



## Research Article

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# Albanian Schools in The Framework of The European Education Standards During 1920 - 1939

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## Abstract

Since the beginning, the first Albanian school had the physiognomy of a school with a contemporary tendency. It is well known that the creators and founders were the Renaissance man, who praised and supported the ideas of the new pedagogy. This mindset set the Albanian school free from the mentality of didactic practices, which were commonly used by the old school. Over the years, Albanian education has tried to follow the footsteps of the European education. The object of this study is to recognize the attitude that Albanian school has held towards new pedagogical theories and developments of Western schools, as well as its tendency to embrace and adapt them to the political, economic, social and cultural situation of Albania. Here, I want to present this important phenomenon of the development of Albanian education and our pedagogical thought during the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of this study is to give a scientific synthesis of the history of the development of education and pedagogical ideas in Albania, from 1920 until 1939. Within the limits allowed in a research paper, the reader can draw certain conclusions and experiences. If we look back and see how this progressive trend, turned into a movement that was becoming more powerful day by day and if we take a look at the past and all the other developments during 1920-1939, it is not difficult to understand that this trend would also appear in the Albanian school system. The basic legitimacy is that all dimensions of time - past, present and future are directly reflected in the fact that during all these years the Albanian education has tried to follow the footsteps of the European education.

**Keywords:** pedagogical thought, educational reform, school, curriculum, teacher, student

## 1. Introduction

In the science of education and educational practice of different educational countries, especially in Albania, we encounter many complex and unresolved problems that require different approaches: methodological and theoretical, individual efforts and even more multidimensional research. There are many educational problems, from pedagogical thoughts in the world as well as in Albania, to complex phenomena such as educational systems, basics of education, comprehensive and critical evaluation of the ideas of reformist pedagogy and development trends in education. The tendency to follow the footsteps of the Europeans in regards with the tradition of the Albanian school during the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is increasingly promoting scientific-pedagogical thought and is engaging intellectual forces, to conduct scientific research and to focus more on the practical pedagogical activity, as well as on the elaboration and progressive change of the latter.

The title of the research paper "*Albanian schools in the framework of the European education*

*standards during 1920 - 1939*" shows that this is not a problem of a historical-pedagogical nature, as it does not deal only with a problem, in which case it would be much easier, but instead it deals with a wide and more systematic topic, in regards to which there are many issues that need to be solved on education, teaching and pedagogical thoughts in Albania during 1920-1939.

*The aim of this paper is to shed light on the educational reform, analyze the basic lines of the most important factors that defined and modeled the policies pursued in this field within the framework of educational standards of the most developed western countries and its consequences on the Albanian society of that time.*

The implementation of the research standard and the historical-pedagogical interpretation based on the combination of chronological criteria with the problematic one, as well as a structure that tends towards the natural transition from one issue to another, gave me the opportunity to identify the most important moments of the phenomena, innovations, educational processes and the external factors that led the Albanian school system follow the footsteps of the Europeans in the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The problem of this paper begins with "Introduction", "Scientific Resources" and "Method of scientific research", and then it is followed by three issues, which address: "Enlightenment inspiration to Albanian Renaissance thinkers", "The interest of education activists in the ideas of reformist pedagogy", "The interest of education activists in the ideas of reformist pedagogy". The paper is concluded with the "Bibliography".

The research is organized depending on the character of the topic, scientific sources, methodology and forms of historical research, theoretical and comparative analysis using the results of other sciences.

A well-known postulate states that "to judge the level of development of a nation and the degree of emancipation of society, one must know the degree of development of its education and culture". I believe that this paper clearly expresses the sensitivity of the Albanian school to new pedagogical ideas and developments of the western schools, and the tendency of our school system to embrace and adapt them to our historical, economic, political, social and cultural factors.

## 2. Scientific Resources

The paper on "Albanian schools in the framework of the European education standards during 1920 - 1939" comes as a result of a thorough scientific research. It has been written based on numerous bibliographic works and documentaries-archives of a national character. While writing this paper, I have taken into account the best contributions of Albanian historiography, among which I would mention: "History of Albania", vol. IV, publication of the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences (Tirana 1983), "History of education and Albanian pedagogical thought", vol. I, publication of the Institute of Pedagogical Studies (Tirana 2003), "History of education and Albanian pedagogical thought" (Pristina 2002) by Prof. Dr. Hajrullah Koliqi, "Development of Education and the schooling system of Albanian nationality in the territory of present-day Yugoslavia until 1918" (Pristina 1970) by the scholar Jashar Rexhepagiqi, "Notes on the history of Albanian pedagogical thought" (Tirana 1972), Bedri Dedja "One century of Albanian school 1861-1961" (Rome 1962) by Fehime Pipa etc.

Special studies for the national education in this period have been conducted in the form of articles and scientific papers by local historians and researchers, such as the scholar Hamit Beqja, Prof.dr. Musa Kraja, Prof.dr. Hysni Myzyri, Dr. Xhevat Rrepishti. Dr. Iliaz Goga etc., as well as foreigners, such as Peter Bartl, Roger Consinet, Matteo Mandalá etc.

Another asset to this paper was the "Albanian encyclopedic dictionary" (FESH), new edition in three volumes and prepared by the Albanian Academy of Sciences and "Pedagogical dictionary" by Shefki Osmani (Tirana 1983).

Articles, studies published in different periods in national and local newspapers, prepared by teachers who worked diligently in both the education and training sectors, have been helpful in determining the stages of development of ideas and the Albanian education system. They were teaching in school institutions throughout Albania in the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of

them were Aleksandër Xhuvani "People's teacher", Sali Çeka "People's teacher", Sotir Paparisto "Deserved teacher", Ilo Mitkë Qafëzezi, Sedat Pejani, etc.

