

MACEDONIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY – BITOLA  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Conference Proceedings

**THE EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS -  
CONDITIONS, CHALLENGES,  
SOLUTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES**

International Scientific Conference  
Bitola, Republic of Macedonia, November 10-11, 2017



BITOLA  
2018



**PUBLISHER:**

Macedonian Science Society – Bitola, Republic of Macedonia

**FOR THE PUBLISHER:**

Marjan Tanushevski PhD., president

Conference Proceedings from the International Scientific Conference  
**THE EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS - CONDITIONS, CHALLENGES,  
SOLUTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES**  
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Bitola, March 2018



9	<b>Roza JOVANOVSKA</b> Similarities and Differences in Practicing of Some Teaching Concepts in a Changing Educational System ..... 120
	<b>Gordana STOJANOSKA; Zlatko ZHOGLEV</b> Professional Association of Teachers between the two World Wars in Bitola City, Bitola and Mariovo District ..... 125
13	<b>Yoana YANKULOVA</b> Relationship between Course Perceptions and Career Preferences During Professional Training in Universities ..... 132
25	<b>Anabela PETRESKA; Liljana BELAKAPOSKA; Hristina STOJMIROVA</b> Teachers' most Frequent Problems in the Application of Interactive EFL Instruction and Their Problems Resolving Approaches ..... 136
29	<b>Jehona RRUSTEMI; Tatjana ATANASOSKA</b> Theories of Learning in the Context of Teacher's Profession – Literature Review ..... 140
	<b>REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN THE EDUCATION</b>
35	<b>Nataša STURZA MILIĆ; Tanja NEDIMOVIĆ</b> The Influence of Physical Education Methodology on Changes in the Sedentary Lifestyle of Children and Students-Future Teachers ..... 147
41	<b>Vladimir TALEVSKI</b> Music - Powerful Weapon in the Educational Process ..... 152
45	<b>Sande SMILJANOV</b> Leadership and Protocol – Study Regarding Case “Republic of Macedonia” ..... 156
49	<b>Marija KOTEVSKA-DIMOVSKA</b> Socio-psychological, Pedagogical and Educational Aspects in the Working Programs with Gifted Students ..... 160
53	<b>Biljana NACKOVSKA VELJKOVIKJ</b> The Educators Aspect of the Social Workers Professional Performance in the Social Work .... 165
58	<b>Sevim MUSTAFA; Yrmet SHABANI; Naim FANAJ</b> Assessing Learning Organization Dimensions in Prizren Schools ..... 170
52	<b>Kristina KRSTESKA; Gorazd SMILEVSKI</b> HR professionals, Trainers, Lecturers and Employers vs Millennials demands ..... 176
58	<b>Lidija STEFANOVSKA; Mende SOLUNCHEVSKI; Drazen KOTESKI</b> Strategic Review on the Benefits of Practical Training ..... 182
72	<b>SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF LEARNING, STUDYING AND TEACHING</b>
6	<b>Sasha STAMENKOVSKI; Oliver ZAJKOV</b> Teaching Physics, Denmark vs. Macedonia ..... 189
1	<b>Jelena PRTLJAGA; Aleksandra GOJKOV – RAJIC</b> Foreign Language Preschool Teachers Education ..... 193
8	<b>Sonja CHALAMANI; Marzanna SEWERYN-KUZMANOVSKA</b> Mathematics Teacher's Role in Problem Task-Solving Teaching ..... 199
	<b>Florina SHEHU; Bujar SAITI</b> Modern Approaches for the Development of the Motor Activity and the Health in Preschool Education ..... 203
9	<b>Biljana CVETKOVA DIMOV</b> Creativity in Visual Art Education ..... 207
3	<b>Maya RAUNIK KIRKOV; Emilj SULEJMANI; Vesna MAKASEVSKA</b> Contemporary Concepts of Knowledge in the Arts, Culture and Science in the Context of Teaching Profession ..... 213
2	<b>Predrag PRTLJAGA; Radmila PALINKAŠEVIĆ</b> Editorial Board, IT and English language Competences - a Prerequisite for Successful Inclusion in Index Databases ..... 217
6	



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## PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS IN BITOLA CITY, BITOLA AND MARIOVO DISTRICT

### Abstract

Professional associations arise when a group of like-minded people and / or experts who share the same motives, interests and desires link their activity and offer certain services. They also have a protective role and function of their members.

Association of teachers is one of the types of association that is of particular interest for the membership, but also for the citizens and the society as a whole. The education and upbringing of young generations as well as the advancement of the educational process is always the focus of attention of any social community and this type of association of professionals has a long history.

The subject of the analysis of this paper is, in particular, the professional association of teachers and their activities in the period between the two world wars (and more specifically from 1933-1936) on the territory of Bitola, the Bitola and Mariovo districts.

