

The Efforts of King Zog I for Nationalization of Albanian Education

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Abstract: *This document aims to analyze the factors that led King Zog I to take educational reform - along the consolidation of the Albanian state. Through a compliance of draft legislation according to European standards, His Majesty King Zog I gave importance to school consolidation and Albanian education. Design and implementation of reforms meant the strengthening of school with full national character, state and secular spirit, and the weakening of religious, private and above all foreign schools.*

Key words: *reformer King, national education, secular, decrease of illiteracy and education of women*

1. Reforms in educational field

With the announcement of the monarchy on 1 September 1928, King Zog I began work to take the nature of a reformer king with western features. In an interview in the London Daily Telegraph he indicated: "We are centuries behind the rest of civilized Europe. People are not able to write or to read-by continued-I am determined to civilize my people." But it meant a lot of work and great expense, because there was no education in the country and the only state educational institutions that existed were directed by foreigners and religious organizations. To reach his goals in the educational development, King Zog had to undertake an ambitious reform program, including the return of obligatory primary education, opening schools all over the country, construction of dormitories for students coming from remote locations, opening night courses, and opening schools and courses for women facing the patriarchal mentality.

2. Facts about the way the Albanian government to developed national education

With the announcement of the Monarchy, King Zog I began the period of reforms in all spheres of life, and of special importance were the measures in the field of education to strengthen national character, as he stated: "Only by culture and European culture, but should not forget creativity, preservation and accumulation of national culture. National culture is characteristic of a nation. She exalts the nation by giving it deserved importance - continuing - history gives us examples: that many great nations have disappeared just because of the loss of national culture" (Lushaj, 1995, p 36).

This reform was necessary, if we consider that since the period of Turkish occupation Albania had many foreign schools, subsidized from outside, affecting to the lack of cultural development.

In 1929, the Italian language was obligatory in all secondary schools in Albania and Italian advisers to the Ministry of Education were working to influence school programs for being closer to those of Italy. They favored Catholic schools and wanted to introduce the Italian language as a second language in Albania, an ambition that did not come to fruition until 1933. King Zog I managed to keep the country under control, but he often lamented that "intelligent and smart are the rogue, and the honest people are incapable or lazy" (Vicker, 2008, p.199).

The Italian people were trying to get their hands on physical education and school youth extra-curricular activities. Thus, in 1929 the National Entity "Albanian Youth" was created, which formally depended on the Ministry of Education, but in fact was led by a Italian military specialist attaché in the Ministry, with the title of

the physical education inspector (Rama, 2005, p 20)

In the end of the 1920s there was a trend to increase the number of Albanian schools.

At the press of the country and diaspora circles raised voices against such a situation and requested more organized schools run by the state. State schools should be the only focus of national uniform formation of generations, where children of all layers stay together. Foreign schools were viewed as conducive to outside influences and a threat to national unity (Puto, 2009, p.500). For this reason, on 4 December 1929 the Ministry of Education established a committee to examine problems of education. After a review of the situation of education, the committee finally decided:

