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***The section of Padua of the Italian
Pedagogical Association
(Associazione Pedagogica Italiana)
in the late 20th century***

*Padovanska sekcija Italijanskega pedagoškega združenja
(Associazione Pedagogica Italiana) v poznem 20. stoletju*

Izvleček

Italijansko pedagoško združenje (*Associazione Pedagogica Italiana*), ustanovljeno leta 1950 v Firencah, je še vedno dejavno po vsej državi, zahvaljujoč usklajenemu prizadevanju številnih lokalnih sekcij. Posebnost programa Italijanskega pedagoškega združenja je povezovanje učiteljev vseh ravni izobrazbe in univerzitetnih profesorjev, da bi izboljšali in prenovili šolo in katerokoli drugo izobraževalno ustanovo, kot tudi izboljšali študij in raziskave na področju pedagogike. Padovanska sekcija se vse od ustanovitve odlikuje po organizaciji konferenc in osvežitvenih tečajev za osnovnošolske učitelje. Obsežna dokumentacija, ki se nanaša na dejavnosti sekcije, se trenutno hrani v Muzeju izobraževanja (*Museo dell'Educazione*) Univerze v Padovi.

Abstract

The Italian Pedagogical Association (Associazione Pedagogica Italiana), founded in Florence in 1950, is still active throughout the country, thanks to the coordinated effort of the numerous local sections. The distinctive feature of the Italian Pedagogical Association is to bring together school teachers of all levels and university professors in order to improve and renovate the school and any other educational institution, as well as to enhance studies and researches in the field of Pedagogy and education. The section of Padua has distinguished itself since its founding by the organization of conferences and refresher courses for teachers of elementary schools. A significant amount of documentation relating to the activity of this section is currently preserved at the Museum of Education (Museo dell'Educazione) University of Padua.

Ključne besede: učiteljstvo, društva, Italija, 20. stoletje

Keywords: teachers, association, Italy, 20th century

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»The Italian Pedagogical Association (Associazione Pedagogica Italiana, As.Pe.I.) was founded to unite all the people engaged in School of every level and those who have interest in the problems of education, beyond any difference of political, religious and doctrinal thought and of trade union, in order to enhance and increase studies and pedagogical experiences, and to disseminate the active interest in the improvement of School«.

This is the verbatim transcript – capital letters included [the word “school” appears twice with the first letter capitalized, to emphasize the importance, also symbolic, of this institution] – of the first article of the As.Pe.I. Statute, subscribed by the founding members in Venice on May 1st, 1956; that was the last day of the Third National Congress.

Pluralism is one of the peculiar features of the association, together with the openness to figures who, for various reasons, are interested in educational matters, as can be seen in the Article number 9 of the original Statute. It states that the President's Council would be composed of eight university professors, three lecturers, four professors of secondary school and four elementary school teachers.

The "ecumenical" instance among teachers of different educational levels, which is the basis of As. Pe.I. since its foundation, as we have seen, it can appear to the colleagues who are not Italian – and to those who do not remember well that season – not only a practice dictated by common sense, but also a strategy to channel the energies in the direction of a common interest. But it is not so. Not in Italy and not in those years (and even today, in many ways).

The corporate defense of the interests of one side has often produced divisions more than shared "battles", in a variety of fields, from the union trade to the school one. In this last field, consider the bitter controversy and the "attacks of unusual roughness" that have been conducted in the Fifties, when the As.Pe.I. was born, between the two catholic associations of primary school teachers and teachers of secondary schools (AIMC and UCIIM). Although they were referring to the same ideological front – and to the same hierarchy – at that time strictly committed to contrast the "red menace", the two associations made use of their own journals to support their proposals of school reform, often in open conflict between them.