In addition to the literature used, there is extensive information on the curriculum of the Albanian school, used in Albanian institutions. The contribution of this research paper lies in the authentic evidence of love and the efforts of the Albanian people for education, culture and science.

In addition to the bibliography, archival resources have been used on a relatively large scale; a special importance concerning the drafting of this paper has been the recognition and use of documents from the Central State Archive in Tirana. The Ministry of Education undoubtedly played an important role during 1911-1944.

Based on the analysis and different perspectives on the bibliography, published documentation and press organs of the time, it has become possible to modestly present the teaching process in Fier district, with all its dynamics and problems during 1945-1963.

### 3. Method of Scientific Research

A number of scientific research methods have been used for this historical-pedagogical scientific research. One of the methods is the *historical method*. Through this method, we have tried to show the early stages and genetic development (historical-chronological) of phenomena, ideas, institutions and pedagogical system, etc., in Albania during 1920-1939. The historical method includes three main tasks: the collection of historical data, their critical evaluation and the presentation of findings (including their evaluation, elaboration and interpretation).

Another scientific method, used in this paper, is the method of *theoretical analysis*. Through this method, we have studied the ideas and pedagogical thoughts of the Albanian pedagogues and various pedagogical works such as the pedagogical system of Sotir Paparistos, The pedagogical thought of Aleksandër Xhuvani etc. By using this method, we have studied, systematized and evaluated in a critical and creative way the pedagogical views and ideas of pedagogues and other thinkers, more precisely we have studied their works in which they have presented and systematized these ideas and views.

Another method, which is also very current and very important to the scientific research paper on the "*Albanian schools in the framework of the European education standards during 1920 - 1939*", is the *comparative method*. Through it, we have tried to highlight the same features, similarities and eventual differences between Albanian thinkers and Western countries thinkers, during the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Which means that through this method, we have made the description of the compared pedagogical ideas, the grouping of features according to similarity, their systematization and evaluation concerning the Albanian schools.

### 4. Enlightenment Inspiration to Albanian Renaissance Thinkers

According to the documents, we have about Albania, until the 16th and 17th century we cannot say much about the educational system, although schools existed. Due to the limitations, truncations and mutilations that were made to the culture and spiritual life of the Albanian nation, we can speak only about the existence of people's system of education, with a pronounced patriotic, physical and military character. The first attempt towards the implementation of one of the most popular principles of creating the people's education system is found in the pedagogical thought of **Lekë Matranga** (1560-1619), who sought "the achievement of equal education in the mother tongue of both sexes" (La Piana, 1592).

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<sup>1</sup> See also: Mandalá, M., (2012). *Lekë Matranga: men, time, deeds. On the critical publication of the manuscript and printed versions of the work "E mbsuame e krishterë - 1552"*, Tirana: "Ombra GVG"; Dedja, B., (1967) "On the pedagogical and didactic contribution of Lekë Matranga", in: *People's education*, No. 1, Tirana; Riza, S., (1962). "Some theses on all three manuscripts of Matrënga's catechism", in: *Bulletin of the State University of Tirana*, No. 1, Tirana; Ashta, K., (1998). "Lekë Matranga and his work", in: *Historical lexicon of the Albanian language*, vol. II, publication of the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" and the Scientific Sector of Albanology, Tirana: "Toena" Publications.

During the National Renaissance, efforts were made for the theoretical and practical solution of the problem of organizing the education system. **Naum Veqilharxhi** (1798-1846)<sup>2</sup> elaborated some democratic principles for the creation of the people's education system, while **Sami Frashëri** (1850-1904)<sup>3</sup> in his well-known work "*Albania - What it was, what it is, and what will become of it*", as a political, economic and social platform, is the first to launch the idea of an education system in Albania, based on the humanistic concepts of thinkers from different European civilizations, such as: Vitorino da Fletre, Tomazo Kampanella, Mishel Montenji, Martin Luther, Tomash Mori, Johan Shtrumi, etc.

In that historical-pedagogical work, Sami drafted a complete platform for the creation of the education system in Albania according to European models, demanding, "All villages have elementary schools. [...] All boys and girls from 7 to 13 years old should be obliged to go to school, Albania should have a complete school system, up to the high school level, where education should be provided for free, poor children should be given free textbooks and teaching aids, and national minorities should have and enjoy the right to education and mother tongue" (Frashëri, 1978).

**Sevasti Qirjazi - Dako** (1871-1949)<sup>4</sup> was another prominent personality of the Albanian school, she drafted a project for the education system throughout the Ottoman Empire. In the pedagogical works, Sevasti dealt with various issues of education. "*Education, - according to S. Qirjazi, - has a much broader meaning than just learning. [...] Learning is just gathering knowledge on various things. [...] Education belongs to humans in general - it belongs to their body, mind, and heart. [...] The purpose of education is to make a person well prepared and give him a stable character*" (Osman, 1994)

"*It never turns out- says the well-known didactic Siri Shaplllo- that in certain periods we have an interest in a single theory and have pure mastery of any of them. The step-by-step follow-up of the developments of the didactic process in the Albanian school will make this point of view clearer and more credible*" (Shaplllo, 1975)

The first decade of the Albania's Independence presents us with an interesting picture. It is the period of the Government of Vlora, of the Balkan War and then of the First World War, and the circumstances were not so perfect for the school system. The most important thing is that even in these circumstances the efforts for education continued, and this did not create any step backs. The developments of the didactic processes are closely related to the efforts for the survival of the Albanian school and its orientation from the pedagogical ideas of the time, which we will encounter in the activity and legislation of the Government of Vlora.

