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Original Paper

School meals in Greece. A historical - comparative analysis

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ABSTRACT

Pupil lunches was one of the oldest social welfare projects in Greece. The purpose of school meals was to provide, either free of charge or for a small fee, mainly at noon, to the underfunded pupil, a hot and nutritious breakfast supplementary to daily nutrition, in response to the needs of his/her growing body and needs of school work. The consequences of malnutrition in childhood were known. Reducing the vitality and energy of the child, slowing down, decreasing their resistance to infections, mental lethargy, etc. Malnutrition in particular was to blame for tuberculosis. Student meals were, therefore, the basis of school perception and care, the most positive and effective measure to protect the health of sick and malnourished students, the strongest weapon of preventive care. And if they were of great importance before the war to school canteens, their value after the war for the restoration of the health of Greek children, who were severely tested by war and occupation, can be understood. The purpose of submitting this study to the academic community is to investigate and compare the institutional arrangements, processes, and ways in which the politics of student meals was formulated, organized and practiced in the Greek educational system during 1931 - 1935, 1936 - 1940 and 1941-1967.

Keywords: Student lunches - school meals, welfare state, malnutrition.

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INTRODUCTION

Student rations were introduced and imposed for hygienic reasons, social and pedagogical [1]. Hygiene reasons: The consequences of childhood malnutrition were known. Reducing the vitality and energy of child, slowing down, decreasing their resistance to infections, mental lethargy, etc. Malnutrition in particular was attributed to the outbreak of tuberculosis [1]. Social: The abandonment of children, from the early stages of their lives, to the misery of hunger for which they are not responsible, on the part of those who are obliged and able to help them, are the reasons they advocate for pupils. Pedagogies: Finally, purely pedagogical needs imposed the institution of pupils' modus operandi. Why are hungry students unable to meet the demands of school work? Where schoolchildren were operating, teachers noticed a remarkable improvement in the physical and mental performance of their participating students (Circular 240/102366, December 6, 1937 "On the Organization and Functioning of Pupils"). Maximum education: Experience from the institutions operation has also shown that pupils are also a primary educational instrument in the hands of teachers. At the communal dining table and under the constant supervision of their pupils, the students used to receive their food in accordance with the hygiene instructions, which they later transferred to their families. By operating in addition to these within the schools, students even acquire basic knowledge of home economics [2].

Research questions

When analyzing and editing our research material we will be concerned with the following research questions:

- What institutional measures have been taken by the State for student meals?
- What factors, endogenous and extrinsic (scientific social political economic educational) influenced the formation of the institutional framework in our country?
- What changes or differences have occurred during the periods we are considering?
- Which operators had the essential supervisory role?
- What principles and key legal arguments did their reformers supporters adopt?

Theoretical Framework: Welfare State and Education

Particularly important is the redistributive functioning of the Welfare State in two main areas: in the area of health and education. As can be seen, these are two social goods of the highest importance, which cannot be the prerogative of only small social groups, but must be distributed equally to all population groups, as required by the principles of social

justice, altruism and collectivity [3]. The understanding of education as a social process that serves the general benefit is the core of the argument for the activation of state intervention and the establishment of the welfare character of educational institutions, which gradually built from the 19th the century and developed especially after the Second World War, in which case it is linked to the wider development of the welfare state [4].

Education policy in accordance with the prior approaches of the welfare state should aim to equal the educational opportunities and ensuring certain minimum conditions (minimum standards) regarding program access and the provision of educational goods to all citizens [4]. However, the concept of educational goods, like all public goods in general, refers to the problem of unequal social distribution of resources. As this reality into account, to ensure equal opportunities presupposes the exercise of political redistributive character or, as stated in the educational literature, compensatory education [5,6,7,8].

The welfare state approaches facing the welfare state in nature as a set of interacting and cooperates institutions [9]. Many scholars believe that educational policy itself cannot be approached one-dimensional, seen as an ideologically-socially neutral state policy [5]. Its aim is therefore to remove the mechanisms of education that create, maintain and reproduce social inequalities by ensuring uniform national educational criteria and standards at national level [10].

METHODOLOGY

We used the method of historical research to approach this issue, using primary sources - documents: laws, decrees, House Minutes, report and commentary reports and school reports and inspections, press releases and periodicals and as secondary sources: any bibliographical references related to the subject [11].