*Key words: professional association, teachers, Bitola, Bitola and Mariovo district*

### 1. Introduction

Professional association as an activity has long been known and is aimed at protecting and enhancing the expertise and quality of work in a certain field, preserving and adhering to ethical codes, duties and rights, as well as protecting the interests of a particular profession, as well as protecting citizens and society in general in obtaining the services that the profession offers.

Professional associations arise when a group of like-minded people and / or experts who share the same motives, interests and desires link their activity and offer certain services. They often arise, not only as an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences, but also as controllers and correctors of the attitude that their members have towards the entire social public. Hence, their function is not only protective in terms of the interests of its own members, but also protectorate extends to the level of services that they offer.

The association of educators is one of the types of association that is of particular interest for the membership, but also for the citizens and the society as a whole. The education and upbringing of young generations as well as the advancement of the educational process is always the focus of attention of any social community and this type of association of professionals has a long history.

The subject of analysis of this paper is the professional association of educators and their activities in the period between the two world wars (1933-1936) on the territory of Bitola, Bitola and Mariovo district.

### 2. Subject of the research

As stated above, the subject of this research are the associations of educators / teachers in Bitola, Bitola and Mariovo District and their activities. The activities of the educators were carried out through three associations that operated on this territory between 1933 and 1936:

- Teachers Association of the City of Bitola
- Teachers Association of the Bitola District
- Teachers Association of Mariovo District.

Each of the more advanced associations had its own specific activities. They worked closely with each other, so much of their activities are similar, but some other activities are different, both

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in terms of quantity and quality. Some of their most important activities are written in the text that follows.

### 3. Research method: content analysis

In this paper, due to the nature of the sources, we decided to use the method of content analysis.

Source: magazine "Vardar", Skopje – articles

- Time: 1933-1936
- Focus: Teachers' Associations, Teacher Associations
- Analysis Units: Assemblies, Meetings and Teachers' Guidelines
- Place (space): Bitola, Bitola District and Mariovo District.

In this context, we want to thank our heart, Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Sterjovski from Bitola, who provided us with the documents that we use in this text and because he gave us an idea for this research and this paper.

#### 3.1. The situation with the education in Bitola school district

During the analysis of the articles in the journal Vardar, it was established that at that time schooling had a well-developed network of schools and school buildings, a number of teaching staff who held classes, but also courses, libraries and reading rooms with a rich book fund, as well as large areas of school property such as:

- **Number of schools:**

Total = 38 with 62 departments

- **Number and condition of school buildings:**

Total = 58 of which state = 52, church = 4 and private = 2

- **Teachers:**

Total = 82 teachers in primary schools and 5 teachers for housekeeping courses

- **National Enlightenment:**

5 public libraries and reading rooms with a total of 825 books; school libraries = 7605 teacher books and 2058 for pupils

- **School properties:**

Total = 23 ha and 55 acres, yards and playgrounds, 3 school vineyards, 5 school grounds, 1 school meadow and ...

In the analysis of the sources, the exact number of students in the school years by sex and according to the number of classes in this period was determined as follows:

Year	Number of pupils and classes			
	Pupils m	Pupils f	Total	Classes
<u>1929/30</u>	1832	1420	3252	76
<u>1930/31</u>	2049	1645	3694	83
<u>1931/32</u>	2320	1860	4180	86
<u>1932/33</u>	2499	2080	4579	88
<u>1933/34</u>	2739	2274	5013	92

Table 1 - Number of students by sex and number of grades, according to school years



It is evident that there was a trend of increasing the number of pupils of both sexes which caused a proportional increase in the number of classes in each subsequent school year. Significantly, the number of students increased by more than 1800 only for a period of 5 years, with the number of male students increasing by 909, and the number of female children increased by 854.

The number of male students at the beginning (1929/30) increased by 412 students in relation to female students, and after five years the difference increased to 465 in favor of male students. If we take into account that this is a five-year period analyzed (1929 / 30-1933 / 34), then it can be concluded that the annual increase in male children was only slightly more than 10.

This indicates that the number of male and female children in the schools was relatively equal, that is, it has relatively good equality, seen from the aspect of the gender representation of the students. It is very interesting and even astonishing, because such gender equality is unattainable for some environments, until the introduction of mandatory primary education, immediately after World War II.

### 3.2. Activities of Bitola school district

Thanks to the numerous regular and precise reports that were presented in the then press, activities in the Bitola school district could be monitored in the period that was the focus of interest in this research.