The Government of Vlora in the "*Appropriate Kanun of the Albanian civil administration*" defines with special provisions the main directions of education development. In the field of didactics, in the articles dedicated to education, what draws our attention is the request for the directorate of education

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<sup>2</sup> Naum Veqilharxhi, born Naum Bredhi (1797-1846) was an Albanian lawyer and scholar. In 1844 he created a completely original alphabet for the Albanian language, called "Vithkuqi Alphabet". Veqilharxhi is one of the most prominent figures of the first years of the Albanian National Renaissance, and is valued as one of the first ideologues of that time. (Taken from: Osmani, Sh., (1983). Pedagogical dictionary, Encyclopedic Publications, Tirana: "8 Nentori", pp. 700-701)

<sup>3</sup> Sami Frashëri also known as Şemseddin Sami Bey (Turkish: Şemseddin Sami Bey; 1<sup>st</sup> June 1850, Frashër - 18<sup>th</sup> June 1904, Istanbul) was a functionary and intellectual of the Ottoman Empire as well as a journalist, playwright and founding ideologue of the National Renaissance, along with his two brothers Abdyl and Naim. Unlike Naim that was dedicated to the mother tongue, Sami collaborated on the reformation of Ottoman-Turkish language, in the expressive space of which he advocated for the Albanian identity, problems and issue. He is the author of one of the earliest novels in the Ottoman language, entitled *Ta'aşşûk-ı Tal'at ve Fitnât* (In English. *The love story of Talat and Fitnete*) published in 1872. (Taken from: Osmani, Sh., (1983). Pedagogical dictionary, Encyclopedic Publications, Tirana: "8 Nentori", pp. 212-214)

<sup>4</sup> Sevasti Dako (Qirjazi), was born in 1871 and died on 30th August 1949, was a patriot and the initiator of the organization of Albanian education for women. She is the author of the project of the national education system and the author of the first alphabet of Monastery, etc. (Taken from: Osmani, S., (1983). Pedagogical dictionary, Encyclopedic Publications, Tirana: "8 Nentori", pp. 582-583)

in the prefecture to "seek and make the best teaching system acceptable" (Luarasi, 1999), aiming at a qualitative education at that time. Furthermore, the *"Appropriate Kanun of the Albanian civil administration"* assigned the educational directorates in the prefectures to deal, inter alia, with the qualification of the educational staff, through a system of examinations: "To make the elementary school teachers sit for examinations and give them diplomas" (Ibid.).

These requirements of the law are in continuation of the decisions of the Educational Congress of Elbasan (1908) and the requirements made by teachers and principals of the elementary schools, as was the case of Mr. Dako, who expressed that: "The power of education is not infinite, but it can be much greater when done under the conditions and according to the methods given to us by today's pedagogy" (Dako, 2012).

Even under the historical conditions during the First World War, with the efforts of the patriotic and educational forces, the developments and initiatives for a school and for an advanced teaching process continued. What stands out with the new developments, are the direct actions for the creation of school documentation, such as curricula and textbooks for elementary schools, which were published and implemented during 1915-1920.

From the review of these programs, we have reason to dwell briefly on their goals, structure, and content and to note the attitude of Albania schools towards the new didactic actions and models of schools where the latter were based. Thus, the programs, which were designed under special circumstances, reflected the new didactic feeds, which were related to different didactic models, to the pedagogical currents of the time. In their entirety, they had their impact on the development of the Albanian schools, helping in particular, for the qualitative preparation of the structure and content of the subjects in the elementary schools.

Meanwhile, the drafters of the programs, being attentive that these programs were based on the peculiarities of the Albanian language and in the conditions of Albania at that time, preserved the physiognomy of the Albanian schools. Luigj Gurakuqi, Aleksandër Xhuvani, Mit'hat Frshëri, Lef Nosi, Dhimitër Berati, Sotir Peci, Sali Gjuka, Kristo Floqi etc. gave their valuable contributions in this regard.

Also, gatherings or conferences were organized for the people (near clubs or schools), which were led by the mentioned figures of education and culture such as Hilë Mosi, Ahmet Gashi, Murat Toptani, Muço Qulli, Milo Duçi etc.

All these above-mentioned activities took Albania forward, served the civilization and, as Ismail Qemali emphasized, "showed Europe that Albania has always remained European in its blood and that it wants nothing more than to strengthen its nationality and become civilized like the European countries." (Bartl, 2017). See also: Vllamasi, 1995; Ikonomi, 2012).

## 5. The Interest of Education Activists in the Ideas of Reformist Pedagogy

In the conditions created in the early 1920s, the reform of the education system and the administration of the Albanian schools was necessary to be accompanied by the reform in the field of content and development of the teaching process. The atmosphere of these important developments in the field of didactics is vividly reflected in the pedagogical press during 1920-1939 and in the pedagogical publications. We emphasize that it is impressive that in this period the pedagogical press in Albania recognized a qualitative development and growth, which remained in history as one of the zenith of the press.

The most popular magazines of that time, such as *"Pedagogical Magazine"*, *"New Education"*, *"National School"* and *"The normal"* will give a picture of the efforts of the Albanian schools for reformation. In these efforts, stands out the interest in new pedagogical theories and in the models of schools of the most advanced western countries. We think that this was a clear and fair definition of the future of schools in Albania.

A special place was given to the acquaintance with the theories of modern pedagogy, especially those of John Dewey (1859-1952), Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Mertin Buber (1878-1965), Anton Makarenko (1888-1939) etc. New pedagogical ideas in Albania started in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century with the studies of **Parashqevi Qirjazi**, in which appear some elements of pedagogical thought based on Dewey theory in relation to *experimental pedagogy*. These studies were further reinforced in the 1930s and influenced the critical attitude towards the "formal scales" and the formalism of the templates that their use brought. In this period, as we will note in this paper, *Herbartism* became more questionable and began to give way to *new pedagogical theories*.

