict. While Tokyo founded its legation in Sofia in 1939, the Bulgarian government only responded with the same action three years later, in 1942. According to the documents, the Japanese played a more active role in the bilateral relations, impelling the signing of a convention of friendship and cultural cooperation between the two countries. There have been two Bulgarian diplomatic representatives in Tokyo, Yanko Peev and Stoyan Petrov-Chomakov. The text reveals their main activity in Tokyo, their relations with the

Japanese government and their foreign colleagues as well as their reflections about the political situation in wartime. The chapter is mainly based upon cipher telegrams kept in the Archives of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry but some personal memories and publications have also been introduced. According to the sources, the Bulgarian diplomats in Tokyo were not only informing their government about allies' and enemies' intentions and military initiatives, but in addition, because of their presence and activity, contributed to the better acquaintance of Bulgaria and Japan.

10. **Petăr Mateev – the Commissioner General of Bulgaria to the Universal Exposition at Saint Louis (1904).** – In: Beyond the Borders. Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> Joint Meeting of Bulgarian and North American Scholars, Sofia, June 27-29, 2016. Ed. Lora Taseva et al. Sofia, Prof. Marin Drinov Publishing House of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2019, pp. 97-102. ISBN **978-954-322-971-0**

The article tells about the Bulgarian participation at the World's Fair in St. Louis, USA in 1904 with special emphasis on the activities of Petar Mateev, the chief commissioner of the Bulgarian exposition at the fair. The contact of a man from old Europe with the New World and the excitements he encountered during his journey are presented. The Bulgarian appearance at the international fair is described in detail as also the categories in which Bulgaria participates with its own works. Thanks to the activity of the Bulgarian Commissioner, the country received a number of awards for its products. Petar Mateev has extended his energy to other, seemingly unusual initiatives, such as the commissioning of a model locomotive for the heir to the throne, Prince Boris, and the transport of a crocodile across the ocean for the Prince Ferdinand's zoo. While in the United States, Peter Mateev introduced himself to President Theodore Roosevelt, possibly becoming the first Bulgarian to be officially received by an American ruler.

11. **Докладите на британския генерален консул Уилям Гиффорд Палгрейв за българското Учредително събрание в Търново.** – Епохи, том XXVI, 2 (2018), 460-524. ISSN: 2534-8418 (Online); ISSN: 1310-2141 (Print): <http://journals.uni-vt.bg/epohi/bul/vol26/iss2/17> (ERIH Plus)

The present publication contents some of the reports of William Gifford Palgrave, the British Consul-General in Bulgaria after the liberation of the country from the Ottoman yoke in 1878, to Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, Foreign Secretary (1878–1880), three times Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the leader of the Conservative Party. The reports are preserved in the National archives in London. An experienced diplomat, Palgrave was the first among the European delegates to come to the new capital Sofia. The task of the European diplomats was to observe the creation of the Bulgarian administration, to examine closely the Provisional Russian Administration and to contribute to the interests of their governments. An important aspect of Palgrave's mission in the Principality was his presence and observation of the meetings of the Constituent Assembly in Tarnovo in 1879, which was convened in order to adopt the Organic law (constitution) of the new state. Palgrave excels as a diplomat and often turned out to play an active role in the reconciliation of the hostile groups and continuation of the debates. He was able to become deeply acquainted with the Bulgarian national character, which helped him in his diplomatic activities in the country. Palgrave followed the instructions of his government, stuck to the decisions of the Congress of Berlin and opposed the Russian policy in the Balkans and at the same time tried to attract the Bulgarians on the British side and to recognize the interests of the minorities.

12. **Българските търговски агентства в Османската империя – създаване, развитие, влияние, управленски състав (1896-1912).** – Исторически преглед, LXXIV, кн. 3 (2018), 76-107. ISSN 0323-9748

Bulgaria founded its commercial agencies in the European vilayets of the Ottoman Empire in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their existence was difficult because of the ambiguous treatment of the

Ottoman authorities. There were no clearly identified rules regarding the treatment of the Bulgarian commercial agents and their attributes. In general, the Sublime Porte regarded them as high Ottoman officials. After the establishment of the agencies, the Bulgarian government tried several times to initiate negotiations with the Ottoman government on that topic –in 1897, 1900 and 1906, unfortunately without success. The ministers in Sofia decided to follow the policy of the “fait accompli” due to the lack of any principles regarding the attitude to the Bulgarian representatives. The first Bulgarian commercial agents were men of good education and high repute. Their work coincided with the activity of two more important factors having their impact on the Bulgarians in the region: the Exarchate and the Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization (VMORO). The Bulgarian representatives had their own influence among the local Bulgarian population and acted as mediators between the two other organizations.

13. **Дипломатически извор за ранната история на БРЦК и Левски, съхраняван в Истанбулския османски архив.** - Исторически преглед, LXXIII, 3-4 (2017), 57-68. ISSN:0323-9748.

The article presents in original and translation an unpublished source, stored in the Istanbul Ottoman Archives, which refers to the early history of the Bulgarian Central Revolutionary Committee (BCRC). The documentary tells of two meetings of the BCRC held in Bucharest late 1869 – early 1870 and provides valuable information about Vasil Levski’s participation in the meetings. The author of the report speaks of the revolutionary preparations of the Bulgarians in Bucharest and describes the meeting of the conspirators who discussed the idea of a revolt in the Bulgarian lands in the spring of 1870. The source characterizes Levski as “one of the most active and energetic agitators ... very famous.”

14. **Посланици на държавната независимост: българските дипломатически представители в Цариград (края на XIX – началото на XX век).** – В: Известия на Института за исторически изследвания, том XXXIV. Ролята на елитите в процеса на консолидирането на нациите и на националното строителство. С., 2017, 300-319. ISSN-2367-5187.

