

SPIRU HARET, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL LEGISLATION REFORM

CONSTANTIN SCHIFIRNEȚ*

ABSTRACT

In this article I analyze ideas and decisions of Spiru Haret on Romanian education reform. First, I talk, briefly, about the work of Haret on the organization and administration of school. I present some directions of explanation of the rise of mass education that have emerged over the Europe in the nineteenth century to frame Spiru Haret's legislative activity in the European context. I explain the relation between tendential modernity and the reform of the Romanian education. Next, I approach Haret's ideas about Education as the foundation of social and national development, the Education Laws in Romania until 1898, Spiru Haret's laws, the social dignity of teachers, education for adults.

Keywords: education reform, organization and administration of school, mass education, social dignity of teachers, education for adults.

I. LEADER OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

Spiru Haret has contributions in different areas: science, politics, and education. His works cover areas like astronomy, sociology, mechanical and hydraulic engineering, pedagogy. Haret is not only a scientist, he is the reformer of the Romanian society. Spiru Haret's reforms focused on education, culture, ecclesiastical activity, modernization of villages, etc.

He worked not only as a Romanian education reform theorist but also as a legislator of school and leader of the national education administration.

Haret occupied important positions in the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations. In 1882, he was appointed member of the Permanent Council of Instruction, and on 3 April 1883, he became general school inspector. Between 1885 and 1888, he was General Secretary of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations. In 1884, he elaborated the *General Report on Secondary Education submitted to the Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations*. Most of the ideas included in the *Report* were derived from the legislative bills regarding the construction of primary school buildings

* Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative, București, e-mail: constantin.schifirnet@yahoo.com.

(published in 1889) and the draft reform law issued by the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations, D.A. Sturdza, in 1886¹. Moreover, the modern spirit of the report characterizes all of Haret's legislative work and all his projects of school reform, which will be discussed below.

Spiru Haret was three times Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations: 1897–1899, 1901–1904, 1907–1910, and, in this capacity, he was surpassed in terms of duration only by Constantin Angelescu, Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations in 1918–1919, 1922–1926, 1927–1928, 1933–1937. Besides these two ministers, two other Ministers of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations – Dimitrie A. Sturdza (1885–1888) and Take Ionescu (1891–1895) – deserve mentioning. During the mandates of these four ministers, the main reforms of the Romanian education system were adopted.

In his first term as Minister, beginning on 31 March 1897, Haret had two fundamental laws passed in Parliament: The Law of Secondary and Higher Education (1898) and The Law of Vocational Education (1899). During the same period, the Curriculum for secondary schools was adopted, alongside the Regulations for all the levels of the education system; schools for adults, nursery schools and school cafeterias were established, the journal *Albina* was founded, the medal “Reward for Labour in Primary Education” was instituted and the anti-alcohol campaign, which had started in 1897, was continued.

After returning, on 14 February 1901, as Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations, Haret had to reinstate the Law of Primary and Normal Education (1896), the Law of Secondary and Higher Education (1898) and the Law of Vocational Education (1899), which had been cancelled by the conservative government in 1900.

During his mandate between 1901 and 1904, Haret strove to restructure the education system in relation to the modernization requirements of the Romanian society, which critically needed trained manpower. Therefore, Haret established a large number of elementary and lower vocational schools.

Regarding the organization of secondary education, he decreased the number of high school years to three, maintained the organization of the school system into three different sections – classical, modern and science –, removed the final examination at the end of high school, and stipulated that enrolment in college could be made only after a preliminary examination.

In the fall of 1903, Spiru Haret presented to King Carol I the “Report on the Activity of the Ministry of Instruction” giving an account of the laws and other legal acts adopted in the Romanian school system, between 1 October 1895 and 31 August 1903.

¹ Gh. Adamescu, Introduction to *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret* [*The Works of Spiru Haret*], vol. I, p. V.

In May 1905, Haret edited *Revista generală a învățământului* [*General Review of Education*], rallying the support of many teachers. In this periodical, Haret published studies about his reforms.

Haret attended the Congress of the Primary Teaching Staff, held in Bucharest in July 1905, in the presence of 1,000 teachers. In his speech on 1 July 1905, he presented new arguments for the reinforcement of primary education². He insisted that the primary school curriculum should be the same in the urban and the rural areas. Unlike Haret, his conservative political opponents had decided in favour of a different organization for the primary education tier in villages and in towns.