The interest for this reformer in pedagogical theories will continue and the pedagogical press will make it known and present in some aspects of the teaching work in the Albanian schools. Schoolteachers in those years recognized John Dewey as the founder of the "*Laboratory School*"<sup>5</sup>, as the first experimental school of the University of Chicago, which had the largest influence on the pedagogical theories and practice of the '30s (Treska, 1939). According to **Dr. Stefan Treska** "has continued to make known to the pedagogical public the theories of the famous philosopher and pedagogue Dewey in various pedagogical journals published in late 1939" (Treska, 1939). Analyzing Dewey's book "*How to Think*", the author of the article "Dewey's Educational Philosophy", S. Treska, informs us of the analysis of the learning process, for which Dewey presents five distinct logical scales: 1. Man feels in his consciousness a problem to decompose or a need to satisfy; 2. He begins to orient himself with the problem until the mind dictates the essence of the difficulty and forms the goal and the ways to achieve that goal; 3. Makes some hypotheses about possible solutions; 4. Develop hypotheses and the solution he makes is proven. 5. Man accepts this solution.

In the five concepts cited above, Dr. Treska finds the idea that was central to Dewey's concept of logical scales: "there is no connection between these "*scales of thought*" and the "*formal scales*" of Herbart" (Treska, 1939). This could be interpreted as if the education represents for each individual the possession of his independence and the development of his natural and spiritual self.

Regarding John Dewey, through the translation of Roger Consinet's article "New Education" by **Aleksandër Xhuvani**<sup>6</sup>, published in the magazine "*National School*", Dewey's progressive methods become known as "*functional method, project method, problem method and multiple self-action programs*, which rely on children's observation of objects to arrive at their ranking or classification" (Consinet, 1936).

As a philosopher and reformer of education, since 1919 Dewey, for 4-5 years was invited as a professor at the University of Tokyo for a year, two years at Peking University, later called by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to organize the education system in the new Turkey and henceforth, in the Soviet Union to organize Russian schools (Sota, 2017).

No less well known in the Albanian pedagogical opinion became thanks to the press of that time, the prominent pedagogue Maria Montessori with the *theory of free education and experimental method*. "The inclusive nature of Montessori's ideas, - says Herman Röbrs - *is perhaps most striking because in the early stages of her research she was focused on working with very young children and only later extended it to older children and families. She saw childhood as a critical stage in the evolution of the*

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<sup>5</sup> John Dewey was the most important American philosopher in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His career is spanned in three generations and his voice was heard in cultural discussions in the US (and abroad) from 1890 and until his death at the age of 93, in 1952. Over the course of his long career, Dewey developed a philosophy that seeks the unity of theory with practice. With his intellectual work and activity in the field of education, he set the example for this unity. His mindset was based on the belief that "school is a form of social life, which is detached and under control - which is directly experimental and, if philosophy will ever be an experimental science, creating a school would be its starting point. Dewey arrived in Chicago with very good ideas for the "Laboratory School" type, which he founded in January 1896. The school started with 16 children and 2 teachers, but in 1903, it had 140 students and had a staff of 23 teachers and 10 graduate assistants. Most of the students were from professional families, many of them children of Dewey's colleagues. (Taken from: Westbrook, B. R., "John Dewey (1859-1952)", in: I.B.E. - UNESCO, *Thinkers for education*, translated by Jonisa Angoni, Tirana: "Plejad", 2008, pp. 212-234.

<sup>6</sup> Aleksandër Xhuvani (1880-1961) was a teacher, textologist, linguist, clerk and Albanian minister. For his work in the field of education, he was honored with the title *People's teacher*. (Taken from: Osmani, Sh., (1983). *Pedagogical dictionary*, Encyclopedic Publications, Tirana: "8 Nëntori", p. 716-718)

individual, in which the foundations are laid for all subsequent development, hence the universal validity in the definitions of this period of life" (Röbrs, 2008). According to Röbrs, "Montessori was also a model figure in what she sought to establish, a theoretical and practical meeting place in the form of orphanages and her didactic materials" (Röbrs, 2008).

For Albanian didactics the really salient thing to remember is that the discussion about her ideas was almost as lively and full of controversy as it was when the theory of education was first published, because Montessori opposed the despotism of the old school, scholastic and formal learning. No other representative of education in Albania applied theories and practice to the same degree; she was the initiator of a diversified program and on an international scale, has remained unrepeatably.

After 1909, when she first appeared in the press (at the suggestion of her close friends, Ana Makeroni and Eliza Franketi) her works began to be translated into all the major languages of the world (Röbrs, 2008). The spread of her ideas was aided by a series of inspiring and elegantly articulated lectures, which were given throughout Albania in the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At that time the need to understand the phenomenon of the relationship between theory and practice, the individual and the work, what was borrowed and what was original, was stronger than ever, as can be seen from the number of publications in Albania. Thus, the magazine "National School" published in 1937, among other things, includes two points: "1. To follow the advances and currents of modern education to achieve, following the example of others, the proper educational evolution of Maria Montessori; 2. To give an overview of the internal and external educational movement, to keep the teacher up to date with the educational events of the country and the world" (Xhuvani, 1937).

