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Adult education, priority in educational policy of Spiru Haret

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Abstract

At the end of the nineteenth century, Romania ranks fifth in Europe in terms of the level of illiteracy. This paper aims to highlight the importance of education reform achieved by Spiru Haret, whose priority, as minister of religious affairs and public instruction, was increasing the level of culture and education of the population, as the only solution to overcome the economic difficulties of the country and to preserve the national identity of the Romanian people. The establishment of thousands of schools for adults contributed to the decrease of illiteracy in Romania, from 78% in 1899, to 61% in 1912.

Keywords: adult education; education reform; law; teacher.

1. Introduction

Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century represents, for the history of Romanian education, up phase of the modern education system (1864-1918). Historically, this period is dominated by ideals Romanian bourgeois revolution, resulting in the generalization of specific relations of capitalism. In this historical context, in terms of culture and education disputes occur ideas belonging to different views - conservative, liberal and socialist, which led to the development and implementation of democratic legislation. Product of this cultural effervescence is the reform initiated by Spiru Haret, as minister in a Liberal government and supported by outstanding personalities of the time, with different political orientations, as the socialist C. Dumitrescu and the conservative Titu Maiorescu.

Spiru Haret is known in the history of Romanian education especially as a man of the school and reformist-teacher, because of its concerns regarding general education at all ages, concept later known as continuing education, adult education, lifelong education and lifelong learning. This paper aims to realize an analysis of how
Spiru Haret understood the importance of education in the overall development of the contemporary Romanian society, with emphasis on adult education, **approached from two perspectives**: education level of people reached the legal age maturity and adult basic education conducted at different ages of the normal school. For a better understanding of this issue, this paper provides a review of key moments in the educational and professional course of human Spiru Haret.

2. **Spiru Haret – man of the Romanian school**

   Personality, opera and activity of Spiru Haret (1851-1912) are presented in several writings dedicated to the illustrious representative of science, culture and Romanian policy in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. As a student, Spiru Haret standing out is by the sapience and seriousness, "by the crowd and the precision of knowledge and by the edge of the thought" (Sandu, 1930). After obtaining the license in physics and mathematics, in Bucharest and Paris, at only 27 years old, Spiru Haret makes its debut in the international scientific world, to the famous Sorbonne university of Paris, on the occasion of presentation of the doctoral thesis entitled "Sur l'invariabilité des grands axes des orbites planétaires", which enjoyed great success, subsequently being cited in several scientific papers and encyclopedias. Back in Romania, Spiru Haret is dedicated Romanian education both as a teacher and as a reformer. In 1892 he became a member of the Romanian Academy. He obtain different administrative functions of education, on the permanent member of the Board of instruction, to the general inspector of schools (1889), Secretary General and then for three times minister of the Ministry of Public Education and Religious Affairs (1897-1899, 1901-1904, 1907-1910). In parallel, he continues scientific research, with a series of papers aimed at the application of mathematics in solving public or astronomy problems, being remarkable the paper "The social mechanics", published in 1910, in Paris, considered the author "an attempt to apply the scientific method to social problems" (Haret, 1969). The wealth of ideas and their quality have their source not only in the scientific training of Haret, but also in his experience as a special inspector, as it appears from reports made since 1880.

3. **Spiru Haret – reformer of Romanian society**

   Churchill considered that the politician thinks about the next elections and the statesman to the future generations. Haret proved to be a true statesman, who is thinking of future generations. Haretian educational policy had in view achieving education not only in the formal school, but beyond the schools themselves and beyond school age, to support the adaptation of all persons older than seven years at the changes required by modernizing society.

   3.1. **The first ideas for modernizing of the Romanian education system**

   A year and a half after taking office of inspector general of schools, Spiru Haret approaches the problems of Romanian education seen in their systemic reality. As inspector, focused on observing the essential aspects of the school, which aims the process of teaching, learning and assessment and the organization and management of the school. It is well known *The general report on secondary education presented Mr. Minister of Public Education and Religious Affairs* (Schifirne, 2009), realized by Haret in 1884, which comprises the essence of the reform program which will apply as a minister.

   In the opinion of professor Constantin Schifirne, Report is "the definitive work of Romanian social sciences by analyzing society in all its dimensions, with emphasis (...) the educational establishment. School establishes the reference frame of the main social, cultural, national and economic problems in a society which is stated in the way modern changes " (2009:21). In this report, Haret criticizes the haste with which the Romanian education system borrowed experienced by other countries, without the necessary adaptation to the specific conditions in Romania and in the absence of Romanian doctrine. He points the need to elaborate a general plan of development of each type of school, according to "current and future necessities of the country" and existing resources, demonstrating a political thinking based on principles of educational management. An idea that is found in the subsequent legislative undertakings Spiru Haret refers to the fundamental role of initial training of teacher, as now, insufficient in number, nearly 25% of the departments of gymnasiums and schools being occupied by substitute teachers.
3.2. The main normative acts adopted during the ministry

