



The Albanian women during the communist regime

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Abstract

The Albanian woman was a worthy participant during the National Liberation War. She followed the example of other women around the world against Fascism by living behind the prejudices of the time, as an important step in the victory of her rights. She represents a power in the society and by struggling and self-denying she did a lot to escape from robbery within her family and society. The cooperation with women was an important element even in the governing bodies of war. They considered her equal with men during this war totally different from the Nationalist like Ballist, Zogite even the north Bajraktar who were in a more conservative and traditional position. The Albanian Communists were realistic and closer to the modern trend. Women's participation in this war was just a necessity. In this international movement they would be an inseparable part. This movement organized from the governing bodies of the war, marked the beginning of her emancipation. ACP (Albanian Communist Party) The Albanian woman became part of this organization in the early 1942. Enver Hoxha personally dealt with this problem in the document directed to the organizations. The women's emancipation was realized by the leading party ACP. The directives on women's emancipation and employment were approved in a five-year-plan. Her emancipation followed the Marxist and Leninist ideology of the leading party. Although the figures achieving gender equality, women emancipation was not real but more ideological.

Key words: Ideology, class warfare, Marxist-Leninist directives

1. The Revolution' in Education and the Increase of girls' Access in it

In the declared government policies, education was not a privilege only of the rich members of the society, but also of the 'common people' [6]. The government of King Zog had left a deficiency in the development of education. Despite the attempts of King Zog to give a secular character to education, the school attendance and their spread was limited. During this period even though it was invested in the elementary schools, their spread in the rural areas was limited. High schools functioned only in the large cities and were attended by the children of families with considerable incomes. Most of the schools until 1933, had religious character or were opened by the invaders during World War I. The lessons in most of the schools were not held in the native language. Meanwhile, the schools in Albanian language were very few because the budget resources to maintain them were limited. During the academic year 1926-1927 there were 536 elementary schools, where 830 teachers taught and 26.612 students attended, with a population of 834 thousands inhabitants. There were only 10 high schools, where 101 teachers taught and 1.328 students attended, where only 10% of them were girls. [4]. High schools were mainly opened by foreigners, and as far as universities were concerned, they were unthinkable. Women schools were also few in number. [6]. In the September 14th, 1932 Act, which was ratified by the Parliament in the spring of 1933, it was forbidden the attendance of foreign schools. This act was very important in order to reinforce the position of national schools. During 1938-1939 in Albania could be counted 643 elementary schools altogether with 5 classes each.

In the post war situation, The problem for the communist government was not only the fight against illiteracy, but also opening high schools and preparing the texts for primary and secondary education. The first steps towards creating the obligatory education were thrown at the 4th Plenum of The Central Committee of the P.K.SH held in October 17 1945 [6] and further continued in the 5th Plenum held in February 21st in 1946. Immediately after this decision and the ratification of the education reform of 1946, there were rebuilt and opened many new schools. In all types of schools there was an increase in the number of male students and female. As a consequence there was an increase in the education indexes compared to 1935-1940.

The war had left behind many damages in Albania. As there was lack of teachers, there were taken measures to create pedagogical courses in order to prepare teachers, In the beginning schools worked with the old programmes in subjects such as History, Geography, Psychology and Pedagogy. Later on, the 5th Plenum determined emergent duties in education, starting from the fight against



illiteracy, rebuilding of the schools and opening new ones. The illiterate population in 1947 was 81.22% [1]. All the Plenum decisions were put in the programme of the first government of Popular Republic of Albania, in March 24, 1946. [6]. In this programme it was reflected the women issue. Because of the need for qualified employees in 1946 it opened the 2 year Pedagogic Institute. The government also encouraged more girl students to attend these schools in order for them to take the deserved position in the new Albania.

The Reform in education started to apply in Albania after the ratification by the Popular Convention the Law No. 282, August 17 1946. The reform determined the state, secular and democratic character of the schools. It also stipulated the new education system : the preschool education, the vocational education and adult education. The reform also planned a new structure for the comprehensive schools : elementary school for classes from the first to the fourth; middle high from the fifth to the seventh; and high school with four classes more [11].

The reform in education enabled every citizen an access to all levels of education. The elementary school started at the age of 7 and was obligatory for everyone, boy and girls. The school programmes were infied, by leaving out lessons about religion, Latin, Greek and by giving more attention to Albanian Language and Literature, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, History and Geography, Biology and Constitution. In the same year in all high schools it started to be taught Marxism –Leninism and Russian Language. Special importance was given to teaching an educative process, and to the relation between theory and practice.

The reform stipulated the secular character of the schools, but in reality this education policy resulted anti-religion and not just secular. Like any other field, even education took a turn that had nothing to do with policies for education in democratic countries. This made the education system completely ideologic, making propaganda for the first line of the Party and for the creation of the Communist Philosophy especially in the youth. During the '50s, there was an increase in the number of 2 years long Institutes such as The Agriculture Institute, The polytechnic Institute, The Pedagogic Institute (4 years), The Medicine Institute and The Jurisprudence Institute.

In 1957 it was founded the State University of Tirana [3]. A special importance it was given to the vocational education- technic- in order to prepare employees for different professions, important and necessary to increase the level of education higher than it was, by giving it a popular character but at the same time a politic one. [2].

In the beginning, in the education system there were used plans, programmes and texts from the Russian schools. After a decade of education policies, led officially by the Democratic Front, but practically by the Communist Party, in the 3rd of P.P.SH. held in May 25th, 1956, it was declared the end of illiteracy [8]. Despite the big economic difficulties as the result of the war and the process of the rebuilding the country, this was a victory against the education situation of the population after the war, where it was estimated that 81.22% of it was illiterate. [1].

