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REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION IN ROMANIA - AN APPROACH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF IMPORTANCE FOR THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY

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Abstract: The authors make an x-ray of education in the Romanian space, highlighting its importance in the overall evolution of society, starting from the premise that education is the defining element of national identity that influences the evolution of any nation. The beginnings of education in the Romanian Lands are treated from the perspective of state attributions and church concerns, the steps related to the establishment of schools being sporadic and, in general, lacking essence or luck, the population being practically illiterate, the only cases of cultural elite being family members boyars and clergy of the period. The modern period marks the beginning of the long-awaited process of the secular and lay elite, the first forms of organizing education being found in urban centers, often next to churches and monasteries, they are the result of the activities of prominent personalities and of their real efforts to systematize education in the Romanian space. The first steps towards the normalization of Romanian education are found after the Great Union, when the interwar governments understood the importance of public education and initiated extensive measures in the field of administration. Major changes, regarding the Romanian education, appear after the end of the Second World War, even if they were strongly imprinted by the newly installed political system. After 1989, the education reform in Romania went through several stages trying to respond to the current economic and social needs, but also to the new European orientations, the results not always being the expected ones due to a cumulation of factors with multiple causality. The authors conclude that the perspectives of approaching Romanian education must be adapted to the current realities of society in order for education to become one of the great engines of national development.

Key words: education, globalization, modernization, transformation, society.

1. Argument

Entering a new era, post-December Romania woke up to the „dawn of democracy" faced with a new reality: the coveted freedom brought with it more economic, social, cultural and political problems than solutions, throwing the whole society into a transition; a gloomy reality but accepted by any citizen of this state because it seemed, somehow, the first natural and obligatory step towards the much dreamed normality. Everyone's expectations were then linked to the fulfillment of

strategic objectives for the de facto and de jure modernization of the new Romania, freed from the yoke of communist tyranny and ready to put on the „clothes" of democracy. For the immediate rallying to the international context, the first thoughts were related to obtaining the status of NATO member state and that of full member state of the European Union. With hopes and efforts sometimes exceeding local refractory conceptions or mentalities, presenting valid arguments in front of the decision-makers of the great Western chancelleries, and with a meticulously prepared strategic calendar, almost with surgical precision, Romania managed to reach these targets at the right time, so that later the door of the European Union to close and be almost impenetrable until now.

January 1, 2007 remains a landmark of local history, perceived by the authorities, the press and even the common man, as a new „zero kilometer" for the evolution of the state; some specialists in the field - politicians, people of culture or opinion formers[1] - consider, however, that the moment was artificially loaded with such symbolism, appreciating rather the adherence to the community space as a self-evident fact and not an evolution, but more as a problem of cultural affinity that brings us back to the origins. Despite the outpouring of the moment and all the measures of recent years that have made Romanians recognize the merits of integration[2], Romania still has a gap difficult to recover „an impressive (...) political and institutional delay, intertwined with a cultural delay of the same magnitude".[3] At the time of this research, Romania has over a decade of being a „state of the European Union" but the results are far from expected, according to some studies our country is „at the bottom of the rankings" on the maps of regional competitiveness.[4] This finding is not necessarily surprising, it finds its logic in the discrepancy between Western and Romanian societies - we can consider historical and cultural arguments, we can invoke geographical features or local mentalities ... in any approach we will reach the same conclusion: the vein of any nation belongs to its culture and education is the defining element of national identity, first of all from here the evolution of any nation draws its lifeblood.

[1] http://www.revista22.ro/intoarcerea-romaniei-in-europa-intre-politica-si-cultura-3373.html / accessed 20.05.2020). An interesting approach to the issue belongs to His Eminence Bartolomeu Anania, Metropolitan of Metropolitan of Cluj, Alba, Crişana and Maramureş. (See https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=zeFe8sa-UUU/accessed 25.05.2020.)

[2] Lucian-Liviu, Albu, Radu, Lupu, Adrian Călin, Oana-Cristina, Popovici, *Impactul aderării Romîniei la Uniunea Europeanăasupra economiei româneşti. Analiză sectorială (Industrie, agricultură, servicii, etc)*, Institutul European din România, Bucureşti, 2018, p. 22. (See ier.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SPOS_2017_Studiul-1_FINAL.pdf/ accessed 26.05.2020).

[3] Lucian, Boia, *De ce e România altfel ?*, Ediția a II-a, Editura Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2013, p. 35.

[4] https://www.profit.ro/stiri/economie/romania-la-coada-clasamentului-competitivitatii-regionale-in-ue-5-din-cele-8-regiuni-romanesti-au-un-scor-de-sub-10-puncte-16790399/accessed 20.05.2020.

Starting from this premise, we consider that it is necessary to make a brief radiography of education in Romania, analyzing first the real causes, accepting that there were a number of negative aspects, and that they irreversibly marked the development (or stagnation) of our society as a whole.

