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# *The Work School (Arbeitsschule) and its Influence on the Greek Education System: The Case of the Educationist Theodoros Kastanos*

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to highlight the influence of the Work School on Theodoros Kastanos, one of the most important Greek educationists in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the critical analysis of his body of writing. It becomes clear that Kastanos' theoretical contribution to the development and spread of the Work School principles to the Greek education was great. His works focus on the Greek student and their position in the Work School context, as well as on the student-teacher relations in the newly formed school. It is evident that the dominance of the Old School need be paused in order for the new principles to be established. The main conclusion emerging through the work of the educator, concerning exclusively the theory and application of the Work School, is his assurance that its basic principles are the only right solution in order to improve the operating conditions of the Greek School in the early decades of the 20th century; an improvement based mainly on the way it functions in relation to its students, their relations with their teachers and proper teaching.

**Keywords:** Work School (Arbeitsschule); Greek educational system; pupils; teachers.

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## 1. Introduction

During the early decades of the 20th century the most important Greek educationists (Alexandros Delmouzos, Dimitrios Glinos, Manolis Triantaphyllidis, Theodoros Kastanos, Michalis Papamavrou, Miltos Kountouras, Nikolaos Exarchopoulos) travelled to Germany to continue their studies in Pedagogy. Most of them had graduated from the Philosophy Department of Athens University, where the herbartian method of teaching was dominant. However, the Greek educationists' presence in the German-speaking world was concurrent with the movement of the Self-Activity Principle of Learning, namely the «Work School» or the «New School»,

which resulted in their converting to zealous supporters of the new idea. On their return to Greece, in an attempt to transform the Greek educational reality, the above mentioned educators attempted to make known the principles of the «Work School»<sup>1</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, numerous political, social events and continuous military involvements engulfed Greece. During the 1910s, Greece participated in the Balkan Wars (1912-13), the First World War (1914-18) and, immediately afterwards, became involved in the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) that led to the Asia-Minor disaster. Regarding politics, the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, who had the support of the newly consolidated middle class, dominated the Greek political scene (1910-1935). The middle class played a significant role not only in Politics but in the reformation of the Greek Education System too.

Under the previous mentioned circumstances, the Greek pedagogists, who were influenced mostly by the German-speaking world and the new theories, attempted to alter the Greek School. They focused mostly on changes in the school operation and more specifically in the school personnel, both students and teachers. Moreover, the Greek Language Question dominated the Greek Education era. It was a long dispute about whether *Katharevousa* («purified language») as the High Variety or *Demotiki* («people's language») as the Low one, should be the most effective teaching language (Sifianou, 2003, p. 264). The intellectuals who supported the reformation of the education system through the application of the Work School theories were in favour of the use of the spoken, popular language as the only means for mass education.

The efforts for the introduction of the Work School principles in conjunction with the language controversy unsurprisingly provoked fierce reactions. The representatives of the predominant Herbartian School came from right-wing political forces, the Palace (royal family), the Priesthood of the Greek Church and the Philosophy Department of the University of Athens. They considered that the principles of the Work School were not consistent with the Greek tradition and culture.

The aim of our study is to highlight the influence of the Work School on the educationist Theodoros Kastanos (1888-1932). His main educational activity began in 1915 when he started his studies in Pedagogy and Philosophy at the University of Jena. In 1920 he completed his doctoral thesis, titled *The training of primary school teachers in Greece*, under the supervision of Professor Wilhelm Rein. Although Rein was an opponent of the Herbartian Pedagogy, the Greek educator's work and educational action do not seem to have been influenced.

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<sup>1</sup> The first substantial effort to apply the principles of the Work School was made by Alexandros Delmouzos (1880-1856) (Delmouzos, 1958), during the short operation of the Higher Girls' School in Volos (1908-1911).

On the contrary, he thought that the Herbartian principles, which had been applied to the Greek education system since 1880, were by far responsible for the negative situation of the educational reality. However, Kastanos was greatly influenced by Rein concerning the issue of the application of a teaching method at schools, and refers to his teacher's phrase: «a teacher without method resembles a musician without time» (Rein, 1909).

