

HISTORICAL SCIENCES

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN ROMANIAN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

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Abstract

Romanian society, in the period 1918 - 1940, was characterized by intense searches regarding the reorganization of professional training institutions in the field of education, discussions and actions undertaken with a view to harmonizing the teacher training process, in the new territorial framework offered by the Union of 1918. During this period, gradually, the models regarding professional training have complemented the intrinsic nature of the Romanian school tradition, the lucidity and breadth of the vision of statesmen interested in the good of the nation, as well as the theoretical suggestions of Romanian pedagogues. In line with the changing expectations of Romanian society in relation to education, these models have become increasingly structured and effective.

Keywords: interwar period, pre-university education, professional training.

The educational system was considered by the political elite to be an essential factor in the modernization of Romanian society. In the absence of significant economic and human resources in the Romanian space, modernization was limited to the recovery of existing material and institutional gaps compared to Western society. The pre-war political class did not regard Romania's integration into the Western value system and the modernization of the state as an assumed and conscious destiny. The biggest problem of the Romanian elites was power and not westernization. "The internal competition for access to the resources of the domination is the element that, in fact, also motivates the European integrative approach. Modernization and pro-Western orientation, inevitable throughout the entire process leading to increased interdependence between nations, were only elements involved in the conquest or preservation of positions in the center of power, not ends in themselves" [6, p. 85]. This aspect made the modernization of Romanian society represent a historical process limited to the confrontation between the two political poles of the pre-war period: conservatism (which rejected the reforms because they dispersed the large rural property) and liberalism (which sought the modernization and establishment of a centralized state system, by which to control the resources). Despite this aspect, the politicians appreciated as crucial the mission of creating modern political institutions necessary for the functioning of a democratic state, being evident "the tendency of rationalization in the administration and of aligning the government entirely with Western European models" [5, p. 8].

Through the development of the educational system, the Romanian political class sought to transform the space devoid of civic culture and the exercise of individual freedom into a modern and democratic regime. The principle of meritocracy was intertwined with the debates regarding the political paths to follow in the process of modernization of the Romanian state. In this context, the idea of meritocracy "will also be encountered in the debates on the definition of the concept of citizenship and, finally, it

will be absorbed by the dispute of ideas around the definition of the Romanian nation... Meritocracy has the gift of ensuring the mechanisms for a new social typology: that of the intellectual." Within a democratic society, based on the exercise of individual freedom, "the intellectual had to embrace the aspirations of social ascent based only on personal merit"[2, p. 26-29].

Regarding pre-university education, the principle of meritocracy was closely related to the debate on how to train the teaching staff. After the Union of 1918, the activity of teacher training represented a permanent preoccupation of the process of reforming the pre-university education system. The fundamental problem we deal with in this material is related to the impact of the initial training of teachers on the educational efficiency of the education system. We try to bring attention to aspects related to the salary of the teaching staff and the quality of the teaching act or the equal opportunities offered to students. These aspects are analyzed through an introspective analysis of the government's actions regarding the teacher training policy, in the context in which all political forces supported the theory that the educational reform had to be thought out and adapted to the new political, economic and social conditions.

The main historiographic concerns regarding the development of the educational system were carried out, after the Union of 1918, by a series of university professors, outstanding specialists, who made an important personal contribution to the legislation and implementation of educational reforms in the interwar period. Among them we find Simion Mehedinți, Petre P. Negulescu, Constantin Angelescu, Nicolae Iorga, George G. Antonescu, Iosif I. Garbea or Dimitrie Gusti. Petre P. Negulescu, appointed Minister of Public Instruction in both Averescu governments, publishes *Education Reform: draft laws* (1922), in which he sets out his education reform program, supported in parliament, but which failed to materialize in an organic law. Considering that the development of the Romanian state is closely related to the importance shown to the educational system, Negulescu explains that, at the foundation of the promoted reform project is the

importance of the training of the teaching staff and the coherent linking of the education levels within the pre-university education [9, p. CXI]. Dimitrie Gusti, appointed Minister of Public Instruction, Cults and Arts in the midst of the economic crisis, addressed numerous issues related to the education system in published works or in materials presented on the radio, or published in specialized magazines or in the daily newspapers of the time. Gusti deals with topics such as the role of the reforming teacher in the education system, school attendance, the importance of primary school in the development of the people's culture, the budget allocated to public instruction or the efficient organization of the school timetable. He demonstrates the close connection between education reform and national culture, showing that the ideal of the Romanian school is "the cultivation of the people, its transformation into a nation that represents a superior spiritual-social unit" [1, p. 486]. The educational policies presented by Gusti lead to the organization of an educational system that aims at "a better articulation of school levels and grades, corresponding to the existing psychological ages and social conditions" in Romanian society after 1918 [1, p. XIV]. The works presented are an important source of information in the research undertaken regarding the development of human resources in Romanian interwar pre-university education, alongside other sources such as archive documents, parliamentary debates, school, didactic, pedagogical and cultural newspapers or magazines published during the analyzed period.

