
**CONGRESS OF ELBASAN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF NORMAL
(PEDAGOGICAL) SCHOOL**

Dorina Daiu

University “Aleksander Xhuvani”, Elbasan, Albania, dorinadaiu@yahoo.com

Abstract: Throughout the history, teachers have played a crucial and missionary role in the preparation of generations as citizens of the future. Gratitude on teachers is definitely a patriotic obligation to them.

In Albania, due to different historical, geographical and economic factors, teachers have worked and lived in difficult conditions. This is not only in the long periods of foreign conquests and in the period of the National Renaissance but also after the victory of Independence and the creation of an independent Albanian state.

Most of them, as true missionaries, regardless of the conditions, devoted themselves to that noble silence, worked without a self-propelled for the nation, which always required renaissance. With and without appropriate school facilities, with difficult general conditions, with or without texts, with a lack of teaching resources, without guaranteed livelihoods, served in an exemplary manner to teach new generations the writing of Albanian language and to cultivate to the student knowledge and how to love their country.

But when does the formation of teachers in Albania have the most significant institutional beginnings or developments?

Through this paper I tried to bring into attention the decisions of the Congress of Elbasan in 1909 as the first Albanian Pedagogical Congress whose primary task was the opening of a Pedagogical School. This school would served in the institutionally studied preparation of teachers whose job at that time was a national emergency for the development of the Albanian nation. This school was set up to open in the city of Elbasan.

Elbasan, a city of Middle Albania, has been described as the cradle of the Normal School. Alongside the economic and social development, Elbasan was also acclaimed for his cultural and educational development, especially in the period of the National Renaissance.

Of great importance in the formation of students there is the patriotic spirit of the Renaissance, which was always alive and powerful among Normale's teachers. Patriotic education of students remained as primary target in the field of general formation. Albania's Albanian language (literature, history, and geography) was developed at the highest possible level of time. Since its beginning, Normal School was not seen simply as a high school, but as an educational institution that represented the dignity of the nation, which would radiate the light of Albanian knowledge. Opening Normale School was not a matter of knowledge but also patriotism.

Keywords: Congress, Education, Normal School, Elbasan

I. THE CONGRESS OF ELBASAN AS THE FIRST PEDAGOGICAL CONGRESS

The Elbasan National Congress opened its works on the afternoon of 2 September 1909. His work continued for 8 days in open and closed meetings, were characterized by a busy work of all delegates, but especially of the commissions raised for the most important problems. The general atmosphere of the vibrancy of knowledge and culture efforts during this period in Elbasan is given to us by Miss Durham, which writes: "In Elbasan it is affected by the efforts made for knowledge and culture. There are people who, without any help, give and take French, even German, grammar. There are a large number of educated and knowledgeable people ... In Elbasan there are not only words ... Elbasan dreams of a bright future and his position in the center of the country would be ideal for the capital. " (Durham, 1998, p.81)

The first session of this Congress, which was held in a hall of the "Brotherhood" club, mainly addressed organizational problems. Thus each delegate was provided with documents from the club he represented. After verification of the documents, Congress in a democratic way, by secret ballot, proceeded to the election of its governing forum, namely the mayor, deputy mayor. By secret ballot, Congressman with 39 votes in favor was elected Mr. Dervish Biçaku (or Dervish Bej Elbasani), as confirmed in the time documentation, while Mit'hat Bej Frasheri was elected vice president with 24 votes in favor; The writers from the congress were assigned by the gentlemen from Elbasan Simon Shutariqi, and Josif Haxhima.

Further on in the sessions that followed, Congress discussed extensively such problems as the further spread of Albanian language education, the preparation of teachers for Albanian schools and the better organization of the cultural and national movement in general.

