

## A TIMELINE OF FIRST ALBANIAN TEACHERS AND EDUCATION DEGREE PROGRAMS TAUGHT IN ALBANIAN

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### Abstract

The lack of education infrastructure and proper education degree programs has been one of the main problems that Albanians have faced through decades. This paper is an empirical work aiming to discuss some of the challenges that have delayed the establishment of Albanian educational institutions and circumstances that have impacted school attendance including political, social and financial factors. Moreover, this empirical work gives an overview of the course of professional and pedagogical preparation of the first Albanian teachers within and beyond Albanian borders as well as of the successive developments that followed; one of them being what we call the 'Universitarization of teaching'. The material of the paper has been collected by combining relevant information in the existing literature and analyzing the historical framework within the context of our subject.

*Keywords:* Albanian Teachers, Challenges in Education, Universitarization of Teaching, School Attendance, Formal Education, Pedagogy.

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### Teaching schools in Albanian language in non-Albanian lands

The Teaching Gymnasium school "Zosimea" in Janinë - was founded in Janinë in 1828 (Koliqi, H., 2002) as the first institution of this kind in this city and beyond. It was funded from the four brothers, inheriting their surname, Zosimea, as its official name. The beginning of work in this institution was carried out as a three-year school, a type of college according to European models of the time, and more. Later it became a four-year school. From the bibliographical notes, writings to the Frasheri brothers, it is concluded that "the brothers Sami and Naim Frasheri were also educated at this institution". Although this institution was not envisaged to educate teachers, according to a regulation of 1878, this school begins to work on preparing students for undergraduate studies, mainly in the major of teaching and commerce. The teaching staff at this school were mostly local, but besides locals there were also teachers from France, Italy, Germany and Austria-Hungary. For this reason, Zosimea in Janina was the best-known gymnasium during the Albanian National Renaissance, in which the most prominent Albanian teachers and patriots were educated, with no religious or regional differences. Besides Naim and Sami Frasheri, who were mentioned above, in this school were also educated Pashko Vasa, Naum Veqilharxhi, Konstantin Kristoforidhi, Ismail Qemali, Spiro Saqellari, Sali Nivica, Jovan Ndreko, Anastas Laska, Thanasi Konomi etc. (Caka, L. H., 2007). These individuals, with their zealous work and special commitment, left indelible traces even in the Albanian pedagogy.

## **Normal School in Arbënesh of Zadar**

In 1866 in the Residency Arbanasi-Arbënesh of Zadar, the Normale School began its work (Yugoslavian Encyclopedia, 1984). Zadar's Normal School was the result of Austro-Hungary's growing interest in educating the population of Zadar, an interest that was intensified more by the end of the 19th century. The purpose of the school establishment was to educate the Arbënesh population of Zadar with the surroundings. From 28 May 1901, in this school, the Albanian language became a subject, and the first lecturer was appointed the teacher Pashk Bardhi. Eventually, the subject of the Albanian language was included in the Croatian Normal School, with three hours per week, and later in the "Professional", school next to the "Normale", with four hours per week. Teacher Pashk Bardhi has given his contribution to this institution from 1901 to 1905, after which period, the teaching of Albanian language was also held by other teachers: "Gjergj Fishta, Ndre Mjeda, Mati Logoreci, Shtjefën Gjeçovi, Anton Paluca, Nikolle Rrota and Pal Gjerga (from the arbëneshi). Some of these teachers' engagement in this institution took place until 1921, when the institution was suppressed by the Italian occupation." The number of pupils attending Albanian language in this educational institution ranged from 60 to 70, most of them being Albanians (from Zadar and the surrounding area).

Bucharest Normal School - is considered as the first Normal School which was opened to Albanian students from all regions. From the pedagogical literature, but also for the Albanian pupils who attended this school, the Bucharest Normal School was also known as Bucharest's Normal "Drita". The educational work at this school began to be organized from the 10th of May 1892. With the engagement of the cultural patriotic association "Drita", the Romanian government's work permit for the opening of the Normal School is obtained, but with the condition that the teaching process, besides in Albanian language, is also carried out in Romanian language. The initiator and founder of this educational institution was the prominent Albanian patriot and activist Nikolla Naço, who managed to become the head of this school. In the first years of its establishment, lessons were attended by over 400 students. This school in the Bucharest area was known as the "Normal Albanian School".