For the critical synthesis and comparative evaluation of our research results during the various reform periods, we will use historical - comparative analysis. Indeed, we will follow a two-step course. First, through a comparative comparison of our research data, we will present our descriptive findings. Then, in response to our previous image and the theoretical assumptions, we will attempt labeling - identification, explanation and interpretation of possible developments or changes in the phenomenon under study in time so that we can drive further their theoretical and practical textural research our concerns [12].

Complicating Heidegger's tripartite form of "state, understanding, interpretation" with the constant interaction and the dialectical relationship of "part" and "all" [13], we hope that we will be led to a deeper understanding of meanings, of texts, both stated and non-stated, seeking both in the extracurricular, that is, at the macro-social level, since education does not result in a socio-economic gap, as in the intra-educational (microcosmic) level [14]. Education, moreover - as a field of social sciences - is a 'multi-factorial' and 'multi-exemplary' field [15], a single fact that can accommodate more than one interpretation, and perhaps even contradictory interpretations. And of course the interpretation given to a social phenomenon also indicates the kind of theory under which this phenomenon is examined [16]. The researcher has to grasp the deeper meaning and contrast it with the "spirit" of the time but also to investigate the conditions under which it was adopted [13].

The institution of student meals

The period 1927 - 1934

To illustrate the scale of the problem of poor and poor student nutrition, we quote a letter from a large village in the Peloponnese to Em. Lambadario, Director of School Hygiene at the Ministry of Education.

March 20, 1930

"My dear, the typical picture of the food that Greeks eat at the elementary school I run gives you the following incident.

When I arrived here in October and got to school, it struck me that just before noon, all the kids were almost begging for leave and going to their school yard with their lunch box or mantel that had their lunch. You know that my school is in the middle of two villages, and because the distance that is half an hour from each village, students stay all day and eat at noon school so I bring the food from the house. I tried the biggest surprise when I found the cause of children's output. It takes them half an hour before soaking their bread in the water in the tray used for a glass. So I went out and went to the tap that I researched content of the basket and wipe inside which had the food and you think if I covered! The fag was a bit hard black bread only with ax cut. They had a piece of herring or rather the relics of Scout, or some cheese and nothing else. I am sending you, deliberately, a piece of bread so that you do not think me excessive. Now how to feed these children, how to grow up and how to deal with infectious diseases that threaten them or the malaria-infused water called malaria! ... (Published in Red Cross Youth Magazine, May, 1930).

Since 1931 (under G. Papandreou ministry) there has been a greater interest by the State for school meals. In addition to the 2 million drachmas given by the State [1], funds were also raised from local resources, contributions, fundraising, private donations, from various State school funds, and material support of another 7.5 million drachmas. Distribution of raisins in schools since September 1931 has been part of the same rationale for reinforcing the poor pupils organization.

School years	ol years Number of pupils had lunches			
1927-28	525			
1928-29	3.500			
1929-30	4.500			
1930-31	26.000			
1931-32	30.000			
1932-33	32.000			

Table 1: The evolution of pupils lunches in Greece (1927-1933), [18]

School years	Number of cities has lunches
1928-29	13
1929-30	16
1930-31	58

Table 2: Number of cities that had lunches [19]

Associations, parent organizations and school boards with the financial support of the Ministry and the scientific supervision of Em. Lambadario - Director of the School Hygiene Service - are encouraged to organize and distribute nutrition meals to pupils with disabilities, as well as now focuses on providing abundant and healthy food [2].

In addition to state aid, school funds were also supported by local resources. The value of the portion varied according to the value of the food and the edible. The average is around 3 grams (Single report on school hygiene activities during the school year 1930 - 1931).

Various associations organize the meals (Patriotic Foundation, Red Cross, Merimnis Thessaloniki Association), and various school boards and educational authorities.

The circular of the Minister Education No. 53551/68, September 1, 1934 "Organization of pupils' amenities" to educational and commentary authorities stipulated.

Meals are recommended for:

- a) Preferably malnourished patient pupils in distress or in poor home conditions (orphaned children or working mothers etc.)
- b) All pupils, as long as the adequacy of resources and other conditions of the system so permit (space, parental consent, income, etc.)

The management and responsibility of the student housing organization should be entrusted to the school board and the school administration, assisted by the school teaching staff and, if necessary, by a special committee, consisting of Social Welfare officers or related organizations (ladies, private) or members of associations, the Red Cross, the Patriotic Foundation, etc.). The school board shall determine the details of the organization of the facilities, the responsibilities and duties of the staff and shall draw up rules of procedure for them.

