

PRIVATE SCHOOL IN THE VISION OF SPIRU HARET

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Abstract: The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is marked in the field of education by the personality of Spiru Haret who also organized private education in Romania alongside public education. Spiru Haret's name is linked to the appearance of school magazines, including the General Journal of Education. Through these magazines, Spiru Haret sounded the alarm about the organisation of private education and its failures.

Keywords: private education, confessional school, school regulation, legislation, pedagogy.

Pre-university education in the Romanian space is marked at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries by the personality of Spiru Haret; any theme is addressed during this period, you cannot get over the personality of the great school man. He was a renowned mathematician, astronomer, but his involvement in politics brings him to the leadership of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Instruction. If for universal history, Spiru Haret is more of a mathematician, but also a crater on the moon that bears his name, for us Romanians he is the great reformer of education. He served three terms (1897÷1899, 1901÷1904, 1907÷1910) totalling eight years as Minister of Education. Much or little? Difficult to say.

Spiru Haret was a great teacher without a degree in this field, but no other great reformers of education had a degree in the field, such as Froebel who was a chemist, Decroly who was a philosopher or Montessori who was a doctor. As a professor of mathematics in university and secondary education, Spiru Haret creates his own pedagogy that will last long after his departure from the ministry's leadership.³⁸

Spiru Haret's pedagogical thinking was very well concentrated in several sentences addressed to the King in 1903 in a Report on the State of Education:

"One of our targets is to restrict the purely theoretical field of education to the most than possible, without compromising its unity and solidity, and developing its practical side. We are forced to remove from education all that life had but by the power of tradition, without responding to any certain reality: either a current social necessity or the sufficiency of a spiritual need.

³⁸ cf. Emil Bâldescu, *Spiru Haret*, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 1972, p. 207

We also seek to bring the school closer to the people, to make it loved and respected, to be the center from which to start the good and healthy currents for the upbringing and strengthening of the nation." ³⁹ The idea of practical education is implemented by Haret and by supporting publications dedicated to teachers.

Haret believes that education can only develop through the efficient dissemination of information; therefore supports the publication of affordable school books and brochures for teaching departments as supporting materials in their work. Thus, in 1900 Haret founded the *Steaua Society* with the aim of supporting the printing of brochures at low prices.⁴⁰

It is certain that on the initiative of Spiru Haret, specialized magazines on topics of school organization, pedagogy and teaching methodology are also established. Spiru Haret considered it necessary for the pedagogical experience of some teachers to be shared with others or for these magazines to express the opinions and wishes of teachers.

Thus, the magazines dedicated to the Romanian school appear *The new pedagogical magazine, the Pedagogical Tribune, the Modern School, the Romanian School, the School of the Future, Primary Education, the General Journal of Education*; they arise through the efforts of Spiru Haret.

It is the press of the time that underlines very well Spiru Haret's attitude towards private education. In *the Gazette illustrated* from 28 January 1912. On the second page of this publication, in the article *Our Academics*, are presented two personalities, namely: Titu Maiorescu and Spiru Haret. The article underlines the initiative to organise private education:

*"At the same time, she gave particular attention to private education, almost unregulated, seeking that private institutions – especially the retired ladies – should be removed from some religious propropagands, around which there have often been discontents."*⁴¹

The pedagogical press, which he has supported very much, will pay tribute to him long after his disappearance. Thus, the first issue of the magazine *Education* from January to February 1923, 10 years after the death of the reformer of education, is dedicated to the great Spiru Haret. All the articles in this issue are dedicated to Spiru Haret where the work of the former Minister of Education with his good parts, but also with the parts of his less appreciated work, is analyzed.