Of the students who studied at this institution and were distinguished for their learning activities, it is worth mentioning Dervish Hima, Mihal Grameno, Faik Konica, Asdreni, Kristo Luarasi, Shahin Kolonja, Kosta Jani Trebicka, Lasgush Poradeci. During its two-decade activity, more than 100 Albanian intellectuals were educated in this institution.

## **Sultaniyes of Istanbul**

Among the schools that are worth mentioning and which served among other things for the preparation of the first teachers for the Albanian schools are also the Turkish schools called Sultaniye (Turks.Sultaniye - Royal School). These schools were of a religious character, especially of the Islamic faith, and lasted for six years. Otherwise they were known as Lyceum. One of the first and best-known Sultaniyes is that of Galata-Saray in Beyol, Istanbul, which was built by the French model and also supported by the French government. Meanwhile, in Skopje, in the second half of the 20th century, was founded a similar school called "Sulltaniye" where the lessons lasted for eight years. This school was attended by both Muslims and Christians, among whom there were many Albanian students, who later contributed greatly to the development of education and the Albanian schools. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Ottoman normal schools were also opened in Skopje, Bitola, Shkodra, Dibra and Janina, known in Turkish as "Dar-yl-Mualim teacher homes" that served for the preapring of the teaching staff.

**The Normal School of Skopje** (Bitola and Dibra in the period of the Ottoman conquest). The Normal School of Skopje - opened in the second half of the XIX century. At first, the teaching was conducted in Ottoman and some years later in Albanian language, but with the Arabic alphabet. Initially, this institution was a high school, but then, from the beginning of the XX century it began acting as a normal school. The students who graduated from these schools were obliged to serve for ten years in teaching, in order to solve the problem with the lack of teaching staff (Abazi, N., 1977).

Among other things, the Skopje Normal School, served, especially during 1910-1912, for the preparation of some prominent Albanian teachers, who later worked in Kosovo and Albania. Among those who deserve to be mentioned here were: Ahmet Gashi, Niman Ferizi, Sadi Pejani and Sali Morina, who were honored with the title Teacher of the People, and others like Ibrahim Kolçi, Isuf Puka, Avni Zajmi, Jonuz Blakçori, Minush Shala, Ferid Imami, and Ibrahim Fehmiu. With the undeniable engagement of Sali Gjuka (Dukagjini) teacher, the lessons began to be organized in Albanian language. During this process, he was also assisted by other teachers such as Naim Ferizi and Ahmet Gashi. A School Director at this time was the pedagogue Sabri Xhemili who together with the teacher Mehmed Shekibi were also editors of the pedagogical magazine “Yeni Mekteb” (New School), that was published in the years 1910-1912. The continuous expansion of religious and secular schools, both primary and secondary, in which women participated as well, also imposed the need for education and preparation of the female teaching staff. The aim, in 1870, was to open a female Normal school called Dar-ul-Mualimat.

**Normal School of Bitola (Manastir)** – started the educational activity approximately at the same time with the Skopje Normal School. The primary purpose and task of this school was to prepare staff for teaching, who were needed to work in elementary schools in the Vilayeti of Bitola. Participants who after four years of study received the teacher’s title at this institution, returned to their hometowns to serve in local schools to prepare new generations to learn the Albanian alphabet. This school also had a dormitory where students from distant countries stayed, as the possibility of travel was limited due to lack of transportation and large geographical distance. The students who attended this school, besides from Bitola (Manastir), were also from other areas such as: Follorina, Korça, Elbasan, Ohrid, Dibra and Struga, etc. With their illuministic work, each of these students, contributed, in their own way, to the distribution of knowledge.

**Normal School in Debar (Diber)** - started work in September 1910, and was a continuation of activities for the realization of the program for the opening of Albanian schools. The Normal School in Diber at the beginning carried out the lessons in Turkish. In the first school year, two parallel classrooms were opened in this institution, where participants were pupils who had completed classes (Ottoman high school) or half private gymnasiums. During the 1910/11 school year, 115 pupils attended the first year of study, of whom 100 continued in the second year. At the end of the second year, respectively in June 1912, from the school graduated 35 Albanian students (teachers), including: Haki Sharofi, Abdyl Fetai, Ramiz Hatipi, Ekrem Bahriu and others. With the initiative of patriots and the Istanbul Club, the Ministry of Education of the Ottoman Empire allocated financial resources for financing the teaching of the Albanian language and Ali Pustina was hired as a teacher of the Albanian language.