What drew the attention of the educational circles, which significantly influenced the content, and teaching methods in the 1930s were undoubtedly the pedagogical ideas of the prominent Belgian pedagogue Dr. Ovide Decroly (1871-1932). From his works, "Centers of Interest" "Global Method", the pedagogue and translator Sedat Pejani in his article published in the magazine "Teacher's Library" in 1935, expresses an opinion not simply the sensitivity of the Albanian school to new theories, but also a very clear concept of the attitudes that Albanian teaching should hold towards them: "The civilized world has many subjects in the field of pedagogy. But we like to choose the best modern ideas of this advanced world to achieve a rapid civilization" (Pejani, 1935).

Another supporter of Decroly's theories was the didactic, methodologist and professional translator Sotir Paparisto<sup>7</sup>, who referring to his reason for publishing the study "Dr. Decroly (his life and educational work)", among other things explains that, the principles of Dr. Ovide Decroly have a psychological basis, and that they are supported theoretically and practically. Because the applications of his pedagogy were widespread in many parts of the world. [...] With his famous postulate "School of life, for life, through life" during the composition of pedagogical treatises, he also shows the appreciation that Dr. Decroly gives to the freedom of action and self-action of the student that should be respected more than anywhere else. Likewise, in the work "Global method", Dr. Decroly vehemently opposes all of Herbat's principles of education; and recommends adapting the education to the natural provisions of the child; it is against every contemporary action, and against the exaggeration in sharpening literary taste or against getting to know the scientific culture. Dr. Decroly calls these actions pedantry" (Paparisto, 1936).

The same author writes that "it took doctors of science like Decroly and the American philosopher Dewey to get us out of the routine in which professors and specialists in Herbatian dogmatic theories

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<sup>7</sup> Sotir Paparisto (1887-1979) was a talented pedagogue, education activist, author of pedagogical works, innovator, translator. He wrote several pedagogical works, where he focused more on various pedagogical-psychological problems, especially on the personality of the teacher, his features and authority. He is the first Albanian pedagogue, who instead of benches for students in school used chairs and tables, according to the requirements of the new school. Sotir Paparisto was a pedagogue with personalities and high professional skills, who worked with competence and devotion for the development of Albanian education. (Taken from: Goga, I., (2001). Prominent workers in the Albanian schools, Tirana: "Erorilindja", pp. 60-70)

were immersed. They even inspired and prepared the supporters of the new pedagogical theories in Albania to face the resistance that was strongly displayed by the leaders of education or fanatics of the "old school" movement. This can be noted in the preface of the book *"Dr. Decroly (his life and educational work)"*, where S. Paparisto describes: "The school principal reprimanded the students from the classroom, seven minutes after the bell rang, saying: "you need discipline" and that "what you do is an antipedagogical job, one can not imagine such a fantastic job, that students were interested in the topic. Worst of all, it damaged our new ideas, saying, "Oh, this is not a pedagogy, man..." (Paparisto, 1936). The author is concerned by the fact that "there are many people like this director amongst teachers. Therefore, I thought of writing this study" (Paparisto, 1936).

With all the advanced support for Decroly theories, even S. Paparisto was reluctant when he said "The purpose of this review is not to apply the Decroly method in Albanian schools, but only to have an idea of his thoughts. [...] To get something from it. [...] The main thing is to try to adapt new methods to our children" (Paparisto, 1936).

However, adhering to this idea, S. Paparisto continued to propagate the values of the new theories, juxtaposing the principles of the "New School" with those of the "Old School" in the field of didactics reflected in the article "Where lies the new pedagogy". According to him, regarding the curricula, the "old school" included in it as many subjects as the student could hold, with selective subjects as much as necessary for the student. The "new school", for which knowledge is a working tool, seeks to make the student good at learning. So not to give as many subjects as a student can hold, but to give them a chance to seek and study on their own. [...] In this way the things he does not know, if he has acquired this desire and skill, he learns himself later. [...] For books, it must be said that their purpose in "old school" is to give to the student whenever he feels the need. The library is an important part of the laboratory, which together with other documents (including student studies) forms the subject that serves the students in their daily lives. Therefore, the student learns how to find and how to gain something on books. [...] Moral-freedom (methods): In the school where the student is taken as a passive being, the giving of "good expressions" is required. This is not enough for the "New School", which uses exercises - to give the students the opportunity to judge the moral good, to put it to work for the good of its desires and will. "Listening stems from an education about responsibility, from the freedom to act to give as much opportunity as possible to the exercise of these qualities" (Paparisto, 1936).

What surprises us about S. Paparisto is the special way in which his ideas were developed, intertwined with the scientific views of Dewey, Claparede, Kilpatrick, etc., which he elaborates on the pedagogy of teaching: "Learning is no longer presented as knowledge that passes from the teacher to the student, but as a tool that satisfies through work a spontaneous desire or not, that is a real (useful, valuable) tool. To start the lesson, the student must propose the problem (subject) himself. The mind follows that path followed by technique: conjecture, hypothesis, control. To help and guide the student to formulate a goal and to think about the progress that will follow in order to achieve this goal" (Paparisto, 1936).

We focused on these three theorists of modern pedagogy, not forgetting other authors, who became known to us in those years and who will be mentioned on a case-by-case basis when dealing with specific didactic issues.

The ideas and currents of the "New School" are introduced in Albania in various forms. In order to increase the level of teaching work, calls have been made for educational reforms in Albania, according to the models of other countries. Thus in the *"Pedagogical Magazine"*, No. 2 in 1922, the article entitled "Young Germans and pedagogical reforms" is published, a translation of a summary of the issues discussed at a school conference. Among the issues discussed is mentioned that, "active schooling was accepted as the basis of education, based on some principles, such as: not to fill the student's head with book principles, but to develop his sense and strength, not to leave passive, not to put military discipline, but to let the nucleus of his soul develop freely." The translator closes the material with some of his thoughts: "Implement the best reform and raise our education according to

the productive model"<sup>8</sup>.