2. The beginnings of education in the Romanian Lands - between the attribution of the state and the preoccupation of the church

The beginnings of the history of education in the Romanian space correspond chronologically to the period of the Middle Ages and its political realities; it is the historical moment when the country's elite became preoccupied with the centralization of state institutions, involvement in the late crusades or the conclusion of a system of favorable alliances with the Neighboring Christian Kingdoms in the face of the Ottoman danger encamped north of the Danube. In this context, we cannot speak of a real interest of the political, secular or ecclesiastical elites in terms of educational culture, much less in terms of establishing quality educational institutions. It is true that there have been political leaders or religious leaders with initiatives in the field of education, some of whom have set up schools or institutions with educational values, but without significant influence in society; these institutions were called „academies" and focused their activity rather on ensuring an exclusively religious education, reaching some basic aspects of scientific education (writing - reading, basic rules for mathematical calculations, etc.), using Greek and Slavonic for teaching in Moldova and Wallachia and Latin in Transylvania.[5]

A prominent personality of Romanian historiography, politician and cultural figure, Nicolae Iorga attributes to the first Romanian institutions the title of „cell schools" because they functioned near monasteries, here the didactic activity consisted theoretically in teaching and learning writing in Slavonic language and the practical, applied part, was the use of this knowledge for the preparation of documents and official correspondence.[6] Also in close connection with the clerical field, there were workshops during this period, in which students learned the art of decorating books and icons in silver, which we could assimilate with the incipient forms of what would later be called vocational education. At the level of the state elite, the Slavonic language was the language of diplomacy, known by all political leaders, including the first Romanian princes.

The first Romanian medieval state in which an institution with educational objectives is attested is found in Moldavia, in 1562, during the reign of Iacob Eraclide, known in the history

[5] Dimitrie, Gusti (coord.), *Enciclopedia României*, vol I, Editura Imprimeria Națională, București,1938, pp. 433-434.
[6] Nicolae, Iorga, *Istoria învățământului romînesc*, Editura Casei Şcoalelor, Bucureşti, 1928, p. 9.

books as Despot Voda; complex personality, adventurous nature but especially with a vast western cultural and educational experience, he founded in Cotnari, at his own expense „Schola Latina", a "gymnasium", a college-type boarding school. We note in particular a unique aspect: Despot Voda financially supported the expenses of students 'clothing, food and teachers' salaries[7], which indicates that the ruler understood the importance of education in Moldova in order to get out of the fog of ignorance, by copying models from the Western states.

Also in Moldavia, in 1640, Prince Vasile Lupu founded the „Vasilian Academy", taking over the model of the Kiev Academy of Metropolitan Petru Movila; and this school operated next to a clerical institution, the Church of the Three Hierarchs[8], the purpose of which was to „prepare young people for the offices of the country", which is why teaching was done in Slavonic, Latin and Greek.[9] Unlike the „Schola Latina" which ended its activity after a year, when its owner was killed, the "Vasilian Academy" continued its activity in various forms until the beginning of the nineteenth century, even if it was put at hard trials.

We note that the efforts of these pioneers in the system of educational institutions was not necessarily a response to the population's interest in learning, but on the contrary the scholar-ruler Dimitrie Cantemir referred, for the eighteenth century, to other priorities for the inhabitants of Moldova. : „On the other hand, Moldovans not only do not love teaching, but almost everyone hates it. Not even the names of the sciences and arts are known to them. They believe that scholars cannot be whole-minded to such an extent that when they want to praise someone's science, they say that he has gone mad with too much teaching. In this regard, a bad word, which is often heard in the mouths of Moldovans, is that teaching is the job of priests, and for the layman is enough to learn to read and write, to know how to sign his name, to be able to signify white, black, horned ox, horses, sheep, cattle, hives and what else; further it is completely superfluous".[10] Providential personalities, with a solid training acquired at the most prestigious institutions abroad, they realized that the emancipation of the nation and the awakening of the citizen consciousness can be done only through book science, to which as many Moldovans should have access.

Regarding the second medieval state, Wallachia, we see again the role of the Church in promoting educational activities: since the end of the fourteenth century at the Tismana Monastery

[7] Ion, Popescu, Sireteanu, *O domnie promiţătoare*, în „Revista Română", nr. 1(63)/2011, p. 45-46, See http://astra.iasi.roedu.net/pdf/nr63p45-46.pdf/ accessed 15.03.2020.

[8] It proliferates the hearth of culture and spirituality, where it saw the light of the „Romanian textbook", the first book printed in Moldova in Romanian. (See: The Monastery of the Holy Three Hierarchs, in the Mirtopolia of Moldavia and Bucovina, Pilgrim in Iaşi, Iaşi, 2000, pp. 23-24).