Through the adoption of specific legislation after 1918, the Ministry of Public Instruction aimed to ensure their social and professional dignity through the statute of teaching staff, paying significant attention to professional ethics. The general problems faced by all socio-professional categories after the First World War generated wide debates in the public space regarding the status of teaching staff in Romanian society.

In the new context, created by the need to unify the education systems inherited by the Romanian state, an important problem faced by the competent ministry was related to the professional training of teaching staff, carried out differently in each province up to that point, and to putting into practice the changes undertaken by the general secretariats from Cluj, Cernăuți and Chișinău regarding the standardization of education.

The rigorous and solid systematic training of teaching staff was seen as a central and essential objective of the reform process promoted in the pre-university educational system. This aspect started from the fact that the importance of the professional training of the teaching staff represented "a central issue of the reform of our national education, as an axis around which to gravitate all other partial reforms of our integral education" [10, p. 76].

In the interwar period, the main institutional formulas that ensured the training of teaching staff in Romania were: the Normal School, the University Pedagogical Seminary and the Higher Normal School. Within the Normal School, teachers and educators (leaders) for children's kindergartens were trained,

while secondary education teachers were trained within the Superior Normal School. The latter functioned between 1938 and 1940, when it replaced the University Pedagogical Seminary. The University Pedagogical Seminar represented the institution of practical and theoretical training for future secondary teachers, being organized next to a university center. Professors of high academic standing (I. C. Petrescu, Ștefan Bârsănescu, Iosif Garbea, etc.) were active in the pedagogical seminars, these institutions being led by outstanding personalities of Romanian pedagogy. In Bucharest, the Pedagogical Seminar was led by Ion Rădulescu-Pogoneanu, in Iași this mission was held by Ion Găvănescu, in Cluj-Napoca we find Vladimir Ghidionescu in this position, while Constantin Naryl led the Pedagogical Seminar in Cernăuți.

In these Pedagogical Seminaries, theoretical training was combined with practical training. In terms of theoretical training, students attended a pedagogy course, took pedagogy and general didactic exams and were required to prepare seminar papers on a didactic theme. The practical training was carried out through various activities such as: observational practice (they had the obligation to attend at least 30 lessons), carrying out the analysis for the assisted activities, passing a methodical exam, participating in special didactic conferences and supporting some papers on pedagogy topics and applied didactic, holding trial lessons and a final one, based on a lesson plan. The students were also required to observe the students and based on this analysis to develop a psychological portrait of them, as well as to supervise the students during recreation and boarding school.

The University Pedagogical Seminaries aimed to train teaching staff with a solid specialized training, but also with a relevant pedagogical culture. The teachers in these institutions combined the formation of the pedagogical concept in students, by assimilating some theoretical knowledge and dealing with the course topics, with the activity of leading the pedagogical practice, thus ensuring the unity of theory and practice in the training of future teachers. The students opting for the teaching career were guided, rigorously and systematically, in the exercise of the professional technique and the application of the acquired theoretical information. Trial lessons (on average 6-7 lessons in the main specialty and 4-6 lessons in the secondary specialty) were carried out on the basis of relevant pedagogical indicators and operational notions, creating detailed plans. Students were required to prepare collections of moral texts and stories, collections of songs and folklore, etc. The methodical tools used were diverse: guidelines, model plans, collections of studies, methodical issues and anthologies. It was insisted that the training of the teacher be done through the university and with the help of the university, so that the danger of semi-doctrine could be avoided. In addition to the universities, psychology and experimental pedagogy laboratories also functioned, which fundamentally contributed to the familiarization of future teachers with the development and application of tests, psycho-pedagogical characterization sheets, as well as with the

problems of pedagogical research in general. For the students, taking practical, trial lessons was not only a way to be skilled in the didactic technique, but also a possibility to experiment, confronting theory with practice, applying and verifying theoretical acquisitions.

Future teachers took regular exams in their chosen specialty, exams in pedagogy, philosophy and logic, held colloquiums in the methodology of the specialty (primary, secondary I and secondary II), in order to be admitted to trial lessons. Debates, seminar papers, activity in scientific circles and societies, monographic or folklore research, study trips, etc. they completed the training methodology, but also the verification, estimation and sanctioning of training for the teaching profession. It can also be added that the knowledge of the history of pedagogy was checked, as well as orientation in the problems of modern pedagogy (new currents, opinions, methods), knowledge of school legislation, professional ethics and those of social pedagogy.

The period 1918-1924 was characterized by intense searches regarding the reorganization of professional training institutions in the field of education, discussions and actions undertaken in order to harmonize the teacher training process, in the new territorial framework offered by the Union of 1918. Simion Mehedinți proposed a modern alternative to the institutional models of teaching staff training through the legislative project entitled the *Law for Preparatory School and Normal Seminaries*.