The postwar period was characterized in Italy by deep divisions, divided the country by rigid ideological barriers imposed by the Cold War and by the splitting within the cultural context. Consider, to stay in the pedagogical field, that those years saw the end of the actualistic hegemony, started by Giovanni Gentile over

1 See Roberto Sani, "Le associazioni cattoliche degli insegnanti e il rinnovamento democratico della scuola italiana", in *Chiesa e progetto educativo nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra (1945-1958)*, ed. Luciano Pazzaglia (Brescia: La Scuola, 1988), now in Roberto Sani, *Sub specie educationis. Studi e ricerche su istruzione, istituzioni scolastiche e processi culturali e formativi nell'Italia contemporanea* (Macerata: EUM, 2011), 540.

thirty years ago. The scene was then occupied by the representatives of pedagogical trend called “personalism” and by those of laical current.

In a so divided scenario, the commitment of the As.Pe.I. Statute to overthrow the divisions of status (between elementary teachers, middle and high school teachers and university professors) and the divisions of political, religious and doctrinal thought acquires a very significant relief.

Unique in its kind, therefore, the As.Pe.I. brings together school teachers of all levels to improve and renovate the school and any other institution dealing with education, as well as to enhance study and researches in the field of pedagogy and education. To this end, its work is mainly direct, then as now, to the creation and the planning of activities such as training, upgrading and qualification of teachers and all the people involved in education.

When and how was the As.Pe.I. founded? We have already discussed about the ideological and political context. However, it is necessary to specify, especially to the benefit of the foreign colleagues, that those years were characterized by a considerable fervor in the educative field.

At the end of World War II, the work of “defascistisation” of the school² was only the beginning of a season in which the theme linked to the school and the education was at the center of debates, comparisons, projects, discussions that involved teachers, intellectuals, political parties and grassroots.

Consider, for example, the importance assigned to the school in the work of the Constituent Assembly (1946-47), and in particular the debate between Concetto Marchesi, a member of the Italian Communist Party, and Aldo Moro, important spokesman for the Christian Democrats.³ But consider, also, the National Commission of Inquiry formed in 1947 by the Minister of Education Guido Gonella.⁴ The data relating to the impressive participation at the consultation by the entire teaching staff (211,000 teachers who replied to the questionnaire), and the staff gravitating toward schools (85,000 replies) testify not only the interest, but also the will to make education the keystone of a country that need to restart after more than two decades of dictatorship and the rubble of World War II.

In 1949, at the end of the work of collecting and analyzing records, the Minister formed another committee, consisting of ministry officials and school staff, charged with drafting a plan for a comprehensive reform of the national education system.⁵

2 F. Targhetta, “Tra selva normativa e schedature di massa: i procedimenti di epurazione degli insegnanti di scuola secondaria”, in *Rivista di storia dell’educazione*, no 1 (2018), 209-225.

3 See, in particular, Adolfo Scotto di Luzio, *La scuola degli italiani* (Bologna, Il Mulino: 2007), chapter VII, “La scuola alla Costituente”, 233-281.

4 Giorgio Chiosso, “Motivi pedagogici e politici nei lavori dell’inchiesta Gonella (1947-1949)”, in *Scuola e società nell’Italia unita. Dalla Legge Casati al Centro-Sinistra*, ed. Luciano Pazzaglia and Roberto Sani (Brescia: La Scuola, 2001).

5 Giorgio Chiosso, “Cattolici e riforma scolastica. L’Italia nel secondo dopoguerra (1949-1951)”, in *Scuola e società nell’Italia unita. Dalla Legge Casati al Centro-Sinistra*, edd. Luciano Pazzaglia, Roberto Sani (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 2001), 397-419.

Some of the most famous Italian specialists of education brought their contribution to the work of the above mentioned committees. Most of them were destined to become, between 1949 and 1950, the promoters of the Italian Pedagogical Association.⁶ Indeed, the first provisional presidential council saw the presence of Giovanni Calò, Ernesto Codignola and Raffaele Resta.⁷

In a meeting held at the end of September 1949, during which the foundations were laid for the final structuring of the association, other famous researchers were added to them, starting from Giovanni Maria Bertin, in addition to membership in the meantime collected of Luigi Stefanini, Angiolo Gambaro, Nicola Abbagnano, and so on.