[9] http://adevarul.ro/locale/iasi/academia-vasiliana-iasi-copia-academiei-kiev-scoala-domneasca-tara-functionat-mai-mare-oras-moldova-1_5647527c7d919ed50e389402/index.html /accessed 20.03.2020.

[10] Dimitrie, Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, Bucureşti, 1973, p. 311.

in Gorj, Curtea de Argeș, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, Câmpulung or Severin are attested schools in the residences of the voivodes of the period, operating next to churches and monasteries where those educated „learned to read and write, as well as the Slavic language of the church".[11]

A point of reference on the territory of Wallachia in the educational field remain the measures of Constantin Brâncoveanu and the establishment of the „Royal Academy" in Bucharest, in 1694; as in Moldova, here the institution also operated next to a place of worship - St. Sava Monastery.[12]

For the Muntenia area we meet a first hierarchy of the education system in three stages: the first stage was that of Slavic and Romanian schools and was organized at the level of county residences, the second stage was represented by secondary schools organized in Craiova and Buzau and the highest and most important step was represented by the Bucharest Academy. It is interesting that the educational offer included economic and political programs, with the mention that the access to the higher level - of academic type - was not allowed to the children of peasants, a limitation on the criterion of belonging to a certain social class.[13]

In Transylvania, the field of education was given more attention, the Saxons establishing, starting with the fourteenth century, primary schools, so that in just two centuries such an institution could be established in almost every Saxon commune. The existing education in Transylvania was religious or guild, conditioned by ethnic and religious criteria, which made the literacy of Romanians in this historical region to be extremely weak.

3. The modern period - outstanding personalities and real efforts to systematize education in the Romanian space

If in Transylvania and Bucovina, territories under Habsburg occupation, were existing already the seeds of an education system organized on principles specific to the times, the modern era represented for the Romanian Principalities the period of this long-awaited process by the secular and lay elite; the first forms of organizing education were usually in urban centers, most often close to churches and monasteries.

For the historical province of Moldova, the evolution of the education system is related to the name of Gheorghe Asachi; Originally from Herța, a graduate of university studies in Lvov, which he later studied in Vienna and Rome, Gheorghe Asachi was a professor, journalist, writer and career diplomat, dedicating his entire activity to the development of national culture and Romanian

[11] Alexandru, Ștefulescu, *Gorjul istoric şi pitoresc,* Editura „Alexandru Ștefulescu", Târgu-Jiu, 1994, p.11.
[12] http://istoria-romaniei.blogspot.ro/2010/05/academia-domneasca-din-bucuresti.html/ accessed 22.02.2020.
[13] Grigore, Pupăză, Constantin, Cheznoiu, *Istoria învățământului din Gorj,* Editura Newest, Târgu-Jiu, 2005, p.14.

education.[14] Based on the experience gained from his studies, benefiting from his vast culture and experience but first of all showing a perfect pedagogical training, on his return to the country Gheorghe Asachi begins his mission of training and transforming the education. The first step was represented by the proposal submitted in 1812 to the ruler Scarlat Calimachi: the establishment of an engineering and decision-making class in Romanian and to function within the Royal Academy from Iaşi; the actual courses began in 1814, with a total of 33 students, sons of boyars, and the results of the graduation exam of 1819 proved the usefulness of the Romanian language for training students in mathematics. As we have already mentioned, most schools operated in urban centers, close to monasteries and churches; Gheorghe Asachi is directly involved in the reorganization of the Socola Seminary and the inauguration of the Normal School with activity supported by the Three Hierarchs Church. The activity of this period is focused on two directions: promoting education mainly in Romanian and ensuring access to education for young people from all walks of life, the main goal being to ensure long-term access to positions for graduates in the state apparatus.[15]

In the conditions of the political transformations after the revolution of 1821, with the establishment of the effective Russian domination over Wallachia and Moldavia, Gheorghe Asachi was directly involved in the elaboration of the first acts with constitutional value in the local space, he was part of the Commission that drafted the Organic Regulations (the act entered into force on January 1, 1831 in Moldavia); the measures proposed by Gheorghe Asachi to be included in the organic law were primarily related to the organization of education in Moldova and referred to the mandatory use of the Romanian language in teaching, the creation of special funds for public schools and seminars, total exemption from taxes for teachers.

By far, Gheorghe Asachi's greatest achievement is the support obtained from the ruler of Moldavia, Mihail Sturza, for the establishment of the Mihailean Academy in Iaşi, in 1835; is a key moment of the education system in the Romanian space because it is the first higher education institution in the Romanian Principalities. The courses of the institution were organized on three levels - gymnasium, college and university and the range of courses was wide, covering disciplines such as: history, law, biology, Greek, mathematics, geometry, chemistry, astronomy, architecture, agronomy; from the point of view of specializations, Mihaileană University offered the following options to its students: Philosophy, Law, Theology and Applied Sciences.[16] We can state

[14] Rodica, Morar, *Rolul lui Gheorghe Asachi în organizarea învăţământului din Moldova*, in Elvira, Rotundu, Alexandru, Guță, Elena, Cozma, Claudia, Dragomirescu (coord.), *Iaşi – orarul şcolilor*, Editura Graphys, Iaşi, 2008, pp. 109-110.