Simion Mehedinți considered that the village is the framework of life and spirit specific to the Romanian people. But for him there was an absolute village, petrified in an eternal culture, spiritual matrix and mythical, archaic reality. In the vision of Simion Mehedinți, the perfection of the nation could be achieved by investigating folklore, language monuments, everything related to the life of the Romanian village. In a completely closed rural universe, the mother, the priest and the teacher were obliged to collaborate in the spirit of a school of work, love and gentleness, in the spirit of the values of a *living church*. Simion Mehedinți proposed changing the "people's school" considering the development of human resources. Future teachers and professors were to be selected according to vocation criteria, from among those attending "preparatory schools and normal seminaries". *The Law for Preparatory School and Normal Seminaries*, drafted by Simion Mehedinți in 1918, was based on a new way of training and recruiting teachers. For him, in the complexity of reforming the education system, the activity of the teaching staff was the most important, because the educator was considered the first unit of measurement of the values that an era puts into circulation. Mehedinți's vision turned to the village world, considering that the traditional school was "sick", and the rural school offered "the peasants words instead of deeds" [3, p. 197]. The Romanian village was seen as the engine through which the urban world could be regenerated, concluding that in order to support "the cities, we must turn our face to the villages" [11, p. 13].

In Mehedinți's opinion, the success of the transformation of the education system through the labor school depended a lot on the involvement of teachers, their character and training. He thus considered that school reform had to start from the teaching staff, by reorganizing normal schools. Mehedinți was of the opinion that, by their way of organization, normal schools represented "a kind of attack on village life" [11, p. 199]. They lost touch with the traditions of the people and, consequently, he requested their transfer to the countryside. Mehedinți argued that "many of the teachers who left these schools returned [to the countryside] with a changed attitude, with a bird's tongue, with cosmopolitan habits", thus contributing not to the strengthening of the village, but to the "weakening of the Romanian people." Living in the rural community, which they were called to teach, teachers would have ceased to transform into city bureaucrats, becoming "an example of intense and complete life, beginning with their own rural household." In the normal schools, for the training of future teachers, the best teachers, the most "chosen personalities of the entire generation and the people most in control of the realities of life" had to be selected [11, p. 198-203].

Mehedinți, philosopher of culture and pedagogue, was categorically against the importation of foreign educational systems. He spoke for the use of the original Romanian values, because in order to "cure ourselves of our shortcomings..., from the nature and heritage of our people we must take the guidelines for raising the childhood of the country to a large extent. Only a Romanian pedagogy can fully benefit our people" [11, p. 16]. National pedagogy had to be based on ethnography, a major condition of its authenticity and practical effectiveness. In order to form the staff necessary for such a pedagogy, it was necessary to establish specific institutions: the normal pedagogical seminary and the higher normal seminary.

The Normal Pedagogical Seminary was supposed to function in the commune centers, being thought both as a professional training institution with specific functions, and as an instrument for the cultural upliftment of the people in all aspects. In Mehedinți's vision, the normal school had to be close to the conception and way of life of the peasant, because the peasantry had not only the largest share of the population as a whole, but was also the bearer of authentic Romanian values and traditions, of the essence of our spirituality. For Simion Mehedinți, Romania's future was definitely linked to ensuring a superior rural life.

Through the *Law for the Preparatory School and Normal Seminaries*, which, although it was passed by the Parliament in 1918, was not implemented, the Superior Normal Seminar would have been the institution for training teachers for gymnasiums and high schools. The higher normal seminaries were to be established in Iași and Bucharest and had associated as application schools all types of educational units: the primary school, the gymnasium school, the high school and the normal pedagogical seminary. These professional training institutions were organized into

three sections: literary, scientific and technological, with the possibility of establishing an administrative section as well. The general culture and specialized subjects included in the curriculum were to be taught by teachers recruited from the universities, with outstanding teaching skills.

In Transylvania, Onisifor Ghibu, general secretary of the Instructional Resort in 1919, concretized his ideas regarding the training of teaching staff by establishing the Latin College. The institutional form of teacher training proposed by Onisifor Ghibu was the pedagogical institute, a complex institution, endowed with application schools of all types. The preparation for the teaching career was, in his view, a harmonious, integrated, global preparation. This involved not only specialized courses and seminars, but also the organization, within the student dormitories, of foreign language courses, conferences on topics related to the language, literature and history of the Romanian people. To these were added excursions and study trips, connections and student exchanges with other universities in the country and abroad, missions and the awarding of prizes for meritorious activities. It also required the existence of libraries and reading rooms, which would provide students with access to the scientific publications of various universities, a sufficiently large number of specialist books, gyms and the possibility to capitalize on their artistic inclinations (piano and violin lessons, musical, cultural, artistic evenings etc.). All of these could support the students in the specific "cultural construction" project of Greater Romania. The Latin College was thought of as an annex of the University of Cluj-Napoca, and its activity had to have a diversified and unitary educational content at the same time, due to the quite clearly expressed goal, that of shaping a generation of intellectuals who would create new standard of culture, at the level of the entire country [8, p. 321-322]. However, the Latin College was abolished in 1921, but the kind of activities initiated by Onisifor Ghibu under the sign of this higher education institute will develop later.