## **Formation period of the First Pedagogical Schools in Albania and Kosovo from 1900-1945**

**Elbasan Normal School** - as the cradle of Albanian culture and civilization, was opened at the time when Albania was still under the jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire. Its opening is considered among the most marked events in the history of education and of the Albanian nation, a success and a result of our Renaissance efforts for Albanian language and school. It was founded "on 1 December, 1909, based on the decision of the Congress of Elbasan, where the head of the education commission was Mit'hat Frashëri". This national higher education institution for the preparation of teachers possessed six classes, of which the first three were preparatory classes where the teaching content was of a general character, while in the other three classes dominated the pedagogical professional subjects, the purpose of which was to prepare teachers for the whole Albania and Albanian territories.

The number of students enrolled "in the first school year at this school was 50, with 16 of them being from Kosovo. In the second year of work this number increased to 140 students, with 70 of them being from Kosovo". Elbasan's normal school was opened and replaced by the Albanian people themselves, especially the association "Përparimi" in Korça (with chairman Orhan Pojani), by the press of the time, the patriotic clubs and societies in the country and abroad, special individuals - to whom the nation, school, and education, were above all. The activity of this school was specific, it sometimes stopped working or was temporarily closed. Thus, after a year of fruitful activity, it was occupied by the Ottoman invaders. With the efforts of the teachers and the persistent demands of the people, it reopened by the middle of the education year in 1911-1912. However, it was closed again when the Middle East was conquered by the Serbian military and reopened after the declaration of Independence of Albania in the 1913-1914. Until the Congress of Lushnja (1920), it was closed several times, and after the Lushnja Congress and the Tirana Government, the Normal School passed under the competence of the Ministry of Education until 1924. The Normal School of Elbasan left indelible traces in the sphere of education of Albanian teachers and on our national culture in general.

**Normal School "Sami Frashëri" in Prishtina** is the first Normal School in Kosovo for the Albanian students that was opened in 1941. The right to work was given to this institution by the the decision of the Ministry of Education of Albania, no.31 on November 12, while the educational activity began on December 17, 1941. A special merit for the opening of this school went to the then Minister of Education of Albania, Ernest Koliqi, and the special envoy of the Ministry of Albania for Kosovo Lirak Dodbiba. The educational framework consisted of teachers who mainly came from Albania, yet many of the teachers were also from abroad. In the group of the first teachers who started to work in this educational institution, worth mentioning are: Lirak Dodbiba, Reuf Zajmi, Zeqir Spahiu, Musa Dizdari, Myftar Spahiu, Filip Ndocaj, Ymer Berisha and later Vasil Andoni, Lazër Berisha, Abdurrahim Buza, Kolë Parubi, Lorenc Antoni, Fetih Dizdari and Ibrahim Kelmendi, Efthim Deri and Zeqir Bajrami. In addition to the Normal school "Sami Frashëri" in Prishtina, within this period, specifically in November 1942, in Gjakova was established a Normal School or Normalo-Commerce Institute, known as "Gjon Kazazi", whose director was named Demush Gjakova, and later, for a short time, the task of the director was exercised by professor Zekiria Rexha. This school failed to train a generation of teachers because its duration was short (it operated until 1944) due to various difficulties and the state of war (Group of authors, 1997).

## Normal Schools in Kosovo after 1945

After the Second World War, the first school of education that opens in Kosovo, namely Pristina, is the Serbian school called "Srpska učiteljska škola". This school opens on September 4, 1945, by decision no. 3539 of the "Popular District Council". The teaching process in this school was organized in Serbian, until 1956, when it was closed (Koliqi, H. 2004).

The school, similar to that in Pristina, was also opened in the city of Prizren in 1947 as the first school of education known as the four-year "normal school". In this institution the teaching was also organized in Serbian-Croatian language; from 1956 the teaching began to be held in Albanian and later in Turkish. The problem in itself was the lack of teaching staff in Albanian and Turkish, and consequently, for a certain time, teaching in some subjects was held in two languages, Serbo-Croatian and Turkish. From the beginning of the school's work to the year 1955, 350 pupils attended this school, and from 1956 to 1977, the school received 1200 candidates. The Prizren Normal School conducted its activity until 1974, and afterwards, based on a political and educational decision of the time it was transformed into the Pedagogical Academy. The "Pedagogical Academy" started the educational activity in 1974/5 as a successor of the Normal School. The work at this school was organized in two levels: as a four-year high education, and as a six-year education (4 + 2). From the establishment of the normal school until the academic year 1977/78, 3257 students graduated from this institution. The school in question pursued its activity until 1979, whereafter, the second level or two years of schooling were merged into the High Pedagogical School of Prizren. The first Normal School for Regular Pedagogy Students in Albanian language was also opened in Gjakova on October 26, 1946, and was called the "Normal Albanian School" of Gjakova. The number of pupils involved in the first year of education in this institution was 55. Out of this total number, besides from Kosovo, there were students from Macedonia and Montenegro.

