

Idealization and politicization of education system in Albania and the role of the homeroom teacher (60s decade)

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Based on the legal, political and administrative perspective, the 60s are distinguished for some important moments that affect the Albanian school in general and the role and responsibilities of homeroom teacher in particular.

In the 1960 was published a number of decisions known as the "*Theses of the Central Committee of the PPSH and the Council of Ministers for the reorganization of schools and for the further development of national education*", which "*aimed to link more closely the school with life, to give the young generation general polytechnic education and prepare them for manufacturing work, without reducing the level of knowledge of students*". (National Education, 1960, No. 7, Page 28).

In the 1963 was compiled the new law "*On the organization of the education system in the RPSH*".

- According to this law "*The education system in the National Republic of Albania has as objective the general education of the young generation and their preparation to take active part in the construction of the socialist society. Its duty is to equip the young generation with genuine knowledge, to build the Marx-Lenin outlook, to provide vocational training and jobs, to educate youth in the spirit of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism and to provide their moral, physical and aesthetic education*". (Article 1)

- It also stated that: "*The fundamental principle of work in schools and in institutions of higher education is the connection of learning and education with life, production, the socialist mode of the construction of the country*". (Article 4)

In enforcement of the law, in 1964 was compiled for the first time "*The Educational Work Program*" and in 1966 was compiled "*The Regulation of General and Vocational Schools*."

The strongly emphasized idea in all these documents and in the press of the time, was the need to combine "*the teaching work with educational work in one process of comprehensive training and education of children and youth*". (National Education 1964, No. 1, Page 128).

A special role in this direction was needed to be carried on by the homeroom teachers. This was limited not only by the fact that their responsibility in the education process was crucial, but also because until that moment, there were emphasized problems in their performance. In the press of the time it is highlighted that "Our teachers (homeroom teachers) many times they fall into formalism in their educative work with the students. This responsibility is reduced into some formal meetings of the class, into compiling of standard education working plans in the class, in a "*campaign*" way of work, mainly superficial, without specific goals, without actual content... In most of the times the educational work is done in a spontaneous way, randomly, many times it becomes uniform and same despite the different ages of the students" (National Education, 1964, No. 1, Page 128).

Ascertain that in many cases the educational working plans were all almost the same (the "Teacher" journal. 1964, No.13, Page 4). Fundamental weaknesses were found even in the organization and development of weekly meetings with the class by the homeroom teacher, meetings that were mostly monotonous and non-relevant. In many cases the meetings of the class were even considered as a trial. (the "Teacher" journal, 1963, No.2, Page 3).

Special attention was given on the content of the educative work. Different authors strictly believed that the personality of the student is shaped during the whole process, activity and their social life: at school, at home, outside-outdoors. They emphasized that "*these factors must be driven in the best way in order to create an educative balanced unity*". (National Education, 1964, No. 1, Page 129). For this purpose, it had to be compiled a system of the educative work in general.

Precisely to define better the content of the educative work in schools it was compiled the "*Educative Work Program*". This document defined the basic characteristics of the educative work, the qualities that needed to be taught to the students; it recommended the activities that

needed to be organized for each class and at the same time it had specific directives for the homeroom teachers. (National Education, 1964, No.1, Page 129).

It was recommended that this program needs to be executed in compliance with the concrete conditions of every school, but the main condition was that *“in the educative work, the teachers should be focused on the clear directives on education given by the party”*. (National Education, 1964, No. 1, Page 129).

In many schools, it was observed a gap in between the teaching work and the educative work. Therefore, in the new program it was demanded that the educative work and the teaching work must create a unity and together to aim the creation of the new man. (National Education, 1964, No. 1, Page 129).

The homeroom teacher was recommended to use a variety of methods, forms and activities in the educative work, starting with the class meetings, continuing with the educative work of all the class combined with the individual educative work with each student, to the “5 minutes” appointments with the class at the end of each lesson.

For the meetings with the class, it was recommended that the homeroom teacher should give special importance to the process of preparation as well as continuity of the work even after the meeting.

The homeroom teacher should give importance to the clarifying and convictive work with the student, taking organizational precautions to achieve the targeted goals, persistence and discipline for the accomplishment of specific duties as well as delegation of some responsibilities to the students. The homeroom teacher should be very careful in order to assist the students so they will be able to *“walk on their feet”*. (National Education, 1964, No. 1, Page 132-33).

The homeroom teachers should work systematically during all the scholastic year starting since the first grade.

The Educative work program gave special importance to the work *“in the psychologic front”*. *“This-stated there- is a working front that touches directly the content of the educative work”*. (National Education, 1964, No. 1, Page 136). Therefore, it was required psychologic preparation, high morale, persistence and patience.

Whereas the *Educative Work Program* has to do more on the content of the educative work in schools as well as some methods and forms of its organization, the other document, *Regulation of General and Vocational Schools*, addresses issues more based on the administrative character.