[15] Geta, Mătăsaru, *Gheorghe Asachi, ctitor de şcoală românească*, în Elvira, Rotundu, Alexandru, Guţă, Elena, Cozma, Claudia, Dragomirescu (coord.), *Iaşi – orarul şcolilor*, Editura Graphys, Iaşi, 2008, pp. 122-123.

[16] http://www.rador.ro/2016/06/16/academia-mihaileana-prima-institutie-de-invatamant-superior-modern-din-moldova-1835-1847/accessed 25.05.2020.

unequivocally that the Mihailean Academy was a real nursery of intellectuals. The concern for the national side and the implementation of education in the Romanian language continued to be a concern for Gheorghe Asachi, proof of the increased interest in national history and geography, which he considered the viable option for national emancipation.

As a journalist, Gheorghe Asachi continued to support education, printed the first Romanian newspaper, Albina românească, and other publications used as a tool for informing and educating - Foaia Românească (addressed primarily to the peasantry) and Icoana lumii (addressed to those interested in the great scientific discoveries)[17]; he also contributed to the editing and publication of a set of textbooks-grammar, algebra, arithmetic.

In Wallachia, in addition to the activity of the Royal Academy, it is noted the beginning of the courses at Sfântul Sava College, the first educational institution with exclusive teaching in Romanian; the masters were the two outstanding personalities, Gheorghe Lazăr and Eufrosin Poteca.

Gheorghe Lazăr (1779-1823) was a scholar of his time, known for his Enlightenment spirit, with rich activity in pedagogy, theology, translations and engineering; he is also the one who founded the Saint Sava College, where he worked as a professor of philosophy and engineering. His permanent plea for education in Romanian in the spirit of a solid patriotic education and the new type of pedagogy in which the didactic approach had to be directed to practice brought[18] Gheorghe Lazăr the nickname of „the first animator of the national consciousness".

The continuity of his activity was ensured by Eufrosin Poteca (1786-1858), his former student whom he named winner of a scholarship to Paris and Pisa; after graduating from the courses of history, theology and philosophy, Eufrosin Poteca returned to the country and took over the chair of geography in Romanian, at Sfântul Sava College. In addition to teaching, he tried to harmonize secular and religious education by drawing up the first analytical programs.[19]

The union at the federal level of Moldavia and Wallachia (1859, United Principalities) coincides with a new stage of development and affirmation of Romanian education: in the emblematic cities begin the activity: University of Iasi in 1860 and University of Bucharest in 1864. The adoption of the Public Instruction Law in 1864, with the provision of compulsory and free primary education, represents the first proof of the modernization of the Romanian education

[17] http://www.istoria.md/articol/539/Gheorghe_Asachi,_biografie/accessed 25.05.2020.

[18] http://www.argesexpres.ro/index.php/cultura/110-gheorghe-lazar-intemeietorul-invatamantului-in-limba-romana-in-tara-romaneasca-1779-1823/accessed 01.02.2020.

[19] Constantin, Dobrescu, Carmen, Băjenaru, *Eufrosin Poteca, un cărturar prahovean revendicat atât de şcoală cât şi de biserică,* în Revista Română, nr 4(74)/2013, p.18-19.

system, after the Orthographic Reforms (1862) valid for schools in the United Principalities had been previously adopted.

The modernization of the Romanian education system continued in the following period, the most important reforms being under the three mandates of Minister of Education of Spiru Haret; In the period 1897-1901, in the standardized plans that bore his name, 200 schools were built. We note a series of unique measures such as equipping school buildings with a maximum of 4 classrooms, providing housing for the school principal, setting up the School House, a body that deals exclusively with the construction of school buildings[20], in charge of procuring national, local or donations.

Access to education in cities but also in villages becomes a concern of the authorities, in a document from 1893 we find information about the operation of rural schools „the village school with one class, the lower school with one class and the teacher's home and the rural high school with two or three classrooms and the teacher's home. (…) The vestibule of these schools will be arranged so that it can also serve as a locker room, and will proceed with a long niche for placing children's snacks and niches for drinking water and cut firewood. And with the possibility of creating in the case of first and second grade schools a room where students can practice manual work. (…)".[21] School buildings and their facilities are beginning to be given more attention, the interior finishes of school buildings were simple and made of greasy lime while the floors of the classrooms were always made of wood, equipped with heating stoves to ensure an optimal temperature of 14-16 degrees Celsius, each classroom was equipped with minimalist, purely functional-chair, desks, blackboard, cabinets used by teachers, etc., but the objects of religious worship were never missing from the inventory: the Bible, the icon of the Savior or the Virgin Mary, portraits of monarchs.