Kastanos was the first educator who systematically attempted the theoretical formation of the «New School» by experimentally applying the new methods to teachers' training colleges (Διδασκαλεία-Didaskalia) in Northern Greece. Moreover, he authored and published two books about the Work School. His basic work was published in 1929, titled: *The Work School in theory and practice* followed by his book the *Apology of the Work School*, in 1931. His presence as a director of teachers' training colleges, combined with his enthusiastic promotion of the New School idea, resulted in influencing one of the most vital sections of Education: the teachers. Moreover, in co-operation with various groups of teachers, he contributed to the publication of two scientific journals, whose topics were oriented around the beginning of the new teaching movement. The first was issued in Karpenisi with the title *Hope* and the second in Florina titled, *Work School*. Kastanos regularly published articles in the above journals, on issues related to the new principles and their potential applicability to the Greek educational reality.

The analysis of the main subject of the current article will be done by examining the main themes of Kastanos' body of writing. We will focus on three areas: firstly, on his theoretical contribution to the development and dissemination of the Work School principles to the Greek Education System, secondly, on his perception of the adaptation of the new principles to the Greek educational reality and finally, on his views about the students of the Greek school and of the Work School itself, as well as the educational relationship between teachers and pupils. By focusing on the above mentioned points, Kastanos' efforts for the theoretical approach of the Work School and mainly for the application of the new teaching theories to the Greek educational reality, and the consequent changes to pupils' lives, and to the relationship between teachers and pupils will be illustrated. The next section is an approach of the basic principles of the Work School will be made, mainly through the German literature which catalytically affected the Greek Educators.

## 2. The Work School

The Work School has been one of the most important contemporary educational movements (Nohl, 1935). It appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has been consolidated onwards. It is considered to have absorbed

into its pedagogical precept any kind of perception for children's education and upbringing, and to have emphasized the self-activity principle in the acquisition of learning, being averse to the intellectual school of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Reble, 1990). Under the polysemous term «Work School», many pedagogical approaches have been arisen. More specifically, some praise the principle of self activity (Kerschensteiner, 1912), while others, under the concept of the name «Arbeitsschule», literally meaning working school, stress the cultivation of the manual skills (Dewey, 1924). In this context, the manual labour is perceived either as part of the general education of the person (Gaudig, 1922), or as the amateur but responsible labour (Dewey, 1924), which is vocationally oriented and economically utilitarian

The new educational theory, both as a concept and as an institution, should be examined in relation to the specific degraded social situations, known as «Social Question» (Soziale Frage), of the German-speaking world at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this same period, one of the biggest labour movements of Europe took place in Germany (Abendroth, 1985; Limmer, 1986; Ficke, 1987), with central request the participation of the working class in the political designs of social movements, primarily in the structuring and functioning of social institutions. One of the demands of this dynamic movement concerned the reorganisation of the education system, which would be based on a school for the children of all social classes, included the working class children, whose training had been largely ignored, despite previous efforts by significant educators like Pestalozzi and Freinet (Peyronie, 2000). Under the oncoming threat of the catalysis of the regime, which would inevitably lead to the political and broader cultural deterioration of Europe, the pre-eminent educator Georg Kerschensteiner undertook the initiative of including the concept of work into the theoretical precedents of the pedagogical designs and its gradual implementation in practice.

It should be noted, however, that the reputation of the Parisian Ecole Polytechnique (founded in 1794) had already been widely widespread in Switzerland in 1820, when Pestalozzi spoke for the necessity of founding a «olytechnic, secular and industrial school for the elementary education of the middle and lower classes» (Seyffarth, 1870-1906; Rotenberg, 1963), while in the German-speaking world the Polytechnic School of Hanover was especially renowned. On the latter's anniversary, Karl Karmarsch at his speech, praised this kind of schools «that want and need to serve materialistic interests» (True, 1956; Karakatsanis, 1991). Moreover, under the same frame of reference, a range of efforts by different German amateur corporations and guilds, for the cultivation of the youth's labour skills, are also integrated (Reble, 1990). However, the

above efforts were educationally systematized and surpassed, in terms of learning amplex, by the official Kerschensteiner's Work School (Kerschensteiner, 1912). Nevertheless, a decisive influence on the new teaching and training concepts derived from the field of Philosophy and more specifically from the harsh criticism by the representatives of the so-called Philosophy of Life and Historicism (Stoerig, 1968), mainly by Nietzsche and Dilthey, but also from the Marxian and Marxist thought and the pre-existing Kant's and Hegel's theories. Dilthey notes that when studying Kant's writings you get the impression that «there is no real blood flowing in the veins of the knowing subject fabricated by Locke, Hume, and Kant, but only the diluted juice of reason as mere mental activity» (Dilthey, 1914, 1931; Karakatsanis, 1997).

