

Politicization of education and culture through media in Elbasan County during the '60

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Abstract

The journal "Mësuesi" as an official organ of Education and Culture Ministry, since its first publish, besides other topics has also put an emphasis in reflecting the state ideology in educational and cultural institutions.

This ideology, which came as a directive from the state leader, Enver Hoxha, who in his speech for educational reform, would declare: "We are making the educational reformation because it is necessary in building the socialism in our country. It will serve for a better education and preparation of youth for life and other tasks, in order to build a socialist and communist society". This was cited in "Mësuesi" newspaper on 9th February 1962.

A part of this general feature of life in the country, were even the educational and cultural institutions in Elbasan County.

During this period a big importance was given to the fact that the actual task was the political propaganda in schools and cultural institutions (houses of culture), by using even other forms of media, such as: "Zëri i Popullit" and "Bashkimi", which were official newspapers of the Party of Labor and its tools. At least it is referred is this way in the weekly "Mësuesi" during the '60.

In this way, the media didn't just spread its editorial line, but at the same time it suggested other media of the same line or even more radical.

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Introduction

The development of education and culture is an essential issue for the entire human society and especially for the so-called small nations. In this paper will be analyzed the politicization of education and culture in the Elbasan County during the '60, through written media and specifically the journal "Mësuesi", which was supposed to represent the voice of all teachers and employees of culture in the place, or at least that is what it claimed. As we emphasized the object of the analyze are not only the writings in the journal "Mësuesi" as an official organ of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which are directly connected to politicization. The politicization of culture and education during the '60 was the matter of the day in the entire place, but in this paper, we will advert to those facts which are connected to Elbasan County, where "Correspondents of the journal", "School headmasters", "Teachers" and other parts of the education's administration write for educational and cultural issues which intent to represent politicization as a value which should be accepted by all teachers and employees of culture in the entire place. In addition to this, they have to make politics a part of their job in the educational and cultural institutions where they work.

Educational and cultural institutions in the Elbasan County during the '60, as well as in the rest of the place were directed by the Education Section of the County, which carried out the orders given by the Ministry of Education and Culture. After World War II until in the 1990, Albania was under the communist regime, so it can be easily understood that during the '60, the place was directed by the Communist Party (although it was called the Party of Labor), which means that the leading binomial was: party-state.

As a consequence, the politics in every field of life, including education and culture were directed by the only party in the state. This is evidenced even by the 'accountability of the leaders of educational and cultural institutions. These leaders inform on their work party's institutions and then the institution of Education's Section, from who are legally depended, at least this is how it is shown on one of the articles of the weekly "Mësuesi" in 1961. In this

article the headmaster of the 7 year school in the city of Elbasan Xhafer Shehu, who has been requested to present a statistic on school's plans and the number of students, who have been registered on the school.¹ In cultural institutions, which are also politicized, we can find different aspects of politicization. In these institutions the matter of the day during the spring of 1963 was directed in: *tearing the mask of the American imperialism, against the bourgeois ideology and in disclosing the modern revisionism especially the Yugoslavian one.*²

This activity includes at the same time cultural institutions (houses of culture) and schools, by turning them into: *centers of agitation*,³ where the political activity is fulfilled, considering even other written media of the state: have been billed the numbers of the official and main written media, such as: "Zëri i popullit" and "Bashkimi",⁴ which were official and main written media of the Party of Labor and its tongs.

In this way the journal "Mësuesi" spreads its politicized line as well as suggests other official media of the state-party as a part of the political activity in educational and cultural institutions of Elbasan County.

This political activity was done by teachers. In this article it is said that it was done mainly by teachers of our village and it mentions teachers of various schools, such as: *Shtëpaj, Kuqanit, Bradasheshit, Shushicës, Gjergjanit, Shtërmenit, Shalësit, Belshit, Gjocajt, Pajovës, etc.*⁵

The politicization of education came as a directive from the state's leaders. The matter of education was set in the frame of educational reform, in the center of which was the construction of an ideological society from the school's desks: *We are making the educational reform,-* said Enver Hoxha in the plenum of the Central Committee of Party of Labor- *because it is necessary to build socialism in our country. It will serve*

¹ The correspondent of the journal "Mësuesi", "More care on night schools", "Mësuesi" 8 December 1961:3

² Sulë Dedej (The inspector of the section of culture and education-Elbasan), "The political work of cultural institutions", "Mësuesi" 19 April 1963:3

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

for a better education and preparation of youth for life and other tasks in building a communist and socialist society.⁶

This educational reform, which had on its content, even the politicization of education, would be applied in the whole country, of course even in the Elbasan Country during the '60.