This short list of names shows that feature of the association is, as said earlier, the plurality of voices and the search for dialogue among different cultural tendencies. An aspiration, the latter, intended to emerge especially at the national congresses, in those “conclusive motions” in which it was possible to see the effort of the speakers in order to represent all the positions.

In those years the dialectic within the Association arose from the debate, frequently intense, between two ideological tendencies: the pedagogical spiritualism, represented by Calò, Caramella, Flores d'Arcais, Agazzi, Bongioanni and others, and the pedagogical sociologism, represented by Borghi, Mazzetti, De Bartolomeis, Bertin, Visalberghi, D'Alessandro.⁸

The first of the mentioned symposiums was arranged in Florence from 5th to 8th April 1950. There were three major reports, which were entrusted to three leading figures of the Italian cultural and pedagogical scene: in addition to the president Giovanni Calò, attended Ernesto Codignola and Vito Fazio Allmayer.

They were assigned, respectively, the following themes: *Training to the teaching (La preparazione al magistero educativo)*; *The ethical and social problem of education (Il problema etico-sociale dell'educazione)*; *The problem of teaching and the innovative trends in secondary schools (Il problema didattico e le tendenze innovative nella scuola secondaria)*. As we can see, the urgent need to renew the school was immediately felt, as well as the awareness that this renewal would necessarily be passed through the figure of the teacher and, in particular, through training, recruitment and professional development of teachers. It is not by chance that those were the issues mainly debated during the periodic national conferences.

After the second national conference, organized in Sicily in the spring of 1954, the national executive of As.Pe.I. landed in Veneto. From April 28th to May 1st 1956, indeed, the section of Padua organized a symposium on the theme of

6 Francesco De Vivo, “La storia dell'As.Pe.I. attraverso i Congressi”, in *L'associazione Pedagogica Italiana (1950-1996)*, ed. Sira Serenella Macchietti (Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1996), 16.

7 For the biography of these figures and others cited in the paper see *DBE. Dizionario biografico dell'educazione 1800-2000*, ed. Giorgio Chiosso and Roberto Sani (Milano: Editrice Bibliografica, 2013).

8 Gianfranco Pontini, *I problemi della scuola italiana nei congressi dell'As.Pe.I. nel dopoguerra* (diss., University of Padua, 1970/71), XVII-XVIII.

The humanistic tradition and the problem of integration of the technical-scientific culture in contemporary education (La tradizione umanistica e il problema dell'integrazione della cultura tecnico-scientifica nell'educazione contemporanea), emphasizing the co-responsibility of the productive forces of the Country in solution of the problem of the Italian school.

Founded since 1952 by Luigi Stefanini and Giuseppe Flores d'Arcais, the section of Padua of the As.Pe.I. has been directed for decades by d'Arcais, a very significant figure in the Italian pedagogical scene and exponent of personalism, a current of thought of Catholic orientation based on the centrality of the person. D'Arcais was still presiding over the local section when, after a period of sleep that lasted for a few years, on March 3rd 1975 was reconstituted with a first group of 52 members.⁹

Those years were characterized by a lot of bottom-up initiatives in primary and secondary levels.¹⁰ The meetings, organized not only by As.Pe.I., but also by other important association (it is sufficient here to recall the activities of the Movement of Educational Cooperation, MCE, inspired by Célestin Freinet's "organic pedagogy"), corresponded to a strong demand from teachers to have many refresher courses. These teachers, along with those just graduated, renewed the teaching practices in elementary school, fixed to the ministerial programs of 1955. Topics such as the extension of school hours in the afternoon for the workshop activities, the abolition of the votes in favor of the judgments, the abolition of failures, a greater dialogue with the families were at the center of the debate. These teachers became promoters of innovative experimental proposals, while institutions, from municipalities to the ministry, traditionally reluctant to accept the most advanced project, struggling to keep up, when not directly obstructed the most innovative experiments.¹¹

For these reasons, the season opened in the mid-seventies was very full of meeting and commitments for the section of Padua. Step by step, indeed, it became an esteemed institution for the training of teachers.