The then epistemological construction of Psychology (Association Psychology) hitherto, had also been proven insufficient and inadequate in supporting the educational act. «Modern Psychology has shown major gaps that need to be filled in», Dilthey pointed out. «It is presented as an expanded theory of feelings and their relationships. The basic force of human mental life has been deducted, as a consequence, from the Psychology which resulted in a theory of forms of mental phenomena, including only a fraction of what we experience in our mental lives» (Dilthey, 1988).

All the above concepts disclosed that the further maintenance of the contemporary intellectual school of the 19<sup>th</sup> century not only would it be meaningless but also detrimental both to the education of the children and to the formation of their general conscience in a rapidly evolving society. So, the link between schools and life rose as an urgent necessity.

One of the basic characteristics of life is considered to be the Physical movement, which is particularly visible in child nature, as expressed in various playful activities. By physical movement not only the child's excess energy is consumed (Remplein, 1969), but their desire to integrate into a «social order» is also expressed. The children's integration into a new population group, that of their peers, proves that apart from an individual entity, they also acquire a social one too.

Therefore, as the conditions during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century called for a reform in the scientific context that contributed to social and educational practices, and because the new formed Work School provided the only scientific guarantees for the harmonious arrangement of the elements of the newly formed reality, its institutionalisation became essential. Thus, the spirit of the New School was adopted in countries where the local social structures allowed, and the operation of the institutions and the conditions in general imposed the inclusion of new concepts.

### 3. The theoretical contribution of Theodoros Kastanos to the application of the principles of the Work School in the Greek education System

As stated above, Theodoros Kastanos was the educator who attempted the theoretical establishment and implementation of the Work School principles to the Greek educational reality. His views presented on his works are thought to be critically and creatively assimilated. The German literature had a great influence on Kastanos and thus the references to Kerschensteiner's<sup>2</sup>, Scheibner's, Gaudig's, Erler's and Diesterweg's works. However, he remained unaffected by pedagogists of different nationalities, mainly of those from the socialist countries (Marenko, Krupuskaya), even though their works had been translated in the Greek language and had a great influence on other Greek educationists like Dimitris Glinos, Michalis Papamavros, Kostas Sotiriou and Giannis Imvriotis. It is essential to be mentioned that at that time there was a prohibition of Communism as an ideology in Greece, which led to the prosecution of the supporters of leftism.

In his writings, Kastanos often refers to the educational «abjection» of the Greek education system, a situation that led to the withering of his generation and the intellectual and social degeneration. The «old» school, the «old» teacher or the «old» method were considered to bear great responsibility for the above situation, clearly implying the Herbartian Pedagogy and methodology, which had been condemned in the eyes of the educational community (Kerschensteiner, 1929). The Old School «was described as a school of learning or as the school of books ... its main line was, and still is, to make the children as literate as possible» (Kastanos, 1995). According to Kastanos, these schools should be replaced by «new schools, new systems, new goals and methods, and new teachers» (Kastanos, 1995). «The Work School can no longer aim, like the Old School, at the passive knowledge and the compulsory student attainment; the new method is energy, action, learning with free work» (Kastanos, 1995).

At the Old School there was little knowledge regarding the physical and mental development of the child, as Paedology, the scientific study of the child, was created at the beginning of the 20th century. Although Herbart refers to the forming of children's moral and religious character (Herbart, 1806), this goal cannot be achieved without a working system (Kastanos, 1995) and the participation of the pupils themselves. The Old School could not get to know the children, feel and truly love them and appreciate their lives, as it was based on different anthropological, social and educational principles. The Herbartian School was intellectual, aimed at the transmission of abstract knowledge to

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<sup>2</sup> Kerschensteiner's most important study *Der Begriff der Arbeitsschule* (The Concept of the Work School) was translated in Greek and became widely accepted.



pupils, by cultivating «formalism» and encouraging memory-based learning (Karakatsanis, 1996). As a consequence, the pupil was excluded from the teaching process while the teacher was highlighted as a unique authority.

