

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN RUSSIA

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Abstract:

The objectives of the research consist in carrying out a synthesis-analysis of the epistemological history of the pedagogy in Russia, by capitalizing on the epistemological valences identified and stressing the impact of the valences of the Russian pedagogy on the epistemic development of the education sciences. The historical research methodology was used to highlight the evolution of the domain in conceptual and institutional plan, in synchronic and diachronic perspective. The paper aims to capture the specificity of education in Russia that is anchored, equally, in the problems of modernization, but also in the maintenance of its own cultural and psychosocial identity. The stages of education development, the periodizations made by pedagogues and historians of pedagogy, the features of the four education reforms, the roles of personalities in the development of education, significant pedagogical ideas that have revolutionized pedagogy / didactics in the world are reviewed.

Keywords: *history of education, reform, counter-reform, fraternal schools, academy*

1. Introduction

Education emerged at the same time as the society and it fulfilled, from the beginning, *a general social function*, of transmitting the experience from one generation to another. G.B. Kornetov, A.V.Duhavneva, L.D.Stoliarenko believe that the beginning of education within tribes dates 2.5 - 1.5 million years ago. [Лобанова, О.Б., Колокольникова, З.У., 2013, p. 14].

The education of the ancient Slavs

During the 6th-9th centuries, education **originated in the family** to the Eastern Slavs. Its social function was achieved only at the micro-community level. The organization of family education in the ancient Slavs had specific features. In the modest 7th century social environment, it was the custom to leave family education at the expense of a mentor; the mentor was usually the mother's brother, the children's uncle. This is why the proverb is justified: "Каковы дядьки – таковы и детятыки" (*Such uncles, such children*). In the absence of the uncle, education was done by pious and decent neighbors. The habit of entrusting the education of the children of foreign families was called "кумовство" (*godfathership*). Amongst the noble members of the community, this habit was called "кормильство" (*growth*) because the educator was responsible for the moral, spiritual and physical education of the descendant of a nobleman, teaching him to carry out economic, leadership and military

activities. *The support*, as a social and pedagogical phenomenon, survived in the Russian kniezzates until the 12th century.

During the 8th-9th centuries, with the progress of the *economic* and ("household") *community* life, significant changes have taken place in the families of the old Slavs. The decisive role of educator rests with the mother and the older siblings. In the 8th century, with the advent of writing, the alphabet and writing began to be studied, but this was not yet done within schools.

2. Content development

Education during the Kievan period

The Christian medieval education in Russia is much different from that of Western Europe. The specificity of education in the period of Kievan Russia is influenced by **the dependence upon the tradition of the Orthodox Church**. With *Christianity*, along with *the cultural tradition*, Russia also takes over *the Byzantine educational traditions*. The old Slavic language becomes a cult language. In the 15th century the Byzantine Empire fell under the influence of the Ottoman invasion, and Russia became the pole of orthodoxy. The break with the West is accentuated; a consequence is represented by the lack of significant changes in education until the time of the reforms of Peter the Great. The children were taught at home by monks and calligraphers. If, during the 10th-11th centuries, the spread of education in Russia, as a condition for expanding the sphere of influence of Orthodoxy, was a state concern, with the consolidation of the Russian church, education and the construction of schools passed under the jurisdiction of the church.

During the Christianity of Russia, there were scholars in the big cities. In the chronicle *Повесть временных лет* (The Tale of Bygone Years) there is a note about the knyaz Vladimir Sviatoslavici, who christened Russia in 988, started building churches and urged priests to gather children and educate them in literacy within church schools. The "literacy" schools had the contents of elitist learning and were organized for children of princes, nobles and warriors. These schools were initially private and the teachers were Greek and Bulgarian.

The tradition of literacy education has been extended to the 11th century due to the efforts of the knyaz Yaroslav the Wise, the initiator of the first Russian book library in Kiev. There was a high school at the courtyard of the wise knyaz Yaroslav the Wise, where many cultural people of the time were trained: writers, chroniclers, translators and copyists, preachers and scholars. During the 10th -13th centuries, besides churches and monasteries, schools for the training of the clergy and the educated persons were established.