Likewise, "Pedagogical Magazine" No. 9-10, 1925 published an article by Professor **Mihal Sherko**<sup>9</sup> entitled "High School Reform in Czechoslovakia". The author, after suggesting that the ways to implement the reform in Czechoslovakia, states "The actions of other states on the path of reforms, clearly show us the problems that attract the interest of more advanced peoples than us and prove to us that the path of reforms that we have taken, is well taken".

The treatment of new pedagogical theories, reforms and school models of the most developed countries, was a work of great value for the work of pedagogical thought about the need to reform our school system in accordance with its developments and according to these ideas and models. In this context, we can mention the attitude of **Aleksandër Xhuvani**<sup>10</sup> towards the active school, which speaks about the evolution of his didactic views.

In his speech on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Normal School, we draw attention to the views and arguments he brings about the need to reform the school, following the example of European schools: "We are saying in short that we must also follow, and go after all those efforts and trials that began after the war to be implemented even in the Western Europe for an improvement, and renewal of the elementary school system, to make it even more most suitable for the general aspects of life, to make the children valuable members of the national society. I want to say that recently new trends in pedagogy have emerged and have been highlighted: the needs for traditional schools to give way to active school have been discussed and the child's psychology should be taken into account. But such an act requires the cooperation of all educational powers, a systematic uninterrupted work and financial means"<sup>11</sup>.

On this basis, the best circumstances were created to oppose pedagogical practices based on the old pedagogy, which encouraged the formalization and schematization, suppressing the self-action and active attitude of students and nurturing their conformism and passivity in the learning process.

Critical attitudes toward old theories have emerged since the early 1920s and intensified in the 1930s, juxtaposing the values of new theories. An article in the magazine "New Century" published in 1930, after making known the efforts of the peoples of the civilized world to abolish the banks of scholastic teaching, expresses emphatically the attitude that should have been held in our case, by making it clearly that "it is utterly useless to discuss the improvement of our schools on the basis of today's scholastic system"<sup>12</sup>, and it is proposed that "the time has come for us to choose and implement the modern school system"<sup>13</sup>.

Even in the magazine "*The Normal*" where, generalization found support on the Herbartian theory, under the influence of new pedagogical ideas articles were published and they compared new theories with the old ones. This is evident even in those smaller works, such as for example "Pedagogical movements of the world", the author tried to adequately formulate many legitimacy, notions and pedagogical and psychological ideas. "*If we compare the teaching methods of the past, - the author emphasizes, among other things, - whose marks are still visible in our country, even today, we will come up with two opposite directions: Activity and Passivity of the child*"<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Pedagogical Magazine, No. 2, Tirana, 1922, pp. 4-7.

<sup>9</sup> Mihal Sherko (1887-1964) was a Latin professor, senior official and member in charge of Foreign Affairs during the transitional phase of the Italian Occupation. He was sentenced with 20 years of imprisonment from the Special Trial. (Taken from: Kraja, M., (1993). Teachers for the Albanian Nation, Tirana: "Toena", pp. 351-357.)

<sup>10</sup> Aleksandër Xhuvani (1880-1961) was a teacher, textologist, linguist, clerk and Albanian minister. For his work in the field of education, he was honored with the title People's teacher. (Taken from: Osmani, Sh., (1983). Pedagogical dictionary, Encyclopedic Publications, Tirana: "8 Nentori", pp. 716-718.)

<sup>11</sup> The Normal, No. 4-5, Elbasan, November-December 1934, pp. 11-12.

<sup>12</sup> New Century, Durrës, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1928, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid..

<sup>14</sup> The Normal, No. 1-2, Elbasan, 1931, pp. 18.

Ibid. "*The Normal*" in the following years, support for the new and critical theories which opposes the old school continues to be expressed, even in sharper and harsher tones, as is the case with this writing: "Psittacism and pediatrics in our schools", also known as (parroting or mechanical repetition without a meaning) and (asking someone's opinion according to their judgment). In this article it is argued that "Psittacism and pediatrics are two ways of learning, which make the student a slave to the judgments of others and completely incompetent of judging himself. [...] "It is better to be content with a half-righteous judgment of the student (but to improve it) than to point out a fair but ready judgment"<sup>15</sup>.

We think that students of the Normal may have written these writings in "*the Normal*". In such a case, there is interest because they were becoming familiar with the new theories and were better understanding the weaknesses of formalization in teaching. As to say, the Woodpecker (as the author decided to describe it in his second writing). It pecks into an old tree.

The influence of new pedagogical theories on young teachers and all teachers in general, was in favor of educational reform in Albania. The fate of any education reform is linked to teachers, their preparation and awareness. The best school reform projects cannot save the idea of a reform, just as deficient projects cannot hinder a reform if teachers are unprepared.

In the history of Albanian pedagogy during the five decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the prominent and very progressive pedagogical writer and scientist, Aleksandër Xhuvani was distinguished for his prosperous pedagogical-linguistic work and for fighting for a free school system. (Rexhepagiqi, 2002). Disagreement with the old pedagogy in those years will be reflected in the work "*Beginnings of pedagogy. Second part: Didactics*" (1937) highlights Gauding's ideas, that oppose the "formal scales" of Herbatism, because the "formal scales" follow an intellectual path, they act more strongly on the mind than on the heart, they do not take into account the nature of any subject, student learning and self-action. In addition, they bind the teacher to follow only one working path, to follow a lesson plan or scheme, hindering his self-action" (Xhuvani, 1937).