Education ministers at the time of Spiru Haret's commemoration 10 years after his death, such as Dr.C. Angheliescu or former ministers such as I.G. Duca, will acknowledge him through their introductory articles in the journal *Education*. Dr.C. Angheliescu mentions:

³⁹ Spiru C. Haret, *Report to MS King on the work of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Affairs*, Institute by Graphic Arts "Carol Gobl", Bucharest, 1903, p. 23

⁴⁰ cf. Gheorghe Adamescu, *Letters from Spiru Haret to Dimitrie Sturdza*, Publishing House of the Cultural Foundation "Mihail Kogălniceanu" Bucharest, 1939, p. 23

⁴¹ *Illustrated Gazette*, Year I, No 7, 28 January 1912, p. 2

"Ten years have come since the death of Spiru Haret and his name still has, among us, a strong resonance"⁴²

I.G. Duca notes in the pages of the same magazines, in the same issue of *Education magazine*, a few lines about Spiru Haret through the book highlighted his achievements:

"Instead of darkening, the years thigh his work. From the time of the organization of Small Romania, full of hardships and problems, in which fatally so many were bound in haste, because then still in a hurry to break up Haret's work, rising more and more, fruitful, rich and strong. [...] He lived mastered by a single thought: the cultural rise of the Romanian people."⁴³

With regard to Spiru Haret's attitude to private education, Spiru Haret accepts this type of education, but believes that this alternative of public education must follow a strict organisation and be under the control of the State and not organised at the will of the employer. From the struggle for a legislative organization of private education, it is apparent the verticality of Spiru Haret who is not impressed by the pressures made by various politicians to leave private education to his founders. Haret was often advised to take care only of the organization of State education.

In Spiru Haret's conception, the school, whether public or private, has a duty "to form good citizens".⁴⁴

From the time he served as Inspector *General of School* appointed by Minister P.S. Aurelian in 1883 and then as *Secretary-General* of the Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Affairs, Dimitrie Sturdza between 1885 and 1888, Spiru Haret followed and wrote reports on private education.

Thus, in a letter to Minister Dimitrie Sturdza dated 1 February 1887, Spiru Haret informs that he has been following for some time "a business" of a private school, a boarding house where a governess regularly goes for a walk with the girls from the boarding house and stops in a house in Calea Griviței number 34 and asks for the support of the Prefect of the Capital Police:

"Minister,

It's been a few days since I've been pursuing a business, which, if it were true, would be very serious. Vitzu himself said that a governess from Mrs. Manliu, abusing her trust, left sunday school taking with her and some of the older girls, under the pretext to walk them, and went with them to a house in Grivita Way No. 34, where they met with several young people and partied.

The thing is very serious, but in such a way that in any way I would have stended to investigate through myself, I could raise a very big scandal, perhaps for no reason. [...].

I hope so, but you'll be willing to write to Mr. Moruzi to campaign for his sharpest and most discreet agent, and to tell us what he's going to find out. If he could even by tomorrow."

The letter is signed by Haret. It should be noted that the name Vitzu that appears in the letter refers to the former School Inspector General, Alexandru Vitzu and

⁴² *Education* Year VI, No. 1, January-February 1923, p. 3

⁴³ *Ibidem*, 4

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 21

professor at the Faculty of Sciences in Bucharest. Ms. Manliu was the wife of Professor Ion Manliu, born Stănescu who was the director of a private pension and graduated from pedagogical studies in Germany. Mr Moruzi who appears in the letter was at the time prefect of the Capital Police.⁴⁵

In another letter also addressed to Dimitrie Sturdza dated July 6, 1904, Spiru Haret draws attention to propaganda for the promotion of Catholicism among students who do not belong in Catholicism. Haret also writes about the disappearance of some students, about irregularities in Catholic private schools.

"Many esteemed Mr. Sturdza,

What happened the other day, in addition to being a proof of how I understand the laws of hospitality, could be an opportunity to put an end to a situation that revolts the world with the right word. I have a whole list of analogous cases that have passed unheeded, even though they have thrown mourning and despair into so many families. [...].

It was discovered that in the private schools of the Catholic Nuns in Galati and Bucharest there is propaganda for the transition of the pupils to Catholicism and even for their nuns."⁴⁶

The notes of Gheorghe Adamescu, who collected and published these letters in 1939, give details of the subject raised by Haret in the letters. The letter cited above dated 6 July 1904 refers to a trial of these schools, the research was completed, but no decisions had been taken.

Two days later, on July 8, 1904, Haret sends Dimitrie Sturdza another letter, where he also sends a list of student victims of Catholic propaganda from private schools:

"Respectable Mr. Sturdza,

As I spoke yesterday, I give you here the list of Romanian girls who, after being converted to Catholicism, most have also disappeared from the saddle and do not even know where they are.