The paper focuses on the diplomatic activity of the Bulgarian representatives in Constantinople in the end of XIXth – beginning of XXth century. During that time Bulgaria was vassal to the Ottoman Empire but was resolutely striving to emancipate from the suzerain. The text emphasizes the personal efforts of the Bulgarian representatives for rejecting the Ottoman suzerainty after the official recognition of Prince Ferdinand. Sofia had its diplomatic agents in Constantinople since 1879 but not all of them were respectfully treated there. The first one to be well received was Dr. Georgi Voulcovich (in the end of 80's – beginning of 90's of XIX century), who was familiar with some of the Ottoman politicians. During his mandate the bilateral relation developed in a mutual trust but in 1892 the diplomat was brutally killed by enemies. The Principality's diplomats were well instructed to fight for the right of emancipation and proved themselves to be initiative for that purpose. During that period there are four diplomatic agents residing in Constantinople. The first of them, Peter Dimitrov, managed to obtain the official acknowledgement of the Prince's title, the naming of the members of the cabinet as "ministers" and the Bulgarian right to present decorations. With his support Bulgaria also acquired two berats for clerics and the right to send two commercial agents in the vilayet of Adrianople (Mustafa Pacha with residence in Adrianople and Dedeagatch). His successor, Dimiter Markov continued that policy using some pressure on the Ottoman governing circles and obtained permission for extending the Bulgarian commercial agent's network also in Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Bitola, Skopje, Serres, Kavala). He also stressed the need to his government of a commercial agency in Constantinople, having its role only dealing with commercial affairs. He negotiated three more berats for clerics in Macedonia, in Bitola, Strumica and Debar. The next diplomat, Ivan Stefanov Gueshov, contributed to the implementation of a bilateral custom arrangement. He also insisted on a proper attitude to the rights of the Bulgarian commercial agents. He showed vigorous activity trying to prevent the enthronement of Firmilian for a Serbian bishop in Skopje, that way holding back the Serbian propaganda in Macedonia. In times of deep arousing bilateral suspicions, Grigor Natchovich was the next Bulgarian diplomat in Constantinople to come. He was well known among the Ottoman

politicians as a turkophile and an adherent of a mutual understanding ignoring the influence of the Great powers. Natchovich arrived to his post in critical times for Bulgarians in Turkey. The Ilinden-Preobrazhenie uprising was savagely suppressed by the Turks and led to many sentences of the rebels and a huge wave of refugees coming to Bulgaria. Natchovich was instructed to reach a bilateral understanding to settle these problems. Due to his diplomatic skills, on March 26, 1904 the Bulgarian-Ottoman agreement was signed, stipulating amnesty for the convicted and support for the refugees who would return back to their homes. In 1906 Ivan Stefanov Gueshov arrived again in Constantinople as a successor on the diplomatic post. During his mandate some important changes in the Empire were about to come. In July 1908 the Young Turks seized power and announced their reform intentions to be implemented in Turkey. Gueshov analyzed the situation and suggested to his government that it was the right moment to reject Ottoman suzerainty. He took advantage of the fact that he was not invited to the celebrations in the name of the sultan in the end of August and left the Ottoman capital such creating the “Gueshov incident” that catalyzed the declaration of Bulgarian independence.

It is important to show the Bulgarian diplomat’s activity in Constantinople for to present that they are not only blind executors of their governmental foreign policy but to prove that all of them, they have their own contribution walking the way of emancipation in regard to the Ottoman empire. The picture of the diplomatic representation in Constantinople could be perceived as a small image of the Bulgarian state itself. Every next year, every next diplomat became more and more confident and demanded more concession for Bulgaria and the Bulgarians.

15. **Les agences commerciales ou les consulats bulgares dans l’Empire ottoman : établissement, développement, influence et effectif (1896-1912).** – Réseaux consulaires, protection et interculturalité dans les Balkans (XVIIe – XXe siècle). *Etudes Balkaniques* – Cahiers Pierre Belon, No 22, 1 (2017), pp. 207-230. ISBN 9782910860226, ISSN 1260-2116: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-etudes-balkaniques-cahiers-pierre-belon-2017-1-page-207.htm?contenu=resume> - (ERIH Plus)

Bulgaria founded its first commercial agencies in the European territory of the Ottoman Empire at the end of 19th century. Since the Principality of Bulgaria was vassal to the Empire at that time, the existence of the representations was difficult. There were no clearly identified rules regarding the treatment of the Bulgarian commercial agents and their attributes. In general, the Sublime Porte regarded them as high Ottoman officials. After the establishment of the agencies, the Bulgarian government tried several times to initiate negotiations with the Ottoman government on that topic –in 1897, 1900 and 1906, unfortunately without success. The ministers in Sofia decided to follow the policy of the “fait accompli” due to the lack of any principles regarding the attitude to the Bulgarian representatives. Therefore, Bulgaria relied on a verbal note of 1892, handed to the Ottoman commissary in Sofia, which was defining the rights of the Ottoman commercial agents in the Principality and expected the same treatment for its representatives in Ottoman Empire. But the policy of creating a precedent to confirm a proper behaviour to the Bulgarian officials was unsuccessful too. The foreign consuls were not unanimously supporting the activity of the Principality’ s agents: the multilateral relations were not simple and they depended mainly on the personal qualities of the Bulgarian representative. The work of the commercial agents of the Principality coincided with the activity of two more important factors which had impact on the Bulgarians in the European Ottoman vilayets: these were the Exarchate and the Internal Macedonian-Andrinople Revolutionary Organization (VMORO). The Bulgarian representatives exerted their own influence among the local Bulgarian population and acted as mediators between the two other organizations, simultaneously protecting the local Bulgarians of arbitrary acts within the boundaries of their entrusted rights.