Likewise, Sotir Papparisto in the article "Where lies the new pedagogy and the changes it has brought" makes an analysis of the changes that the new pedagogy brings compared to the old one. "*So many methods, so many plans, so many organizations, - emphasizes S. Papparisto, - have been put in place and will be put in place to meet the urgent need around the world for the reform of old pedagogy, in line with the demands and needs of real life*"<sup>16</sup>. Distinguishing between the new and the old pedagogy, the author writes "Formal scales are valid, if we consider the child as a passive being"<sup>17</sup>. The new psychology, which recognizes the child as a self-acting being, advises that "instead of a lesson where the child's job is only to accept and receive, becomes a lesson where the child seeks and builds himself" (Koliqi, 2002).

The principles of the new pedagogy that were finding support in the Albanian pedagogical thought and the critical attitude towards the old pedagogy influenced the efforts made in the curricula, texts and practical teaching methodology.

As a result, the sensitivity to educational reforms in the West, according to new pedagogical theories, was not merely a feeling of some intellectuals, who had known the developments of the schools of advanced countries, but had become a necessity. Therefore, "the ideas of reforms and new pedagogical theories were accepted by both the educational bodies and the Albanian state, up to the *Chamber of MPs*, which created the reformed office, the General Directorate that would deal with reforms in curricula, legislation, etc." (Koliqi, 2009).

This attitude would be expressed on a case-by-case basis by the heads of the education department. On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence, the Minister of Education Faik Shatku addressed the teachers: "Everyone knows that new educational currents follow each other towards a progressive

<sup>15</sup> *The Normal*, No. 4-5, Elbasan, 1936, pp. 25-31.

<sup>16</sup> *National School*, No. 5, Tirana, 1937, pp. 13-16.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*.

improvement and that schools are evolving everywhere. Therefore, schools in Albania and Albanian teachers cannot and should not stand still. It is necessary for all the educational powers of the Nation to work for the continuous renewal and flourishing of the national school and for an uninterrupted technical improvement of the teachers, so that their works always become more conscious and more fruitful" (Shatku, 1937).

Other pedagogical works in Albania are mainly related to the issues of people's education. They are also related to the needs of schools, the development and organization of elementary education, the relationship between school (education) and mother tongue, the role and history of the Normal School of Elbasan, as well as to school teaching and methodological problems of a more specific nature. With these works, other Albanian and foreign pedagogical authors made these theories known to teachers, by translating or adapting them. They became worthy successors to their progressive democratic views, and pledged to fight for a new school, which would extend to even the most remote areas. This school would be open to all children, and there they would learn scientific knowledge and develop straightforwardly morally, physically and mentally.

## 6. Elements of the New Didactics in the Albanian Schools (1920-1939)

Following the developments of the school in Albania during 1920-1939, in the general picture of the tendencies for the theory of the new pedagogy and the models of the modern school, we can single out some elements of this school. It is understood that they involved general didactic problems. Many *elements of the reform*, influenced by the ideas of the new pedagogy, are encountered in the decisions of the Lushnjë Education Congress (August 1920), which were sanctioned in the legal framework for education. What draws our attention is:

- **Law on the Admission of Textbooks for Elementary and Secondary Education (November 26, 1921).** According to this law, only textbooks accepted by the Ministry of Education would be used in public and private schools in Albania. Article 2 of the law explicitly states "The Ministry of Education, after announcing the synthetic and analytical curricula of schools, will open a competition for the drafting of textbooks"<sup>18</sup>. In the same law, it is specified "textbooks are approved by a competent commission"<sup>19</sup>, which supervised the technical part and evaluated the content and pedagogical side of the textbooks submitted in the competition. Which means that during those years it was determined the form of the competition, even with regards to the translated texts.

The practice of reviews brought many benefits to the work with textbooks, where the evaluations and opinions of the commission were expressed in the pedagogical press of the time, especially in the magazine "*Educational announcement*". The textbook commission continued its work in the 1930s (Mitrovica, 1921). This step of the Albanian school reform connected it with the practices of the modern western school and, as such, constituted a valuable legacy in the field of didactics. In Albania, after a long pause, in recent years the competition for all textbooks in the school categories of pre-university education is being held again.

- **Education Congress (July 22 - August 3, 1922).** Under the influence of pedagogical currents, by implementing the new school system, the Education Congress relies on the curricula of England, France and Switzerland, in view of the modernization of pedagogical ways, an action which was welcomed by the Minister of Education, Rexhep Mitrovica (Repishti, 1987). These programs designed by the Education Congress paved the way for the introduction of a new

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<sup>18</sup> Arkivi Qendror Shtetëror i Republikës së Shqipërisë (më tej: AQSH), Fondi i Ministrisë së Arsimit (1911-1944) - Nr. 195, (më tej: F. 195), V. 1922, D. 10, fl. 36-37. Ligjet dhe rregulloret e Ministrisë së Arsimit Botuar 1922. [Central State Archive of the Republic of Albania (hereinafter: AQSH), The Found of the Ministry of Education (1911-1944) - No. 195 (hereinafter: F. 195), V. 1922, D. 10, pp. 9-12. Laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education 1922, pp. 36-37.]

<sup>19</sup> Ibid..

current in the field of didactics, from defining the school outside the influences of religions to the most useful content solutions, depending on the high goals, as well as adapting to the political, social and cultural situation of Albania.

- **Curricula of 1925.** Two curricula were implemented this year: "*Analytical-synthetic curricula for schools with four classes*" and "*Curricula for schools with six classes*".