The starting point and the development of Kastanos' educational processes appear to be the pupils who ask questions, dialogue and cooperatively conduct research, leaving the teacher just the coordination of the procedures and the safeguarding of the pupils' initiatives so as not to try in vain, which could result in failure, in the sense of the unguided pedagogical perception (Rogers, 1974). The role of the teacher at the New School is of great importance; the teacher is now a partner, who, together with the pupils, identifies the problems and guides the school work and the discussions. Also, the teacher chooses what is of great importance and interesting for the pupils. Kastanos refers to a new concept that should dominate the teacher-pupil relationship, namely the active cooperation between these two elements of school life (Lietz, 1919). The teacher must bring new things and also show new sides of these things. However, he must always be able to examine, draw up his programme and change it, depending on the conditions prevailing. Also, the teacher's duty is to map of the child's inwardness into the cultural goods of the external reality, arousing this way their awareness of values (Kerschensteiner, 1912), focusing on the interests of the pupils. That said, the role of the teacher should be oriented towards the direction of the assistant in the learning process and not the protagonist's, as was the case for the Old School (Gaudig, 1922).

The main aim of the Work School, according to Kastanos, is not the knowledge but the movement and the action, «the movement and the action, both mental and physical, not on symbols, types ... but on life with the plenty of its problems... The Work School allows the children to face by themselves the natural things and any other social relationships and to deal with any given solutions» (Kastanos, 1931), without being bound by any Curriculum and Timetable, which must be adapted to the pupils' needs and not vice versa. Also, the student's problem-solving ability should be encouraged, with the problems selected from the «child's home», namely their vital area, and according to their age. The time available for the completion of the tasks should be determined according to the number and the kind of problems that will be dealt with. For Kastanos, «the hourly timeframe of work» has no place at Work School, which shows respect to the children's free willing and their physical needs, leaving them free. Referring to the first phase of the Work School, Kastanos writes about the school workshops that were founded in Munich and offered courses like carpentry or steelmaking for the boys and housekeeping, ironing and dressmaking for the girls. The educator dissociated himself from the connection between school and the production of material goods, even if it was considered beneficial for the



learning process (Karakatsanis, 1996). So, Kastanos is opposed to Dewey's views and more particularly to the «mechanical handiwork» (Dewey, 1924) which he considers it abusive, because «it prevents the normal development of the spirit» and leads to «intellectual torpor» (Kastanos, 1995). In his publication: «The Apology of the Work School» he states: «several educators defined the term Work School as the school for exclusive manual work, serving both the interests of practical goals in life and the different types of the human labour, like carpentry, metallurgy, agriculture, animal husbandry etc. However, such a tendency is totally utilitarian and materialistic» (Kastanos, 1996).

According to Kerschensteiner, one of the most important obligations of education, which presupposes the corresponding intellectual and moral capacity of the pupils, is their development in order to acquire the belief that through the fulfilment of their professional duties, not only their individual personality is forged, but also the development of a given polity towards the achievement of an ideal, which is the moral society, is promoted (Kerschensteiner, 1912). Moreover, Kastanos believes that the maintenance of order is not affected if the pupils work or take breaks according to their needs and not as set by the timetable. They should be left alone to solve the problems, «be guided naturally and in an unbiased manner by the teacher and be allowed free to process the problem from any side they want and however they want» (Kastanos, 1931). High priority must be given to the promotion of teamwork, preparing this way «the good member of the civic society, the good citizen» (Kastanos, 1931). The Work School, according to Kerschensteiner, teaches the pupils to work practically for the moralisation of their small school community, trusting them the school itself, «their self-governance and the idea of an employment community», since its main goal is the «preparation of the future citizen» (Kerschensteiner, 1916).

#### **4. The adaptation of the Work School to the Greek reality according to Theodoros Kastanos**

The Greek educational reality had special characteristics and any changes attempted to be made by the Greek educators who had returned from their studies abroad, were fiercely resisted by those who desired no change in education. Kastanos was an intellectual who remained confident, until the end of his life, in the usefulness of the adjustment of the Work School to the Greek education system, thinking that only this way the education could be improved.