Significant pedagogical ideas, reflecting the principles of medieval Russian pedagogy, have travelled through time until the present day as they were preserved by monuments of literature and writing. One of the best known creations is *Поучение Владимира Мономаха детям* (*The teachings of Vladimir Monomah to his children*) dating from the end of the 11th century - the beginning of the 12th century, intended not only to the children of the knyaz Vladimir, but also to the young generation of noblemen.

During the 11th-12th centuries, a number of manuscript collections, with pedagogical content, in translation and in the original, were printed in the Kievan state. The Honey-Bee, the

Emerald, Sviatoslav's Nomocanon, Golden Mouth **Chrysostom** contained ideas, opinions, texts of Socrates, Democritus, Aristotle. Sviatoslav's Nomocanon is the first attempt in the history of the Russian pedagogy to present information about the Byzantine tradition of education.

In the 13th century, the education decayed because of the destruction of cities after the invasion of the Tartars and the Mongols. The traditions of the literacy culture have been preserved only in the princely environment.

Education in the Russian state during the Moscow period

Because of the Tatar-Mongolian incursions, the level of education declined at the beginning of the 14th century. Gradually, however, the Moscow state began to develop a unique system of education. In the 14th and 17th centuries the characteristic features of the Kievan system of education were preserved and only at the end of this stage did *the higher type of education system schools* begin to appear, which anticipate the emergence of the *university education*.

As a result of the process of uniting the Russian lands around Moscow, the strengthening of the political power, the need to train some educated people appeared. In the 14th-16th centuries, monasteries played an important role in the development of education. The Orthodox Church has contributed to the opening of new state-controlled schools. The traditions of children's literacy learning have been preserved in the princely families. During the Moscow period, a relatively small number of people were part of the intellectual elite of the Russian society. However, humanist views have emerged in this environment.

At the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, at the western borders of the old Russian lands, in western Ukraine and Belarus, *fraternal schools* began to develop. The descendants of the population of Ukraine and Belarus, as they tried to preserve their religion, culture and language intact, they created such institutions within the Orthodox communities.

The schools were accessible to children from different backgrounds and a distinctive feature of the educational process was its rigorous organization. The children were taught for four hours a day, they were given homework and the homework was checked at home and the teachers kept in touch with the parents, etc. "The organizational bases of the *fraternal schools* were subsequently theoretically grounded, developed and disseminated by I.A. Comenius." [Лобанова, О.Б., Колокольникова, З.У., 2013, p. 31].

In Russia, the system of frontal education by classes and lessons of I.A. Comenius was anticipated, which was a revolution in pedagogy/teaching and in society.

A special moment in the evolution of education in Russia was the 17th century. This is the century during which the first institutional attempts *aimed at establishing the higher education system* are recorded. The *Lutheran School* (1621), the *Kyiv-Mohyla College* (1632), the *School of the Epiphany Monastery* (1681) and, finally, the *Elino-Greek School* or the *Slavic-Greek-Latin Academy* (1687) were established.

Based upon the education system and program in the *fraternal schools*, the Moldovan Petru Movilă (1596-1647), the metropolitan of Kiev (1633-1647), established, in 1632, the Kyiv-

Mohyla College, which can be regarded as a university-type educational institution. This historical event was achieved by uniting the *Kiev Fraternal Schools* with the *Lavra School*. On September 26, 1701, Peter I officially conferred on the Kyiv-Mohyla College the status of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. [Исаевич, 1972, pp. 62-64, Хижняк, З. І., 1981, pp. 31-33].

The *Slavo-Greek-Latin Academy* (1687) is the first general higher education institution in Moscow, established in 1687. The initiative for its establishment belonged to S. Položki, who created the *Institutional Charter of the Academy*, in which the objectives and content of the education were defined. The Academy was influenced by the program of the medieval European universities where the "seven free arts", the languages of worship and theology were studied.

It is an extremely important higher education institution from a historical perspective, as great personalities of the Russian and universal culture have studied and were educated there, such as: the encyclopaedist M.V. Lomonosov, the writer A.D. Cantemir, the architect V.I. Bajenov, the mathematician L. Magniŭki, the first Russian MD in medical sciences P. Postnikov, etc. [Педагогическая энциклопедия., 1966, 75, 136]. With the opening of the *University of Moscow* in 1755, the Academy lost its significance.