Usage of the "*Analytical-synthetic curricula for schools with four classes*" in villages, was reasoned as follows: "Practice has shown that the curriculum can not be the same for all areas and for all countries, nor in terms of the subjects, because the needs of the inhabitants of the city are different from those of the inhabitants of the village, likewise the continuation of the curricula is not the same everywhere. [...] "Taking this into consideration, the curriculum should be divided into a maximal curriculum and a minimal curriculum"<sup>20</sup>.

The reasons given in the introduction of the curricula convince us of the usefulness of adapting the content to the conditions of different areas of Albania. Nowadays this is solved by leaving it up to the school to use a percentage of the hours for lessons, as it suits to the conditions of the area. Meanwhile, the inequality between the students of these schools and those of the city schools is a concern. What was important, however, was that in the four-classes program the core subjects had no noticeable changes.

"*Curricula for schools with six classes*" was based on the curricula of the French school. This choice was made under the influence of the pedagogical thought of the time which tended towards the reforms that the civilized nations had made.

In this curriculum, there is a qualitative increase in the treatment of the subject, which is not only related to the possibility that created a one-year extension of school time, but also the requirements for each component of language learning. It aimed at "the development of students' thinking and speaking, practical skills in reading and the correct use of oral and written language" (Qafëzezi, 1924).

When students met school requirements, the curriculum enabled them to speak and write in their mother tongue, to read age-appropriate and meaningful books, and to enrich their knowledge even when they could not continue further.

- **Draft Curricula for High Schools (1935).** We find it appropriate to say that the drafting of the curricula had an orienting character, which proves it to be a phenomenon of the modern school. For example, this draft curricula gives a long list of foreign literature authors, arranged in alphabetical order, but with a significant note: "The professor is free to choose between classical and modern authors. However, he should include the works of Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dostoevsky, all these giants of world literature, as students who have finished high school should know them all" (General Directorate of Education, 1935).

Here is the opportunity to point out that the Albanian students have had large spaces to know and study world literature. It has been constantly present in literature programs since elementary school, but more especially in high school.

The interest and appreciation for the foreign literature is related to the need that Albanians felt to get rich values by other peoples in the space of years, after being liberated from nationalist complexes and uninfluenced by xenophobia. This clearly shows that Albanians have not been indifferent and disregardful of other cultures.

Our ties in the field of culture have been an integral part, perhaps the most prominent, of all the ties that have been dictated to us by common destinies with other peoples, part of relations of mutual interest. In this regard, Albanians have always shown the values, but they also have irreplaceable values of the foreign literature, which paved the way and created spaces in the Albanian schools. Historical-geographical factors and psychology, but also the tendencies of Albanians towards progress, towards

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<sup>20</sup> AQSH, F. 195, V. 1925, D. 5, pp. 3-16. *Analytical-synthetic curricula of elementary schools, Elbasan 1925*

moral and social values, have influenced the interest of our school towards civilization and literature that flourished in the civilized peoples of the world.

In these circumstances, the compilers of curricula and textbooks not only for language and literature, but also for other subjects found it appropriate and managed to familiarize school students in Albania with the works of many well-known authors in various fields.

## 7. Conclusions

The science of the history of education and Albanian pedagogical thought is a field of scientific interest and of greater importance, although parts of this science, especially of its scientific disciplines of modern times and newly differentiated (we recall here the reformist pedagogy and its practical evolution) have not yet been sufficiently researched nor scientifically enlightened. Such topics, respectively the narrowest spheres of study in this special science, more concrete and social development, can be recorded hundreds, almost to infinity, and in this case the assessment is made according to the scale and depth of their knowledge, especially during the period between two world wars.

From the title and content of the paper "*Albanian schools in the framework of the European education standards during 1920 - 1939*" it appears that we are determined to look at some important and wide current issues, and in terms of the development of pedagogical activity in Albania in the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century least researched, as well as the elaboration and treatment of those issues that have multidimensional theoretical or methodological significance. These whole issues are listed in two major parts, which deal with pedagogical heritage, scientific-methodological knowledge in pedagogy, education in the western world and the development of schools and education in Albania during 1920-1939.

In terms of their weight and volume, the problems that have been researched are not approximately uniform. These depend primarily on how much and to what extent a particular topic is relevant to research. Therefore, e.g. in the first theme entitled "Interest in the ideas of new pedagogy", in the '20s and '30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Albanian schools began to penetrate currents and reformist pedagogical ideas. Among them are the experimental (functional) pedagogy of John Dewey, the reforming principles of Maria Montessori, the active school of Adolf Ferrer, and the centers of interest of Ovid Decroliu. In the 30s, here and there in Albania there were also attempts to organize the forms of work of Free Education "especially the theory of self-education" (Osmani, 1983).

In addition, there were other philosophical and pedagogical ideas and currents such as positivism, neopositivism, instrumentalism, existentialism, neo-Fordism, psychoanalysis, neotomism, etc.

Also in this paper, on the subtopic "*Elements of the new didactics in the Albanian schools (1920-1939)*" there are also calls for reforms in Albania, according to the models of other Western countries. They have been expressed in the pedagogical press of the time, with obvious professional values. It is included in the platforms for education by prominent figures of Albanian pedagogical thought. They were discussed and decided at educational congresses; they were supported by senior officials of the Ministry of Education, and were integrated into educational legislation, curricula, and textbooks. In all cases, progressive and pragmatic ideas stand out, in which it is noticed that in the curricula are placed different subjects selected as the best of the pedagogical thought of the world, in order for the school to help even more in civilization and emancipation of Albanian society.

Meanwhile, generally those who dealt with schools and education, with curricula and textbooks, with the pedagogical reprimand, were educated in the Universities of the most developed Western countries, such as in Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France etc. They benefited from these universities not only the culture of modern civilization, but also recognized the models of those schools, applying or adapting them to the conditions of the Albanian schools.

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