Spiru Haret's programs and projects, which fundamentally reformed the Romanian educational system, meant the first steps towards modernization, the big gain being the ease of access to education by all social categories, by bringing the school closer to the people, which must be „the center where to start the currents for (...) the upliftment and strengthening of the nation, and again (...) our education to become a national education".[22] We can say that the immediate result was the acceleration of national literacy, subsumed by the emancipation interest of Romanians, which made the historian Nicolae Iorga praise him at a 1907 teachers' congress: „When I speak to

[20] http://m.jurnalul.ro/special-jurnalul/scolile-spiru-haret-628499.html /accessed 01.02.2020.
[21] *Ibidem*.
[22] Spiru Haret's report from 1903 on "The object of education in school", See: Adrian, Gorun, Tiberiu, Horaţiu Gorun, *Compendiu. Sociologia istoriei legislaţiei învăţământului românesc (de la 1864 până azi)*, Editura Universitaria Craiova, 2019.

you about Spiru Haret, out of respect, get up! How many book scholars were there in Romania? In 1899, the census established 22% of the total population. By 1909, the proportion had reached 39.4%".[23]

Despite all the measures implemented, we must admit that overall the situation of Romanian education was still precarious: the teaching staff was quantitatively reduced, the dropout rate was very high, and on the eve of the First World War the literacy in rural areas was maximum 25- 30% of the total population.

4. Contemporary education - the first steps towards the standardization of Romanian education

After the end of the First World War, in the conditions of the Great Union, the Romanian education system faced a new challenge, it was necessary a uniformity, a compatibility of the education system from the former Kingdom of Romania with that of Bucovina, Transylvania and Bessarabia. Under the motto „School as much as possible! School as good as possible! School as Romanian as possible!", The Minister of Education Constantin Angelescu issued the „Law for the state primary education and normal-primary education" from 1924. The most important provisions referred to: the development of the network of kindergartens / school dormitories; setting the duration of compulsory general education at 7 years; introduction of the alternative education: after graduating the first 4 primary classes, students could opt for high school or vocational school, respectively for „primary" or „complementary" education; the establishment of popular libraries and the school medical service; introduction of the obligation to study a foreign language.[24]

A novelty was the introduction of the baccalaureate exam and the adoption of the national education model previously proposed by Spiru Haret - education with exclusive teaching in Romanian, eliminating the Austrian and Hungarian, which contributed to the background reawakening the national feeling of several Romanians.

Regarding his mandate, Constantin Angelescu considered that a reform aimed at „awakening the citizen consciousness" was necessary and that this was possible if the authorities understood that this institution could produce the emancipation of the nation, because an active school „aware of the ideal interests of our national community (....) miraculously transforms the old and shaky building of the book school, into a vast laboratory of the human being".[25]

[23]http://adevarul.ro/educatie/scoala/spiru-haret-omulcare-adus-cartea-fost-salvati-romanii-analfabetism-1_52a1a661c7b855ff567e8deb/index.html/accesed 20.03.2020.
[24] Adrian, Gorun, Tiberiu, Horaţiu Gorun, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 328, 369-371.
[25] Arhivele Naţionale ale României, fond Ministerul Instrucţiunii, dosar nr. 75 / 1928, f. 9.

Constatin Anghelescu's efforts and his involvement in the construction of over 7,000 Romanian schools earned him the nickname „brick doctor" but with all his efforts the situation at the national level was far from satisfactory: schooling was low, passability was of 62%, the degree of repetition was about 30% and school dropout was very high, 8-10%.

Interwar governments understood the importance of public education and initiated extensive measures in the field of administration, at the national level were established seven school districts, consisting of representatives for each county and coordinated by a secondary inspector, two primary inspectors and school inspectors, the duration of compulsory education has been extended, etc. Related to the new economic configuration, the authorities understood the need for technicians and workers for the factories built at that time in Romania and took measures to organize technical education. From the point of view of financial allocations, the Ministry of Education benefited from an allocated budget of about 12%, sometimes reaching even 16%, the status of the teacher was important and his salary commensurate.

We mention a unique fact at the level of public perception, although we are talking about the interwar period, the mentality is similar to today, most students went to theoretical education, chose to take university courses in the hope of later employment in the state administration, preferring stability and social recognition instead of financial security. Another observation that is required is related to the discrepancy of the level of education at the qualitative and quantitative level between the city and the village world, although there is a real increase in the level of literacy in the rural world.