The office of minister took over on 31 March 1897, after 15 years of activity carried in education. Good knowledge of the reality of the Romanian school and the needs of modernization of the Romanian society, Haret succeeds in the first two years by ministry to obtain the parliamentary vote for two fundamental laws: The Law of Secondary and Higher Education (1898) and the Vocational Education Law (1899). Also during this period, are developed curricula for secondary education, organization and operation regulations for each level of education, are established adult schools, kindergartens and school canteens. In the next two periods of ministry (1901-1904, 1907-1910), he continues education reform with measures to restructure the system, which aimed the organization of education at all levels, addressed to all ages.

3.3. Socio-pedagogical perspective of the hareitian reform

In the socio-pedagogical concept of Spiru Haret, the efficiency of a reform measures to modern Romanian society is measured in effective involvement and its benefits felt by all social categories (Ungureanu, 1993). To obtain the expected results, is required to implement a cultural, educational, social and economic program, focused on the rural population. The main role in this program was for school and therefore teachers, whose work has been extended in terms of subjects education and its place of deployment. Thus, teachers were tasked to handle the adults education. "He intuited, just as they thought Cuza, Kogălniceanu, Maiorescu and Eminescu, the predominantly agrarian society and peasant have upgraded from within by appropriate institutions. One of these institutions is the school, conceived by Haret as a fundamental means to the peasant environment" (Schifirne, 2009).

From a social perspective, the Haret's reform focused socio-economic modernization and democratization of the country. The "Findings sad" article, published in The general education magazine, in October 1906, Haret highlights the importance of education in the modernization of society, showing that civilization is not measured in "crowd built palaces and length of iron rails that run across the country", but the degree morality of a society (Schifirne, 2009:20). Therefore, in the construction of his reform program, culture and education are prioritized in relation to the economy.

4. Adult education – priority reform measure for modern Romania

4.1. Historical perspective on adult education

Concerns for adult education existed in ancient times in India, China, Persia, the Islamic world. In Europe, the first institution of higher education for adults is considered to be Gresham College, founded in England, in 1576, for merchants and artisans in London. The changes brought by the Industrial Revolution attract the need to ensure continuous education to people, as a solution to adapt them to new, in different forms: evening schools, study circles, courses by correspondence. As the Nina Sacaliuc show in his course, Andragogy (2012), adult education programs are experiencing a remarkable development in Europe of the nineteenth century. In France, for example, in 1869, there were 34,000 courses for adults organized as conferences and debates.

At the UNESCO General Conference, from 1976, adult education has been defined as a set of organized educational processes extending initial education, through which people considered adult develop their luggage of skills and knowledge necessary in personal and professional plan.

4.2. Adapting education to the needs of adults learners

Talking about adult education, we believe necessary to specify two categories of people targeted by this type of education: 1) young people who have reached the the age of maturity and have graduated secondary education, without interruptions in their education way; 2) adults who have passed school age, without graduate primary and / or secondary education. Referring to the first category of people, the kind of education that they had access was higher education. Secondary and Higher Education Law, approved in 1898 (ISE, 2004), provides in art. 3 duration of secondary education: "Colleges have eight classes, each of one year.", and in the art. 15, the conditions of
enrollment in secondary education: "To be enrolled in the first class, pupils will need to have the graduation certificate of primary education and have at least 11 years of age." (ISE, 2004). Summing years that primary and secondary education leads to a minimum age of 19 years on graduation secondary education. Enrolment in higher education was conditioned by high school graduation, according to art. 57: "Can not register as students in the university than the high school graduates." These young people could enroll in one of the two existing universities at that time in Romania: University of Bucharest and University of Iasi (art. 53), each with one faculty of Orthodox theology, law, medicine, philosophy and letters, sciences. Each college may be divided into sections. Spiru Haret assign Romanian school the mission to prepare students so that, upon graduation, can perform various professional activities, including traditional of the agricultural sector. He shifts the focus from the theoretical side of learning to practical skills training. In this respect, he considers appropriate to introduce vocational education, as a necessary condition to prepare the country's economic development. Like today, the issue of financial support for education was current. At that time, Romania was the only country in the world that provides free full secondary education. Article 2 of the Law secondary and higher education provide "secondary and superior instruction is free for the Romanian children." (ISE, 2004). This made it difficult increasing the number of secondary schools whose graduates were not prepared to occupy a job. In these circumstances, the establishment of vocational schools was the key to solving two major problems: the financial support of secondary education in the state budget and training of young people for their integration in the labor market. In a circular of 1898, the Minister Haret argue thus restructuring secondary education "is certain that our secondary education costs at least three times more than it should, by the country's needs and by the development which has the primary education. Vocational education and industrial could create and sustain whole only with the abundance of funds earmarked for secondary education." (Schiffirne , 2009). Law on vocational education, in 1899 (ISE, 2004), states at art. 1 that the object of this type of education is theoretical and practical study of agriculture and forestry, with annexes and derivative industries, of crafts and commerce. The vocational education are organized in elementary schools, inferior schools and high schools. Could be enrolled in high school young graduates of lower school or high school (art. 21). The duration of the high schools was four years, including two and a half years classroom study and one and a half years practice to a state farm model.