In article 12 of this regulation it is stated that: *“every class should be leaded by the homeroom teacher, who is assigned by the Director of the school. The home room teacher, continues article 12, is responsible to coordinate the educative work of the teachers, to collaborate with the pioneer or youth organization for the communist education of the students, to follow and take care of the behavior and their progress, to maintain closed relations with the parents and help them in their children’s education.*

The homeroom teacher works based on a trimonthly or semester plan of education work. He/she organizes meetings with students of the class when needed. (Regulation of General and Vocational Schools, Tirana 1966, Page 10).

In regard to the actions undertaken for the student’s promotion and punishment, in the power of the home room teacher is acknowledged only the right to accord the disciplinary action of remark in front of the class. (Regulation of General and Vocational Schools, Tirana 1966, Page 18).

In the periodic press of that period, especially in the education area, the discussion on the above decisions and documents, as well as the specific problems of the Albanian education, hold a considerable position. Many articles and texts are written before, during and after these decisions have been published. We will focus on those problematics that are tightly related with the role, responsibilities and duties of the homeroom teacher.

Since the first year of the 6th decade (1960), it is reemphasized the role and responsibility of the homeroom teacher in the framework of the whole Albanian education system. There it is specially highlighted that the role of the homeroom teacher it is not limited in just producing statistics or evidences of the student’s progress or just the organization of some class meetings. *“In the whole learning process – educative of a class, the homeroom teacher plays a very important role: he/she will unite and balance the work of the other subject teachers, will transmit to the class the directives from the School Directorate, will organize their implementation in*

collaboration with all the other teachers, the youth organization, parents and the School Directorate. (National Education, 1960, No.6, Page 50).

Herein, the homeroom teacher work must be concentrated towards the student's progress in the learning process, as well as towards their education. He/she should know the group of the class as well as each individual separately. For this purpose, he/she should keep a special diary. (National Education, 1960, No.6, Page 51).

For the first time, importance is given to the work of the homeroom teacher with the classes compound by boarder students. It is a duty of the homeroom teacher that for these children he/she "*should keep closed relationships with the caretakers and vice director of the dormitory; he/she as well should keep continuous contact with the parents of the students by writing to them letters, to inform as well as guide them in relation with their child*". (National Education, 1960, No.6, Page 55).

The homeroom teacher is advised to rely on the "*archives of the class*", the group of students with high results and excellent behavior, to accomplish with a high quality the educative work and achieve great results in the class. (National Education, 1960, No.6, Page 50).

Special importance is given to the qualitative organization of the class's meetings, the better usage of the newsstand of the class, organizing patronage groups, etc. But special focus is put on the relationship and collaboration in between parents and teachers. "*The homeroom teacher informs on the student's behavior as well as on the progress, guides them on the ways of studying at home, on the entertainment time and ways, on the household, sleep, etc.*" (National Education, 1960, No. 6, Page 54). It is required that this collaboration must be extended during the whole scholastic year, not just at the last month of the year.

The homeroom teacher is required to work with enthusiasm and coordinate his/her work with the neighborhood around the school and its organizations. (The "Teacher" journal, 1961, No.12, Page 2).

He/she is asked to organize together with the students, helpful/useful social works. In the press channels are given examples of these activities, among which are mentioned *the collection and delivery of medicinal herbs* (The "Teacher" journal, 1961, No.12, Page 2), *cleaning of the surroundings of the school, cleaning different areas of the neighborhood or the city etc.* (The

“Teacher” journal, 1963, No.2, Page 3). Throughout these activities it was aimed the education of the students with the passion for work, the feeling of hygiene, as well as to save the state enough money. (The “Teacher” journal, 1963, No.2, Page 3).

The teacher possessed the “leverages” that could “use” for the successful execution of his/her responsibilities. Suchlike, was the student trustee, who had to be considered as the connection in between the class and the homeroom teacher. (The “Teacher” journal, 1961, No.12, Page 2). Furthermore, the homeroom teacher was recommended to “use” the active part of the class’s parents, compound by 3-4 parents. The active part of class’s parents constituted the core of the *Class’s Parents Council*. This organization could help the homeroom teacher by becoming his/her coordinator in the relations with the other parents. The members of this organization could pay visits in the families of the students with learning, discipline or frequentation problems, or even by helping the homeroom teacher in organizing general meetings with the class’s parents. (The “Teacher” journal, 1961, No.12, Page 2).