On 12 March 1907, Haret was appointed Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations for the third time. He maintained this dignity until 28 December 1910.

During his tenure as minister, he gave attention to every detail, without limiting himself to drawing general directions, as a politician would have. All his initiatives were consistent with the conduct of an official who was preoccupied with everything going on in his field. Many of his decisions were based on studies and debates with the social actors representing the school system.

II. EUROPEAN EDUCATION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Spiru Haret's education reform took place within the internal (Romanian) and external (European) context, focused on the direct involvement of the state in the acts of creation and consolidation of the school system as an inherent element of modernization. Enrolment in public schools was regulated by the state in the nineteenth century³. The increasing role of the school in ensuring the spread of literacy among the population was determined by the need to have each generation of children graduate from the compulsory cycle of primary education⁴.

The very first laws on compulsory education were adopted in Prussia (1763) and in Denmark (1814)⁵. In the second half of the nineteenth century, compulsory education laws were adopted in several other countries in Europe: "Almost all European countries – earlier in Western Europe, later in Eastern Europe – enacted compulsory school laws during the nineteenth century and the first three decades of

² *Operele lui Spiru Haret* [*The Works of Spiru Haret*], vol. VI, București, Editura Comunicare.ro, 2009, p. 84.

³ Francisco Ramirez and Marc Ventresca, "Building the Institution of Mass Schooling: Isomorphism in the Modern World", in Bruce Fuller and Richard Rubinson (eds.), *The Political Construction of Education*, New York, Praeger, 1992, p. 47–60.

⁴ David, Vincent, *The Rise of Mass Literacy: Reading and Writing in Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000.

⁵ Yasemin, Soysal and David Strange, "Construction of the First Mass Education Systems in 19th – Century Europe". *Sociology of Education*, 62, 1989, p. 278.

the twentieth century”⁶. The national state organized and mobilized all its members as citizens educated within the same system of compulsory education.

Industrialization and urbanization were poorly related to the growth of mass education: “Hence industrialization and urbanization are not central causal factors directly generating mass education at all”⁷. In Europe, the first to embrace the ideology of mass education were not the industrialized countries, France and England, but Prussia, Austria and Denmark, countries with a higher schooling rate than those mentioned before them.

The school was conceived as an institution with a direct impact on the act of forming behaviour and of shaping the consciousness of belonging to the national state: “The dominant form of expansion of mass education in Western Europe took this route, the creation of the nation-state members”⁸. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the school became the fundamental institution of training and education in the countries of Europe. The modern elites were created by the school as an institution. Before World War I, almost every European state had institutionalized mass education for children aged 5–14 years, through the adoption of school laws and the construction of school buildings. This is attested by the examples of Germany, Japan, France and England, countries that affirmed themselves/distinguished themselves through a solid national education system.

III. THE SCHOOL AND TENDENTIAL MODERNITY

After the Union of the Principalities in 1859 and after gaining its independence in 1877, the Romanian state became the centre of national culture for all the Romanians abroad. The fundamental way of training and educating the national consciousness was through the school institution. Therefore, the education reform was a priority for all the ministers of education in the Kingdom of Romania.

Modern development in Romania took place differently than in Western Europe. In the West, capitalist economic development imposed the bourgeoisie as the dominant social force in society, a social class which built an institutional framework consistent with its values.

It is well known that the bourgeoisie played an exceptional role in supporting the school as the engine of modern social and cultural evolution⁹. The

⁶ Aaron Benavot and Julia Resnik, “Lessons from the Past: A Comparative Socio-Historical Analysis of Primary and Secondary Education”, in Aaron Benavot, Julia Resnik and Javier Corrales (eds.), *Global Educational Expansion: Historical Legacies and Political Obstacles*, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2006, p. 11.

⁷ John Boli, Francisco O. Ramirez and John W. Meyer, “Explaining the Origins and Expansion of Mass Education”, *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (May, 1985), p. 154.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 159.

⁹ See also Constantin Schifirneț, “Spiru Haret, reformatorul societății românești [Spiru Haret, the Reformer of the Romanian Society]”, Introductory study to *Operele lui Spiru Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. I, București, Editura Comunicare.ro, 2009, p. 13–42.

modernization of the Romanian society was not brought about by the domestic bourgeoisie, which was rather fragile.