An important monument of the old Russian culture, of life and education from the 15th to the 17th centuries is associated with the work of *Домострой* (*Building of the house*). Its chapters are specifically dedicated to education issues. In the 17th century Epifani Slavineŭki published a treatise on children's education, *Гражданство обычаев детских* (*On Civility in Children*), an interpretation of the book with the same title written by Erasmus of Rotterdam. The Russian book is not intended for children, but becomes an instructive set of rules, laying the foundations of the *literary-pedagogical* genre.

In 1801, a system of school districts was formed in France, with a number of universities, which ensured the strict subordination of schools in that particular area. This type of administrative organization represented a model to follow, which stimulated the creation of a public education system in Russia.

The achievement of the state education system in the 18th century

N.A. Mazalova establishes four stages in the development of education in the mentioned period. [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.В., 2006, p. 62].

1. Stage one is related to the reforms of Peter the Great in all the fields of the Russian life. During this period, the first *secular schools* were created, which initiated children in vocational activities, and secondary institutions, which trained specialists in the fields of medicine, navigation and engineering. Until Peter the Great's reforms there was no vocational education system in Russia. In 1714 schools of accounting are established, and in 1715 the *Maritime Academy* is established. In 1721 the first *mining and metallurgical schools* were opened in the Ural Mountains, which have operated until the end of the 19th century. The *Academy of Sciences*, established in 1725, with a university and a high school, influenced the development of education and created premises for the achievement of the higher education according to the Western European model. During the *Peter The Great's* period, children were educated according to Western fashion.

2. Stage two is located between 1730-1760, the period of the reigns of the empresses Anna Ioannovna Romanova (1693-1740) and Elisabeth Petrovna (1741-1761). During this period a system of education of the nobility is formed, the first Russian university is established, the institutions created by Peter I are reorganized. During the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna, the scientist and mathematician Mihail Lomonosov (1711-1765), the first Russian academic, reorganized the *Academy of Sciences* and established the *University of Moscow* in 1755, initially consisting of three faculties: the Faculty of Philosophy, The Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine. The state endeavored to establish control over the quality of family education and private education. By a decree of 1755, the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna forbade foreigners, who did not pass an examination at the Academy of Sciences, to teach children at home, to raise the level of preparation. The “M. Lomonosov” *State University* is one of the most prestigious universities, most of the Nobel laureates in Russia were graduates or professors of this University.

3. Stage three is related to the policy of Catherine II in the field of education and the promotion of the Illuminist ideas. Between 1766-1782 *general pedagogical schools* were established for large categories of people, for educational and a non-professional purpose.

In 1779, the first *pedagogical seminar* was established at the *University of Moscow*. In 1786 a *pedagogical seminar* was established in Petersburg, following the Moscow model, and it became the first higher education institution for teachers. In 1763, at the initiative of I.I.Beţkoi, the *Educator's House* was opened in Moscow, following the model of which *houses for teachers* were built throughout Russia. The empress herself was interested in pedagogy, she read J.J. Rousseau's books and she was the author of educational or pedagogy books: *Selected Russian Proverbs* and *The Continuation of Elementary Education*.

The important educator of this period is I.I.Beţkoi (1704-1795), a representative public figure, with an initial formation in education achieved in France, from where he came up with progressive ideas. He shared the ideas of Catherine II regarding the need to educate a new category of people in educational institutions intended for castes. In his conception, attention had to be paid to the moral formation of the child.

4. Stage four in the development of education in Russia begins with the reform of 1782–1786 and lasts until the end of the century. In order to prepare for the school reform, the *Commission for the establishment of public schools* was created and the most important educators and public figures were entrusted with the mission to carry out a project of development of public education in Russia. In 1764 Philip Heinrich Dilthey **invited as** a professor at the University of Moscow, recommended the *German schools* as a model for the Russian Empire: the schools in Riga and Revel as examples for the elementary schools, and the school in the Lutheran church Peter and Paul in Petersburg as a model for gymnasiums.

Dilthey proposed the approach of the structure of the *University of Moscow* to the European educational structure, especially to the German educational structure. The *Commission* has taken over the project about setting up different types of schools and the project of organizing state gymnasiums.

In 1786 the *Charter of the public schools* of the Russian empire was approved; according to this document two types of schools were established: the *main public schools* (five year studies) and the *small public schools* (two year studies). The beginnings of education for girls date from the middle of the 18th century, when the Smolnii *Institute* for the daughters of nobles was established.