Those activities were rich and varied, and the texts that we were available were obviously aimed at what in today's conditions has been occupying the attention of the education system:

- **Falconry**

Falconers were associations of students who devoted special attention to physical activity. In fact, the activity of falconers can in a certain sense be compared to those of pioneers (Association in former Yugoslavia, after WWII), or scouts in the United States. They were organized in the chambers, and one of the more important activities was to organize the fairs. The data for the 1932/33 school year show that there were then 5 fellow squadrons who had held 10 group fights.

- **Raising public awareness**

Special attention was paid to educating the people and making efforts to enable people to be capable of various useful activities and skills that they can use in everyday life. Thus, the documents show that at that time courses were held in households, hand-made, then there were cooking training, etc. All this shows that the state through the education system has taken care to train people with skills that will help them in the family.

- **The forestation**

of the ravines was one of the regular activities of the Teachers' Associations of Bitola and Mariovo District. It is interesting that some schools even had their own nurseries. For example, in the documents we found the fact that the elementary school in the village of Rotino had its own forest nursery.

It may be interesting to note that teachers' associations paid special attention to the development of orchards and viticulture. They did this with special trainings of students and practical work. Thus we found the fact that in 1932/33 25 000 noble trees were planted, something that is impressive, even for nowadays.

Special care was also taken for the development of viticulture, by acquiring appropriate skills for it, and according to the data 3 schools had their own vineyards. The materials emphasize that the vineyard in Bareshani (where one of the teachers' assemblies actually was held) was especially well arranged.

It is indisputable that health (storage and maintenance through physical activities), ecology (afforestation and preservation of the environment and cultivated plants), as well as raising the level of knowledge, skills and abilities of the entire population, not only the schoolchildren took up one huge part of the activities in schooling at the time.



### 3.3. Work of the teacher association

According to the data collected from Vardar magazine for the period of 1933 By 1936, the teaching association had 120 members. The work of the teachers' association involved activities in many fields, such as:

- **Financial:** adoption of financial statements, joint bills and loans;
- **Administrative management:** selection of management, election of secretary of the association;
- **Professional:** lectures, abstracts, discussions, discussions;
- **Public Relations:** invitations and attendance of representatives of the legislative, executive and judicial power of assemblies' assemblies;
- **Organizing:** organization of excursions for teachers, as well as guest visas from the same profession from other countries.

#### Lectures

It is interesting to mention that the papers, abstracts and speeches that were read were on topics that today are in the focus of the world educational public, such as measuring children's intelligence, education for peace and the problem of (non) existence of interculturalism, and especially how to overcome the prejudices that are present in the mediums in which there are pupils of different faith, while not harming the normal functioning of the teaching process. In this sense, we are curious as follows:

1. Mr. Dušan Malinov, a teacher in Prilep, "Raising for Peace" - a top topic of today that faces the serious threats to world terrorism,
2. Mr. Rastomir Jevtović held the paper: "The role of the family, school and society in the education of school youth", a paper whose topic is significant and current today as well as then.

#### The status of teachers / teachers and respect for their profession

The status of teachers in the period between the two world wars in Bitola, Bitola and Mariovo district was very high. This can be concluded from many parameters, and in this context only the presence of certain significant figures on the sessions and assemblies of teachers' associations will be indicated.

Thus, in the journal "Vardar" of February 10, 1934, in the text titled "Big School Assembly in Bitola" on page 2, among other things one can read the following:

... over 300 teachers and teachers were present, and the Assembly was opened by the President of the Association of teachers for the city of Bitola and the Bitola and Mariovo districts, G. Petar Mačić. The speech / address was acknowledged by the old teachers' generations. Teachers are called upon to continue to reflect on the old generations of teachers.

There were also present:

- District Inspector, Mr. Momčilović,
- The generals, G. Dimitrijević and G. Jovanović
- The President of the Municipality, G. Sotirović
- The People's Representative, G. Marković,
- The President of the Court of First Instance, Mr. Mihailović
- The Rector of the Theological Seminary, G. Dr. Lazičić.

The list of attendees, in itself, speaks about the status of teachers in society and how they were respected.

#### The attitude towards criticism / different opinions

Tolerating opinions that are different, and especially those that are critical, is one of the basic criteria for assessing the democratic capacity of each person, group and / or each government. No government is pleased to be criticized or publicly expressed opinions that are inconsistent with official considerations and attitudes. It was neither an exception nor the power in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, between the two world wars. This is testified to by the text published in the journal





"Vardar" from March 9, 1933, entitled "Teacher's Meeting in Bitola", which states among other things:

Teachers of the city of Bitola - the fifth regular teacher gathering. Lazar Tihomirović, a teacher at Ivanovtsi, delivered a practical lecture. The work of G. St. Miladinović: "The end of an unfinished drama" was not put in the social archive because it was estimated as very sharp (page 4).

