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THE FORMATION OF PEDAGOGICAL THEORY IN SOVIET RUSSIA (1917-1931)



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This article is devoted to the problem of the early development of Soviet pedagogy. The publication shows the main directions of development of pedagogical thought in Soviet Russia (1917–1931). The main approaches to the future of the Soviet education system are shown. At the same time, the article outlines the political aspects of the formation of the original Soviet pedagogy.

Key words: education; history of pedagogy; history of education; pedagogical theory; influence of the social environment.

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ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОЙ ТЕОРИИ В СОВЕТСКОЙ РОССИИ

Статья посвящена анализу проблем развития молодой советской педагогики. Публикация показывает важнейшие направления педагогической мысли Советской России (1917-1931). Описываются основные подходы к организации советской системы образования. Определяются политические аспекты формирования оригинальной советской педагогики.

Ключевые слова: образование, история педагогики, история образования, педагогическая теория, влияние социальной среды.

The emergence of the Soviet state after the 1917 revolution caused the need to create a new pedagogical theory based on Marxism.

Indeed, accordingly, the early socialist doctrines, the concepts of utopian

communism, and, above all, Marxist philosophy, served as the ideological and theoretical foundations for the development of a democratic orientation in Russian pedagogy. The relative liberalism of the Soviet society of the 1920s.

The twentieth century led to the penetration and adaptation of the advanced teachings of this time to Soviet pedagogy — behaviorism, Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis, early genetic teachings, sociology, socionics and pedology.

However, the period of the 1920s represents a time of intensive theoretical search for ways and means of democratization of the national school.

In the period of 1917–1931 the problem of creation of the new socialist school was extremely actual. Soviet pedagogy in this period developed under the strong influence of the concepts of socialist society, the ideas of utopian communism and, above all, Marxism.

In the 1920s Soviet society was relatively liberal.

Therefore, the pedagogy of this time borrowed many ideas of Western science such as behaviorism, Gestalt psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology, socionics and pedology.

This was a unique period in the development of Russian science and education. 1920s were the glory days of such famous Russian teachers as P. P. Blonsky, A. P. Boltunov, G. O. Gordon, A. G. Kalashnikov N. K. Krupskaya, A. V. Lunacharsky, A. S. Makarenko, A. P. Pinkevich, M. M. Pistrak, M. N. Pokrovsky, S. T. Shatsky, V. N. Shulgin.

In the theoretical heritage of teachers of this time, the issues of the democratic goals of the educational process, the variability, the profile, the multiplicity of educational content, the specificity of the application of fundamentally new teaching methods as the design, Dalton-plan,

brigade-laboratory form of education were received.

In this case, several, partly antagonistic, directions of these searches are denoted — ideas of school autonomy based on the principles of its depoliticization and deideologization; ideas of pedagogization of the environment on the basis of the principles of its relationship with social processes; the idea of dying out of the school on the basis of the principles of its alternativeness to family and social education.

At this time, two points of view on the future of the Soviet school emerged. The first approach, which was presented in the works of P. Blonsky, A. Kalashnikov and A. Pinkevich accentuated the importance of the personality of the teacher in the development of the school. The most important thing in school development is the “teacher-student” relationship.

Another point of view was presented by N. Krupskaya, A. Lunacharsky and V. Shulgin, which determined the value of the state role in the development of the education system.

The first Minister of education of Soviet Russia (so called The People’s Commissar of Education), Anatoly Lunacharsky, have influenced the development of the Soviet pedagogical theory. Lunacharsky, being a man of liberal convictions, held this post during the first twelve years of the Soviet state.

In 1923-year Lunacharsky declared that the school should be “objective and apolitical,” “free institution,” in which the teacher should be “the child’s free guide on the way to becoming a wise and beautiful adult”¹

He wrote “the person of a herd is easily subordinate to any form of Bonapartism and dictatorship. The herd man cannot be critical of what life gives him. We must develop the features, talents and special skills that a person chose for himself, and which society has indicated to him”¹

The purpose of the true communist education, considered A. V. Lunacharsky is the all-round development of man, the builder of a new, socialist society.

He wrote “A man of a socialist society is, first of all, a man of labor, armed with the knowledge of his age, uniting in himself a fully trained worker and at the same time a master of life ... We want to educate a man who would be as harmonious as possible moral and spiritual. He received a full general education and could easily acquire mastery in any field”².

Occupying the post of The Minister of Education A. Lunacharsky tried to democratize Soviet education and borrow elements of the American school, such as the Dalton Plan and the project teaching method.