1. Primary education is obligatory for boys and girls from ages 6 to 13 years.
2. Male and female primary schools will be organised in 7 classes (school years) and will be divided into two periods: first period will be 4 years and will be taught basic knowledge of teaching, and the second will have 3 years and during this period the knowledge will be completed and will take a practical direction (to learn a little of agriculture and livestock, commerce according to the needs of different areas of the country).
3. High schools will be in 8 classes (school years) and two types: classic and real, set in the same building and under one direction, this due to technical and economic reasons, and will be divided into two periods: the first period of 4 years all the students will have in common. The second period of 4 years will be in two branches: classical (which will be taught classical languages, Italian and Ancient Greek and more literature) and real (which will be taught less literature, but more science and mathematics, not old Greek and a little bit of Latin) (Stevenson, 2004, p. 72). The reason why the commission accepted high schools of 8 years was for two reasons according to an article published to the Magazine "New Education." "First, because students have a full culture for the university because European universities where Albanian students apply required that they have studied 8 years in high school. The second reason was that with 8 years of high school students receive a comprehensive general culture" (Magazin "Edukata Re", 1930, p. 77).
4. In the first grade of high school enter the students of the 4 elementary.
5. Opening: 1) a school work (agriculture, trade, skill) of two years in which enters students who have completed 7 years of elementary. 2) To open working high schools (agriculture, commerce, industry and technical) with 4 years, in these schools students may enter who make 4 years of high school or those who have completed the school work of two years or those who have completed 7 years of elementary.
6. To complete the pedagogical studies it was decided to open a 2-year teachers institute in which could enter the people that have finished the normal school to become primary teachers, elementary school directors, teacher training, and primary school inspector.
7. To create a healthy education of the women, it was decided:
 - a. To open as many female elementary school in the cities and in big villages
 - a. The open courses (on Sundays and Fridays) to combat illiteracy, to learn how to tailor and to cut, for households, and to raise the children.
 - b. To provide material (movies) with school material for these courses.
 - c. To organize conferences with a focus on women in family and social life (Magazin "Edukata Re", 1930, p. 78).

8. It was decided to open a 2-year course for teachers who have completed elementary school. This course would provide food and lodging and give half salary to the participants. Those teachers who completed the course would be known as semi normalist.
9. For teachers who are more prepared would open different courses during the holidays where the teachers earn the right to enter into a higher category.
 - a. For the development of patriotic education it was decided that:
 - b. Primary education will be in the native language, summarizing the different elements in a religious school, and considering that national conscience is formed in the schools. The Albanian language should be the language of instruction.
 - c. In the class should be displayed the king's picture and those of the most important people in national history.
 - d. To organize educational tours for the teaching of history and geography.
 - e. National celebrations must be celebrated in an extraordinary ceremony at the schools by organizing conferences and events.
 - f. To teach national songs to the students.
 - g. To create libraries with books in the mother tongue.
 - h. To publish texts for elementary and secondary schools and for this purpose an Educational Entity will be created to examine manuscripts for textbooks (Magazin "Edukata Re", 1930, p. 79).

To combat illiteracy in the nation, besides the day schools, the Ministry of Education also opened night schools. In an ordinance of the Ministry of Education, it was written: "these night schools will be opened with these requirements:

- Each classroom must have at least 30 students who attend regularly.
- Students who enroll must sign a document that in case they do not continue to follow the lessons, they will pay the costs incurred to the time.
- With the assistance of the administrative council of the country, the School Board will force shop owners to send their assistants every day to attend lessons. Those who do not obey this decision will pay the penalty (Magazines, Mesuesi 1928, p. 109)
- Teachers from primary schools would teach illiterate prisoners who are in prison in Korca" (Newspaper, Besa, p.2).

1933 brought new changes in the educational life of the country. Zog's government implemented educational reform, which regardless of the motives that prompted the Government to take such a step, had some positive effects .

Through this reform the Government aimed to strengthen national secular schools and to weaken the extent of religious, foreign, and private schools. Educational reform was advertised by the press through the Minister of Education, Mirash Ivanaj. The aim was clear. At one side to create the impression that it was a measure based on national grounds and on the other, to present Zog as a great reformer. The modification of sections 197, 206, 207 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Albania, which became legal by the decree of the law of September 1932 and approved by Parliament on 12 April 1933 resulted in the closure of many religious and foreign schools (Dishnica, 2004, p. 326)

The new law - expressed Fischer - considered "criminal act, punishable up to six months imprisonment and a fine of five thousand to ten thousand francs for all those parents who would enroll their children in foreign elementary schools, as inside and outside the country" (Fischer 2004, page. 225).

These measures in particular hit severely the Italian schools that had begun to spread rapidly across the country. The Education Minister Ivanaj Mirash, who came under suspicion of every mission of foreigners in

the education sector, declared: "even if they came here for giving charity - the problem of moral education, patriotic and social was more important than the "diturak in Albania" (Puto, 2009, p. 501).