The Romanian modernization processes can be described by the term *tendential modernity*, which I consider as the act of modern development in the opposite direction to that of classical modernity. Romanian modernity occurred through the replacement of the old institutions with institutions adopted from the West, as long as they could be applied in a predominantly rural and agrarian socio-economic context.

The idea of a development model that should be followed by other countries proved unproductive because “Nothing is more specifically rooted in history than political institutions and political actors”¹⁰.

Tendential modernity describes an evolution towards the principles and norms of modernity within societies, with an insufficiently functioning capitalist economy. In these societies, there is a gap between fast institutional renewal and slow economic development. Consequently, cultural, political and intellectual modernity outruns economic modernity. Tendential modernity refers to the ideas and actions aimed at modernization, which remain partial and are not finalized. Modernity is more of an aspiration, a societal developmental intention, a goal to be reached, but which is never fully realized. Due to the fact that modernity is merely a tendency that is never finalized, the transitions are never completed. Modernity moves slowly and with difficulty through the intricate network of the socio-institutional structures of the patriarchal and traditional society. It is inlaid modernity, not structured as a clear, dominant form.

Given the lack or insufficiency of internal modernizing resources (ideological, economic, administrative, financial, etc.), tendential modernity is a type of asymptotic modernization, which never succeeds in reaching the requirements of modernity, no matter how close it seems to come to Western modernity. Because of its tendential state, modernity cannot definitively establish itself as a certainty at all the levels of the social organism, because it is inconsistently and unevenly manifested in different areas¹¹.

The concept of *tendential modernity* is useful for explaining Spiru Haret’s ideas and actions. In his view, modernization was beneficial only if the mutations occurred in the behaviour and thought of the social actors in a society with an agrarian economy. He anticipated, as A.I. Cuza, M. Kogălniceanu, T. Maiorescu and M. Eminescu also did, that a predominantly agrarian and peasant society must be transformed, from within, by institutions which are adequate to its cultural and historical context. One of these institutions was the school, conceived by Haret as a fundamental means of transforming the peasant society, and as a way of providing the bourgeoisie with instruction and of forming the national elites.

¹⁰ Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, second edition, Oxford, Blackwell, 2010, p. 370.

¹¹ Constantin Schifirnet, “Tendential modernity.” *Social Science Information*, March 2012, vol. 51, no. 1, p. 22–51.

IV. THE REFORM OF THE ROMANIAN EDUCATION

The main directions of Spiru Haret's reform and doctrine are outlined in the *General Report on Secondary Education Submitted to the Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations*. I consider the *Report* a fundamental work of the Romanian social sciences, which analyses society in all its dimensions.

In the *Report*, Haret notes that the Romanian school, without having a personal doctrinal basis, has tended to adopt an education system from other cultures: "To answer clearly, we must have a look, for a moment, at the historical development of doctrines related to education in the countries where the origins of this development can be traced back to hundreds of years ago, and from where we have borrowed our education system *ad litteram*, without adding anything original"¹².

The organization and management of the school system means defining the needs and the human and financial resources of a country, elaborating a general plan for determining the place occupied by each type of school in the education system: "The schools in a state build an organized body, in which each organ has its particular function, all of them working together for the good state of the whole body"¹³.

Haret projects the school-related policies on modern principles of education organization and management. A reform can only be global and it applies only under a development plan for the school in a social context: "The composition of this master plan is the most difficult and delicate problem in developing the school legislation; it requires, among others, a thorough knowledge of the current and future necessities of the country, as well as of the means available to it, which are naturally very diverse and very difficult to ascertain when it comes to schooling"¹⁴. Haret conceives the school reform in the spirit of a project management orientated according to the principle of a very strict control over the use of the rather limited resources allocated to schools.

Haret notices a phenomenon specific to any transitional period: the modernization of the school system was made with the teachers produced by the Romanian society in the second half of the nineteenth century, substitute teachers being admitted – some of whom were 18 years old and possessed insufficient knowledge – without having to pass a formal examination. In 1884, more than 23% of the chairs from gymnasiums and lyceums were occupied by substitute teachers¹⁵. Therefore, he states that training programs for the teaching staff are

¹² Spiru C. Haret, "Raport general asupra învățământului secundar prezentat d-lui ministru al Instrucțiunii Publice și Cultelor" ["General Report on Secondary Education Submitted to the Minister of Public Education and Religious Denominations"], in *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. I, ed. cit, p. 140–141.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 143.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 160.

required because “our teaching staff has formed itself, and there are no educational traditions in our schools”¹⁶. The principle of school reform focuses on all possible means of forming a modern teaching staff and a modern type of school.