One of Lunacharsky’s initiative in that period was the use in Soviet education collegial management, autonomy of schools, teacher, student and parent self-government.

The pedagogical theory of A. S. Makarenko had an important role in the Soviet pedagogy at that time. 1920s is

the period of formation of his pedagogical system. It was at this time that the so-called “logic of Collective education” Makarenko evolved as a scientific theory. A. Makarenko led an ideological struggle with numerous opponents. Soviet scientist has repeatedly confessed that the whole history of his pedagogical system is a struggle for existence⁴

The notions of discipline, collective and collectivism, being central to his pedagogical beliefs, have had a significant impact on the development of education in Russia.

Makarenko defined school discipline as a sign of organized society; as exact feeling of their position in the social environment; as optimal attitude of the person and society; as reasonable subordination to public order; as a way of laziness containment; as a result of the social contract; as a natural state and a sign of any collective.

A. Makarenko never opposed the discipline and the of freedom. He wrote “Will of human being is the phenomenon directly opposite to freedom. Will is not freedom, it is a restriction, it is a phenomenon derived from leveling the discipline”.

In his opinion, discipline is the first sign of freedom. Discipline is not a rigid system of external influences on the person. Discipline is the inner state of man. Makarenko wrote “Our discipline is the connection of full consciousness with

¹ Kotrjahov N.V., Holms L.E. *Teoria i praktika trudovoi shkoly v Rossii (1917–1932 гг.)*. – Kirov: GPI Lenina, 1993. p. 13.

² Lunacharsky A. V. *O vospitanii i obrazovanii*: Sbornik / Editor: A.M. Arsenjeva ets. – M.: Pedagogica, 1976. p. 307.

³ Ibid, p. 26.

⁴ Makarenko A. S. *Pedagogicheskie sochinenia.*: v 8 t. – M.: Pedagogica, 1983, T. 1. p. 285.

the external form... Our discipline is the connection of full consciousness with the internal form.” Thus, discipline develops from external forms to internal discipline or self-discipline.

Consequently, he wrote “Discipline has a collective, mass character, and therefore it is possible only in the collective”¹. Makarenko did not oppose individuality to the collective. On the contrary, full personification of human being is possible only in collective and through collective: “There is no personality outside of society as there is no individuality without a collective. All the existing views on the collective as a mechanical sum of individuals are untenable, as well as the idea that the team is leveling the personality is vulgar. The team does exalt the personality”².

Emphasizing the opposite essence of freedom in relation to the will and the collective in relation to the crowd, A. Makarenko wrote: «It is impossible to imagine the collective, as simply as to take the sum of individuals. The team is socially living organism. Like the living body it has organs, power, responsibility, proportion of parts, interdependence, and if it is not, that is a crowd”³

Hence, the difference of the collective from the crowd is the presence of consciousness, socially significant purpose of activity and presence of internal bodies of management (self-government). In the right collective there is no disharmony between the goals shared and private, on the basis of which collectivism, according

to A. Makarenko’s ideas, is laid in the very nature of human society, and especially in the nature of youth: “A child, a teenager, a young man cannot to be satisfied with mental life only in conditions of isolation, but aspire to communication, being by the nature collectivist”⁴.

But extremely radical views appeared in the development of Soviet pedagogy at this time.

The one of the most famous radical of that time was the director of the department of education in the Kostroma region V. Nevsky. In the monograph “Schools is the club of the working youth”, he argued the principle of the election of teachers by the students themselves. All teachers, mentors and school administrators must be selected by the students themselves. Any teacher who has not been chosen should be fired. Nevsky wrote: “There are no teachers and mentors in life, so they should not be in the schools. It is necessary to organize the life itself, and in the school, it is necessary for the students themselves to lead the entire life of their school organization”⁵. These ideas were the beginning of «The school dying conception” — radical and extremely popular theory in Soviet Russia at that time.

Another influential concepts of the development of the Soviet school 1920s was the idea of “pedagogization of the environment”. Such famous soviet pedagogues as M. Krupenina and V. Shulgin had a negative attitude towards the tradi-

¹ Ibid, p. 130.

² Ibid, p. 285.

³ Ibid, p. 231.

⁴ Makarenko A. S. *Pedagogicheskie sochinenia.*: v 8 t. – M.: Pedagogica, 1983, T. 5. P. 231.

⁵ Nevsky V. *Shkoly – klub trudjashegosja junoshestva.* – Kostroma, 1920. P. 29.

tional comprehensive school. They called it “school of study.” This school, upon their opinions, is doomed to die¹.