He undertook the education reform aimed at nationalization and secularization of Albanian education and further development and progress of schools in all categories. The Law for the reorganization of the school system of 1 April 1933 envisaged to create a unified educational system and to cut off the political foreign influence, especially Italian. The educational reforms touched, above all, the primary professional schools open by Italian people, particularly in the North, and the Greek ones, in minority areas. In schools that remained, teaching Italian and Greek was halted. The Albanian language was obligatory for all subjects, while Italian and Greek were taught as foreign languages only in high schools. The whole system and programs were under the responsibility of the Albanian Ministry of Education. Schooling and education of Albanians became obligatory for all and was given free by the state (Myzyri, 2004, p. 390). The newspaper "Besa", in an article published in October 1934, wrote: "the greek minority of Albania, not more than 20 000 people, have today 45 schools with 71 teachers, where they learn freely the greek language together with the official language ... the Albanian Government, to keep these schools, has spent last year a total of 122,000 gold franga ... the Albanian government spends on maintaining the greek language schools in villages where greek minorities are 80% of the total, and if taken in the proportion of the greek minority population approach with the Albanian population, this amount should be only 2%" (The Central State Archive of Albania (AQSH), F.246, D.71, p. 84-90). Furthermore, in the next year the number of these schools had risen to 47 schools and 92 teachers. Contrary with what the newspapers wrote, the greek minority spoke greek freely in churches, in private and commercial correspondence, and in books of accounts.

Although there was favoritism for them, Greece joined Italy in the protest movement, and the case was sent to the Permanent International Court at Hague which gave only an advisory opinion. By majority vote eight to three, it declared that "the Albanian government can not justify the closure of private schools and had violated the terms of the Declaration of 2 October 1921, which qualify that Albanians belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities have the same treatment under the law as other Albanian citizens" (Duka, 2007, p. 190).

For this reason the Albanian government, on 3 January 1935 issued a statement through which the greek schools were allowed to teach in the greek language, but teachers should have been from the greek minority (even if their education was made in Greece) and not from Greece as had been the previous practice. This was established because of the Albanian government's belief that previous teachers were military personnel and not just teachers (Stevenson, 2004, p. 82-83).

In the education law of 1934, illiteracy was addressed in article 224 of the constitution, which foresaw the opening of courses to fight illiteracy among adults, particularly women and girls. As places for these courses, female schools in cities such as Tirana, Berat, Gjirokastra, Korca, Vlora and Lushnja were used. Also, night courses for women were opened. Regular courses were observed in Gjirokastra, where the total number of women learning reached 100 (Musaj, 2002, p. 230). These courses were continued for six to eight months, with eight hours of instruction per week. In these courses women and girls older than a certain age participated. In order to operate, a course had to have up to ten women and it was divided into two sections, one for women who did were not literate and those were.

- In the first section the number of women should be only six. The lesson consisted in writing, reading and arithmetic based on the program of first elementary grade divided in three teaching hours per week.
- In the second section the lesson consisted in writing, reading and arithmetic based on the fourth grade program with three teaching hours per week, in both sections handicraft work was taught for four hours a week.

The lessons were in common if the number of women did not exceed 30. If the number fell to seven students, within two-three weeks the course was closed only by a decision of the Ministry. In the entire country 42 courses were opened with 1.906 students (Musaj, 2002, p. 205).

In primary schools in villages, the obligation to go to the elementary school began when children were 7 years old. For the fulfillment of obligatory education, the school boards in each municipality or comune were in charge. In May they began to prepare lists of children which should start school in the next school year. For unjustified absences of children from school, parents were fined by the school committee 0.50 gold franga and a maximum up to 4 gold franga for each day of absence; for children without parents, the fine was payed by the tutor of the child. The money that the commission collected from the fines was used to buy school supplies, tools or library books for poor children. The Institutes of Education Inspectors was in charge to check the implementation of school obligations.