V. EDUCATION, THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiru Haret designed education and training as key factors for the transmission of basic knowledge and for creating the skills needed in practical activities: “Education in a country is called upon to fulfil a threefold purpose. First, it should form good citizens. Secondly, it must provide all young people with a fund of knowledge that is indispensable to any man in life, regardless of the social level: this is compulsory education. Finally, it also should form professional groups for all the careers that are needed for the complex and harmonious life of the state”¹⁷.

In his view “The school is one of the most powerful tools of social action as its effects are felt in all the parts of the country and in all the strata of society. The school can be of significant service even in some directions which, at first glance, do not appear to fall within its field”¹⁸.

The purpose of the Reform undertaken by Haret was to give a stronger practical dimension, so that its graduates could be useful to society. Therefore, in the rural primary schools, he introduced practical agricultural education and manual work, while in the urban primary schools, he introduced manual work. He gave a clearer practical curriculum to secondary education. He created elementary vocational education. All these changes were designed to instil the young people with motivation and confidence in professional careers related to commerce, industry and agriculture.

For Haret, a key issue for a country in the process of modernization remained the management of funds allocated to secondary education. At the end of the nineteenth century, Romania was the only country where secondary education was entirely free. Because the issue of funds was very serious, Haret drew attention upon the inability of the state to support financially a growing number of secondary schools. These schools could operate only to the extent to which they were able to fulfil the specific needs of the society, and under no circumstances could they prepare graduates without the prospect of finding a job¹⁹.

Haret conceived the school reform in accordance with the real situations associated with grassroots groups, because the changes in the second half of the nineteenth century occurred only at the elite level, which implied a partial and

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 195.

¹⁷ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. II, București, Comunicare.ro, p. 197–198.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 200.

¹⁹ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. I, ed. cit., p. 339.

limited modernization. His program focused on the numerous classes: “The lower strata of the population are those that especially need our attention. They are those that have benefited the least from the transformations occurring over the recent decades, and this is natural, because the top-down movement requires a longer time to be communicated to the masses”²⁰.

VI. THE EDUCATION LAWS IN ROMANIA UNTIL 1898

The laws of Spiru Haret were preceded by legislative acts on Romanian education. In the 1880s and 1890s, several bills were drafted, papers about school and education were edited, and debates related to the design, methods and principles of the school institution took place²¹.

I. The Law of Public Instruction from 1864:

One of the major reforms of the era of Alexandru Ioan Cuza was the adoption of the Public Instruction Act in 1864. For more than three decades, the school in Romania had operated on its basis.

The law regulated public and private education in the new national framework resulting from the Union of the Principalities in 1859, aiming to create a unified education system, organized on the principles of freedom, compulsoriness, gratuitousness, gender equality and secularization. Free education meant paying the teachers’ salaries from the state budget and granting social and merit scholarships.

The education system was structured into three cycles: primary (four years), secondary (seven years) and academic education (3 years).

Article 32 of the law regulated the structure of the primary education curriculum, as “mandatory instruction will include the following subjects: reading and writing, catechism, notions of hygiene, grammar, geography, the history of the country, the administrative law of the country, the four operations in arithmetic, the legal system of measures and weights”.

The 1864 Law of Public Instruction organized the public four-year primary education, which was general, free and compulsory for children aged between 7 and 12, who resided in all the towns and villages of Romania and who had Romanian citizenship in accordance with Art. 31: “Elementary Instruction is compulsory for all children of both sexes, from the age of 7 to 12 years.” The Romanian State was among the first European countries to legislate compulsory primary education (after Prussia, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark)²². This principle

²⁰ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. II, ed. cit., p. 270.

²¹ Ștefan Bărsănescu, Florela Bărsănescu, *Educația, învățământul, gândirea pedagogică în România. Dicționar cronologic [Education, Teaching, Pedagogical Thinking in Romania. A Chronological Dictionary]*, București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1978.