Since 1934 the Patriotic Foundation has been responsible for student meals, which has organized meals jointly for pupils and needy citizens. However, the synchronization of students and citizens in the same place and in the same banks at lunchtime created problems. For this reason, very quickly the meals for the pupils were again provided as before (1937) separately.

The period 1936 - 1940

During the school year 1936-37, the State entrusted the organization and operation of the facilities generally to the Patriotic Foundation, which provided guarantees for the successful completion of this difficult task both by its organization and by its relative facilities in almost its major centers of country. But this system of joint preparation rations, it was not possible to meet the needs of students had meals, could not even meet with the basic principle of student messes in which they are not a matter of simple charity, but direct educational institution inextricably linked with all school life. Student lunch were organized, expanded and functioned very well until 1940 when the war began. In

1938, by decision 86925 on school membership, students were elected on the basis of social and health indicators, and the participation rate ranged between 10% -20% on students (Article 4). Preference for participation in the school meal was: (a) pupils whose parents were proven to be poor, inadequate in their children's nutrition, (b) pupils without maternal care (mother sick, dying, working outside the home, etc.) or under the family, in general, conditions which do not ensure adequate home nutrition (father unemployed, drunkenness, etc.), (c) pupils for any reason underlying malnutrition and (d) pupils staying out of school and for whom schooling was impossible homing and eating at noon (Article 7).

The hygienic indications were determined by the pediatrician following specific research (Article 8). Student meals were provided in the form of:

- a) Breakfast beverage only. This was given at the end of the first lesson or in the middle of the lesson (10am slower) so as not to affect the students' appetite for lunch. Milk (75-100 gm) was provided where this was possible, with a little bread, cocoa, light tea, rice or soup or rice soup, cheese with bread, jam, seasonal fruit etc.
- b) Breakfast alone or in combination with a morning drink. In exceptional cases, evening meals were also provided (Article 14). As long as this was allowed the financial resources of the diet were provided to the addicts in addition to the sweetness or fruit of the season (cf. Article 16).

In 1939 it was enacted by the Compulsory Law 1787 "On the organization of pupils 'meals" and a Central Committee on pupils' nutrition was organized which was responsible for the strengthening and promotion of the institution. The Minister of National Education maintained the supervision. There was also a compulsory levy of 30 drachmas imposed on every pupil in secondary and elementary education from the school year 1939-1940, as well as contributions from municipalities, communities, funds and legal entities governed by public law. The levy ceased to apply from the school year of 1943-44 to students of Secondary Schools, pursuant to article 7, par. 4. L. 128/1944.

The following diet was approved by the Ministry of National Education through the current School Meals Operating Regulations. It was also approved by the State Supreme Health Council, which was duly recommended by a report by School Health Director D. Stefanou.

Monday Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Potatoes	or	Meat soup or	Beans or lentil	Spaghetti with	Spinach or baked	Cod greens or
zucchini		meat with	soup	minced meat	eggplant or	sliced cod or
		spaghetti or			zucchini or stuffed	sliced oven fish
		potatoes			tomatoes	

Table 3: Diet of Students (1939), (*Dec. 102.915 / 15-10-1939*).

A fundraiser for school meals was held at Metaxas. A radio call was made to the people to reinforce the fight against student malnutrition through pupils in the afternoon of October 28, 1939. The Archbishop of Athens Chrysostom participated. The call was "misery of poor and sick child should be moved each Christian soul and that entire affluent task at strengthening the student rations, which are necessary to operate until the last Greek village" [2]. Lela I. Metaxas (Vice President of Central Committee of Students Meals): "Greeks and Greeks. You answered the church of His Beatitude Archbishop of Athens and All Greece You have reinforced the school meals. Help the project. There should be no STUDENTS is hungry. This imposes the interest of society and the nation".

During the school year 1938 - 39 52,250 pupils took part in the school canteens while in the school year 1939 - 40 pupils operated in 2.484 elementary schools. 97.134 students took part or 19.7% of the 489.949 students in the above mentioned schools.

Since the 1940-41 school year, school lunches in the form of the Law did not function because of the war that affected our country [2].

The period 1946 -1968

In 1946 the meal only included breakfast. In 1947-48 dry food (cheese) was added and from 1949-1952 it was enriched with raisins. 1946 marks the beginning of a new era in the functioning of school meals. Two ministerial decrees (99686 / November 1946 & 99687/4 December 1946) were then issued and the bodies and bodies of the pupils were given legal status and details of their operation were regulated, while the purposes of the pupils meals were specified, the forms in which they were to be formulated. The organization, its bodies and tasks were provided, as well as the composition and the manner of setting up the Central Committee on Students Meals. In addition, sources of funding were defined and how they were managed and controlled [1].