According to Kastanos, the principles of the Work School should be adapted to the Greek reality in order for «the child to face the problems of the Greek society, to feel them and solve them». To the argument of his ideological opponents

that the new ideas cannot be applied to the «Greek child» due to their different idiosyncrasy in relation to the children from other countries, Kastanos opposed that the child in any given country or language is still a child, with the same psychophysical needs. He refers to Gaudig, who claimed that priority should be given instead to the smooth development of the child's potential as well as the provision of a real education with respect to the childhood development (Gaudig, 1922). Also, Kastanos quite rightly questioned why the severe criticism raised for the work-school principles was not expressed for the Herbartian Pedagogy, a German conception too, that had been applied to the Greek educational system for decades. The educator wishes through the Work School to push the «Greek Child» into action, to «push them in front of the problems of life in Greece, in order to face them, to feel and solve them so as the child be settled in the Greek society where they will live» (Kastanos, 1930). In other words, the socialisation of the child should be accomplished in accordance to the Greek reality. Moreover, Natorp mentions that «the harmonious development of the human being is better achieved in the live society and the human being can be understood only within the wholeness of people» (Natorp, 1899).

Regarding the teaching methodology, Kastanos suggested the application of the Interdisciplinary Approach, because, as it had been successfully used in most European countries, including Turkey, since 1909, it could be applied, without experimentations, in the Greek School. The Interdisciplinary Approach is presented in both his books, *The Work School in theory and practice* and *The Apology of the Work School*. Through the above mentioned method, teachers assign to a student or a group of students various thematic units, which are studied in more than one content area. The conclusions are later disclosed in order to be addressed by the whole class or even the whole school. Kastanos attaches great importance to the participation of an experienced teacher in this teaching method, «as the scientific disciplines cannot be automatically divided into units and the students cannot systematically process the teaching material by themselves» (Kastanos, 1995). So, the teacher plays the lead role, he is the energetic factor of the learning process, the source of wisdom, who knows everything that is about to be taught. This way the teacher-centred school still monopolises the teaching process and the teacher becomes the main shaper of the teaching procedures, both as to the content of teaching and to the transmission of knowledge; namely he becomes an authority.

The Teacher Association of Leipzig is thought to have considerably influenced Kastanos' adoption of the Interdisciplinary Approach. In 1909 the Leipzig Association requested official permission for the founding of pilot classes at the first levels of primary education, where teaching would be carried out in an indivisible and aggregate manner, without teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic be included. Kastanos also refers to the outstanding results of this

very first application of the new teaching methodology which led, a few years later, in 1920, to its expansion in the school curricula to the first four years of Leipzig primary schools (Leipziger Lehrerverein, 1909). However, in 1924 the new method was suspended due to the political instability (Schnadel, 1925).

More specifically, according to Kastanos, the properties of remarkable educational work are: independence, naturalness, economy, material agreement, the support over life and pursuing of results. To lead the child to the above values, the teachers should become working models themselves, so that their students will learn to work by observing them. Under the teachers' supervision and with their collaboration, the pupils make comments, express their thoughts and thus the improved working processes are applied to new material. This way, predisposition, pleasure, good will, the perception of love and joy for work arise in the child (Kastanos, 1995).

As far as the issue of methodology is concerned, Kastanos raised the question of whether the methodology prevails teacher's personality. Referring to Adolph Diesterweg, who believed that the teacher's power derives from their method (Diesterweg, 1850), placing great value on the objective value of the method, without, nevertheless, sidelining the fact that the teacher makes the method and not vice versa, Kastanos gave great emphasis on the personal contribution to teaching. Also, influenced by Gaudig, Kastanos argued that the teacher personality consists of both technical skills and professional methods (Gaudig, 1922), while, referring to his teacher, Rein's words, he compares a teacher without a method to an artist without time (Rein, 1909).

Kastanos is convinced that at all levels of education, the combination of mental and physical work, that contributes to the balanced development of both spirit and body, should have a dominant position (Kerschensteiner, 1912). With the students' manual engagement, the love for the work itself is developed, because the products that resulted from work are specific live creations and the children get to love them, as they are the creations of themselves and not the abstract results of the spiritual activity (Kastanos, 1995). Also, children's creations should not be accurately constructed but emphasis should be given on achieving pleasant influence on children's souls and on supervision during teaching (Seinig, 1923).