The educational reform plan was carried out by F.I.Iacovici of Mierevo (1741-1814), an Austrian educator. N. I. Novicov (1744–1818), an educator, a writer and a public figure, wrote the first magazine for children, *Children's Reading for the Heart and Mind*. He was also the first author to use the term **pedagogy** in Russia because he felt the need to develop theoretical concepts and ideas specific to an area that researches education and teaching.

The development of the public education system in Russia in the 19th century

N.A. Mazalova establishes three stages in the development of education in the 19th century: the beginning of the century - 1824; 1825-1860; 1860-1890, stages that will be developed in the following pages, devoted to the reform. [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.В., 2006, p. 23, 69].

The education in Russia from the end of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, educational and teaching institutions different from the traditional schools are created in Russia, both in content and in organization. The "House of the Free Child" of K.N. Venčel, the "Settlement" of S.T.Şaţki and A.U.Zelenki, the "Happy Life" colony of S.T.Şaţki experience the ideas of the educators who created them. Thus, in 1906, in "Settlement" ("Cultural Village") a whole system of children's institutions was achieved: a kindergarten, a beginner's experimental school, a school club, in which activities were carried out with adolescents who graduated from urban schools and crafts workshops.

The building was reminiscent of a fabulous medieval castle and the construction was financed by the merchants and entrepreneurs in Moscow. The Ministry of Education initially supported the organization of children's clubs, and then banned them for the propaganda of socialism among children. In 1909, in the building of "Settlement", S.T.Şaţki and Şlegher created the company "Work and leisure for children" for the education of children from socially disadvantaged families.

During the winter of 1912-1913, the teacher P.F. Kaptereov organized in Petersburg, the first *Russian Congress of Family Education*. At this level the author advocates for raising the socio-cultural and socio-professional status of the family as a factor of education, complementary to the education of all types and of all grades.

The education system during the 20th century

M.A. Mazalova [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.В., 2006, p. 109] divided the period after the October Revolution (1917) into three periods: 1917–1930, 1930–1940, 1945–1991.

V.Volînkî establishes four stages of the education development and pedagogical thinking in the 20th century: *1917-1929, 1930-1945, 1945-1990, 1991-present day period* [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.В., 2006, p. 17].

The 20th century was marked by school-related experiments, such as the "experimental station" opened near Moscow by S.T.Şaţki, a complex of scientific and educational institutions where certain forms and methods of education were researched tested and put into practice. The period *1930-1980* had several stages: the war years, the development of general education in the 1940s-1950s, the introduction of the seven-year education, the organization of education in relation to production from the late 1950s to the 1960s, the generalization of the secondary education for 10 years in 1960-1970.

In *the history of pedagogical thinking and education* in Russia *several stages of evolution* are mentioned that marked the process of achieving "**four reforms of education**": 1804, 1864, 1918, 1992. They have a number of particularities, generated by geopolitical, historical, social and cultural conditions: a) the concentration of reforms in the 19th century; b) the *reform-counter-reform* alternation and sometimes *the counter-reforms* were of a higher intensity; c) the permanent swing between Western influences and the indigenous elements; d) the interaction between two political-educational paradigms, a *conservative* paradigm and a *liberal* paradigm.

The history of reforms in Russia

The premises for the emergence of education reforms were outlined in Russia later, during the second half of *the 19th century*. During the last two centuries, major changes were registered: the major reforms of 1860, the fall of autocracy followed by the establishment of the Soviet power and then the collapse of the totalitarian system, in the early 1990s. These social changes attracted natural reforms in the field of education.

The international experience, analyzed by Ph. Coombs points out that "the changes in education systems in many countries were rather a result of an intervention outside of the education system – at the political level – than on an inner initiative." (Ф.Кумбс / Ph.Coombs, 1970, pp. 10, 12-13). The same thing happened in Russia. The reform in education was imposed by the state, by the political power, with the intention that, subsequently, education could become a factor of innovation and development of the country. In times of profound change, the true reformists held the positions of ministers of education: in 1861 – Alexandru Golovnin, in 1917 – Anatoli Lunaciarski, in 1990 – E.D. Dneprov.