Primary schools were created mainly in cities where there was a greater need for their opening. Elementary schools were built in each city to teach children of all neighborhoods. Villages have the right to open primary schools in cases that there were at least 30 students and if the villagers prepared the school premises and necessary furniture. In cases where there were two or three villages near each other in a distance of 3 km to each – together they could open a joint primary school. In villages that are far away or have a difficult communication, school stations with itinerant teachers were established.

In mountainous areas where there were no conditions for opening schools, dormitories with internal primary schools were opened. These benefited poor children which received scholarships from the state. In these schools instruction took about 10 months, usually from September to June. In mountainous areas the school period could change because of the weather. After finishing elementary school, students received a school certificate, which granted to the student the right to be accepted to higher and lower schools the kingdom. Teachers who worked in these schools were recruited from normal schools, which were linked to a training school, that served for the practical preparation of teachers.

Educational staff consisted of temporary and permanent teachers. In order to become permanent, teachers must pass an exam, and complete two years service. For positions that remained vacant, a deputy teacher may be nominated who has committed no normal school maturity examination. They were paid for daily wage. To improve the culture of teachers, periodic conferences were organized, as well as courses of exercises and lessons, according to educational needs. Construction and maintenance of primary schools, completion and preparation of school furniture and educational materials were charged to municipalities or comunes or inhabitants through school committees.

Secondary institutes consisted of high school and lyceum, which were taught in french, normal, commercial institutes, urban schools and technical institutes. Supervision and inspection of these schools was made directly by the Ministry of Education. Lessons in secondary schools wer: 8 years in high school, 9 years in lyceum, normal 4 years and 4 years in technical institutes.

The first four years of high school are considered as the low school and the last four are considered as high school. Normal and Commercial Institutes were considered as high schools.

Near Normal schools operated also the training schools for teaching practice for students who frequented the last year of school. Branches that urban schools may have had, the division of which began in third grade, were: commerce, woodworking, ironworking, breeding, agriculture and households.

Students registered in secondary school had to pay a certain fee for each class or school, with the exception of poor students or those students who have completed the previous year with "fairy well" in the various lessons and the grade "exemplary" in behavior.

According to the law, for different certificates and evidence issued by high school, each student had to pay a fee, and the only exemption was for students of Normal schools. (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1938, p. 166).

In all schools students aged 11-13 years were accepted (to be registered in first class of the high school), 11-16 years of age to be registered in first class of Urban schools. In first class of high schools or urban schools were accepted only those students who had the release certificate of primary school and the first class in high school, normal school. In the Commercial Institute were accepted only those student who had received the semimature certificate. In the first class of the Technical Institute were accepted only those who had finished Urban school or the four classes of the high school. Students who receive the release certificate

of Urban schools were eligible to continue learning in secondary schools and other high level according to specific modalities. Grades used in high school are: 1 (very good), 2 (good), 3 (very good), 4 (sufficient), 5 (weak), 6 (very poor). At the Korca Lyceum, grading system varies: 10 (very good), 5 (sufficient) and 0 the worst grade.

The teaching staff of secondary schools must have completed a full high school and have completed a regular high school or university and charged up to 22 hours per week. High school students underwent semimature examinations after the fourth class. Maturity exams were held in high school, Normal school, Technical and Commerce Institute. These examinations were taken after finishing the last year. In Urban schools, students who completed the fourth year had to take the examination of the release. Reexaminations took place in autumn, with the exception of the practical test in Normal Schools, which was awarded in September (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1938, p. 163).

The Ministry of Education launched a fight against illiteracy, for this they established special courses for adult males divided into two sections: a. section I was for the illiterate, b. Section II for those who knew how to write, read and count until 100.

In the first session was: writing, reading and arithmetic, according to the program of first class in primary schools. When possible, it was taught to count until three digit numbers. 10 to 15 hours during the course were devoted to basic various reports: historical events, patriotic, civic announcements, geography, hygiene.