In this context, he made a number of decisions that were resolved in the so-called Congressional Decision Act of 15 points, but as it was written in the press, the spirit of Congress and Albania were three decisions: (Myzyri,2004,p.70)

1. The opening of a normal school in Elbasan. (point 1)
2. Establishment of a school center in Korça that would deal with the organization, maintenance and assignment of Albanian schools. (point 2)
3. Election of the “Manastir club” as a central club for the next two years. (point 9)

In view of the first decision during his work, Congress addressed the problem of adopting regulations and statuses related to the outline of the organizational structures and the Normal School program that would soon expire on the preparation of teachers for Albanian primary schools. Concerning the second decision, the Congress orientated the opening of new ones in different areas as well as the introduction of the Albanian language instruction in all the foreign schools that existed. In this context, the central school society that was established in Korca with the name "Albanian Society of Students," "Progress" would be of great help. Congress demanded that this society be formally recognized by the government of Istanbul and next to it to create a general fund ark. Concerning the latter, Congress in one of its sessions decided to set up a commission consisting of Dervish Biçak, Qemal Bej Elbasani, Refik Toptani, Orhan Pojani, Irfan Ohrid, Idomentë Kosturi and Haxhi Bajrami, which undertook the drafting of a list of all the wealthy citizens who came from the four sides of Albania and telegraphically asked them in the name of Congress, money help, within the reach of teachers.

Concerning the third decision, during the proceedings, the Congress widely discussed the problem of strengthening the interaction and the links between clubs and societies. However, it should be said that the problem in question was outlined as a preoccupation in the press of time before the congressional meeting. So on the pages of the newspaper, "The Sun", which came to Boston under the direction of Faik Konica, a month before the Congress, while the fact of the opening of new clubs was revealed, attracted attention to three main points: (Osmani,1998,p.218)

Firstly: to coordinate the actions of the clubs in favor of resolving the national affair;
Second: the necessity of drafting a general program.

Thirdly, these inquiries should be submitted for resolution at the Elbasan National Congress. In addition to the decision to resolve the “Manastir club” as a central club, the congress also approved the regulation of Albanian clubs and associations that, in addition to the general and mandatory provisions for each club or society, should also establish individual status in accordance with concrete conditions and needs. In this context, it is stated explicitly, "All clubs and societies must work with all their strengths for the benefit of the Albanian nation and the country for progress, popular civilization, etc." (Osmani,1998,p.219)

Decisions of historic importance of the Elbasan National Congress make a valuable contribution to the spread of education of the culture in the mother tongue. This Congress has been fairly considered in the press of the time as well as the National Congress for Letters, held ten months ago in Bitola on 14-22 November 1910, which made

known the aspirations of the Albanian people for freedom, independence, education, culture and social progress.

NORMALJA E ELBASANIT, 1909



I.II EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN ELBASAN

Albanian school means first school in Albanian language. All patriots, who tried in the dark years of the past, to raise and exalt the Albanian school, themselves have a share in the history of national education. But for those elbasanas in particular for the given contribution it would be enough to have an honorable place in the history of school and of the Albanian pedagogical thinking. The historical route through which national school has passed is somewhat special, compared to the Balkans and wider. This is

because of the fact that the Ottoman Empire had denied Albanians the language, school and national culture. They had denied the Albanian language because it was the most expressive expression of national identity and denied Albanian teachers because they are institutions within which this identity is formed. History shows that Elbasan and education had found each other and represented the continuation of a long tradition. Known Patriot Grigor Cikla will

write in the press of time: "Very good and very pleased if it will be this school in Elbasan. ... Even I am from Korça, I'm not ashamed to say that the Elbasanians are more grateful ... I know the homelands of Elbasan and I have the hope that Elbasan will reach the highest level than any other city of Albania. " (Hatellari,2012, p. 39)

However, Normal School and Elbasan were for each other. Elbasan kept "Normal School" because it loved and Normal School stayed there because Elbasan kept it. Not without purpose in the press of time Norma is cited as the first Albanian Institute. Mr.Erikson at a rally in America states: "Know that this nation is a beautiful lily, but surrounded by thorns, which did not let her sweet smell leave. Let's run to eradicate the thorns on his back, and then the civilized world will see how good this lily is. " (Osmani,1998,p.225)

Seeing the decisions of the Congress of Elbasan and their implementation we draw some conclusions: (Koburja,1999p. 28)

First: Congress with its decisions concretized the establishment and organization of the Albanian system and considered it the main means of progress and social emancipation. In this view delegates judged and made decisions based on the demands of the renaissance and the established tradition.