The educator E.D. Dneprov, a reform theorist after 1990, exemplifies the situations in which the state built the higher education system, according to its own interests [Днепров, Э.Д., 1994, p. 15]. For example, during the reign of Peter I (1672-1725), the education system had a pragmatic, professional character. During the period of the "enlightened absolutism", promoted by Catherine II (1762-1796), the education was based on the *general education*. The reform of Alexander I (1801-1825), one of the most liberal, somewhat continued the Enlightenment ideas of Catherine II. The concept of K.D. Uşinski, who believes that the main objective of the reform is the construction of the Russian school "upon the lasting basis of the personal needs and the needs of the Russian life" [Ушинский., К.Д., 1948-1950, p. 145].

E. D. Dneprov highlights the existence of four significant reforms in the history of the education system in Russia [Днепров, Э.Д., 1994, p. 13]: 1) 1804 (the liberal reforms of Alexander I); 2) 1864 (the era of the great reforms); 3) 1918 (the Socialist reform); 4) 1992 (the reform conceived in the spirit of the political ideas of *the perestroika* type, theorized and applied by the educator E.D. Dneprov).

During the 18th century, *the radical reforms* initiated by Peter I in all spheres (social, economic and cultural) of life in Russia led to a fundamental transformation of the pedagogical traditions, by establishing the first *secular schools*, meant to initiate pupils into practical activities and some *secondary institutions* that trained specialists in the fields of medicine, navigation and engineering.

The Academy of Sciences, established in 1725, with a university and a high school, created the premises for achieving higher education in Russia according to the Western-European model. In 1715 the *Maritime Academy* is established. In 1721 *the first mining and metallurgical schools* are established in Ural, which will operate until the end of the 19th century.

The *Petrov's* period is the period during which children are educated in Western fashion. A new direction is involved in what education in the family should represent, through organization and content. In the development of pedagogical thinking, L.F. Magniŭki (1669-1739), a mathematician who theoretically based general and professional education, V.N. Tatischev (1686-1750), I.T. Pososkov and F. Prokopovici played an important role.

In the 19th century, the process of developing education is accomplished during three stages – identified in the classification proposed by N.A. Mazalova – related to the reforms initiated, from the top of Tzarist Russia, to Alexander I or to Nicholas I [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.Б., 2006, p. 69].

The first stage is related to *the liberal reforms of Alexander I*. In 1802 the Ministry of National Education was established, which was charged with carrying out the education reform that led to the organization of four types of *institutions: parish, county, governorate or gymnasiums and universities*, designed in the perspective of their continuity.

The second stage of the reform is related to the period of the reign of Nikolai I (1825-1855), who tried to develop a school policy aimed at strengthening the social stability. The Minister of Education, Count Liven, indicated the ways of achieving the reform, in the *Charter of primary and secondary schools* (1828). The educator V.F. Odoevski worked for more than 40 years (1832-1862) at the *Commission for Public Education* and took charge of the training activities of the teachers in the rural schools. The decree of Nicholas I, published in 1831, increased the supervision of private schools and foreign teachers. In this way, *the reform of Alexander I from 1803-1804* was followed, in 1828-1835, by *the counter-reform*.

The third phase of the reform marks the process of education development in Russia, started in 1860, which led to *the preparation of a new reform*, of particular importance, as noted by M.A. Mazalova, [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.Б., 2006, p. 73.]. In 1860, for the first time in the history of Russia, institutions and organizations were established that aimed at spreading knowledge among the masses. *Sunday schools* were established for farmers and adult craftsmen, needed upon the basis of population emancipation, after the abolition of

slavery (1861). Several *pedagogical societies* are established. One of the most important pedagogical society is that of St. Petersburg (1869), which stimulated the process of development of the national Russian pedagogy through the contribution of K.D. Uşinski, N.H. Vessel and P.F. Kapterev. K.D. Uşinski developed a teacher training plan for primary school and expressed his desire to create *pedagogical faculties* in universities. At the level of social life, we point to an original expression of direct democracy – *zemstva*, a territorial council, established during the liberal reforms of the Russian Empire. The *zemstvas* stimulated the modernization of the country at the end of the 19th century, the creation of the local network of infirmaries and small hospitals, as well as *the process of the emergence of schools*. Besides, a fundamental political thesis of Soljenitiņin is that contemporary Russia should bring the *zemstva* back to life, "that body of local *self-government*, created after the reforms of Alexander II and which survived until the Revolution" [Nivat, Georges., 2004, p. 159].