Regarding the other class of persons covered by the adult education program, law provides at the Chapter VIII, art. 86, setting up courses for apprentices and adults, in addition to commercial apprentice. These courses are organized in the evening and on Sundays and holidays, with a program adapted to the time resources for adults. Passing the final examination was accompanied by granting of a certificate. Law on primary education, primary-professional, higher primary and normal-primary, adopted in 1900 (ISE 2004), contains provisions on the organization of complementary education as courses for adults (art. 33), with a frequency of at least two hours per week, been supported by teachers or tutors. These courses been completed with a general examination and promotion was accompanied by granting primary graduate certificate. Art. 98 specifies especially higher education institutions, namely the Schools of Fine Arts, Conservatory of Music and Declamation Conservatory.

Haret has regulated, by circulars and decisions, organization of courses for adults, supported by teachers, whom he considered the most active factor in the modernization of society, due to the training, number and their presence in all the localities in the country. Haret wanted that, through the reorganization of teachers' extracurricular activities, to support the farmers to become independent producers.

4.3. How did adult education a priority in educational policy of Spiru Haret?

Even if the Romanian state was one of the first European countries which set up compulsory nature of primary education through Public Instruction Law of 1864, to the late nineteenth century, Romania was ranked fifth in Europe in terms of the level of illiteracy, after Prussia, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

According to the general census of population, realized in 1899, the illiteracy rate in Romania was 78%, while in rural areas it amounted to 85% of the population (Platon, 2003). These data represent an important benchmark in the analysis of the Haret reform impact, regarding the modernization Romanian education.
Statistical data on illiteracy shows that there are significant differences between cities and villages, in regards percentages of illiterate persons older than 7 years. Thus, while in towns about 50% of the population attend or attended the courses of a school, in villages percent literate people was only 15.2%.

The high percentage of illiterates show that the rhythm of development of Romanian education, after the implementation of the reform measures during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, was quite slow. This rhythm has picked up significantly between 1891 and 1900, when there was an increase in the number of primary school graduates from 5,715 - 93,107, which means that the number of graduates increased about 15 times in less than 9 years. Regarding the secondary and higher education, adult education provider, in the school year 1898-1899, the situation in the two Romanian universities was follows (Rădulescu, 2003):

- Bucharest: University: 2141 students and 76 teachers; Faculty of Low (815), Faculty of Letters (394), Faculty of Sciences (380), Faculty of Theology (148) Faculty of Medicine (404); 3 high schools: École Normale Supérieure (34 intern students), National School of Bridges and Roads (117 students), High School of Pharmacy (117 students), Conservatory, School of Fine Arts; 15 special schools (3000 students): 1 School of Veterinary Medicine, 2 Commercial Schools, 2 Seminars, 1 School of Agriculture, 1 School ofinstitutors .a.
- Iaşi: University: 423 students and 58 teachers; Faculty of Law (129), Faculty of Letters (117), Faculty of Science (82), Faculty of Medicine (95); High schools: Seminar Benjamin, École Normale Supérieure, Normal School Vasile Lupu, Commercial School, Technical School, School of Military Sons Conservatory, School of Fine Arts .a.

The data reflect the small percentage of young people who completed university with the an academic title: only 54% graduate from the University of Bucharest and 23% at the University of Iaşi. A significant difference is observed in terms of number of students who attended higher education organized in two university centers in Bucharest being registered a total of about 6 times higher than in Iaşi.

In these circumstances, Spiru Haret considered the only solution to overcome the economic difficulties of Romania and keeping of national identity is raising the level of culture and education of the population. Thus, to remove the illiteracy, one of the most important measures taken during the three mandates minister of cults and public instructions was the realization of the institutional framework for development of adult education in
Romania, by setting up of adult schools, cultural circles, popular libraries, social evenings village, village theater, publishing books and magazines containing articles about schools teaching adults. The social category under consideration in priority was the peasantry.