By all means it was required that the work with the parents should be coordinated “*in order that the requests should be equal, adapted, according to the age and as much consequent as possible*” (The “Teacher” journal, 1963, No.2, Page 3). In the education press are given many positive examples on the successes or results of the homeroom teachers of the time. These are often used as models for the other homeroom teachers. According to a model presented by a group of teachers, at the beginning of the scholar year they group the class based on the weaknesses and based on this they build their educative plan for the whole year. In this direction they have in mind the “organizational measures, the ideological work, the out of the class work, working with parents as well as other thematic. (The “Teacher” journal, 1963, No.2, Page 3). Anyhow most important for these teachers remains the progress, discipline and attendance, besides the personal example of the teacher. For this there are used also proverbs as “Words teach you, examples educate you.” (The Teachers Journal, 1963, No.2, Page 3).

One of the ways that is still recommended massively in between the concrete examples, is the patronage form and the placement of the patrols; the first, to help weaker students; the second, to control the compliance of the daily regime decided in the class meeting. (The “Teacher” journal, 1963, No.12, Page 3).

The collaboration and relationship of the homeroom teacher with the other colleges that teach at the homeroom class, remains a very preferred way of the homeroom teacher work. He/she had to talk to them in regard to the weaknesses of each student, had to ask them on giving extra assignments if needed, to specific students, to activate them as much as they could during the lessons, etc. Most impressive are the visits of the homeroom teacher in specific teaching hours of other teachers, to observe the standing of the students, their behavior, the activation, the quality of the response, presence, etc. (The "Teacher" journal, 1963, No.12, Page 3). This was necessary so that all the teachers would have the same tactic with the students of the class." (The "Teacher" journal. 1964, No. 19, Page 3; No.8, Page 2).

The student's booklet is considered as important documentary way of the communication in between the homeroom teacher and parents. The booklet was specifically used to show the student's progress.

Many teachers practice successfully the visits in the families of the students with different problems, like low frequentation and absences, low results, absence long periods of time for medical reasons, as well as other joyful occasions. (The "Teacher" journal, 1963, No. 12, Page 3).

In this framework are seen also the conversations with the parents regarding different issues. Parents are invited in the class meetings, in order to know better the situation in the class, the level of progress, weaknesses, accomplishments, frequentation problems, behavior and discipline. (The "Teacher" journal, 1963, No. 12, Page 3).

In several special occasions and activities parents are asked to contribute voluntarily through their work, experience and knowledges, or even help with materials according to the type of the activity.

An interesting way how to mobilize the students on the preparations for different activities, have been the invitations for special guests during these activities in the class. The presence of these guests was used as a chance for the students to better clean the class, decorate it properly, prepare the activity with greater desire, passion and responsibility and be more active during its implementation. (The "Teacher" journal, 1964, No. 19, Page 3).

Inside the publications, it is stated that the students gradually start to appear with uniforms and “pioneer scarfs”. One of the successes of the homeroom teachers is the fact that “boys and girls sit on the same bench together”. (The “Teacher” journal, 1964, No. 13, Page 4).

The 60s of the XX century mark the intensification and enlargement of the role, responsibilities and duties of the homeroom teacher in the Albanian education system.

This feature is part of the politic aspect (*The Thesis of the CC of PPSH and Council of Ministers of 1960*), as well as the legal one (*Law on the organization of the education system in the Republic of Albania 1963*), enriched by other important documents with professional character (*The Educative Work Program 1964*) as well as administrative (*Regulatory of General and Vocational Schools 1966*).

On an ideological outlook, it is evident for the first time the concept of “*the creation of the new man with the Marxism-Leninism outlook*”.

As we have emphasized previously, during these years it was demanded that the educative and learning work in the school should create a sole unity.

In this framework, the homeroom teacher duty was to coordinate the educative work of the teachers, to collaborate with the youth or pioneer’s organization, on the communism education of the students, to follow and take care of the behaviors and their progress, to maintain closed relationships with the parents and assist them in the education of their children.

In the specialized media of the time there were offered models, forms, ways and examples on how the homeroom teacher must and could achieve an objective like this. Besides the already known ways from the 50’s, new ways were introduced also.

The reliance on the soviet school, in the pedagogy and soviet model, are not mentioned anymore.

Despite the ideologization and politicization of the Albanian education system, and specially the educative work in the Albanian school, the core of the homeroom teacher work on taking care for the progress of their students, on frequentation, discipline and holistic education, even in the 60s remains unchanged, constant.

References

1. *National Education*, 1960, No.7, Page 28
2. *National Education*, 1960, No.6, Page 50, 51, 55, 54.
3. *National Education* 1964, No.1, Page 128
4. *National Education*, 1964, No.1, Page 129, 132, 133, 136
5. *The "Teacher" journal*, 1961, No.12, Page 2
6. *The "Teacher" journal*, 1963, No.2, Page 3
7. *The "Teacher" journal*, 1963, No.12, Page 3
8. *The "Teacher" journal*. 1964, No.8, Page 2
9. *The "Teacher" journal*, 1964, No.13, Page 4
10. *The "Teacher" journal*. 1964, No.19, Page 3
11. *Regulation of General and Vocational Schools*, Tirana 1966, Page 10, 18