²² Anghel Manolache, Gheorghe Pârnuță (coord.), *Istoria învățământului din România [History education in Romania]*, vol. II (1821–1918), București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1993, p. 224.

of compulsory and free education would be adopted later in other European countries: in Italy in 1877, in France in 1882, in England in 1870, in Switzerland in 1874, in Bulgaria in 1879, in Serbia in 1882 and in Hungary in 1868²³.

The Law of 1864 regulated the teachers' training: "teachers in colleges and universities will be chosen from among the graduates of the normal school, which will be established". So the professors were to be recruited from among the graduates of normal schools, which would be established, revealing once again the human resource crisis in higher education.

The Law of 1864 concerned only the organization of faculties, and the University was described as "the circumstance when several faculties are in one locality". Higher education developed through the establishment of the universities in Iași (1860) and Bucharest (1864), as well as of technical and professional institutions.

Spiru Haret qualified the Law of Instruction from 1864 as a "very liberal" law for the Romanian social and national context, and, therefore, it was not rigorously applied by the authorities and by the teaching staff, becoming obsolete in the process: "There were created schools by simple budgetary actions, and then an extraordinary thing was observed: schools which, by themselves, did not know the purpose for which they had been created, other than their name in the budget"²⁴. The precariousness of the school reform revealed the lack of regulations for the implementation of the Law of Public Education from 1864; thus, for example, the regulations governing the competitions in university departments, as well as other regulations were made "in blatant opposition to the law"²⁵.

Haret saw the school reform as the act of adopting a comprehensive, systematic and uniform legislation through the radical change of the law from 1864 and through the cancellation of all the regulations and circulars issued under this law.

2. The Law for the Appointment of Professors, from 17 March 1879, provided the right to be admitted to the examination for any vacant teaching position in a secondary school only to graduates and doctors in the field where the chair was vacant. This was a requirement that was difficult to fulfil, since there were very few graduates. For example, in 1884, the number of graduates from the University of Bucharest was: 8 at the Faculty of Science and 11 at the Faculty of Letters; at the University of Iași: 7 at the Faculty of Science and 4 at the Faculty of Letters, but the number of the vacant chairs was 80²⁶.

The condition to have a bachelor's degree in order to occupy a chair in a secondary school did not exist at that time, not even in France, where many

²³ Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc [History of Romanian Education]*, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1971, p. XXIX.

²⁴ Spiru C. Haret, "Raport general asupra învățământului secundar prezentat d-lui ministru al Instrucțiunii Publice și Cultelor" ["General Report on Secondary Education Submitted to the Minister of Public Education and Religious Denominations"], in *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. I, ed. cit., p. 144.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Operele lui Spiru Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. I, ed. cit., p. 159.

teachers without a degree taught classes in the secondary schools. The Public Instruction Law of 1864 stated that only those who had completed high school and passed the general examination would be admitted as students in colleges (Art. 264). In the *Report* from 1884, Spiru Haret had required the amendment of this article, enabling the graduates of exact sciences gymnasia to enrol in the Faculties of Science and Medicine²⁷.

3. The Law on Normal-Primary and Primary Education of 1893 was promoted by Take Ionescu. The law regulated, in a uniform manner, the activity of primary schools. Compulsory schooling for the ages 7–14 years was established, “preferably for boys”. The same law divided primary schools into several categories and established a kind of urban primary schools and other schools in the rural areas. Primary schools were divided into hamlet schools, lower primary schools, upper primary schools, additional and repetition primary courses. This regulation impeded the children from the rural areas to have access to the higher stages of education.

Haret claimed that the measures adopted by this law had led to a decrease in the number of children attending schools in the villages, given the limitation of attendance in the compulsory lower primary school system, the effect being that these children could not have access to secondary education and vocational schools. In Pierre Bourdieu’s terms, through such decisions, education would only replicate the power structures and the social inequalities in society, thereby maintaining the existing social order²⁸. Haret demonstrated that the law from 1893 – as well as the law of 1900 – had promoted education only among the great and medium land owners and among a small group of wealthy farmers. The legislation of equal opportunities for all children irrespective of their residence was one of the great battles Spiru Haret fought and finally won for the welfare of the entire Romanian society.