The Congress Directives were turned into a platform for the development of education, with different objectives compared to the one of 1946. The directives included : 1) Schools to be provided with a large number of books based in the Marxist-Leninist methodologies, 2) Taking firstly measures to connect theory with practice, lessons with life; 3) To improve the education in rural areas, 4) To increase the number of Pedagogic Institutes; 5) To increase the night classes and the part-time ones; 6) To increase the number of the dormitories for students who cannot attend schools in their own towns 7) The cultural activities for the masses should aim at propagating the party's ideals. 8) Realising a seven year comprehensive school aiming that at the end of the third 5 year period, 1965, these schools will have absorbed 80% of children who have finished the elementary school. For this reason during the third 5 year period will open 200 schools of 7-years and 35 boarding schools that will be spread even in the most remote areas, where there will be at least 15 students in the first grade. For this reason it is needed to prepare about 1000 new teachers.

The 19th Plenum of K.Q. of P.P.Sh. on 8 October 1960, set guidelines for the education system. With the establishment of secondary school, as a compulsory system of education, every young person will be prepared sufficiently to attend primary and secondary professional education, or overall approach, with recurrent or without severance payments. In Albanian schools was introduced practical work, which would take place at the factory in plant and agricultural cooperatives. [9]. If the school was supposed to be 12-years, we should fill the program with something else, with the aim to prepare students about life, about production. In terms of the high school education, after discussions, it was decided that it was going to be schools of 12-years. [10]. The problem of the school revolution was led by the party, with open discussions. Measures were taken so as to schools students should be taught the Marxist-Leninist methodologies. Education system was the most sensitive toward the ideological orientation. The declaration of E. Hoxha for the character of school, was in his discussion at the

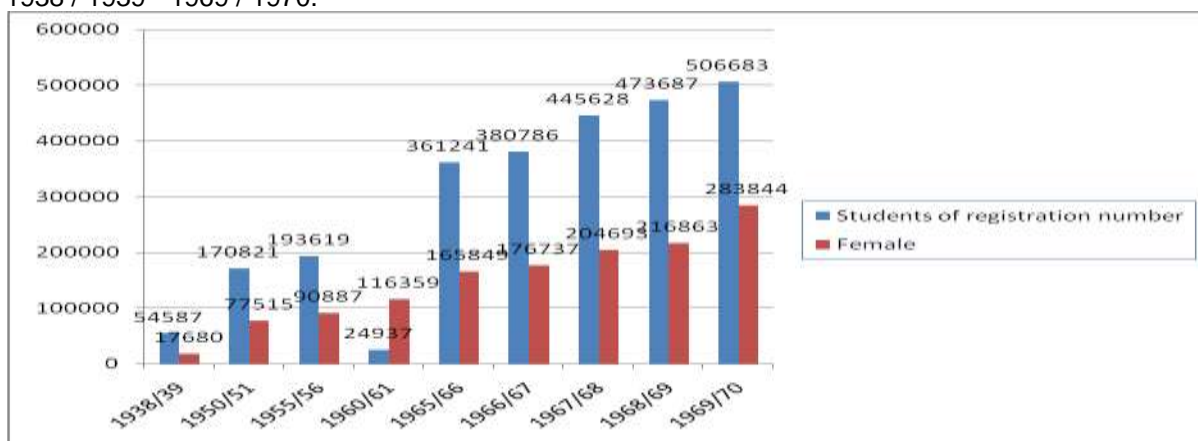


meeting of the K.Q. B.P. Club P.P.Sh. "Our school is not a nonpolitical one, it is a primary political and technical assistance. Teachers, lecturers, textbooks, educational teaching system - and, of course, our organization of youth serve this purpose; and that all these are directed and inspired by the party. Ministry of Education and Culture for this purpose, is going to select the best people, not only from the pedagogical aspect but ideological and political as well - in order for these to understand that our school is political and ideological one. The secretary of the party should attend a meeting and evaluate if their work is at the required level and if what teachers develop is necessary for students" [9].

At the beginning of the cultural revolution in 1961 the communist propaganda became more intense. This movement took place at the same time with the Cultural Revolution in China in 1965. Any form of appearance of a foreign culture was considered reactionary bourgeois descent. School programs included a close relationship between theory and practice. Within the country began the raising in the production basis practically in every school, which was included in the curriculum, in order to make young people familiar with the work and to prepare them in the construction of the homeland. The young people committed practice near undertakings or agricultural cooperatives, in order to strengthen ties with labor and rural populace. Practice, was the most important element of the Marxist - leninist theory, which was assessed in terms, according to the Marxist concept that the theory of learning in books without practical life would remain something without spirit, without life, something dead. [7].

The comparison that the communist propaganda was trying to make, pitting figures and statistics during the Kingdom period in Albania, was a political act that realized at the same time the clamping of this period, as a "dark" one in the history of the Albanian people, and in support of the decisions of the Congress of Përmet about the position of the King Zog regime. In the following figure appears the increasing in the number of female students versus the total number of students during the years; 1938 / 1939 - 1969 / 1970.

Figure: The increasing number of female students versus the total number of students in the years 1938 / 1939 - 1969 / 1970.



As it can be seen, the number of women attending school in Albania in 1970, was about 17 times higher than their number in 1938. This increase was much higher than the increase in the number of general pupils, which was about 10 times. It is clearly noticed from the table that the increased number of women in education started in 1950; during this year in Albania, about 4.5 times more women than in 1938, attended school. Also, with the exception of the academic year 1960 - 1961, when the number of female students was higher than men, all the other years reports are in favor of students men.

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