The number of courses for adults has increased from year to year, reaching in the year 1904 to over 1000. In parallel, be adopted laws and regulations aiming at the consolidation of the teacher status and the social position of his motivation, which ensures that it optimal participation in the modernization of the village and of the Romanian society. Strategic concept on the restructuring of Romanian village had in focus the qualification of rural population for the agricultural activities, the land being considered a natural resource which must be harnessed ever better. To achieve that objective, have been set up the schools for agriculture, intended for all social groups involved in the work of the land, from peasants and farmers, to the small and large landowners. Along side schools, in 1898 have been set up 320 popular village libraries, ten in each county. Starting from the cooperative experiences of other European countries and having as a reference the model of agriculture developed in Denmark, Haret supported the idea of jointly cultivation of land to obtain a greater agricultural production. For a better understanding of the Danish model, he send to Denmark two teachers to see how it is organized Danish peasant life.

Spiru Haret appreciate the effectiveness of popular school created in Denmark by Grundtvig, a school recognized as a national institution for modernization of society. Unfortunately, the success of the Danish popular school has not been registered and in popular school of the Romania, even if the changes proposed by Haret were legislated. Professor Schifirneț (2009, p 36-37) believes that, in the reform implementation, decisive was the cultural space in which are located the two countries, the occidental space in which is located the Denmark having characteristic openness to change and progress, while space is located Romania bears the imprint of the competition for political and military hegemony, which has the effect of blocking tendency of individual initiatives. Danes have developed agriculture and then the industry for processing of agricultural products, obtaining more profit compared to Romania, who was obliged to export only agricultural products.

The year 1912 reflects the result of haretian reform: the decrease of illiteracy from 78%, to 60,7% (Fig. 3). This percentage continues to decline until 2000, when there were 778,000 illiterates, representing about 4% of the population, according to the UNESCO report of the Romanian authorities for the Conference "Education for all in Europe and North America." After 2000, following an ascendant course, reaching in 2011, according to the census, at 10% of the total population (Mincu, 2003), percentage corresponding to a number of approximately two million Romanian who can not read and write.

4.4. Ways of organizing the adult education

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in Romania there were thousands of schools for adults, organized according to their level of education: adult schools for the primary level, free courses intended for complete general education, adult schools for the disciples from factories, shops and workshops, schools for peasant to acquire practical skills specific to rural areas. The spread of culture among numerous social categories was performed including through the setting up journals, as Talks Teaching, Primary Education, General Education Magazine, New Pedagogical Magazine, Romanian School, Intended for teaching staff. A long appearance had The Bee Journal, whose purpose was the dissemination of scientific knowledge among the rural population.

4.5. Qualifications of adult learners

Non-formal education can be achieved both within the school and outside of it, is for people of all ages and may include educational programs by different durations, for adult literacy, for ensuring basic education of children outside the school, for the training of life skills, of work and of general culture (Eurostat, 2006).

In Europe of the beginning of the XXI century, educational programs for mature students who left initial education, known as the "Second Chance", know forms of organization vary from country to country. Even if today, compulsory education includes primary and lower secondary level, about 23 million adults in Europe are registered with school drop out before completion of lower secondary education. Flexibilization of these programs is materialized in their providing in a modular form, as evening classes, distance learning or e-learning. How higher education includes students who have reached, the vast majority, of legal age to maturity, we can include the
university studies in the forms category by adult education. In addition to the traditional form of education, many states have implemented education policies that encourage adult inclusion in higher education at alternative forms, that enable the organization of learning time outside of work.

5. Conclusions

Haret school saw a great starting point for social reform (Adamescu 1936). He remained unique in the history of Romanian education through sociological concepts on the modernization of society starting from educational reform. His attention has focused on two aspects: ensuring of the social mobility and of a socio-cultural unit, through education. Structural reform performed by Spiru Haret at the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century represented a true foundation that it developed further Romanian education.

Spiru Haret remains today in actuality by radiographic ability and by highlights of those problems which significantly influence the Romanian educational system: the economic, educational, cultural and social gap between the urban and rural areas, the initial and continuous training of people of working age, the adaptation of the curriculum to the real needs of society, the development of practical dimension of the educational process, the management of school infrastructure (Pricopie, 2009).

The innovations promoted by Spiru Haret can be found in the major trends of contemporary educational sociology: the extension of the concept of lifelong learning (at children, youth, adults); the differentiation of education, seen as a necessity for ensuring social mobility and equal opportunities; the inclusion of a large number of young people at all levels of higher education, as a condition of social cohesion and democracy; the insurance of continuity and order in education, as a condition of a successful education; the avoidance of elitist pedagogy, as an obstacle to the democratization of education (ISE, 2004).

Reform measures adopted and implemented during Spiru Haret demonstrates that in Romania the early twentieth century was understood the significance and importance of education achieved in public education system for articulated and coherent implementation of the broad modernization process of the Romanian society. Spiru Haret's dominant educational policy was not only the accessibility of education for the entire school population, but also for the adults were summoned to contribute at the Romanian modernization project. Haretian epoch was a decisive period in the evolution of Romanian public education, and the results registered were encouraging for the future that Spiru Haret had in mind in everything he undertook.

References