4. The Law on Primary and Primary Normal Education or The Act of Petru Poni from 1896 eliminated the division of primary schools into categories and established one and the same type of primary school in the urban and the rural areas, following the same curriculum, with the exception that the duration of studies was of 4 years in towns and of 5 years in the villages, a situation caused by the fact that most schools in the latter areas had only one teacher.

VII. SPIRU HARET’S LAWS

Through his reform, Haret launched the legislative process aimed at modernizing education at all levels: primary, vocational, secondary and higher education, as well as at developing cultural institutions. Haret’s laws and actions are examples of the type of reforms oriented towards bringing the potential of a

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 254.

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron, *La reproduction. Eléments pour une théorie du système d’enseignement*, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1970.

nation to fruition. He elaborated and passed legislative acts through Parliament, the implementation of which led to the assertion of the Romanian school system as a fundamental institution of the Romanian society, and also to its alignment with the main directions of European education.

1. The law on Secondary and Higher Education, from 23 March 1898 (drawn up with Constantin Dumitrescu, Iași). Under this legislation, secondary education lasted 8 years instead of seven; it was organized in two cycles (lower and upper) and in sections – modern, science, classical. Secondary school included gymnasiums, secondary schools and high schools for girls. The new organization of the education system in Romania was comparable to the education systems in the European countries: cycle I (grades I–IV, with common courses), cycle II (grades V–VIII, with three branches – classical, science and modern) and higher education.

Under the same law, universities were to become centres for the development of science and introduced the requirement for professors to have an original scientific contribution. The higher education comprised two Universities, in Bucharest and Iasi, each with five faculties: Orthodox Theology, Law, Medicine, Philosophy and Letters, Sciences. Spiru Haret included in the law activities of the seminar type or conducted in laboratories and specialized clinics; for the training of secondary schools teachers, a pedagogical seminary was established and organized within each university.

2. The Law on Vocational Education from 1899 regulated the foundation of vocational education in the following primary schools: primary schools of agriculture (for boys), schools of rural household economics (for girls), primary schools of crafts (for boys) and schools of crafts and household economics (for girls), lower schools of trade (for girls), higher schools of trade (for boys).

3. The Law for the Establishment of the Savings, Credit and Assistance House of the Teaching Staff, adopted in 1903, regulated the founding of an institution that would provide loans and savings deposits for the teaching staff members and for the officials of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations, the House of Schools and the Church House. This was an institution meant to support teachers confronted with cases of sickness, to offer protection to the widows and orphans of its members, to sustain the funding of educational institutions for the children of the teaching staff, as well as other philanthropic establishments for their benefit. Funds were obtained through continuous contributions made by the members of the House, through donations, popular festivals, etc.

4. The Law for the Establishment and Organization of the Romanian Orthodox Autocephalous Church of the Holy House in 1902. This institution oversaw the management of church property and of religious establishments, as well as the management of the state budget funds for the church.

5. The Law for Ceding All the Collections in the Central Library to the Romanian Academy, in 1901. The transfer of the collections of the Central State

Library, founded in 1864 under the public regulations law, to the Romanian Academy, was enacted.

6. The Law for Normal Schools of Housekeeping, in 1908.

7. The Law for the Manufacture and Sale of Wax Candles, in 1908.

8. The Law for Equipping Rural Primary Schools with Arable Land, in 1908.

9. The Law for Military Training in Schools, in 1909.

10. The Law for the Organization of the Superior School of Veterinary Medicine, in 1909.

11. The Law for the Schools for Toddlers, in 1909.

12. The Law for the Establishment of a Romanian Historical Commission in 1910, which stipulated the establishment of an institution authorized to publish internal and external chronicles, documents, or inscriptions about the Romanians.

13. The Law for the Organization and Administration of the Theatres in 1910. In addition, Haret had a large number of laws passed in parliament, which amended previous items of legislation, and developed an impressive number of programs and regulations indispensable for the enforcement of the school laws, during the three periods when he was Minister: *a.* 1897–1899: 4 laws, 6 programs, 34 regulations; *b.* 1901 to 1904: 11 laws, 14 programs, 56 regulations; *c.* 1907–1910: 19 laws, 16 programs, 76 regulations²⁹.