The Work School is in line with the above mentioned principles, namely accepts the child as a separate and autonomous personality. The Work School «wants every power and good inclination that are inside the child as an uncultivated seed, to blossom, and to be assisted so as to reach their perfect formation» (Kastanos, 1995). The desired qualities are agility, flexibility, physical resistance, observation skills, determination, self-command, memory, imagination and judgement, while the proposed inclinations are considered the love for nature,

ichnography, readiness for help, the sense of friendship etc. Through the Work School, Kastanos foreshows the capacity the young to correspond to the needs of modern life, namely to the industrial and trade developments and the scientific progress in the fields of Psychology and Paedology (Kastanos, 1995). However, the above mentioned traits were in conflict with the Herbartian or Old School, which remained conservative and was unable to adapt to the newly-formed intellectual and social conditions of the Greek reality. The Herbartian School was committed to principles and values of the past, which had not been adjusted to the demands of the early 20th century. Moreover, as previously described, teaching was persistently done in a form of language which was not spoken by the vast majority of the population, especially the middle and lower socio-economic classes. Finally, the classroom was still dominated by the type of teacher who defined and decided about everything and everybody.

At this point it should be noted that, Kastanos developed his views of the Work School in his works, confident that he could positively contribute to the improvement of the Greek education. However the application of the principles in practice encountered many difficulties. There were continuing reactions to his initiatives that ushered in his transferring to numerous teachers' training colleges of the country, especially in geographically inaccessible areas of the mountainous northern Greece. Thus it is evident that his ideas were not widely accepted yet implemented. However, by making maximum use of the possibilities offered by the legislature, he attempted to integrate the principles of the New School in teaching practice. But these attempts were fragmented and only when the conditions permit it. He wrote «they are cursing us, using the worst insults, since they insist to seal us with the seal of atheist and communist» (Kastanos, 1930). So, any anti-herbartian actions that would have developed in the Greek School context of that time, they would have raised the same allegations of atheism and communism.

## 5. Kastanos' perceptions of the pupil

The pupil was central to Kastanos' thinking. As far as the low-achieving pupil is concerned, «his academic performance should be in accordance with his abilities and towards the goals that his abilities enable him». On the contrary, the good pupil «is not allowed to stop his progress; the path of his development should be kept free and open» (Kastanos, 1931). Bright students should not be hampered but enjoy full freedom of movement and the right environment for their progress. The Old School of «learning and grinding» does not take the above principles into account, but foresees, according to the legislative framework, the time, the intensity and the direction of school work, using the same method for all the children.

In order for the students' learning capacity to be improved, Kastanos proposed some interventions, like: a) A shift of some subjects taught at an older age, as they were thought to have been taught prematurely, b) The mandatory school age should be lengthened up to the age of 14, when the physical and intellectual development is considered to have been completed (it should be noted that at that time the minimum school-leaving age was the age of 12), c) New types of schools should be established for a quality and specialised education, d) The educational equipment designed for the primary education, should be age-appropriate, e) During the learning procedure, of utmost importance should be children's perceptive capability, the observation and research and f) Every kind of schoolwork should be included in the school curriculum, so that the pupils could come in touch with different teaching concepts. The School that recognises and executes the above challenges is called «Work School» which is a term that defines the difference between the Old and the New School (Kerschensteiner, 1912). However, the above definition cannot describe the concept of the «Work School» as a whole; the then newly emerged term has many more features: a) Different kinds of work find a place in the New School, b) Knowledge acquisition is actively accomplished, namely through the pupil's self-activity, their remarks, their experimentations, their special studies and trials. Moreover, the work-school was never in fact centred exclusively around the concept of manual work (Erler, 1921). Pupils through self-reliant activity should be engaged in both manual and intellectual work, which are interrelated (Gaudig, 1922).

According to Kastanos, the name *Work School* does not underestimate its intellectual function but «highlights the outward direction of work» (Kastanos, 1931). The dynamic and creative intellectual activity replaces the passive acquisition of knowledge. Three basic characteristics of the «Work School» are distinguished: 1) The dynamic activity instead of the transmission of knowledge (Muench, 1920), 2) The formation of knowledge and 3) The unification of both spiritual and manual practice, elements that act one upon another (Kerschensteiner, 1912). At Work School the child is directed towards the objects. Education is accomplished more smoothly when the pupil comprehends the objects in their natural state, or their natural environment (Kerschensteiner, 1926). At the New School, the activities are age appropriate, tailored to the children's needs and not to the future needs of the adult life.