In 1975, for example, the theme debated at the lessons was the teaching of history and the experimentation in the first two years of the secondary schools. The following year the refresher course was addressed only to preschool teachers. In 1977 a series of lectures was dedicated to preschool teachers, to teachers and to principals of secondary school.

Then, in 1978 was organized a refresher course for teachers of Chioggia, a small town in the province of Venice, arranged in a series of ten lectures. The

9 Bollettino della As.Pe.I., no. 10 (1975): 10. See also the minutes of the first meeting of the teachers who marked the reconstitution of the section of Padua, dated February 19, 1975, in the archive group "AS.Pe.I." preserved by The Museum of Education of University of Padua.

10 Annalisa Tiozzo Caenazzo, *Tra passato e presente. La sezione padovana As.Pe.I. dal 1950 ai giorni nostri* (diss., University of Padua, 2017/18).

11 See *Quando la scuola si accende. Innovazione didattica e trasformazione sociale negli anni Sessanta e Settanta*, ed. Luisa Bellina, Alfiero Boschiero and Alessandro Casellato, special issue of *Venetica*, no. 2 (2012).



UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

La S.V. è invitata ad intervenire al

Convegno su:

**ANALISI DEL DISCORSO
PEDAGOGICO**

che si terrà a Padova nei giorni
8 - 9 febbraio 1983.

IL PRESIDE DELLA
FACOLTÀ DI MAGISTERO
Prof. P. G. Nonis

IL RETTORE
Prof. L. Merigliano

Sede del Convegno:
Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti
(Via Accademia) Padova.

In occasione del conferimento della laurea honoris causa in Pedagogia al prof. dr. Bogdan Suchodolski da parte della Università di Padova, viene organizzato il presente Convegno che vuole costituire anche un momento di incontro tra pedagogia polacca e pedagogia italiana.

PROGRAMMA

Martedì 8 febbraio ore 16:

Presidente: Luigi VOLPICELLI (Roma).
Introduzione al convegno: Giuseppe FLORES d'ARCAIS (Padova): **Strutture e funzioni del discorso pedagogico.**
Strutture e funzioni del discorso pedagogico
La pedagogia per il tempo futuro in Bogdan Suchodolski: Lamberto BORGHI (Firenze).

ore 18:

Il discorso pedagogico in dimensione storica: Fabrizio RAVAGLIOLI (Roma).
Il discorso pedagogico in dimensione antropologica: Mario MANNO (Palermo).

Mercoledì 9 febbraio ore 9:

Presidente: Mario MENCARELLI (Presidente AS.PE.I. - Siena).
Il discorso pedagogico fra tecnologia e creatività: Irene WOJNAR (Warsawa) - Mauro LAENG (Roma) - A. M. BERNARDINIS (Padova).

ore 11:

Comunicazioni già notificate di:
S. BARATTO (Padova) - L. GALLIANI (Padova) - L. PAZZAGLIA (Cattolica di Milano) - L. SANTELLI (Bari) - U. MARGIOTTA (Venezia).

ore 16:

Presidente: Mauro LAENG (Roma).
Il discorso pedagogico socio-politico: ideologia e utopia.
Tavola rotonda: Giuseppe CATALFAMO (Massina) - Alberto GRANESE (Cagliari) - Raffaele LAPORTA (Roma) - Claudio VOLPI (Roma).
Interventi ed altre eventuali comunicazioni.

ore 18:

Pedagogia sistematica e pedagogia critica: Bogdan SUCHODOLSKI (Warsawa).
Conclusioni dei lavori: Giuseppe FLORES d'ARCAIS (Padova).

Aderiscono al Convegno: Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti e Sezione di Padova dell'AS.PE.I.
Segreteria ed organizzazione: Sezione di Padova dell'ASSOCIAZIONE PEDAGOGICA ITALIANA - Via Marsala, 59 PADOVA (Tel. 049 - 36.695).
Informazioni logistiche: Azienda Autonoma di Soggiorno - Piazzetta Pedrocchi, 18 - Padova - (Tel. 049/27767).