VIII. THE SOCIAL DIGNITY OF TEACHERS

In his program of reform, Haret included the necessary decisions for the recognition of the dignity of a teacher's profession by all social groups: "since my first entry in government, in 1897, I have not stopped for a moment being concerned for the social role of teachers, not even during the two terms when I was not a member of the government"³⁰. Haret invested the teaching staff with the role of an active factor in the modernization of society. In this regard, he made every effort to provide the legal framework necessary for the assertion of the teachers' activism, by regulating their extracurricular activity and entrusting them with various missions: the fight against alcoholism, the establishment of popular banks, the organization of cultural circles, the foundation of village theatres, the organization of the villagers' soirees and school celebrations, the setting up of schools for adults, the creation of libraries, the publication of journals and of popular periodicals. The involvement in these activities brought a higher prestige to the teachers' status.

By laws and regulations, Haret ensured that primary teachers would have a good material situation, enabling their participation in the modernization of the village: "Regarding safety, the teaching staff from our primary schools is better provided for than in any other country, without exception. In terms of wages, not many

²⁹ Cf. *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. III, București, Comunicare.ro, 2009, p. 93–114.

³⁰ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. VI, ed. cit., p. 84.

countries are ahead”³¹. As a consequence, in 1909, he introduced the Law of the Credit House for the Teaching Staff, aimed at strengthening the teachers’ economic status through a system of measures (loans, advances, benefits, etc.), which gave them the opportunity “to capitalize and make their small economies productive”³².

As the main factors in shaping the modernizing mentality, teachers needed to become familiar with the economic activity of the village and to guide the peasants to effective forms of work organization, of soil cultivation. Haret advocated the cooperatives, considering that the Romanian peasants could improve their dramatic situation if they worked the soil together. The teaching staff in the villages had the mission to educate the peasants how to cultivate the soil together through the cooperatives. For Haret, the Romanian cooperative could be organized according to the cooperative experiences of other European countries, Denmark for instance. For a direct understanding of the Danish cooperatives, he sent two teachers in this northern country “to see how admirably the peasants had organized their life there”³³. It might be said that Haret recognized the effectiveness of Danish schools: “Because there the school itself made the peasants cherish the land and know full well how to use it”³⁴.

A natural question ought to be raised: why did the Danish folk school system succeed, to the extent that the modern Danish society was actually developed by the peasants, while in Romania, despite the enactment of Spiru Haret’s reforms, the peasantry and the villages were fenced in their action of modern change? The answer is certainly not an easy one and requires a thorough study of the cultures from the two countries. I would say that the development space in which each society is located was determinant. Denmark was part of the western space, which supported and drove change and progress, while Romania existed in a cultural and geopolitical space where a competition for political and military hegemony was waged, blocking individual initiatives and profound modernization. The Danes had many ways to exploit their agricultural products and process them into industrial products, while Romania was forced to export only agricultural products.

IX. EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

One of Haret’s contributions to the reform of the Romanian society was the regulation of education for adults. In his view, education in a modern state should encompass all age groups in an appropriate institutional framework. Education was invested with the role of a fundamental institution for popular advancement.

By laws and regulations, Spiru Haret created the institutional framework for the development of adult education in Romania through the schools for adults,

³¹ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. II, p. 286.

³² *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. III, ed. cit., p. 184.

³³ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. VI, ed. cit., p. 86.

³⁴ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret [The Works of Spiru Haret]*, vol. VIII, București, Comunicare.ro, 2010, p. 104.

cultural circles, popular libraries, the villagers' soirees, village theatres, etc. He launched journals meant to enlighten the peasants and the workers.

Haret elaborated, in 1904, the Regulation Governing the Schools for Adults, stipulating that urban and rural communes, as well as the corporations of artisans could set up courses for adults at their own expense³⁵.

The syllabus of the schools for adults developed by Haret in 1904 established courses to complete the instruction of factory, workshop and shop apprentices. These training activities were held on the premises of the vocational or trade schools every weekday evening and on Sundays. They had a duration of three years. In the same document, the courses are presented: Romanian, French, German, arithmetic and elementary geometry, the study of trade and accounting, and theoretical and practical lectures on various branches of trade and industry³⁶.

The schools for adults were organized according to the population's level of education: primary schools for adults, free courses to complete one's general culture, adult schools for apprentices from factories, shops and workshops. Likewise, he set up schools where peasant women were shown how to raise and take care of livestock and poultry, and where they were taught notions of kitchen, gardening, pomology, hygiene, childcare, silkworm rearing, beekeeping, fabrics, sewing peasant clothes for women, men and children.