#### 4. The relation to novelties (the introduction of new things)

The introduction of any change (novelty), most often faces various resistance. It is also related to human nature, especially with its part that tends to maintain a balance, that is, "status quo". That's why people most often oppose the introduction of novelties. The teachers are not the exception, although they were the most learned people in their time. That's why the time baulk of the introduction of the so-called. "Singing according to notes". Although from a professional point of view, the learning of playing and singing on notes is undoubtedly the basis for any musical development, yet at that time there was resistance to the same, for which the teachers also declared their official assembly. Such a text can be found in the journal "Vardar" from June 2, 1934, in the text titled "The Work of the Teacher's Assembly in Bitola":

A district teachers' council was held on which a secretary was elected. Speakers in large numbers declare themselves singing in elementary school. Discussions were held with students from different religions, and quite a number of speakers said that it was therefore difficult to hinder teaching (page 2).

#### 5. Caring for family and family values

One of the more important activities of the teachers was the concern for family values. Since then, there has been a highly developed awareness that in the plan of educating students, more significant results cannot be achieved in the long run unless this is done in a planned and systematic way and in cooperation with all relevant institutions (family, school and society). The texts published in the "Vardar" magazine on this topic are best testified to. On this occasion, we just point out that the notification about this at the teacher's assembly in Bitola held on June 2, 1934, where, among other things, writes:

Mr. Rastomir Jevtović held the paper: "The role of the family, school and society in raising schoolchildren."

#### 6. Accountability and electoral activities

Accountability is very important for each individual, group and / or institution. In the journal "Vardar" of October 27, 1935, on p. 5, in the text titled "The teachers selected a new administration of the Association of the city of Bitola and the Bitola and Mariovo districts", reads:

The annual assembly was held in the school of St. Sava on October 19.

The report of the Assembly of the Section held in Ohrid read by Mr.

Lazić. The report of the General Assembly held in Novi Sad read by Mr.

Vuković. Borrowings from a joint cash register - discussions. The report

was accepted by the administration, although it was not submitted in

writing. And the treasurer was released, although he did not report.

The same text also explains about the manner of selecting the administration of the Association of Teachers from the city of Bitola, that is, describes the electoral model that was used:

A new Office of two candidate lists was voted on by applying a proportional voting system.

#### 7. International cooperation

One of the more important activities that teachers' associations paid special attention was international cooperation. That is why we are witnessed numerous articles in several issues from



the magazine "Vardar". Below are some of the numerous texts that relate to international activity. Thus, it can be concluded that in the course of 1933, on April 23-24, the primary schools in Bitola were Greek teachers:

In the magazine "Vardar" from May 7, 1933, the first page and the text titled "Greek Teachers visiting Bitola":

Visit of 27 teachers from Lerin (Florina) in Bitola on 23-24 April 1933.

They visited the primary schools "St. Sava" and "Jovan Babunski".

But in the autumn of that year (1933), the visit was returned to them. Namely, this was written in the journal "Vardar", from 05. October 1933. page 2, in the text entitled "An Excursion to Bitola Teachers in Greece":

On September 19, 1933, in Lerin, 100 teachers and teachers from Bitola went on a visit to the international fair in Thessaloniki.

That co-operation and visits (especially by the Greek teachers from Lerin/Florina) were not accidental, but continued to continue, confirms a text from the journal Vardar from June 30, 1936, p.2:

100 Greek teachers and teachers, led by the director of the Gymnasium of Lerin (Florina), Mr. Acaevos, visited the Bitola primary schools.

### Conclusions

According to the data collected by analyzing the contents of the journal Vardar from 1933 to 1936, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Teachers' associations in this period were counted by a large number of members (120), and the assemblies attended not only teachers from the local association, but also from the neighboring ones, so the attendance was impressive (there are also assemblies attended by 300 teachers).
2. Detailed and precise records of students, teaching staff, property and inventory were kept.
3. The activities that were part of the work of the associations were distinguished by a great variety.
4. A wide-ranging education was maintained, which was not reserved only to those community members who were in school age.
5. The types of education offered were comprehensive: physical, ecological, education for peace and interculturalism.
6. The part of the education that was included in the courses was aimed at gaining knowledge, skills and abilities that facilitated and enriched family life (household, cooking, handicrafts).
7. The professional development of the teaching staff was in the foreground, as evidenced by the large number of abstracts, papers, etc. for which it was published in the press.
8. The associations were active in the field of finance - it is obvious that they regularly prepared financial reports.
9. The associations also cooperated with the political, with the judicial authorities as well as the hierarchically highest active military personnel (generals, colonels, lieutenant colonels, majors, captains, commanders of different units, etc.).
10. There was cross-border cooperation and meetings with teachers from other countries (Greece).

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