From the school in Bucharest

[Before are listed 8 students from the school in Galati]

9. Marcela Duca, minor, sister of Sofia from Ploiești

10. Elvira Nicolau, teacher at Azil, niece of Mr. Paul Stătescu

11. Aneta Georgescu, daughter of an engineer from Campina

(The latter two were stopped by police when they left the country, accompanied by apples Theophane de la Notre – Dame de Sion in Bucharest.

12. Juliette Lieberls

13. Anne Giurcea

14. Vera Donici

15. Camille Donici

16,17,18. Three Sisters Apostoleanu

These last 7 are all nuns.

⁴⁵ Gheorghe Adamescu, *Letters from Spiru Haret to Dimitrie Sturdza*, Publishing House of the Cultural Foundation "Mihail Kogălniceanu" Bucharest, 1939, P. 10

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 23

*All these names I found out Can only say by chance, without any investigation, only by the fact that in Galati I had relatives in the Catholic school. From Bucharest my information is more limited, because I had no one there. A superficial investigation would surely give a lot to the face."*⁴⁷

Haret's ongoing concern to ensure quality education leads him to get involved in elucidating problems that arise in the educational process of private schools. Even if it does not bring a complete resolution of the problems through its efforts, but still manages to raise the alarm about the misdevelopment of education in private schools.

A similar view of private education also appears in the *Report to the King's M.S. on the work of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Affairs*, written in 1903 and drawn up in great detail. This report of about 600 pages analyzes the activity of primary, secondary, secondary schools in urban and rural areas, university activity; details are given about schools, pupils, the teaching body, teaching facilities, refresher examinations of teachers and teachers. School publications, textbooks, school libraries are not neglected in the analysis. Spiru Haret stops with the analysis of school canteens, extracurricular activities. In addition to this analysis, Spiru Haret also offers suggestions for remedying the identified problems. In this analysis report, private education takes up 5 pages.

From the first lines written about private education there is a negative note:

*"Of all the branches of learning, the one who has made less progress in us is the private education"*⁴⁸

In this *Report* Spiru Haret emphasizes the idea that poor organisation and lack of progress are caused by the lack of legislation for private education. Due to the lack of a law for private education private schools have a great freedom to determine the teaching staff, school curricula, timetable and everything related to the organization and conduct of the educational process. In these circumstances, many schools had to close their work because of a superficial education and the decision of parents to withdraw their children from these schools, without giving examples of this in the report.

According to the law of public instruction of 1864 which established a summary legislation for private education, Spiru Haret recalls the regulation of 1885 which provides a better organization of private schools. Under this Regulation, the graduation exams came under the supervision of the State which also issued valid certificates in the State's schools.

This Regulation of 1885 is amended several times, as on 29 May 1896, which related to the examinations of primary school pupils trained in the family or in private schools; then, another change occurred on 4 July 1896 and related to the organisation of private schools. On 12 August 1898, another Private Education Regulation was published which referred to secondary education and the promotion examinations of secondary pupils which were also subject to the attention of the State's school authorities:

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 30

⁴⁸ Spiru C. Haret, *Report to M.S. King on the work of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Religious Affairs*, Institute by Graphic Arts "Carol Gobl", Bucharest, 1903, p. 347

"At this moment, the regulations to which it is subject to private education are: that of 4 July 1896, on private schools; that of 29 May 1896 for primary education examinations of children trained in the family or in private institutes recognized by the State; and that of 12 August 1898, on secondary schools, which also deal with the pro-motion examinations of private secondary school pupils. Of these, the one of 4 July 1896 seeks to give an organization to the whole private education.