Major changes in Romanian education occur after the end of World War II, with Romania's entry into the sphere of Soviet influence; the Soviet model took over the education, and the translation of Russian textbooks is quickly used[26], the Agitation and Propaganda Directorate of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party is set up to ensure the conformity of the educational act with political ideology - the first step taken by the head of this body, Mihai Roller, was the publication of a new deeply anti-national history textbook.[27] Romanian education has entered a new stage, we can identify measures that have imploded its development - expanding the school network at the national level, reducing-eradicating illiteracy but also measures that have turned school institutions into an ideological lever for the masses in favor of the communist regime-school becomes the most important instrument of indoctrination of the new generations in the

[26] http://www.contributors.ro/cultura/un-posedat-ideologic-cine-a-fost-mihail-roller/accessed 20.05.2020.

[27] The manual formulated according to the rigors of Marxist-Leninists was used as a way of indoctrination and communist propaganda and insisted on the need to implement an important Slavic component in the ethnic composition of the Romanians.

party's ideology, the socialist education system is implemented which aims at uniforming the human personality up to the obligation of agricultural work by students and teachers, etc.

The legal framework was changed, it became clear of Soviet bill, as we can see in the Education Reform Law applied between 1948-1968, with adjustments or additions during the following years, depending on the wishes of the state party.[28] The stated purpose of this act was to promote the population's access to education in accordance with the new requirements of society and had the effect of implementing measures that boosted the development of local education, even subject to inadequate measures that served communist ideology: access to education was guaranteed precisely by its compulsory nature, all children aged 7-11 were automatically enrolled in primary education; the duration of elementary school courses was increased to 7 years for the elementary cycle and to 11 years for the middle cycle - a measure adopted on July 18, 1956 and subsequently set at 12 years - in 1961; organizing the average cycle on two profiles, real and human; organizing literacy courses for illiterate adults; organizing courses for employees of evening courses of medium and higher level, thus pursuing a qualitative development of staff in the economic and administrative sector.

The communist authorities also took a series of measures for the training and improvement of teachers, through the Law of 1959 the Institutes of Pedagogy were established with a duration of 3 years for the qualitative training of teachers; these specialized forms of education were intended for the training of teachers for levels V-VIII and V-VII. The first pedagogical institutes were established in 1959 in Bucharest, Iaşi, Timişoara, Craiova, Galaţi Braşov, followed by those established in 1961 in Arad, Baia Mare, Bacău, Constanţa and Oradea, in 1968. The increased interest given to teachers is also seen in Law no. 6 of March 14, 1969 on the Statute of Teachers in the Socialist Republic of Romania, which began with a praise of teachers, spoke of „the noble mission and high social and patriotic responsibility to achieve the goals of education, contributing to the multilateral and harmonious formation of the human personality, to the flourishing of our socialist order and nation".[29]

The period after the Second World War brings, therefore, major changes in Romanian education even subject to the import of a foreign model, the Soviet one. The main achievements are related to the expansion of the school network-increasing the number of school buildings, their endowment and guaranteed access to the training process in order to reduce-eradicate illiteracy.

[28] Ştefan, Bârsănescu şi colab.- Dicţionar Cronologic. Educaţia. Învăţământul. Gândirea Pedagogică Din România, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1978, pag. 146.

[29] https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/he2dcmjx/legea-nr-6-1969-privind-statutul-personalului-didactic-din-republica-socialista-romania/ accessed 01.05.2020.

Other normative acts that impacted the educational process were: Law no. 11 of May 13, 1968 on education in the Socialist Republic of Romania[30] - it renews the tradition of education according to the European model with the capitalization of Romanian experiences and traditions, through which the Romanian state offered free education throughout time and Law no. 28 of December 21, 1978 - education law and education, adopted in order to increase the control of the authorities over the schools, by educating the new type of the individual - builder of the new political order.

At first sight, the statistics show that the measures in the field of education seem to have reached their general goal, at the level of 1989 the literacy rate of Romania had exceeded 90%. It should be noted, however, that these reforms were made with various sacrifices, the elimination of subjects from school curricula (sociology, law, philosophy), the closure of private or religious schools, the promotion of individuals who served ideological interests and culminating in the arrest or even murder of teachers who did not promote the new "values", the ideas of the political regime.

5. Romanian education today, where to?

The new reform of Romanian education began after the revolution of 1989 and involved over time a series of measures[31], often unpublished or contradictory, some of which annulled the previous ones without taking into account the legislative or application vacuum on which generated it, others have often become a means of satisfying some ambitions or pride of the political personalities who were at the head of the relevant ministry.