The education reform of 1860 is important because of its unprecedented scale and complexity. It has reached almost all the links of the education system. It has laid a solid foundation in the *primary public school*, it has formed a flexible education system for women, created the premises for the development of pedagogical, professional, extra-curricular education and it initiated the reform of higher education. The concept of *pedagogical social movement* is related to this stage.

The education system aims to fulfill the mission of *humanizing the education* the general purpose of which is the formation of the personality of the child, pupil and student. The *idea of humanism* with multiple social echoes crystallized from the works of three important educators of that period:

a) N.I. Pirogov – *the humanistic education*, which denied the *utilitarianism* of the school education from the period of Nicholas I; b) L.N. Tolstoi – *the proto-pedocentrism* that anticipated the "New Education" movement, influential in the European, and North American space, throughout the 20th century; c) Uşinski – the anthropological pedagogy, a direction that laid *the foundations of pedagogy as a science* in Russia.

Following the attack against the Tsar Alexander II, the education reforms were followed by two *counter-reforming* waves, in 1870 and 1880. The government tried to completely subordinate the secondary school to the control of the state and the church in the person of the Synod. In 1887, a circular letter was published regarding "kitchen children", which prevented the access to the gymnasium for the children of lackeys, washerwomen, and small merchants.

In 1884, the new *University Charter* eliminated the autonomy of universities. At the same time, the police supervision of students was instituted and the tuition fees increased. Many progressive teachers were fired from universities. The right of women to access the higher education has been curtailed.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Russian pedagogy had a significant scientific potential, accumulated and as a result of the experiences registered in the school reform process. The change programs, which anticipate a new reform of the Russian education system, were debated in educational forums and publications (around 200). Some are published in books and brochures, such as those signed by V.I. Ciarnoluski: a) *The results of*

social thinking in the field of education (1906); b) *Basic problems of school organization in Russia* (1909). A more radical, more comprehensive and detailed program for the transformation of the Russian education system, as the one during 1910-1918; a "more radical" program for the transformation of the Russian schooling system was proposed, which aimed at: a) democratizing education; b) the denationalization; c) the demonopolization and decentralization; d) attracting the community in the management and in the activity of the school; e) the active participation of parents in the activity; f) training the local authorities for the good functioning of the school; g) promoting the initiative and autonomy in education; h) the creation of a unitary education system; i) the development of national schools; j) ensuring education in the mother tongue, a secular education, everyone's right to education, the accessibility of education; k) the free education, with the removal of all social, national, confessional and other restrictions; l) providing general education, m) providing mixed education; n) providing education for the marginalized; o) providing freedom in teaching; p) the non-censorship of textbooks; r) the renewal of learning contents, etc.

This *Program* contained reforming ideas, historically and philosophically grounded and N.I.Pirogov was right to assert that *the new* represents *the old* long forgotten. One of the ministers who was thinking about a reform project was Count P.N.Ignatiev, Minister of Education for a short time (1915-1916).

During the first half of the 20th century, a phenomenon specific to the Russian cultural space - the counter-reforms – intervenes, which sometimes had a magnitude that exceeded the magnitude of the reforms, interrupted in full progress. Stalin's actions during the 1930s compromised what had changed positively in education in the years 1918-1920. The *counter-reform* of the 1930s also affected the status of pedagogy, which lost its scientific character, threatening to become a part of the new Stalinist political ideology.

The **1950s-1960s** of the 20th century represented a thaw, a reconsideration of values. This is also the case of the educator V.A.Suhomlinski, ostracized because of his free thinking and "abstract humanism". During 1960s top personalities in the field of pedagogy lived and worked, such as: pedagogical publicists - V.I.Matveev, S.A. Soloveicik, innovative educators - S.A. Amonaşvili, I.P. Volkov, I.P. Ivanov, S.N.Lîsenkova, B.P. Nikitin, L.A. Nikitina, V.F. Şatalov, M.P. Şetin or scientists - V.V. Davîdov, V.P. Zincenko, B.M. Nemenski, A.V. Perovski, etc. They are part of the personalities that have prepared the intellectual, moral and spiritual *perestroika* and they were the link to *the fourth reform of education*.