Haret conceived education as a means to remove illiteracy and ordered that training programs for the illiterate should be carried out. In Circular no. 43 226 of 31 August 1902, addressed to the prefects, who were enjoined to set up courses for adults, Haret remarked "the great significance of adult education in a country where there is such a large number of illiterate people"³⁷.

Due to his decisions and actions, there were established thousands of schools for adults in Romania at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1904, nearly two thousand schools for adults were functioning with 80,000 students³⁸, while in the 1908–1909 school year; the number of courses for adults had been raised up to 1,403, with 56,678 participants.

Haret's program included the publishing of didactic books, accessible to as many readers as possible. For teachers, he created the collection "The Teaching Library" [Pedagogical Library], consisting of translated works of universal pedagogy. Haret supported the publication of the reviews *Convorbiri didactice* [Didactic Talks], *Învățământul primar* [Primary Education], *Noua revistă pedagogică* [The New Educational Review], *Școala românească* [The Romanian School], which included articles about the schools for adults. Through the *Albina* [Bee] magazine,

³⁵ "Regulamentul școlilor de adulți" ["Regulations on the Schools for Adults"], *Monitorul Oficial* [Official Gazette], no. 49, 3 (16) June 1904, p. 2514–2516.

³⁶ "Programa analitică pentru școalele de adulți" ["Curriculum of the Schools for Adults"], *Monitorul Oficial* [Official Gazette], no. 203, 8 (21) Decembre 1904, p. 7572.

³⁷ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret* [The Works of Spiru Haret], vol. II, ed. cit., p. 161.

³⁸ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret* [The Works of Spiru Haret], vol. VI, ed. cit., p. 86.

scientific knowledge was disseminated in the villages. This magazine was one of the few publications in Romania with an uninterrupted appearance.

Because of the institutional framework of adult education created by Spiru Haret in Romania, illiteracy decreased in a significant proportion – from 78% in 1899 to 61% in 1912.

One direction of adult education promoted by Spiru Haret was the initiation of decisions and actions meant to combat alcoholism. Haret was convinced that only the establishment of a strong community of primary school teachers could decisively influence the ultimate success of the fight against alcohol consumption. For that end, he listed – among the extracurricular activities of the teaching staff – the anti-alcohol campaign, which started in 1897 and “during which the teachers have worked with such energy”³⁹. He mentioned the foundation and organization of cultural circles in the villages, the inclusion of plays about the effects of alcoholism in the rural theatre repertoire, the publication of brochures and the portrayal of anti-alcoholism messages through paintings, all of them being distributed to the libraries of the rural schools and to teachers⁴⁰.

A significant fact is that the government, whose member Spiru Haret was, passed in Parliament in 1908, “The Law Establishing a Monopoly on the Sale of Spirits in Rural Communes and Measures against Drunkenness”, which was published in *Monitorul Oficial* [*Official Gazette*] on 7 March 1908.

CONCLUSIONS

Spiru Haret’s reforms were aimed at adapting the Romanian society, predominantly agrarian and peasant-like, to the requirements of the bourgeois economy, as well as to the European standards of institution administration. The school’s mission was to create the skills necessary for a professional life that would be different from the traditional agrarian activities. In addition, the school aimed to shape the consciousness of the citizens’ rights and obligations in a democratic state. In his view it is essential that everything that is learned in school should be learned seriously, with the thought of using that education.

Spiru Haret conceived the school as a fundamental institution for the process of creating and developing the national state because the first sequence of the national action takes place on the school ground. The school system of a country must be the faithful reflection of the needs, aspirations and national character of the people that live in it. Spiru Haret has regulated institutional rules of the entire Romanian education and he created a mass system of schools to prepare members of modern society.

Through his scientific work and his political and legislative measures, Haret provides an explanatory model for the modernization of the Romanian society. Undoubtedly, Spiru Haret was a true reformer of the Romanian society.

³⁹ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret* [*The Works of Spiru Haret*], vol. VI, ed. cit., p. 84.

⁴⁰ *Operele lui Spiru C. Haret* [*The Works of Spiru Haret*], vol. II, ed. cit., p. 271.

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