In the mandate held at the Ministry of Instruction and Cults, between December 1918 and September 1919, Constantin Angelescu paid special attention to those transitional measures that had to ensure the gradual transition towards the unification of the pre-university education system. A first step was taken with the help of Decree-law no. 2844 of July 5, 1919 amending the Primary and Normal Primary Education Law, which introduced the complementary course. For the changes considered, Constantin Angelescu asked the teaching staff to formulate their point of view regarding the "great reform of education", based on the legislative proposals sent to the school units.

The professional training of teachers was debated, in the commissions created by the ministry, in close connection with the extension of compulsory primary education until the age of 16, through the introduction of the complementary course. In the document "Proposals for the organization of complementary courses", adopted in the working group of school inspectors and reviewers in the meeting of May 5, 1919, the reasons that were the basis of the measure to extend

compulsory education and the problem that the ministry had to solve were presented resolves regarding the increase in the number of teachers in primary education. In these "Proposals for the organization of complementary courses", although the ministry was faced with a "lack of teachers, for the primary elementary course", the ones nominated to take over the classes held in the complementary school were precisely the teachers by obliging them to carry out the maximum number of 32 hours of teaching per week! The authors of this proposal cited as arguments: a) the soul connection created between teachers and students in the elementary cycle; b) professional training superior to "any other factors for the achievement of the educational and cultural purpose" and c) the fact that "to some extent, the normal school has given them sufficient knowledge of the manual and agricultural work that schoolchildren must practice" [7, p. 50-59].

In the draft statement of reasons for the *Decree-Law on complementary courses* (no. 2844 of July 5, 1919), it was also specified the need to introduce the French language in normal teachers' schools, with the aim of improving the initial training of primary education teachers. It was thus considered that "in addition to the goal of training teachers capable of training primary school children according to national interests and social needs, the normal school must also give future teachers the opportunity to increase their knowledge and work energy, using for this and the sources of science of other peoples." Through this measure, it was considered that the future teacher was supported in continuous improvement, considering the fact that "the teacher's cultivation concern does not end with the completion of normal school" but it "must extend in the endless branches of social activity, in which the ultimate goals of the school are fulfilled." By studying French during the normal school period, the concern for self-improvement "will be all the more fruitful as the learner will be able to use the knowledge and experience of others" [7, p. 48]. The introduction of the French language as a compulsory subject of study in the normal school was also requested by the teaching staff in primary education, this being seen "as a means of general culture and professional improvement." This measure represented, in the opinion of the minister, a closeness of the professional training of Romanian teachers to the way of training of their colleagues in Western European states, where two or even three foreign languages were studied in equivalent school institutions. Angelescu pointed out that countries like France, England, Germany and Sweden "with all the wealth of their pedagogical literature, find it necessary for their teachers to know other foreign languages." The teaching of the French language in normal schools had the declared purpose "to give the teacher a tool of general culture and improvement, to put at his disposal the rich pedagogical literature of the West, to make it easier for him to know the origins of the ideas about school and education, which stirs the brains of great thinkers, currents and results of attempts in the educational and school field" [7, p. 41-43].

G. G. Antonescu, general inspector for normal education, showed in a report submitted to Minister

Constantin Angelescu, that in order to be able to carry out the various changes made to primary education with full success, it was also necessary to "prepare future teachers in accordance with the new requirements." For this, it was necessary to "intensify the study of applied sciences, that of tests related to social education (civic, moral, hygiene education) and that of physical culture in normal schools, so that in this way future teachers are sufficiently prepared for complementary education as well, not only for primary elementary school." In the context in which Constantin Angelescu was concerned with the reform of the normal school, G.G. Antonescu proposed the establishment of a ministerial commission to present a program for the organization of the normal school considering: a) the need for additional training of future teachers to deal with the complementary cycle; b) the introduction of the French language as a compulsory subject of study; c) reconsideration of school programs by eliminating the "deficiencies" noted and reported by the teaching staff; d) establishing the norms according to which the subject of "discipline and moral education" was to be taught to young normalists "in accordance with the new requirements of pedagogy and the democratic spirit of modern society" [7, p. 32].