In 1992, **the fourth education reform** was theorized and implemented by the educator E.D. Dneprov.

The current period

The analysis of the Russian reforms cannot ignore the existence of "two major axis of the country". The old axes is the one that "leads from the Varangians to the Greeks," as the *Tale of Bygone Years* states, based upon the power of the Byzantine principles and religion, promotes the European axis par excellence. The second axis is *the Eurasian axis*. [Nivat, Georges., 2004, p. 70]. In other words, Russia is equally anchored in the problems of

modernization and *globalization*, but also in maintaining its own cultural and psychosocial identity.

There have been long debates between *Westerners* and *Slavophiles*. The first, the *Westerners*, were convinced that Russia belonged to Europe; consequently the road to modernization is the one followed by European societies. Instead, the *Slavophiles* were convinced by the uniqueness and messianic role of Russia in an extended social and historical context.

According to the idea of modernization, we also point to another periodization of the reforms undertaken after 1980. This is the periodization achieved by M.A. Mazalova, which talks about three stages in the evolution of reforms: 1) Stage I (1980-1992) – the development of the alternative education compared to by the traditionally centralized education system; 2) Stage II (1992-1998) – the evolution of education in the period after the fall of the USSR as a state and political regime; 3) Stage III (from 1999 to the present day) – the evolution of education during the period of *globalization*, practiced at a social (economic, political, cultural, etc.) level [Мазалова, М.А., Уракова, Т.В., 2006, p. 124].

The invariable elements of *contemporary modernization* are determined by several factors asserted in the *post-industrial* society, in the *information* society, in the *democratic* society. Among these important social *factors*, sometimes even decisive, we mention: a) the general laws of development of the modern market economy, also reflected at the level of the educational institutions; b) the *economic globalization* reflected in the globalization of the *education system* especially the professional education system; c) the *democratization* of the social life reflected in the activation of the educational (local, territorial, national, etc.) communities, against the background of the formation of the civil society; d) *the development of quality standards of school education*, reflecting the global trends in the modern education systems; e) the *computerization* of all areas of activity within the society, reflected at the level of the school organization, the design of the curriculum plans and the school syllabi.

At the base of the *modernization* there are structural changes in three *key areas*, which define the activity on the social scale of the school system: the *financing of the school system*, the *content of the education and the monitoring of the quality* that decisively marks the *school management*. These structural changes are considered by A.A. Pinski, a member of the reform strategy working group, the three tools of *the present modernization* necessary to overcome the traditional boundaries of the *traditional school system*, built for the training needs of the *early industrial society*, which are today in opposition to those imposed by *the post-industrial computerized society*.

In the field of **financing**, the following principles apply: a) "*the money follows the pupil*"; b) *the payment of teachers according to performances* based upon pedagogical criteria;

In the field curricularly designed **contents** there are: a) *competence* oriented standards – defined psychologically within the general and specific objectives; b) the creation of national evaluation systems; c) the use of self-monitoring and self-assessment tools of schools; d) the increasing importance of self-control, with the promotion of *portfolios*.

In the field of *quality monitoring*, the means of stimulating the autonomy of the schools, of the participation of the community in the effective management thereof are used, as far as the *added value* within the educational process is concerned.

The projects carried out in Russia by international organizations (*World Bank, British Council, Council of Europe*, etc.) have an important role to play in the reform of school systems, which need to be evaluated and refined from the perspective of their contribution to the development of the *national* education system as a whole, to the progress of society in the postmodern (contemporary) era.

3. Conclusions and suggestions:

Russian educators stress the importance of historical-hermeneutical research. Pedagogy is a hermeneutic science because the educational action is hermeneutic. The carrying out of research in a historical and hermeneutic manner allows all those interested to form a holistic vision, with decisive contributions to the progress of the education sciences;

The concern of Russian educators for scientific rigor and epistemic clarification of pedagogical concepts can serve as a model for all those active in the field of education and who can contribute to carrying out fundamental, but also operational research, by using an epistemologically stabilized pedagogical language at the level of the fundamental concepts that define the object of study specific to the pedagogy, the normativity specific to the pedagogy, the research methodology specific to the pedagogy as a socio-human science with autonomous status, which is the basis of all the sciences of education.

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