During the 1946-47 school years, food was allocated by type and quantity to each student per month (26 canteens) as follows:

Each student received:

- a) Each cup of milk (either evaporated or powdered) with sugar, glucose and cocoa.
- b) 10 meals a month of grass meat or pork with eggs or canned meat.
- c) 10 pulses of pulses made with a certain amount of soup, fat and tomato.
- d) 6 cheese cheeses.
- e) For 11 days a month jam or sweet apple (puree) and
- f) For 10 days per month pistachio butter administered with jam.

The Ministry of National Education for the school year 1947-48 prepared the following supplementary student nutrition program. The program, designed on the basis of the food available, consisted of:

- a) To a daily milk cup outward analog quantity of sugar and cocoa or chocolate (milk powder 10 drams, sugar 4 drams and cocoa or chocolate 1 dram).
- b) In a slice of raisins daily, consisting of flour 20 drams, raisins 5 drams, milk powder 5 drams, oil or fat 2 drams and salt 1 drams. The above diet yielded 540 calories a day and an albumen of 23 grams, 17 of which were animal.

Similar was the curriculum for pupils nutrition for the school year 1948-49 according to circular 77723/21 September 1949 "On the re-functioning of pupils nutrition". Elementary and secondary education students accounted for 75% of the excluding proven well-off students. About 30% was of Private Schools. This was because there was no justification for the free diet of the State for the children of affluent families, given the then difficult economic conditions of the country. Students from minority schools, Pedagogy Academies, the Academy of Physical Education and the Priestly Schools were also able to participate in the meals. The educators, the school staff and the staff used in the preparation were entitled to a portion. Food was not provided to teachers family members. Kindergarten students participated in elementary school meals while they were housed.

School children (7-12 years old) are entitled to supplementary nutrition for non-teaching schools. For the purpose of administering it, in accordance with the above diet, it is appropriate to set up, where possible, the law school boards concerned by the inspectors concerned.

Of the examples cited by Elementary School Inspector Mr. Theophanopoulos B. at a Conference of Educational Inspectors on October 17, 1949, to demonstrate the importance that post-war student meals have had, one is worthy of special attention.

"One young student was so exhausted that he thought he was a ghost. His body consisted only of skin and bones, his eyes were almost erased, his face was bronze-green, his movements were inhumane. On the first day of the morning meal he was given a cup of milk, but this was seized by her mother staying outside the school yard and drunk immediately. The next day the door was closed and the pupil was forced to drink his milk. Outside his mother was crying out for milk to be given because it damages her child digestive system that the milk is tender to the little one, but the little one led by his mother did not want to drink the milk. But the teaching staff insisted, however, that they had milk, spoonfuls of milk, for half an hour. In the following days the same scene was repeated but its duration was shortened. After a week the pupil's face changed completely. His color improved, his eyes glowed, his skin began to grow muscles, his movements were intense, and the teachers were forced to do things acknowledge that puppets, albeit of a low calorie level, have introduced into children organizations, although they have kept them from collapsing, saved the new generation from tuberculosis and death, helped prevent the degeneration of our race and helped their educational work", [20].

Since 1963 a lunch has been added. Student meals were now an activity of the school day-to-day operation, which also had the responsibility of purchasing food and preparing and distributing meals within their premises. It also consolidates the institution of housing and establishes the participation of all pupils in order to eliminate any social discrimination and to avoid the feeling of being disadvantaged by unequal treatment of pupils.

One of the teachers of the school (or of the schools in the case of the common dining room) was appointed by the Committee for this task. His working hours were considered school work hours. He was granted a similar monthly allowance.

From 1965-1966 the meals will be expanded to 600.000 pupils (breakfast and lunch) and they will be placed on a permanent basis under the full guidance and supervision of the Ministry of Education, trained by its regional services

[17]. Since 1966, the operation of pupils in almost all primary schools has been generalized. The meals were mainly intended for the needy and weak students. With the circular 195575/23 December 1967 "School lunches of the school year 1967 - 68, following the revision of the institution of pupils meals in the form and type of their functioning until then, the National Council for Economic Policy (NCEP) decided the following:

School meals would work in the form of an improved diet, based on an improved diet, only in schools where there are conditions for good preparation and placement with all the deprived, as well as those wishing to belong to that category. The other schools would distribute five grants per pupil per day to the guardians of needy students with unprocessed food sent by American Aid organizations. The capital schools would not operate meals, nor would the 5-cent aid be paid to students, nor the distribution of unprocessed food. Schools in cities with more than 20.000 residents would not receive the 5-cent allowance for students, but would distribute unprocessed food from American Aid.