Apart from these regulations, private education in recent years has not given way to general measures of an organic nature.⁴⁹

Haret has the initiative of the Law of 1898 when two types of secondary schools were created. The two types of schools were: Grade I secondary schools that equated to boys' gymnasiums and second-grade grade II secondary schools that equated to the higher high school course. The focus was on girls' secondary schools. Spiru Haret's concern also came from the direction of private schools because many candidates who entered the competition for a department in education came from private schools, i.e. from a certain social category that could support school fees. For a long time until 1898 the candidates for the teaching positions came from the Pensions of Lady *Manliu*. The Law of 1898 supported a certain more modest social category, to support public schools, to remove the monopoly in the Baccalaureate exams of private girls' schools.⁵⁰

Spiru Haret's main concern was that these private schools do not have a national educational orientation; therefore, he insisted in *the Report to M.S. King* on the need for State control for the proper teaching of the Romanian language, for the study of national history and geography and for the introduction of the study of the Orthodox religion for Romanian students belonging to this religion. Thus, Spiru Haret informed that measures for patriotic education were introduced in private schools, as was achieved by the Circular of 8 August 1903; this circular required the obligation of national songs, the royal anthem as well as paintings depicting scenes from Romanian history.

Spiru Haret informs that due to the non-compliance with the Circular of August 1903, many schools belonging to religious denominations were closed; children in those schools were removed from the culture and religion of their homeland which did not impose any tolerance in Spiru Haret's view.

Another complaint presented by Spiru Haret in this *Report* was that of school holidays; private schools reserved the right to set their holidays, and many of these holiday days were not determined by any regulation, and their number was only shortening the study programme. For these irregularities referred to by the Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Affairs, Circulation was issued with a view to the recovery of the situation:

"By the circular of 29 January 1903 (Annex No. 88), we recommended that more attention be given to education in private schools. By that of 17 Noemvrie 1897 we stopped to suspend classes in private schools on days other than the celebrations provided for State schools. We don't quote more than one of lesser meanings."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibidem, 350

⁵⁰ Ibidem, 624

⁵¹ Ibidem, 351

The means of education used by the care of the principals of private schools did not comply with the materials approved by the Ministry, which is why the mission of the State school authorities to supervise the proper conduct of this type of education was quite difficult.

Spiru Haret's conclusions and solutions for a better course of things were: "we sought to make the authorizations to open confessional assions no longer be granted only to persons who fulfil some conditions of competence and a well-established morality." Also, "*the lack of a special law and control staff, because we have only two inspectors, has not allowed us to do more.*"⁵²

Spiru Haret's efforts to better organize private education continue in the next mandate of 1907÷1910. Haret believed strongly in quality education; therefore, the private school had to be organised according to the criterion of the school demands of the time and not as a much more convenient alternative to public education. During the last mandate it issues several circulars to regulate the activity of private schools.

Thus, according to Circular 84,554 of December 1909, private schools were to organize their physical education classes. They had to equip a gym with gyms and other tools needed to conduct these classes. In addition to these facilities, private schools had to hire teachers who specialized in teaching physical education or gymnastics classes.⁵³

In order to organise a private education that respects the principles of national education, Spiru Haret agrees with circulars number 75.445/1909 and Circular 2983/1910, it was decided that the Heads of Private Schools should speak the Romanian language and an examination on "speaking and understanding the Romanian language" was introduced.⁵⁴

Spiru Haret also insists during his last term for the study of the Romanian language, history and geography of Romania after the curricula and textbooks used in the State school circuit.

Thus, Circular 39.717 of 17 June 1910 contained the following specifications: "As far as the study of the Romanian language is concerned, you provide in the programmes and the number of the studio object for all courses and classes of any age the students attending and any diplomas they possess. [...] you are made aware that this provision is essential for the operation of your school and any deviation will cause the school to stop working. [...]" It was also envisaged that schools with a 4 year study program should include the study of Romanian History as well as the Geography of Romanian territories in one year of study, and schools with 3 years of study should include in the schedule the most important moments in Romanian History and important relief features in the Geography of Romanian Space.⁵⁵

These Circulars came against the background of the other Circulars in the previous mandates, certainly not respected if Spiru Haret felt it necessary to double those measures by other similar measures. In the same direction came circular 1811 of

⁵² Ibidem, 352

⁵³ cf. Spiru C. Haret, *yours of yours*, Institute of Graphic Arts "Carol Gobl". Bucharest, 1911, p. 549

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 280

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 550

1910 sent to confessional schools requiring all Orthodox students who stay at boarding school to be allowed to go every Sunday to mass at the church closest to the school under the supervision of an adult. Also in 1910, circular number 30.543 required for all private schools another set of measures in the same direction of patriotic education:

"1. To be entered in the school schedule at least 1/2 hour of scales per week, for the skill of Romanian songs.