Moreover, in the law on the organization of the educational system in the Popular Republic of Albania, in its first article was confirmed the line of education's politics, where it was said that the purpose of the educational system was educating a new generation prepared to build a socialist society as well as a generation with ideological knowledge: *to form a Marxist-Leninist outlook.*⁷

In the schools of Elbasan County in 1963, specifically in the 7 year school "Ptoleme Xhuvani" Elbasan, after all the pressure and orders for the politicization of the educational system, teachers were forced to include in every subject the elements of politicization. Subjects like mathematics wouldn't make an exception, especially primary classes, where pupils were given exercises and problems which showed the socialist reality of the place, like this mathematical problem:

CL: IV. a) A distinguished employee earns 8000 lekë per month. He spends $\frac{4}{5}$ of this amount on food, clothes, etc. How much money does he save per month?⁸

In addition to this, educational institutions were directed by local structures of the party. This was also true for the pedagogical school "Luigj Gurakuqi" in the city of Elbasan in December 1963, which had decided that every Sunday students' and teachers' would organize different cultural activities in the village Kuqan. These activities included also political issues.⁹

⁶ "Mësuesi", "The report of the first Vice leader of the Minister Council of the minister of education and culture, MP Manush Myftiu", "Mësuesi", 14 June 1963:3

⁷ Sami Baholli, "The law on organizing the educational system in the Popular Republic of Albania", "Mësuesi", 14 June 1963:3

⁸ Hiqmet Bumci (Vice leader of the 7 year School "Ptoleme Xhuvani" Elbasan), "The work with typical problems in primary", "Mësuesi", 5 July 1963:3

⁹ Sulë Dedej (Our correspondent in Elbasan), "The Sunday in Kuqan (Pedagogical school takes in patronage the village)", "Mësuesi", 6 December 1963:3

Politicization of educational institutions in the spring of 1964 goes even further in the District of Librazhd (which is a part of Elbasan County), where in the 11 year school of the city of Librazhd is created the room of the party. This room is completed by teachers in the supervision of the local institutions.¹⁰

On the other hand, local institutions responsible for education and culture organize in the 11 year school of Librazhd a meeting with the headmasters of 7 and 8 year schools of the district, so that they would learn more about the room of the party and take the commitment to create other rooms in their schools. As a result of this, until 24 April 1964 in the district of Librazhd were created 2 rooms and 15 corners of party, which were appreciated for a good job especially in the schools of Bëzeshtës, Prrenjasis dhe Hotolishtit.¹¹



¹⁰ Qazim Gjini (The inspector of the education and culture section-Librazhd), "Rooms of party in schools", "Mësuesi", 24 April 1964:1

¹¹ Qazim Gjini (The inspector of the education and culture section-Librazhd), "Rooms of party in schools", "Mësuesi", 24 April 1964:1

*In the 11 year school "Qamil Guranjaku", Elbasan is created a room of party with an interesting and rich material.*¹²

In this way, not only do political materials take place inside schools, but politicization is also propagandized through the journal "Mësuesi" in primary schools and then in the entire state.

In 4 July 1964 in the city of Elbasan was open the first artistic festival of pedagogical schools (schools which prepare the future teachers). At this festival is expected to take part students from various pedagogical schools of different cities, such as: Korça, Peshkopia, Berati, Tirana, Shkodra, Vlora and Gjirokastra.

Furthermore, the future teachers are expected to reveal their artistic talent by dedicating songs to the Party of Labor, to which they owe too much.¹³

There is no doubt that in this way the process of politicization of education and culture had created an important stability in the educational and cultural system in the middle of '60, because it was a chain process which started with students in the school desks, and those students tomorrow would become teachers. This process was regularly promoted by the journal "Mësuesi".