Such famous educators as V. Vasilyeva, A. Ivanov, A. Naryshkin, A. Poselyaninova, N. Korst, N. Panova believed that children being brought up outside the home, outside the family and outside of society, would not be exposed to the ravages of existing traditions and prejudices. Ultimately, they would become a “new type” of people who can build a perfect communist society. Neither the family nor the school, but only special public institutions will be able to give a real communist education. Therefore, the state should assume the functions of education of new citizens.

Another representative of radical pedagogy A. Sabovich, the author of the utopian works “USSR after 15 years” and “Cities of the future and the construction of socialist life”, proposed the organization of public education of children through the special children’s cities. Such children’s Megapolis will be isolated from the rest of society, in order to prevent the influence of society on pupils. Adults will be allowed there only with special passes.

In such children’s cities, it was proposed to organize special children’s factories and factories for the labor education of students and for the Soviet economy. Houses for adults and plants will be located in concentric circles, gradually moving away from the center (like the utopia of T. Campanella’s “City of the Sun”).

¹ Venderovskaja R. B. *Otechestvennaja shkola 20-h godov (v poiskah pedagogicheskogo ideala)*. – M.: Izdatelstvo ROU, 1996. Pp. 72–74.

² Op. by: Fedorova N. M. *Stanovlenie sovetskoi shkoly v 1918–1931.: Diss. ... cand. ped. science* – SPb.: Rossiiskii GPU A.I. Gertzena, 2001. P. 75.

³ Stenogramma 1-st Vserossiiskoi konferencii rabotnikov detskih domov. – M., 1927. P. 18.

Other supporters of similar ideas as A. Naryshkin, A. Ivanov, F. Ivanov developed the theory “The system of public service family”. They argued the need to create not only schools, kindergartens, but also special “cells of communist education.” These will be educational boarding schools, farm facilities, summer schools, summer cottages, dormitories, forest schools, school workshops and children’s farms. These will be independent educational institutions in the system of public education, where children spend all their free time from school, will be outside the family.

Material maintenance of children in these institutions will be borne by parents. A. Naryshkin wrote “... giving children back to a public education institution does not mean at all that parents deny themselves any obligations towards children ... first of all, parents should materially participate in this matter, allocating part of their earnings to pay maintenance costs children in public institutions”²

In 1927, the All-Russian Conference of Education Workers was held. F. Ivanov described the merits of “orphanage” education in speech at the conference: “In order to reverse the negative attitude towards orphanages, it is necessary to popularize the work of the best orphanages, to convince workers and peasants of the incomparable advantage of the orphanage public education to family, and even more so street one!”³

A. Pinkevich said at the conference: "In orphanages, we can create a new nurturing environment ... we are modern educators. In schools we are powerless in many cases; home, out-of-school environment is often stronger than us..."².

A moderate in his pedagogical views A. V. Lunacharskiy partly shared these views. At the same conference, he outlined the guidelines for the activities of the Commissariat of Public Education, headed by him, as follows: "... Children's home is the best form of upbringing of children — the upbringing of a genuinely socialist, pulling out the kids from the family situation and its petty bourgeois way"³.

In the early 1930s, due to the strengthening of Stalin's policies, these areas were destroyed. Since the second half of the 1930s there has been a decline in the activity of teachers. An indicator of this can be at least the fact that if in the first half of the 1920s only four ma-

gor congresses of educators took place. In 1930 — The 1st All-Russian Congress on Polytechnic Education and the All-Russian Congress on general education, in 1931 — The All-Union Congress of Pedologists, in 1932 — the 8th Congress of Educators. In 1940s — 1950s congresses are no longer convened⁴. In Soviet pedagogy, totalitarian campaigns began to predominate.

In the mid 1930-s many areas of social knowledge, such as socionics, genetics, anthropology, sociology, psychoanalysis, and pedology, were subjected by the Communist Party and the government to harsh and unjust criticism. The personality of the pupil was considered as a passive object — the recipient only of any pedagogical influence.

Consequently, the Soviet school since the beginning of the 1930s became a variant of the classical Prussian gymnasium.

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² Pinkevich A. P. Pedagogica. Uchebnoe posobie: V 2 t. Izd. .5. — T. 2. — M.: Rabotnik prosveshenia, 1929. P. 261.

³ Stenogramma 1-st Vserossiiskoi konferencii rabotnikov detskih domov. — M., 1927. P. 18.

⁴ Narodnoe obrazovanie v RSFSR / Editor M. P. Kashina i E.M. Cheharina. — M.: Prosveshenie, 1969 r. P. 67.