The Normal School was the pinnacle of the Albanian education system. Consequently, Congress chose schools to be opened for generations to be educated for the officials to be prepared. In the pedagogical plan, it is important to define the structure of the Normal High School, conceived as a national high school. At a special session of the Congress, the committee set up by Congress, presented for discussion and approval the lesson plan where the subjects to be developed would be determined. They were: Mathematics, Numerator, Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Anatomy, Botany, Geology, Mineralogics, Literature, Syntax, Literature, Rhetoric, Poetics, Turkish, French, English, Greek, Psychology, Logic, Pedagogy, Religion, Geography, Permanent History of Albania and Turkey, Drawing, Music, Gymnastics. All aimed at patriotic, professional, scientific, physical and ethical communion of future teachers.

Secondly: The proceedings of the Congress were conducted on the basis of patriotism principles. In this view, a special contribution is made in the history of education to decisions on school management. The Elbasan Congress decided to establish the "Progress" Society in Korça as the only center for the management of all schools in the country. In this way, the unique direction of all schools in Albania was ensured. So, "Progress" Society in 1909 was the first Albanian educational institution.

In addition, the Elbasan Congress set the rules of school management with director and elders. Here is the decision of the Congress: "... should be recalled in writing by the Congress of Elbasan's governing councils" Bashkimi " and" Vllazëria ", like the" Aferdita "company together, to choose the primacy here teacher of 8 local people in Elbasan, who together with her direction will reconcile the teachers who need and will take care of everything that has to do with her." (Hatellari,2012, p. 45)

Such a democratic school management concept, conceived by Congressional delegates, is a precious tradition for our school. The Normal School was all over Albania, but the Congress entrusted it to Elbasan and its children through their representatives took care of it to grow healthy and keep it when needed. As is known, Luigj Gurakuqi and Alexander Xhuvani were assigned to administrate the Normale school. In the newspaper "The Sun", November 1909, this criticism was made: "... should have chosen as a director of Normale a learned stranger, an english, an american, a scandinavian, who at his homeland had that burden that would be put in Albania" (Hatellari,2012, p. 46). This xenomen had forgotten the patriotism and the mentors of the Albanians and did not know the noble purpose and national nature of the Normal School. It does not prepare agricultural workers, nor mechanics, but cooks the spirit of the nation. Luigj Guarakuqi was a personality of Albanian politics and letters, while Alexander Xhuvani was a young philologist whose call at Normal School was the discovery of a talent for pedagogy and the Albanian School. Both patriotic patriots endowed with sound western culture. Time showed that the school's trust in the hands of L.Gurakuq and A.Xhuvan was an official as scientific as patriotic.

Thirdly, the development of the congressional work on the implementation of thoughts played a primary role in the combination of scientific and organizational activity, as well as of the pedagogical and administrative activities.

In the scientific and pedagogical view for the first time Congress solved the problem of our school content: The plans and programs of the Normale school were drafted, teaching in this school developed with pedagogical scientific criteria. In addition, tasks were defined through the "Advancement" Society to unify the school documentation of other schools.

In the pedagogical administrative aspect, Congress detailed the number of classes and students, teachers 'and managers' salaries, students 'duties and scholarships' obligations, the school budget highlighting "Administrative Expensive" and other school needs. (AQSH, file No. 2381)

I.III OPENING NORMAL NOT ONLY AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION BUT ALSO AS A NATIONAL PEDAGOGICAL CENTER

The opening of the Normal School in Elbasan in 1909 was the first Albanian national secondary school in the Albanian area. Normale's opening marked a pinnacle of time and this not only in the educational and cultural field, but also in the patriotic and social field (Koburja,1999, p.16). From the outset, "Normale" was not seen simply as a high school, but as an educational institution that represented the dignity of the nation, which would radiate the light of Albanian knowledge. Opening Normales was not a matter of knowledge but also patriotism. The Normale of Elbasan was the work of Albanian enlighteners, intellectuals, patriots and Albanian pedagogues. It is the result of the struggle of the entire Albanian people for the Albanian language and school. It was not opened by the Sultan's decree because this could not happen: but neither by the Albanian State's decision because it did not exist. The Normale is called as the Albanian Education nursery, but I would add that if you started out of the programs and from its pedagogical bodies, Normale was not a high school, but a real university.(Koburja,1999, p.16)