These legislative measures, adopted with the aim of preparing the professional training of teaching staff in the school year 1919-1920, were influenced by the political changes recorded in the period September 1919-March 1920, when three ministers were at the head of the Ministry of Education: Alexandru Lapedatu (September 27-November 30, 1919), Octavian Goga (December 5-16, 1919) and Ion Borcea (December 16, 1919-March 12, 1920), who did not even have time to familiarize themselves with the existing problems in the Romanian education system, let alone intervene to resolve them.

Petre P. Negulescu, who became the Minister of Public Instruction in the Averescu government (March 1920-December 1921), faced the reality of a large number of vacant chairs, which led him to propose that normal departments be created in addition to high schools, a context in which general culture courses were supplemented by theoretical and practical pedagogy courses, a solution considered transitory, determined by conjunctural needs. Taking into account the raising of the training level of future teachers, P. P. Negulescu proposed in the draft law for pre-university education a duration of seven years for the normal school. The aim of this measure was to give graduates the opportunity to enter higher education and become teachers. The new minister thus considered that if the teacher had the normal school as the basis of his professional training, he would have benefited from a solid pedagogical and psychological culture, argument and instrument of exemplarity in the teaching career, as well as of genuine seriousness in life and in the activity at class. Pedagogical training was, in P. P. Negulescu's opinion, equally important and necessary for both the primary school teacher and the most demanding high school teacher.

In 1922, P. P. Negulescu developed an original education reform project, debated in Parliament. Along

with other measures brought into discussion by this project, P. P. Negulescu supported the establishment of a pedagogical institute for the training of teaching staff. This idea also appeared in other authors: G. G. Antonescu (1926), Onisifor Ghibu, Nicolae Costăchescu, in the draft law on the organization of higher education from 1931 and others. But the way in which P. P. Negulescu conceived the pedagogical institute, as a teacher training institution, equals in precision and subtlety the way in which a modern and flexible, integrated and open institution can be conceived today. It is the testimony of a responsible vision of the Romanian dignitary of that time regarding the destiny of the Romanian school. For this reason, P. P. Negulescu is considered a landmark in the very controversial field of teaching staff training policies.

The pedagogical institute was to include three sections: a) scientific; b) didactic; c) of information and propaganda, thus linking the initial and continuing training of teachers in a very current sense. The scientific section had as annexes an experimental psychology laboratory, a didactic and ethnographic museum, a library of pedagogy, ethnopädagogy and ethnopsychology. The general objective of the department was based on the permanent study, theoretical and practical, systematic and experimental, of methods of education and of all problems concerning education. This study had to take into account the specific characters of our people, their degree of development and the conditions of their life. Both the problems and methods of education in the case of normal children, as well as the methods for the "subnormal" ones (children with disabilities), were studied, of course with the help of specialists.

The didactic section was intended to take over, in the conception of the authors of the project, the functions of the pedagogical seminar, theoretical courses, trial lessons, the application and verification of innovations, the results of scientific research. The information and propaganda section marked the opening of the institute to the outside, the connection with the people of the school, the organization of training courses, etc. Thematic bibliographies were being prepared, there was a plan of trips to different cities of the country and a program of conferences. They were more than interesting proposals, based on a clear conception regarding the prevention of deterioration of the qualification and the installation of routine in the activity of teaching staff. In the vision of P. P. Negulescu, the pedagogical institute for teacher training had a triple function: professional-pedagogical training, research, as well as continuous improvement. The realization of these functions, by one and the same institution, reflects a modern and systematic, solid conception regarding training and continuous improvement, highlighting at the same time the connection between didactic and exploratory skills, research and investigation of the educational process. At the same time, the interest in providing the teacher with a substantial, scientific psycho-pedagogical training was obvious. Thus, the educational model developed by P. P. Negulescu was clear, well articulated, with a well-formulated theoretical basis and

organically integrated into the text of the draft law. For the initial training of future teachers, the project provided for the recruitment of university professors based on the appreciation of published works, and for continuing training, it provided for a paid study leave of one year, every ten years. Following the changes that appeared on the Romanian political scene, this project to reform the education system in Romania did not end up turning into a legislative act.

An important first step in the unification of the education system was achieved in 1924, by the adoption of the *State Primary Education and Normal-Primary Education Law* (infant schools, primary schools, schools and courses for adults, schools and special classes for educating children with disabilities). This law also took over the process of recruitment and professional training of teaching staff, regulating the appointment conditions, transfers and means of improvement of the members of the primary teaching staff. The normal school, having the same organization throughout the country, had the purpose of forming, according to the law, the teaching staff for small children's schools (kindergartens) and primary schools. Specific normal schools were established for the two categories of staff, with the specification that, in addition to normal schools for teachers, special departments could also be established for the training of female educators. The duration of courses for normal schools was fixed at 7 years, of which the first three years were intended to give future teachers a general culture similar to that of secondary schools, and the following four years were reserved for the completion of general culture and professional training, "holding-it seems that the teacher who has left the normal school can successfully teach, in addition to theoretical education, the practical utilitarian occupations provided for in the last three years of the primary school curriculum and carry out in his commune all forms of cultural, patriotic, social and economic activity, which the advance of a commune claims" [13, p. 8625].