N.B.: E' stata richiesta al Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione l'autorizzazione perchè i docenti di scuole di ogni ordine e grado possano partecipare al Convegno.

Flyer of the conference organized in 1983 on the occasion of the conferment of the honorary degree in Pedagogy to Bogdan Suchodolski (cover and inside).

themes, from teaching Italian language to the teaching of Latin and mathematics, from the problem of evaluation to the teamwork, were discussed, in large part, by professors of the University of Padua, including Flores d'Arcais, Anna Maria Bernardinis and Sergio Baratto.

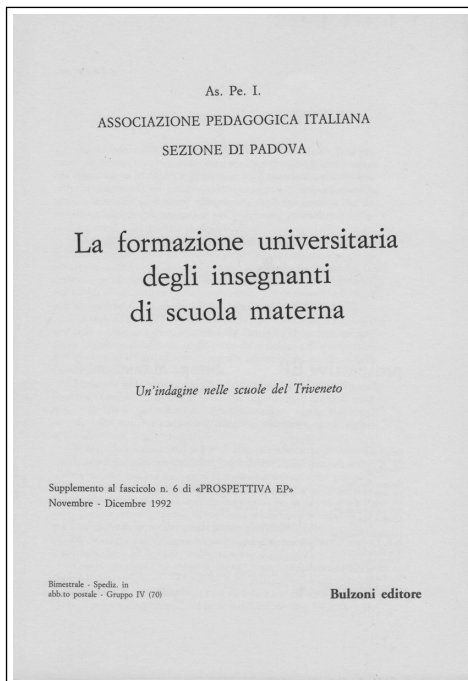
At the beginning of the 80s this annual activity assumed a systematic character, as evidenced by the progressive numbering which was adopted. This organization also meant a greater enlargement of the number of speakers, also called from other Italian universities on the basis of their specific expertise in the subject matter. So, for example, in 1983, when the subject of a series of meetings was *The current pedagogical and didactic problem of compulsory education (Attuali problematiche pedagogiche e didattiche della scuola dell'obbligo)*, were invited two professors who were working on the revision of the new programs teaching for the elementary school. «Considering the success and the wide interest aroused» from this series of meetings, as stated by President Flores d'Arcais in the letter of presentation of seminars for 1984, it was decided, on an exceptional basis, to consider the theme even in following year. In 1983 the Association organized also an important conference in Padua on the occasion of the conferment of the honorary degree in Pedagogy to Bogdan Suchodolski. An opportunity for comparison, to use the words of the flyer, between Italian and Polish pedagogy.

I will not go beyond the limits of this report, which is supposed to be an introduction to the topic, recalling themes and speakers of the cycles of meetings

organized by section As.Pe.I. of Padua. I think that these few hints are sufficient to frame the activity of a section which between the eighties and the nineties lived a very intense period. The collaboration started with the education agency and, above all, with the IRRSAE Veneto (Regional Research Institute of Educational Testing and Update; Istituto di Ricerca Regionale di Sperimentazione e Aggiornamento Educativo), an organization sponsored by the Ministry of Education in order to encourage and support the process of autonomy and innovation of school, allowed to enrich the educational offer of Padua section of As.Pe.I., which could rely on regional contributions to cover the costs of organizing lessons and symposiums.

This was the case, for example, of the international conference held in Padua in January 1996 on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Pestalozzi. Scholars from the major universities in Europe and the United States were invited.

To conclude this brief presentation of the activities carried out by the section of Padua of As.Pe.I. at the end of the century we must give at least a mention to the research on *The university training of preschool teachers. A study over the schools of Veneto region (La formazione universitaria degli insegnanti di scuola materna. Un'indagine nelle scuole del Triveneto)*, published as a supplement to the issue no. 6 (November-December 1992) of the journal "Perspective EP".



Cover of issue no. 6 (November-December 1992) of the journal "Perspective EP" dedicated to the university training of preschool teachers. A study over the schools of Veneto region.