In the first years it worked with reduced curriculum plans and two years of teaching, in order to establish a genuine teaching framework as soon as possible. Later, the Normal School of Gjakova, from the reduced two-year programs goes to a four-year program and continues so until 1953/54 when, for political reasons, it was "ordered" to be transferred to Pristina. Consequently, all normal schools in Kosovo become five-year schools. The reopening of the Normal School of Gjakova happened again in 1958, namely in the school year 1958/59, and was named after the martyr of the nation "Hysni Zajmi". It functioned until 1974, when it was replaced by the Pedagogical Academy. At a political meeting held by the "District Council" on August 25, 1952, a Serbian political representative, known as Tsvetko Shutakovic, proposed the Normal School from Gjakova to be transferred to Pristina. Such a proposal was approved, and the school in question was transferred to Pristina and so in 1953 the city of Prishtina gained another Normal School, with instruction in Albanian. In the school year 1953/54, the students attended the lessons in the Normal School of Gjakova. Many students were registered and six classes were formed with students from Kosovo and other areas inhabited by Albanian population from Macedonia, Montenegro, Medvedja, Bujanovci and Presevo (Lleshi, Q., 1987). Since the foundation of this institution, until 1964, 1562 students graduated from this school. In addition to the Normal Schools mentioned above, the same institutions were opened in some other cities of Kosovo. So, in the school year 1954/55 the Normal School in the town of Mitrovica was opened, initially with two parallels and later the number of students grew. After a short period of time, in the city of Gjilan, the Normal School opened, but in the school year 1955/56, in the absence of a qualified staff, it was temporarily closed and its two classes were transferred to Prishtina. With the provision of the qualified staff and the continuous insistence of the Gjilan educators, after three years, respectively in the school year 1959/60, the Gjilan Normal School resumed work and in the first year 81 students were registered in two classes. Similarly, the city of Ferizaj had also a normal school. In 1960, the normal school

"Zenel Hajdini" for elementary education, started working until the academic year 1976/77. Since then all normal schools in Kosovo were completed, and they turned into five-years schools.

### **Pedagogical Academies - continuation of normal schools**

The end of the normal schools' works in the academic year 1972/73, respectively, with the graduation of the last generation of normalists in these institutions in the academic year 1976/77, takes place the opening of the "Pedagogical Academies" as a continuation of education in those cities where previously there were normal schools. The Pedagogical Academies have their origin in Europe, especially in Germany since 1926, while in the former Yugoslav Federation the first Pedagogical Academy was founded in Croatia in 1960, with a two-year duration. Unlike the Pedagogical Academies in other parts of Yugoslavia, where the teachers of all primary grades (I-VIII) were trained, in Kosovo, the Pedagogical Academies were able to teach only the primary cycle (I- IV) and preschool. The activity of Pedagogical Academies in Kosovo marks their end in the 80s of the last century. They functioned separately from the University of Prishtina, but then with their "melting" within the PHSCH, they became part of the higher education system within the UP.

### ***Higher Pedagogical Schools in Kosovo***

The First Higher Education Institution "in Kosovo started in 1958, with the opening of the Higher Pedagogical School in Pristina. The teaching in this institution started with two programs, to be followed by another two in the next school year 59/60, which included: the group of Biology-Chemistry, the group of Mathematics-Physics, followed by the Albanian Language and Literature group, the BTE- (Basics of Technical Education) and Physics. In the first year 1958/59, 93 regular students and 55 part time students were enrolled.