The initial training of teachers placed special emphasis on specialized pedagogical training. In addition to each normal school, an application school had to function as an integral part of it, and the teacher of pedagogy of the normal school was the director of the application school, being subordinate to the director of the normal school. The teacher of pedagogy was obliged to carry out model practical lessons both for the teachers of the application school and for the normalists in pedagogical practice. For the other subjects of study, teachers were also required to give model lessons. In order to prepare the teaching staff to meet the challenges of the complementary school, workshops for practical applications were operating in addition to each normal school, and for the experiences and practical work of agriculture each normal school had sufficient land.

In the analyzed normative act there were also the means of continuous improvement of primary education teachers, in the form of: general didactic conferences, cultural circles, courses to supplement knowledge, refresher courses, access to school libraries and pedagogical libraries. In order to support the

teaching staff in continuous training and advancement in their professional career, the law provided for the possibility of granting a leave of absence for didactic improvement studies, in a pedagogical department attached to the university or as a scholarship abroad. The support provided in this direction was substantial. Teachers who were pursuing advanced studies in the pedagogic section attached to the university received their salary and the full salary grade, and those who went to study abroad as scholars received the grade and 25% of the basic salary [13, p. 8617-8626].

As part of the staged reform of the pre-university education system, Constantin Angelescu passed through Parliament, in 1928, the Law for secondary education. Secondary education was considered the second level of education in the structure of the Romanian education system. The purpose of secondary education was to give the graduates of the first four years of primary education (the first level of education), the essential elements of a general culture, while preparing them to be able to pursue higher education (the third level of education). Secondary education was divided into two successive cycles: lower, with a duration of three years (gymnasium) and higher, with a duration of studies of four years (lyceum).

The requirement to train future secondary teachers was highlighted by Article 38, which stipulated that in order to occupy a chair in secondary schools, candidates had to cumulatively meet the following requirements: be graduates of a faculty of letters or sciences, be graduates of a pedagogical seminar and to have successfully passed an aptitude test for at least one main subject and two secondary subjects. Unlike their colleagues in primary education, secondary teachers had the status of non-removable and had the obligation to teach a minimum of 15 hours of class per week [14, p. 4250], compared to the didactic norm of a maximum of 30 hours per week for a teacher [13, p. 8617].

In the case of secondary teachers, as in the situation of primary education teachers, the ministry placed a special emphasis on supporting training and continuous improvement. In this context, the law allowed the granting of a leave to complete studies in a university center in the country or abroad or for research activities (scientific missions), for a maximum of four years during the entire professional career. The leave to complete the studies was granted with the approval of the Council of General Inspectors from the ministry, and the respective teaching staff benefited from the payment of the graduation and a percentage of 25% of the basic salary. Thus, after an effective tenure of 10 years at the department, secondary teaching staff had the possibility to benefit from a permission to carry out a training trip abroad, for a maximum of six months, during which the state ensured the payment of their full salary, with all the increments held. This permission was granted by the Ministry of Education based on the opinion of the Council of General Inspectors and within the limits of the budget [14, p. 4247-4267].

However, secondary teachers were a rather inhomogeneous category in terms of training, recruitment and appointment in education. Due to the different way of organizing the system by which the

teachers were trained, there were teachers "coming from the graduation of a single specialty of the faculty of letters, others from two and even three faculties; some coming from aptitude exams with a single specialty, others with two and three specialties; some passed the special exam-competition for occupying a certain secondary chair, etc." The existing inequality among secondary teachers arose "from the fact that the studies of the faculty of letters are for a few years now only three years, and not four, as they were in the past." The mentioned stratifications, the heterogeneity of training and the hierarchies involved are just as many implicit forms of teaching staff training, some of them less satisfactory. There were, for example, what we might call artificially accelerated training models, which were reduced to two- and three-month university courses, intended for teachers who were thus transformed into trainee secondary teachers, tenured and "with the right to salaries and grades equivalent to university-licensed secondary teachers" [12, p.11]. These forms of training had a conjunctural character, their appearance being determined by the acute need for teaching staff immediately after the First World War. Empirical models of this type, with equivocal equivalences of gradations and forms of training, were also generated by the need to create a unique legislation at the level of Greater Romania, but also by other social aspects. Such models are far from the strength and theoretical rigour of some conceptualized models, present in the reform drafts or in the normative acts adopted in the interwar period and presented in this progress report. These conjunctural forms of training future teachers have worked in periods of crisis or social transition, they constitute a reality of not assuming a unitary policy of those who have assumed the reform of the education system regarding the way to solve the problems related to ensuring the resource qualified human beings in pre-university education.