Even in the second festival of pedagogical schools in 1965, students from the pedagogical school "Luigj Gurakuqi" Elbasan, had dedicated an important part of their artistic repertoire to the party and the process of building the socialist system in the state.¹⁴

In 1965 at the end of the school year in the premises of the Cërrik's 11 year school "Tomorr Sinani", an exhibition was open for the first time. In this exhibition were shown different achievements of students in various subjects, but the writer of the article for the journal "Mësuesi" appreciates more the room of party created in this school.

¹² The journal "Mësuesi", *"In the 11 year school "Qamil Guranjaku", Elbasan is created a room of party with an interesting and rich material"*, "Mësuesi", 24 April 1964:1

¹³ The correspondent of the journal "Mësuesi" Elbasan, *"Tomorrow the steps in the artistic festival of pedagogical schools Elbasan"*, "Mësuesi", 3 July 1964:3

¹⁴ Mehmet Arapi, *"To venerate the name of Normale..."*, "Mësuesi", 21 May 1965:1

According to him this room is the pride of students and teachers of this school.¹⁵

This means that even in the middle of 1965, the journal "Mësuesi" continues reflecting, appreciating and promoting elements which openly politicize the activity of educational institutions, according to the principle that one school becomes an example for another one.

The "Tomorr Sinani" school Cërrik even in the next year continues to be the focus of the journal "Mësuesi" on different articles for political aspects in educational institutions. This school, which is now a 12 year school (according to the new changes made in education), is the example of a special work made in order to enforce the political education of students.

The special thing about this year is that the room of the party is not mentioned together with the homeland. However, the article says that the first one treats the same issues as the second one.

Moreover, in this room or as we are going to call it, in this class student attend lessons with educative topics, which are appreciated for the important contribution they give in educating students politically: *which are more important for the political education of students.*

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In this way the process of politicizing educational institutions goes into a deeper and more interactive step, under a facade of patriotism and nostalgia. Although the name changes from room of party in room of homeland, its purpose and tasks in the field of politicization didn't change. They become even more active by creating a more politicized environment inside the school, but now in a teaching class for all students of the school. In all the places where the communist regime was set, life was completely under the control of the party-state. Everything was done in five year plans. In this way every activity in every field of life was organized, controlled and directed by the party-state. Parts of this control were even cultural and

¹⁵ Hyjni Çeka, "In the fourth halls of an exhibition", "Mësuesi", 16 July 1965:3

¹⁶ Fatmir Shqerra (A teacher in the 12 year school "Tomorr Sinani" Cërrik), "We don't have it as a jewellery, but as a helper in our job", "Mësuesi", 14 January 1966:3

educational institutions, not only in these institutions, but also outside and in the end of the school year.

In February of 1966, as a response of the fourth five year plan the graduates of the pedagogical school "Luigj Gurakuqi", express their desire to work voluntarily where the party would tell them during the summer break: *we, all the 208 graduates of the pedagogical school "Luigj Gurakuqi", express our desire to go and work in every village, wherever the party sends us and wherever our homeland needs.*¹⁷

This initiative hasn't only become public through media (the journal "Mësuesi" in the first page), but it also became an example for other graduates, who decided to join this initiative: *together for a new burst in the construction of socialism in our country.*¹⁸

Conclusions

During the '60, Albania was consolidated from the ideological-political perspective, precisely in the spirit of marxism-leninism, under the leadership of the Communist Party headed by its leader Enver Hoxha. However, this political and institutional dominant situation wasn't enough for the leader of the only party in the country, he wanted to politicize the whole life in Albania. In order to achieve this goal, one of the main directions in the functioning of politicization in the middle term and long term, would definitely be the politicization of education and culture.

In this way, the educational and cultural institutions would be transformed into centers of propaganda and ideological education. This political activity would be done by teachers and employees of culture, who are under the pressure of the local institutions of the party. In schools, the ideological and political education would begin with students from the lowest classes to the highest ones. As a consequence, the present of the country was politicized as well as its future. The process of politicization of education and culture during

¹⁷ The graduates of the pedagogical school Elbasan, "208 graduates of the pedagogical school Elbasan going where homeland needs them", "Mësuesi", 18 February 1966:1

¹⁸ Ibid.

the '60 in the District of Elbasan was followed in every step by the media, which in the case of this study was "Mësuesi". This journal reflected, promoted and amplified it as well as suggested other media, even closer to state-party serving to politicization.

Literature

The journal "Mësuesi", Tiranë, 1961-1966.