Starting from this brief report, it is easy to see the potential for the research of the rich material, not yet used in studies, preserved in the Museum of Education of the University of Padua. It is possible to consult teachers' meeting minutes, programs for refresher courses, lists of members, notes, lesson plans, collections of photographs, administrative documents, correspondence with the other sections, and so on. This is an archival collection yet to be inventoried. Nevertheless it is important to retrace a very interesting and qualified experience of teachers' association working in Veneto region during the second half of the twentieth century.

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Summary

The section of Padua of the Italian Pedagogical Association (Associazione Pedagogica Italiana) in the late 20th century

Fabio Targhetta

The Italian Pedagogical Association (Associazione Pedagogica Italiana), founded in Florence in 1950 by Giovanni Calò in cooperation with some of the major scholars of Pedagogy (Aldo Agazzi, Giovanni Maria Bertin, Giuseppe Flores d'Arcais), is still active throughout the country, thanks to the coordinated effort of the numerous local sections.

The distinctive feature of the Italian Pedagogical Association is to bring together school teachers of all levels and university professors in order to improve and renovate the school and any other educational institution, as well as to enhance studies and researches in the field of Pedagogy and education. To this end, its work is mainly directed to the construction and the planning of activities like training and upgrading of teachers and every person involved in education.

The section of Padua has distinguished itself since its founding by the organization of conferences and refresher courses for teachers of elementary schools. A significant amount of documentation relating to the activity of this section is currently preserved at the Museum of Education (University of Padua). It is possible to consult teachers' meeting minutes, programs for refresher courses, lists of members, notes, lessons plans, collections of photographs, administrative documents, correspondence with the other sections, and so on. All these relevant documents, not yet studied, the proceedings of the National congress – including two symposiums organized in Padua (1956 and 1996) – and the examination of the Italian Pedagogical Association bulletin have made possible the reenactment of a very interesting experience of teachers' association during the second half of the twentieth century.

Povzetek

Padovanska sekcija Italijanskega pedagoškega združenja (Associazione Pedagogica Italiana) v poznem 20. stoletju

Fabio Targhetta

Italijansko pedagoško združenje (Associazione Pedagogica Italiana), ki ga je leta 1950 v Firencah ustanovil Giovanni Calò v sodelovanju z nekaterimi večjimi učenjaki pedagogike (Aldo Agazzi, Giovanni Maria Bertin, Giuseppe Flores d'Arcais), je še vedno dejavno po vsej državi, zahvaljujoč usklajenemu prizadevanju številnih lokalnih sekcij.

Posebnost programa Italijanskega pedagoškega združenja je povezovanje učiteljev vseh ravni izobrazbe in univerzitetne profesorje, da bi izboljšali in prenovili šolo in katerokoli drugo izobraževalno ustanovo, kot tudi izboljšali študij in raziskave na področju pedagogike. Delo združenja je usmerjeno predvsem v gradnjo in načrtovanje dejavnosti, kot sta usposabljanje in izpopolnjevanje učiteljev in vseh oseb, ki se ukvarjajo z izobraževanjem.

Padovanska sekcija se vse od ustanovitve odlikuje po organizaciji konferenc in osvežitvenih tečajev za osnovnošolske učitelje. Obsežna dokumentacija, ki se nanaša na dejavnosti sekcije, se trenutno hrani v Šolskem muzeju (Univerza v Padovi). Možno si je ogledati zapisnike pedagoških sestankov, programe za izpopolnjevalne tečaje, sezname članov, zapiske, učne načrte, zbirke fotografij, upravne dokumente, dopisovanje z drugimi sekcijami itd. Vsi ti pomembni dokumenti, ki še niso bili proučeni, zborniki nacionalnih kongresov – vključno z dvema simpozijema, organiziranimi v Padovi (1956 in 1996) - in pregled poročil Italijanskega pedagoškega združenja, so omogočili obnovo zelo zanimive izkušnje združenja učiteljev v drugi polovici 20. stoletja.