In the second section was: albanian, arithmetic, history, geography, natural history and hygiene.

The Ministry of Education had projected that in the academic year 1937-1938 about about 200 of these courses would open.

In the courses for adults, enrollment began on 1 November and on 10 November the lessons began. Courses in schools of the villages continued until 15 or 31 March, according to local needs. In these courses were accepted boys from 13 to 18 years old, and older persons who wished to attend the course. Courses for adults were held at school during the time that the normal school has finished lessons. The Ministry of Education gave appropriate instructions to the Office Inspection of Education in the capital to open a course for adults in the prison of Tirana.

Secondary schools also grew, so during the academic year of 1937-1938 there were 18 schools (6 high schools of which 2 were female schools, 6 Urban of which 1 was a female school, 1 Technical Institute, 2 Normal schools of which 1 was a male school and 1 a female school, 1 Commercial school, 1 agricultural school and 1 drawing school) (page. 171) The number of students was 5.677 (of which 1.425 were girls) and 262 teaching staff (of which 37 were women), (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1938, p. 170).

Because Albania was a country where the economy was based as agriculture, His Majesty the King authorized the Minister of National Economy to open courses for agricultural practices within the prefectures or agricultural centers as appropriate and necessary, which addressed such topics as: how to work the land, how to grow the livestock and use of various plants and agricultural industries.

The course would not be less than one month and not more than 6 months, the continuation of the courses would be determined by the ministry according to their importance. All expenses for food or other necessities for trainees would be the charge of the economy ministry. Men who came up with good results were given gifts, while parents or tutors who did not allow boys to attend these courses were fined in the amount of 10 to 40 gold fragna, with a double fine for repeat offenses (Magazine, Bujqesia 1930, p 105).

In April 1939, on the eve of the invasion of Albania, in the country operated 22 kindergartens for children with 40 educators, 647 primary schools with 1340 teachers and 56,932 students, created in the form of five classes, while in villages there were 4 classes. Over 80% of the population was illiterate, while among the women this phenomenon reached about 90% (Rama, 2004, p. 25).

During the monarchy period, the most mentioned schools continuing their activities were: gymnasium "Illyricum" the Franciscan clergy and the college "Saverien" of the Jesuit fathers, the state high school in Shkodra, the French Lyceum in Korca, the Lyceum in Gjirokastra, the gymnasium of Tirana, the Normal school, the female Institute "Queen Mother" and the technical school "Harry Fultz" in Tirana, the Commercial

school in Vlora and the agricultural schools in Kavaja and Lushnja, technical professional schools, primary schools etc (Rama, 2004, p. 26).

About 462 students continued their studies in countries such as Italy, Greece, Romania, France, Austria, Germany, etc., who received a scholarship or did so at their own expense. These students created cultural and national student associations (Rama, 2005, page. 13).

3. Conclusion

Despite the efforts of the King for obligatory primary education system, for the development of high school education, mainly vocational, for changes in educational programs, but above all, for the opening of female schools in all major urban centers, he did not fully succeed as a result of several factors as:

1. Lack of educational infrastructure.
2. Lack of the teaching staff.
3. Fight with the local mentality, inherited from Ottoman rule, for not to educate the women.
4. The reopening of foreign schools:
 - a. As a result of the severe economic crisis that took place in the country, and finding no support for loans from the governments of Great Britain, USA, Belgium and the Netherlands, in 1934, the King Zog began again to obey to Italy. He initially accepted a compromise that had to do with the opening of religious and technical schools
 - b. On 3 January 1935 the Albanian government issued a notice allowing Greek schools to teach in greek, but teachers should be from the Greek minority and not from Greece (Duka, 2007, p. 190).

Despite these setbacks the development of education in Albania had its results as:

year	1927-1928	1930-1931	1933-1934	1936-1937	1937-1938
no. of schools	500	529	545	615	642
no. of students	27.770	33.664	39.043	54.221	56.634

(Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1938, p. 170).

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