At the time of this study, the Romanian education system consists of preschool education, primary education, lower secondary education, which includes grades V-VIII, upper secondary education, which includes grades IX-XII / XIII, non-university tertiary (arts and crafts schools, apprenticeship schools, post-secondary education), higher education (undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs) and adult education.[32]

The transformation processes of the Romanian society registered in the last years and the transition to the society based on knowledge and competence represent major challenges for the education and training system, in the context in which the quality of Romanian education has continuously decreased, after 1990, to school performance indicators that currently place us in one

[30] https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/he2daojr/legea-nr-11-1968-privind-invatamintul-in-republica-socialista-romania/accessed 01.05.2020.

[31] << Those interested in real research will find, along with many school officials across the national education system, that leap measures, periodic returns to previous attitudes and practices, accusations, which have become commonplace, of the 'disastrous legacy,'" the lack of strategic continuity in education, there are as many dangers for ensuring an adequate education to support the national interests. >> See: Cătălin, Peptan, *Education, dimension of the state of national security*, Revista Intelligence, Bucharest, no. 16/2009.

[32] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/organisation-education-system-and-its-structure-64_ro/ accessed 25.05.2020.

of the last places in Europe. Education reform in Romania has gone through several stages and aimed mainly at restructuring the education system and educational programs, trying to meet current economic and social needs, but also European guidelines, the results not being always as expected. In the absence of substantial changes in education, distrust in the Romanian education system will increase, contributing to its decline and affecting the national interest.

Pre-university education has seen a decline in competitiveness over the past three decades, due to multiple causes, driven by the national demographic involution[33], declining gross enrollment rates, rising school dropouts and fluctuating rates of transition from an educational cycle to another. On the other hand, although it is well known that a society with a high level of quality of youth education will ensure the premises of a safe and strong society, from an economic, social, military, etc., and in Romania education is a national priority, in recent years, the amounts allocated from the state budget to the education sector as a whole have not exceeded 4% of GDP, being among the lowest in the European Union.[34]

The changes produced in the economic sphere and, especially, the development of the social context, have also left their mark on the evolution of the education system in recent years, problematic aspects with strong impact being related to socio-economic discrepancies between rural and urban and implicitly between the quality and performance of education in these environments, almost all indicators for evaluating the quality of education being inferior in rural areas.[35]

In the context in which the evaluation of the results obtained in exams, in national and international tests is one of the methods of measuring the level of preparation of students, and implicitly the efficiency of the education system, statistical indicators showed the decrease of participation and graduation and a low level of core competencies in international assessments.[36]

[33] After 1990, the negative demographic evolution, generated by the decrease of the birth rate and by the external migration of the population, led to important changes on all levels of the education system, as a result of the decrease of the number of students from one year to another. The Eurostat forecast for the period 2015-2040 shows that Romania's population will decrease by 1683 thousand inhabitants, which reveals a decrease by 5 million inhabitants compared to 1990, and the share of the young population, 0-19 years, will decrease from 21 % in 2015, to 19.1% in 2040.

[34] In Romania, as at European level, education continues to be financed mainly (at least 80%) from public funds. The European countries with a higher share of spending from private sources are Germany, Spain, Cyprus, Hungary, the United Kingdom and Bulgaria.

[35] https://www.news.ro/social/ministerul-educatiei-explica-rezultatele-evaluarii-pisa-si-factorii-care-le-au-influentat-principalul-factor-este-cel-socio-economic-1922403703002019121319188182/ accessed 28.05.2020. Regarding the results of the PISA Tests 2018, the Ministry of Education and Research is of the opinion that „in Romania, students from families with good socioeconomic status obtained, in reading / reading, 109 points more than those from families with low socioeconomic status, the difference being much higher than in the 2009 test (86 points). The socio-economic status was closely correlated with the performances in mathematics and sciences".

[36] https://www.edupedu.ro/rezultate-pisa-2018-romania-obtine-cel-mai-slab-punctaj-din-ultimii-9-ani-cea-mai-mare-cadere-fiind-la-matematica- functional-illiteracy-at-peak / accessed 28.05.2020. The results of the PISA tests (Program for International Student Assessment), from 2018, highlight the poor performance of the Romanian education system, the score obtained in the three areas tested: reading, mathematics and science being lower than the tests in 2012 and 2015. functional illiteracy amounted to 44%, increasing compared to previous testing when it was 39%.

Although higher education is a fundamental pillar of Romania's smart and sustainable development and plays a major role in the selection and formation of the economic, social and political elite, complete ignorance of changes in the labor market has produced an education system incapable of providing competence, but which has systematically created specialists in "saturated" fields (economists, lawyers, actors, ethnologists, sociologists, etc.), mostly being unemployed.

The uncontrolled expansion of higher education[37], the proliferation of part-time and distance learning programs, the decrease in the number of students[38], the non-correlation of their number with that of academics and the relaxation of standards on access to higher education are just some of the causes that led to the decrease of the quality of education at the academic level. Consequences of eroding the quality of higher education in recent years have been obvious; the low performance of Romanian universities in relation to similar institutions abroad, the inferior positions of Romanian universities in the international rankings on the performance[39] and non-adaptation of higher education to the requirements and needs of the labor market, being just some of them.