2. Celebrate our national celebrations.

*3. At any national celebration, either Romanian or foreign to sing the Romanian royal anthem."*⁵⁶

The General Journal of Education from November to December 1932 publishes a commemorative article for Spiru Haret emphasizing the idea of organizing education according to national principles; the article is suggestively titled *Spiru Haret and the national school*. The article begins with a motto that summarises the educational principles of Spiru Haret:

*"Homeland is not only the land from which we make annuities. The homeland does it and the language and history and traditions"*⁵⁷ Spiru Haret considers history to be an essential subject for children's education; that is why it will organize between 18-20 May 1908 in Galati, *the Conference of History Teachers from all over the country*

Thus, the above article underlined Spiru Haret's conviction to study national history:

*"Seek to make children cherish the great events of our history more than those in the history of other peoples; to convince themselves that their ancestors were heroes, who fought and shed their blood, to preserve the land that houses them today."*⁵⁸

Spiru Haret is due to the decision to carry out school celebrations to mark the days of 10 May, 24 January, to listen to the *Royal Anthem* standing, to make paintings for schools with scenes of national history. Spiru Haret also decided to organize school celebrations for local historical events such as 4 July in Borzești, 26 July in the White Valley, 13 August in Monks; Spiru Haret participated in these celebrations. such education was extended by Spiru Haret in all sectors of education and insistently even in private education where national history was to occupy an important place. The same article thus emphasized Spiru Haret's concern for private education because ⁵⁹ *"Spiru Haret is also directing his work towards private education"*⁶⁰

Ten years after Spiru Haret's death, the issue in *Education magazine*, No. 1 in 1923 commemorating Haret's personality, publishes the article *Spiru Haret and the private schools* signed by Professor Dr. N. Leon. Private schools were a concern of Haret and when he was Inspector General or Secretary General of the Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Instruction, Dimitrie Sturdza; the school was for Haret his main concern.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 551

⁵⁷ *General Journal of Education*, Year XX, No. 9-10, November-December 1932, p. 379

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 382

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 382

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 387

The article highlights the irregularities in the functioning of this educational sector and the efforts of Spiru Haret to give a homogeneous organization to these private schools; moreover, Haret was trying to align the private education system of the State's education system.

Until 1896 private schools were not even subject to the minimum legislation that existed at the time. Thus, private schools could be founded by anyone, were not conditions for the professional training of the founder, and students could be enrolled at any time. The principal's only condition was the payment of the tuition and boarding fees. Spiru Haret wanted a private school that was not a refuge for those who could not cope at State schools, and the diplomas awarded by private schools would support a quality educational act.

"The fee for baccalaureate diplomas had amounted to tens of thousands of *lei*, the owners and associations of private schools lived very comfortably and enriched themselves quickly, and the boys of ready money, who were unable to pass to the state schools one class in three years, passed four classes in a year, to private schools.

A former headmaster, whose private school in Bucharest had long since disbanded, kept the seal with the school's header and continued to issue certificates."⁶¹

The above things are not mere irregularities, but are serious acts on which Spiru Haret intervenes and thus attracts many enemies: "*During private examinations, the Ministry was a wasp of politicians...*"⁶² The exams at private schools were the occasion of pressure on Spiru Haret. Pressure was being made from principals requesting examination boards with more lenient teachers; the pressures also came from certain teachers who wanted to be appointed to the examination boards of private schools because the examination fees paid by the parents of the students examined were entirely the hands of the examining teachers. Another pressure came from parents who wanted certain committees deemed more lenient. Against all these pressures Haret had a neutral, vertical position and applied as well as he could the Regulations in force. Fierce protests drew Spiru Haret when he decided that the transcripts should be targeted by the Ministry at the beginning of the school year, which ended the enrolment of students in any part of the school year.