Normale started its regular work on December 1, 1909 amid an enthusiasm that crossed Elbasan, even the national borders. The echo of its opening went and spread everywhere where there were Albanians around the world. Normal School "would be governed by an Elbasan elders' who would be elected by Elbasan elite members of the Elbasan club for two years." (Xhuvani,1938, no. 5) And for keeping it, they were obliged "all clubs and societies inside and outside Albania, as well as all people who want the progress of the Albanian nation". (Xhuvani,1938, no. 5)

This important national school, the first Albanian full-time high school, was fortunate to set up its pedagogical foundation and start work with prominent personalities of the Albanian intellectual world such as Luigj Gurakuqi and Aleksandër Xhuvani. Together with them, the teachers and distinguished workers of the Albanian schools like Sotir Peci, Simon Shuteriqi, Hafiz Ibrahim Dalliu, Dhimitër Paparisto, Hajdar Blloshmi, Petar Dodbiba were approached in mutual cooperation and mutual understanding. Then, in the course of time, in this important national institution, they contributed with distinguished pedagogues and methodists known for solid formation, such as Josif Haxhimima, Ahmet Gashi, Ahmet Duhanxhiu, Qamil Guranjaku, Zijaudin Kodra, Karl Lazar, Shaban Arradhe, among them, Sul Harri. (AQSH, file No. 2381)

Thanks to the highly qualified pedagogical work and the multifaceted, teaching and organizational efforts made by these staffs, over time, Normale managed to consolidate his features through a serious and authoritarian work, thus becoming a center for the development of theory, practice pedagogical and primary source for providing the staff not only of the Albanian primary school, until the end of World War II.

Despite the difficulties of various historical stages, related to the limited material possibilities (texts, teaching tools, local, furniture, etc.), an educational process was actually developed at the level of coping with historical tasks, which required both general preparation and students with knowledge and patriotic education. It was also important to prepare at the Albanian levels of pedagogy and psychology courses, faced with various pedagogical influences.

"The notes the students received and later dispensations that were used in the absence of textbooks, were prepared with special care and served their teachers as a gathering of positive experiences and, at the same time, as a practical and theoretical source the basis for drafting and publishing the proper texts of some subjects ". (Osmani,1998,p.259) Here is the source stream starting work with the original Albanian textbooks for the subjects of pedagogy, psychology and Albanian language also for the other Albanian secondary schools.

Of great importance in the formation of students there is the patriotic spirit of the Renaissance, which was always alive and powerful in the bosom of Normales School's teachers. In the field of general formation, patriotic education of students remained primary. Albanians' subjects (language, literature, history and geography of Albania) developed at the highest possible level of time.

The special merit of the Normal School is the work of her teachers with Alexander Xhuvani in charge of delivering the Albanian language. "The Normal School", one of the first to teach Albanian grammar and as a school where this subject was considered to be a first place, was a good smithy for the processing of this subject and the dissemination of the relevant textbooks." (Domi,1909)



Figure 1 Photo of the Normal School building(AQSH, file No. 2381)

CONCLUSIONS

Relatively close to the delivery of the Albanian language, according to the example of the Renaissance, “Normal School” became an important lab for the interpretation of the terminology of various texts in Albania, which were prepared by the Normales's teachers since the beginning of it work. Despite the great difficulties and disadvantages that conditioned different historical periods, the teachers who passed and were formed in the Norman School banks, as Alexander Xhuvani said, "did not give the people's sons only the original knowledge, but there acting on their own hearts, has stirred up national feelings and has preached the brotherhood and union of elements of the nation. The Normal School, as it is the case that those who opened it today for 25 years has become the center of national education, not only education has been provided in this school, but the feelings of nationality are being stirred up and overcome ... The children of Albanian are brotherly children coming from all the lands of our homeland, having one goal and one ideal: Preserving Albanian independence, joining and advancing the nation.” (Xhuvani, 1938, no. 5)

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