With the decision of the former Kosovo Provincial Assembly in 1962 at the PHSCH in Pristina, the Figurative Education group, the Music Education group, and the Physical Education group also opened. Also 11 years later, in 1973, the course for classroom teachers was opened. The Higher Education of Pedagogy of Prishtina in October 1961 opened in Prizren two programs, which consisted of two learning groups: Language Group and Albanian literature and the Serbo-Croat and Yugoslav literature group. At the beginning of its work, there were 122 students in both languages and 43 full time and 79 part time students, of which 66 were Albanian students. In 1962, the High Pedagogical Education of Prizren was replaced by the Prishtinë / Priština higher education. In the school year 1962/63 four new programs such as Turkish language and literature, Russian language and literature, English language and literature as well as the mathematics-physics group were opened in this school. In the academic year 1965/66, the new chemistry program begins. Also in the school year 1970/71 is formed the teaching-study group for chemistry-mathematics. Due to some changes in the curriculum, after the cessation of the work of the Pedagogical Academy, and its substitution with the Higher Pedagogical Education, in the 1978/79 school year, a group for Class Education was formed, which continued its uninterrupted work for a long period of time. From the academic year 2001/02, the reform of the study program began and the two-year teaching period now lasts for three years, from which the students, after graduation, receive a Bachelor's Degree. This is a move towards the Bologna Process, according to which the opening of the Faculty of Education in Prizren and the transfer of the Higher Education Institute to the Faculty of Education are taking place. In addition to these two cities mentioned above, such institutions were also opened in several other cities of Kosovo, such as in Gjakova in 1967 and in Gjilan in 1975. When presenting the period of formation of the PHE in Kosovo, and the importance these

institutions have in the training of Kosovar teachers, we can not avoid mentioning the Skopje PHE which was opened in the school year 1947 / 48 in Macedonian language, while in the school year, 1954/55, within it also opens the study program in Albanian language.

### **Faculty of Education - Universitarization of teaching**

In order to increase the quality of teaching and training for the teaching staff in the modern-day teaching, one of the preconditions would be to extend the time of studies from two to four years. For this purpose, on 1 October 1997, in Prishtina was established the First Faculty of Pedagogy with a duration of four years.

The decision for its establishment was taken by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Kosovo (diaspora). Graduated students from this faculty should receive the title "Class Teacher". The Faculty's longevity was short, as MEST suspended its activity, and "within the University of Prishtina, on September 9, 2002, founded the Faculty of Pedagogy". This institution started its work on November 18th of this year, with programs on the preparation of teachers for the lower primary cycle, grades I-V, and from the academic year 2003/04 it also launched the study programs on the preparation of teachers for the lower secondary cycle - elementary teachers of grades VI-IX, where students after completing their studies receive a degree. In the first year of studies in this institution, there were registered 305 students. The headquarter of the Faculty of Pedagogy is located in Prishtina, but this institution itself includes three regional centers of Kosovo: Prizren, Gjakova, and Gjilan. In the academic year (2010/11) the Faculty of Pedagogy - centered in Prizren stopped working temporarily due to the opening of the University of Prizren, where in the absence of space there were no conditions to incorporate the branch of pedagogy. Students, professors and citizens of Prizren expressed dissatisfaction with the closure of the branch, through various forms of civic organizations and protests, and appealed to the Government and the Ministry of Education for a more reasonable decision on this issue. The voice and appeal of the citizens of Prizren was well understood by the top management, so in the academic year 2011/12, the Faculty of Pedagogy located in Prizren started again with several study programs in three languages (Albanian, Turkish, Bosnian).

### **Conclusion**

The education of Albanian teachers in a slightly more organized way, the origin and the starting point, took place in the second part of the 19th century, while in the early 19th century, the road that was quite challenging. The difficulties of that time were of a different nature, some of which we think were more crucial and caused a slow or delayed course in the training and preparation of the first Albanian teachers. Under the most severe difficulties that directly affected the process of educating the first teaching staff entered:

1. Massive population illiteracy, namely the lack of public primary education;
2. Lack of appropriate institutions for teacher training;
3. Unfavorable economic conditions and high population poverty; and
4. The long dominance of the invaders over the Albanian territories (invaders considered denial of education as the "key" to extend the rule).

The beginning of the twentieth century marks a more productive period in the training of Albanian teachers, especially with the opening of the first school of instruction in Albanian lands. We are referring to the opening of the "Normal School" in Elbasan, as the most significant event in the history of education and the Albanian nation. Elbasan's standard marks a good start towards the realization of the "dreams" of the Albanian people to remove the "secular darkness" through the massive opening of schools and the education of the population.

Regarding the training of Albanian teachers in Kosovo and beyond, besides the "Normal" school in Elbasan, the beginning of the work of the Normal School "Sami Frashëri" in Prishtina is of particular importance. After these two higher institutions, followed a number of other institutions for teacher training such as the "Pedagogical Academy", "High Pedagogical Schools", "Faculties of Education" etc., but the Normal Schools of Elbasan and Prishtina laid the foundations for the education of Albanian teachers in all ethnic lands.

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