Dissatisfaction grew among primary education teachers also following the changes made regarding the increase in teaching standards and the means of improvement established following the adoption of the *Law for the organization and operation of primary and normal education* in 1939. The members of the primary teaching staff were obliged to carry out up to 35 hours a week, didactic activity in school and outside it, and they were obliged to follow the security and social guidance courses organized by the *Social Service* [15, p. 3389].

In terms of perfecting and completing the necessary knowledge for teachers, the following were organized: cultural circles; special courses; study trips and refresher courses. These courses were compulsory for different categories of teachers and were set by the ministry based on findings made by school inspectors throughout the school year. Minority teachers in state schools had the obligation to attend courses for learning the Romanian language, Romanian history and geography, civic instruction and pedagogical practice. These courses lasted two months and were completed by taking an exam. If this exam was not passed for two consecutive years, the respective teachers lost the right to teach [15, p. 3377-3390].

For the training of secondary education teachers, the ministry organized special courses, conferences and practical laboratory or seminar work, according to the Decree-law for the organization and operation of theoretical secondary education, adopted in 1939. The dissatisfaction of the secondary teaching staff came from the fact that they had the obligation to refresh their knowledge following findings made by general inspectors through detailed reports. The teachers who did not improve their activity at the department, after attending such special courses three times, were placed at the disposal of the ministry [16, p. 6137-6154].

The needs of the education policy seem to arise, for the entire interwar period, from the need to clarify the national political meaning, from the need for continuity of public policies in the education system and from the need to adapt the measures taken to modernize the education system to social reality. Continuity in the application of educational policies, essential in the success of the reform of the pre-university education system, in terms of the training of teaching staff or the salary of the teaching staff, represents the element of unity in the reforming principles. In order to be able to speak of success in the implementation of reforms in the education system during the studied period, a long-term activity plan assumed by all government political forces had to be promoted for all fields of activity, not only for the one analyzed in this material. But the reason for the discontinuity, recorded in public educational policies, was precisely the party's rigid educational policy, promoted by those who reached the government.

In the studied period, gradually, the models regarding professional training have complemented the intrinsic nature of the Romanian school tradition, the lucidity and breadth of the vision of statesmen interested in the good of the nation, as well as the theoretical suggestions of Romanian pedagogues. In line with the changing expectations of Romanian society in relation to education, these models have become increasingly structured and effective.

In this context, we appreciate that the diversity of teacher training forms, as well as the existence of perfectly valid alternatives to the legislated models, are characteristics of the way of building public policies in the education sector. On the one hand, we encounter the official models contained in promulgated laws, often too technical or too cautious, characterized as a mixture of pragmatism and authority, limited in terms of financial support. On the other hand, we encounter models proposed by specialists or politicians, products of a movement of ideas that can only be characterized as complex, alive and effective in its attempts.

At the practical-action level, of the actual training for the teaching profession, some dysfunctions and dissatisfactions were manifested which determined the emergence of alternatives for the training of the teaching staff, secondary and primary. Some of these inconsistencies had an objective determination, related to a limited budget, others related to a certain mentality, organization and even conception, as well as subjective reasons for dissatisfaction, which generated attempts

and alternative proposals in the training system of teachers.

Despite the failure, motivated by conjuncture, of the attempt to reform the training of teaching staff, part of Simion Mehedinți's ideas regarding this problem can be found in many of the subsequent laws. For example, the idea of locating normal schools in the countryside, in order to bring the future educator closer to the problems and life of the Romanian peasant, appears in the consistent *Law of Normal and Normal-Primary Education* from 1939 as a desirable option, but without being imposed by means administrative. The approach of the normalist to the psychology of the people and the life of the Romanian village, a preoccupation brilliantly illustrated by Spiru Haret, will be attempted in the period between the two wars, either through the establishment of regional schools, or through pedagogical practice or through the Social Service and special education disciplines, as was "Life Activity" for example. It can be affirmed that Simion Mehedinți profoundly influenced school policy decisions, lecturing and campaigning for a real approach to the people, to their specific spiritual needs, to tradition. The Normal Pedagogical Seminary and the Normal Higher Seminary are the institutional alternatives proposed by Mehedinți, which influenced the training models of the teaching staff in the interwar period. Unfortunately, the training model for the teaching career proposed by Mehedinți placed particular emphasis on the village-town difference, a fact that affected the credibility of the institutional formula. The modern bourgeois state, which asserted itself in Romania, also required a change in the villager's mentality, not freezing in an archaic rural reality. On the other hand, some positive aspects cannot be neglected, which remain current: the educational value attributed to traditional work, preparation for optimal adaptation to a specific living environment, highlighting the social and civic role of the educator, his importance within the local community, the need for permanent collaboration between teachers, priests and the family. Despite the vulnerability conferred, Mehedinți's model brings attention to patriotism, genuine respect for Romanian spirituality, the aspiration towards purification through simple work, through faith and the need to free the education system from foreign models, sometimes taken over without any discernment.