Romanian higher education, after 1990, did not comply with the needs and requirements of the labor market, consequently, the purposes for which part of educational policies was developed, namely the training of graduates, their insertion in the labor market and economic development - social development of the country did not have the expected results. An analysis of how the investment in university training has an economic purpose, in the evolution of the labor market, reveals obvious dysfunctions, non-correlation of specializations studied with market economy requirements, emphasis on theoretical training of graduates to the detriment of practical training required by the labor market , the existence of a conflict between the labor market and the higher education system on specialization, representing only some of them.

Against the background of these problematic aspects, however, there are also some positive aspects of the Romanian educational system. Thus, compared to other European countries, it is worth noting the small number of students who are not included in the education system, the small

[37] In the academic year 2017-2018, the distribution of higher education institutions by forms of ownership highlights 55 state higher education institutions and 39 private higher education institutions, with 372 state faculties and 136 private faculties.

[38] Eurostat's forecast for the next 25 years (2015-2040) shows that the population in the 20-24 age group, suitable to be engaged in university studies, will have a decrease of 171.6 thousand people in 2040 compared to the reference year 2015.

[39] Shanghai Ranking's (Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2018) included in the first 1,000 positions only Babeş-Bolyai University and the University of Bucharest, at the level of classification by fields of study, in the first 200 positions are the Polytechnic University of Bucharest (Engineering - Automation & Control) and Babeş-Bolyai University (Social Sciences - Public Administration) and in the ranking of fields of study, in the first 500 positions are found only 11 higher education institutions in Romania.

number of repeaters and those who drop out of school, a low number of crimes committed by students, and the list goes on. From these examples we can conclude that there is a good basis on which to build a new educational system in Romania.

6. Conclusions

The tradition of Romanian education, whose „pioneers" were providential personalities, deserves and must be capitalized in order to lay the foundations of a viable strategy and adapted to the Romanian realities of education reform. It is certain that the educational model in Romania must change starting from moral values. At the same time, the educational system must attract young people to study and ensure the appropriate rigor throughout the educational cycle. These changes are necessary and must be made quickly, but, as Constantin Rădulescu-Motru declares, paraphrasing Ion Creangă, „for the Romanian is difficult until he grabs onto something, because it easy to let go".[40]

There is a need to reconsider the vision of education, which must „prepare people for the type of society that (still) does not exist"[41], because education has been and is a target and a means of evolving society, but also a vector of maximization of the power resource of certain individual or state entities. For this, young generations must have role models to guide them, even if their entry into the education system is not an attractive option due to the lack of recognition of the importance of the profession by a part of society. It is necessary for the state to intervene to change attitudes towards what education is as a whole, by creating an institutional framework conducive to the development of school objectives.

Education is one of the basic pillars of society, through education are modeled characters, because in the educational process between teacher and student there is a direct interaction, which is not only related to the process of knowledge communication. The teacher is the adult who presents himself to the students as a trained person, as an existential model. The impact that a teacher has on a student's life can be much greater than the educational process itself, because, paraphrasing Mihail Sadoveanu, „something of his soul has remained in the souls of many".

The school must become „a factory of souls", which has as its raw material the character of the student and contributes essentially to his formation as a human being, in the context in which the educational process has a double representation: an objective one - which consists in acquiring

[40] Constantin, Rădulescu-Motru, *Psihologia poporului român*, Editura Paideia, Bucureşti, 1998, p. 18.
[41] Edgard, Faure, *A învăţa să fii*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, Bucureşti, 1974, p. 54.

the necessary skills -a future activity, and a subjective one - which generates the feeling of security of the one who assimilates information as a foundation of knowledge, even if only we believe the biblical verse „you must know the truth and the truth will set you free".

In this context, the role of education must be fully aware, because today's student will be the man who tomorrow will arrive in society, perhaps even in the position to lead and make decisions for his peers, and an incompetent man with poor training in its field of activity it can generate detrimental consequences, both at individual and societal level.

Nelson Mandela said that "education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world"[42], a world today in constant change imposed by the galloping evolution of technology; starting from these considerations, it is necessary that the perspectives of approaching education must be adapted to the current realities of society for education to become the great engine of human development that can make a difference in the future of a person but also of society. The educational system must play a central role of the state and it is necessary to benefit from all resources (material, technological, human, legislative and not only) to streamline the educational process, in which the very future of the state is at stake.

In conclusion, it should be noted that regardless of the circumstances, education must be a priority for both the state and the citizen. The lack of financial resources should not lead to the devaluation of education and to the derision of the educational system. Even in the worst circumstances, it is necessary to ensure the functionality of the educational system and its valorization in society.

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