Another problem That Haret faced with private schools was the gifts, the undue attention received by the principals of private girls' schools, in particular, from schoolgirls "*The principals of girls' schools also revolted when we stopped them from receiving gifts from the students. Gifts were a great abuse. Instead of contenting themselves with a few flowers, on the birthday and on the new year, they claimed to the students, through governesses, to buy them furniture and luxury items. The most luxurious rooms were for the principals of private schools, furnished, with the students' money.*"⁶³

According to Haret, one of the most unruly girls' schools was the Catholic "Notre-Dame" to which was added another irregularity, the fact that Orthodox students were not taught the course of Orthodox religion by an Orthodox priest, and the history of

⁶¹ *Education* Year VI, No. 1, January-February 1923, p. 20

⁶² *Ibidem*, 20

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 21

Romanians was not taught in the language of Romanian. The Catholic schools of *Notre-Dame de Sion* in Bucharest, Galați and Iași will not take seriously the provisions regarding the organization given by Spiru Haret and it is reached in September 1904 at trial. D. A. Teodoru, a school inspector at the time, supported allegations of non-compliance with national school laws at trial, and historian A.D. Xenopol supported the causes of nuns. The result was the loss of the trial by Catholic schools and the suspension of activity for 1 school year. But Haret returns to the measure and grants a period of 2 months from 10 October to 10 December 1904 to solve the problems. What is to be noted from this incident is that Haret did not wish to renounce private education but to comply with the school legislation in force which was also valid for public schools; and Haret is the prime minister who takes this initiative.⁶⁴

In the face of all the difficulties of private schools, Haret came up with a simple solution, namely, he called competitive subordinates, devoted to their work who were not impressed by the subversive actions of those concerned.

After leaving the leadership of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction, Spiru Haret's merit in the organization of general and private education is always brought into question. Thus, *the General Journal of Education* of June-July 1915 discusses the organization of private education which supports public education and in support of the town halls, in particular the Bucharest Municipality. It is stressed that these private schools belong in particular to foreign communities which also include Romanian pupils, and the organisation of teaching must be carried out according to national principles. The one who takes a stand against this anti-national state of affairs is Spiru Haret. It is true that Spiru Haret was not impressed by the pressures of foreign embassies or the attitude of representatives of religious communities.

"Here, we are masters!" it seems that these were the words of Spiru Haret and will act accordingly to remove irregularities in the organisation of teaching, such as:⁶⁵

*"It is known that in Bulgarian school in Romania stares stuck in the walls of the classes, for a long time, without impressing anyone, maps in which Dobrogea was embedded in Bulgaria; that in a girls' institute, a foreign person, who ate the bread of our indulgence, teaches the students that Stephen the Great was the head of a band of robbers; in one that who is Orthodox is heretical; and in the Hungarian communes they cursed, the feast, the parents of the pulpit, if they sent their children to the Romanian school. All of these are not mere affirmations; are finding-based things and can be proved with ministerial documents. And how many other serious cases of terrorizing the conscience of offending the faith, of mocking the national aspirations will not be knowing those who had the opportunity to investigate more closely the life of private institutes."*⁶⁶ Obviously, the press of the time may exaggerate a little to attract the quoting public, but for the most part this situation existed in private schools at the time.

⁶⁴ cf. Spiru C. Haret, *Op. Cit.* p. 771

⁶⁵ *General Journal of Education*, Year XI, no.1,2, June-July 1915, p. 9

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9

Spiru Haret will intervene to put an end to this "*ferment of disquiet in the country*"⁶⁷

In this respect, as early as 1908 Haret will establish a body of inspectors or *inspector of control* to take care of the organization of teaching in private schools according to national⁶⁸ principles, so that: "no private school will be a place of foreign means and that from all things the *awareness of solidarity and respect for the Roman state, the protector of all those who live on his land, will rise.*"⁶⁹

In conclusion, Spiru Haret tried to make private education an integral part of national education, to eliminate differences and to spread the idea that this educational segment was absolutely necessary for Romania. Most politicians of the time did not understand this, which is why the bill for private education is rejected during Spiru Haret's ministry.

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⁶⁷ Ibidem, 9

⁶⁸ Official Gazette, No 207 of 1908, p.4

⁶⁹ *General Journal of Education*, Year XI, No. 1,2, June-July 1915, p. 9