A particularly valuable idea, which we encounter in the projects or legislative attempts presented, but especially in those elaborated by P. P. Negulescu and Onisifor Ghibu, is that of the need to consciously and systematically influence teachers in all stages of their activity, the role of the institution of training not being completed with the award of the study certificate or attestation. The unit initial training - continuous training is perceived as a necessity. Through propaganda and organized information, teachers had to be familiarized with the newest teaching methods, oriented to study and helped to eliminate the risk of routine or falling behind informationally. The project presented by P. P. Negulescu remains a valid alternative to the official teacher training options from the first half of the 20th century. A sectoral

reorganization in the field of teacher training and improvement, structural adjustments whenever possible can also take into account the suggestions contained in this project.

The law for state primary education and normal-primary education from 1924 also took over the training of teachers, providing the means of improvement in the form of: general didactic conferences, cultural circles, courses to supplement knowledge, refresher courses, access at school libraries and pedagogical libraries, normal schools for male and female teachers and special normal schools (for female educators). These forms of organizing the continuous improvement of the teaching staff have been a permanent concern in educational policy. In this field, that essential thing, necessary in school policy, was registered: continuity. This common point of the promoted school policies regarding vocational training led to the imposition of this necessity at the level of the entire education system. The beneficial impact on the educational performance recorded by teachers who entered the education system according to the provisions of Decree-Law no. 3328 of August 6, 1919 amending the *Law on Secondary and Higher Education*, is demonstrated by maintaining the way of organizing the capacity exam for occupying a pedagogy chair in normal schools in the normative act adopted in 1924. Continuing with the importance given to pedagogical training, the *Law for state primary education and normal-primary education* preserves, through Article 229, the demanding form of recruitment of pedagogy teachers for normal schools proposed in 1919 by G. G. Antonescu [13, p. 8629].

The law for state primary education and normal-primary education from 1924 also took an important step in terms of equal opportunities offered to students from the minority population. Thus, through Article 201, it was stipulated that in normal schools where at least 20% of students from a national minority were enrolled, their mother tongue and religion must be taught "in such a way that they can teach in this language" [13, p. 8626]. This law, however, maintained the organization of primary school according to sex criteria, providing for primary schools for boys, primary schools for girls and mixed schools. By article 67, it was stated that for mixed schools, with at least two teachers, girls from grades V-VII were organized in a separate study group, instructed by a teacher. This isolation was maintained, in Article 69, for the teaching staff as well. For mixed schools with a single post, a male teacher should preferably be appointed, and for mixed schools with several posts, at least one of these posts should be filled by a male teacher. In boys' schools, as a rule, male teachers had to be appointed, female teachers could only be appointed for the first three grades. Instead, only female teachers were appointed at girls' schools [13, p. 8609].

For secondary education (gymnasium and high school), the same gender organization of students was maintained, but also the division between male and female teachers in terms of the possibility of occupying a chair. The law of secondary education from 1928, stipulated in article 35, the fact that in girls' high

schools the teaching staff, with the exception of religious teachers, had to be made up exclusively of female teachers. For boys' gymnasiums, for example, in the absence of men, teachers and dexterity masters, except for religion and physical education, could also be appointed women. But the upper course was for "men only" [14, p. 4251].

The state of anxiety created among pre-university teachers could only have a negative effect on the quality of the teaching act, which benefited the students in primary and secondary schools. An insufficient salary to create a state of security for teaching staff led to a ceiling on teaching activity and to the removal of personal concerns for didactic and scientific improvement. In this context, with all the concern of the ministry to ensure access to a specialization for teaching staff in university centers in the country or through scholarships offered abroad, following the signing of bilateral agreements with other countries, an insignificant number of members of the teaching staff could benefit from these privileges.

Beyond these shortcomings, the pre-university teaching staff was marked by personalities who directly influenced the lives of the students on the school benches. Professor Ștefan Duțulescu, with a degree in philosophy and law, contributed decisively to the foundation of the moral and scientific profile of his students at the "Buzzești Brothers" High School in Craiova, where he introduced four main values into the set of the ethical ideal: "a) the principle of personal dignity and national; b) the principle of responsibility, which leads to the affirmation of personality; c) the principle of solidarity, from the association of individual, legal and disciplined deeds having as the norm: the fulfillment of the duty through the complete agreement between ideas, feelings and deeds of all, an agreement reached through obedience, sacrifice and heroism; d) the principle of legal and moral justice, in social relations" [4, p.1]. Such teachers contributed to the education of the interwar generations in the spirit of pedagogical values such as: dignity, responsibility, solidarity and justice.

Acknowledgement: This work is supported by project POCU 153770, entitled "Accessibility of advanced research for sustainable economic

development - ACADEMIKA", co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Program 2014-2020.

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