Gradually, and with the improvement of the living conditions of the Greeks, the operation of the meals began to lose its importance.

Nowadays (2016 – 2019)

The institute of hot lunch in primary schools, completing three years of successful implementation this year, is a national program integrated into the state budget. The program is implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. In the school year 2019-2020 expand in 1.227 Primary Schools in the country, meeting the needs of pupils, which demonstrate the positive acceptance by students, parents and the educational community.

CONCLUSIONS

In the works of pupil perception, special reference is made to meals, for the starving pupil was provided with the necessary food, as a necessity of hygiene, social and pedagogical. Social and hygienic indications were distinguished for participating in the school meal. That is to say, it was understood that the health of the malnourished pupil is at very serious risk and that malnutrition during childhood does not, unfortunately, pass without unfortunate consequences. It was therefore necessary to abandon "the many times they praised the Greeks" [14], because of its association with tuberculosis incubation.

Student meals were an urgent need to function as an educational institution and not as a charity case (Circular 240/102366, 6 December 1937 "On the Organization and Functioning of Pupils"). And of course the school could not remain unmoved, and the teachers ignored the pretext that the educational work was hampered. Recall in England the slogan: "Primum vivere", "First bread for children and then letters", [1].

The function of pupils' meals was established and systematized as an educational institution by the provisions of Compulsory Law 1787/1939 and the following Decrees and Circulars issued. Until that time, the State concern for food for distressed pupils was limited to including them in charity in the Patriotic Foundation operating facilities for the needy and destitute adults.

The provisions of Compulsory Law 1787/39 constituted the initial legal framework, on the basis of which the subsequent central and regional organization was followed. The resources required for the operation of pupils in a limited number of pupils at the beginning and progressively up to 200.000 pupils were also specified and a mandatory and 30-compulsory levy was imposed on non-needy pupils in elementary and secondary education [17].

After 2 years of operation, the country was dragged into the war, occupied and thus in distress, and the school meals ceased to function, they did not function post-breakfast in the form of a morning drink and sometimes a portion of different content.

Student meals in all countries formed the basis of schooling and care, the most positive and effective measure to protect health of sick and malnourished students. And if they were of great importance before the war to school meals, their value after the war for the restoration of the health of the children of Greece, who were severely tested by war and occupation, can be understood. A UNESCO report on Greece highlights the major food problem faced by large sections of the population during the civil war. The report states that "food for children of elementary education is one of the overriding whatever terminal an urgent problems of Greece, presently".

At all international conferences on child protection, it has been found that no other country has suffered as much from malnutrition as the physical and mental health of child in our country (circular 80755/23-9-1946). The Ministry of National Education, rushed to the perception that these are the basis of pupil perception and welfare, organized them so

as to become a permanent educational institution, connected to school life and capable of responding to teachers, educators and social workers for these purposes.

Mr. Papandreou Government has been well beyond expectations in the area of school hygiene and in particular pupil welfare, despite the fact that he himself was aware of the importance he attached to the institution of pupil nutrition when he was Minister of Education. In 1930 provided the first State aid of 2 million drachmas for school meals.

In 1964, for the first time, such care was taken by the State and there was so much enthusiasm for feeding the pupils to such an extent. This is now a radical solution to the problem of student housing issues.

The differences in the organization and functioning of the institution in the policies of the Governments of '39 and '64 focus on the following: The first difference in the Government policy of '64 is the participation of almost half of the students. Secondly, participation will be free, as is free education. And thirdly, with the participation there will be no more discrimination and hygienic and social criteria. All students will be able to participate. And for the sake of estimating these differences, the 1939 legislation made it the goal of the institution of pupils to provide food in principle to pupils who would prove that the home was not adequate, quantitative and qualitative, the needs of their development and the requirements of their school work.

Nowadays, school lunches, as an institution in most European countries, contribute significantly to strengthening the solidarity and companionship of the student community and at the same time improving student performance. The multiple benefits of the program have a positive reflection on the development of primary domestic production, as the products selected for meal preparation, in collaboration with the Agricultural University, are local and of high nutritional value. That is to say, the new generation promotes healthy, Mediterranean nutrition, while increasing the number of jobs in local communities.

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