## 6. Kastanos' views of the teacher-pupil relationship

Regarding the relationships between teachers and pupils at the Greek schools, Kastanos pointed out the necessity of their redefinition so that they would improve. According to the spirit of the Work School, Kastanos rejects the

one-sided teaching relationship and supports the idea of cooperation between teachers and pupils, so that the latter would be given the opportunity to «escape the passive stance that they were condemned to for centuries». In the new context, the pupil talks, asks questions and converses with their teachers and classmates. Also, the classroom seating arrangement is altered, becoming more pupil-centred in order for the teacher to come «close to his friend». Thus, teachers should ask questions oriented away from the learning procedure and encourage free conversation, comparative studies, observations, reconstructions, ichnographies, explanations, comparisons and exchange of views between the pupils. At the Work School the child is constantly in a continuous free movement and action. «The child gets liberated, becomes strong and self-initiated, feel the life inside him, a brand new beautiful life that the student learns to offer it kindly in order to serve the common good» (Kastanos, 1995). Kastanos is opposed to the then classroom seating arrangement, claiming that the desks force the students to be still. This «order» encourages the passive acquisition of knowledge, tantamount to military discipline. At the school that Kastanos envisaged, pupils are not obliged to just sit at their desks, but move freely too (Wolff, 1923).

Every activity that takes place at school should directly be linked to the development of the child (Gaudig, 1922), while great weight should be given to the students' physical and psychological needs as well as to anything that may boost their individuality. According to Kastanos, in the Old School philosophy, «knowledge or activities take place because children may need them later on in life», while in the New School philosophy, «the opportunity for knowledge and educational activities is offered according to their different levels of development, their current age» (Kastanos, 1931). The Old School treats the child as an adult, without taking into consideration their age-related needs. Following this wrong tactic, the smooth development of the child is blocked and the human nature distorted (Kerschensteiner, 1926). At the modern school the teacher should be aware of the purpose of education, as «the school provisions are laid down and the right conditions, necessary for the development of the child, are created» (Kastanos, 1931). The main purpose of the New School should be «the healthy man who will have ability to act, who may, at any given time, reach the level of the civilisation that his abilities allow» (Kastanos, 1931) without any diversion from his progress. Therefore, the main claim of the New School is the creation of the best possible conditions for the child's development, taking into account the individuality of each student.

Theodoros Kastanos' impact on the educational community was of great importance, despite all the reactions. In towns where he directed the teachers' training colleges, he cooperated with the primary schools teachers, urging them to apply the principles of the New School. He also undertook actions outside the



school context; he organised frequent meetings with teachers of active employment and accomplished the publication of two pedagogical journals, where, apart from the pre-mentioned renowned Greek pedagogists, the teachers themselves could publish articles, bringing in the public eye their teaching experiences and their views of implementing the new teaching theories in practice. Kastanos' efforts to cooperate with active teachers demonstrated that his theoretical approaches and views could be applied in schools.

## 7. Conclusion

Although Kastanos' contribution to education lasted only 12 years because he died at the age of 44, he was one of the few educationists who attempted to present, both in theory and in practice, the Work School principles and to prove them as the main factor for improving the Greek Education System. Influenced by the most distinctive German intellectuals who supported the New School principles, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Kastanos' work revolved exclusively around the neo-pedagogical movement.

Kastanos' contribution to the Greek education is of great importance since he was the first Greek educationist that introduced the Work School theory to the Greek literature. He was the first to publish two books on the theory and its application on the didactical reality, when the only available literature included a few translated works, mainly Kerschensteiner's and a few fragmented articles by other Greek intellectuals. Kastanos wrote in a simple and clear way, so that he would be easily understood by the educational community he addressed. His contribution is also considered important because not only he made known the Work School principles but he applied them in practice.

Kastanos managed to influence a great number of teachers at the areas where he taught, encouraging them to apply the new teaching principles in practice. This influence is clear at the two educational journals he published, where there are frequent reports on the educator's theoretical and didactical activity. The teachers' articles on the previously mentioned journals, clearly show that the Work School principles are the basis for the improvement of the pedagogic principles of the Greek School. The fact that the teachers accepted Kastanos' views is considered his biggest contribution to the Greek Education System. Moreover, his work influenced many directors of the existing teachers' colleges like Michalis Papamavrou and Miltos Kountouras, with whom he had a frequent contact. Kastanos' works are frequently mentioned in the above directors' writings.

At the Greek educational environment, where the Herbartian principles were still dominant, it was very difficult Kastanos' views to be accepted. Besides, his



action was limited only at the teachers' training colleges of the Greek countryside. In any case, Kastanos' theoretical and didactic initiatives put the basis for the changes that took place in the following years.

## 8. References

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