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Education in Russia: The Evolution of Theory and Practice¹

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Abstract

This article investigates the relationships between the evolution of Russian social psychology and the transformations of the modes of education in Russia. Social psychology is a science born the last century and also a status of the social conscience of people, forged historically on the basis of proper cultural artifacts. In Russia education is mainly the process of human development and, like wherever, it is the institution of knowledge transmission. We show on the case of Russian history that the scientifically proven educational practice can contribute enriching development of social conscience after ideological and economic shocks.

Keywords: analysis of education, cultural economics, Russia

JEL classification: I21; Z1

¹ This text is the second part of our historical, sociological and economic analysis of Russian education. The first part, "Education en Russie" by Kuznetsova and Peaucelle (2005), deals mainly with economic aspects.

Introduction

Contradictory development of material and spiritual cultures of Russia during the reform period, and the imperceptible disorder and extreme variety of spiritual and public values have led to sharp polarization and social degradation of a significant part of the society, and have put it on the edge of cultural, scientific and educational catastrophes or, according to Mamardashvilli (1989) «anthropological catastrophe» p.118).

Russia needs a new educational paradigm adequate to the evolutionary economy and to a forward-looking educational system, satisfactory both to the new "world of economy", and the new "world of learning". It seems to economists, as we are, that currently the world is changing too quickly compared to the shifts in educational practice. Inertia, stagnation, absence of flexibility and conservatism, resulting from society's neglect of schools, are reflected in the full list of problems familiar to Russian education as part of European cultural hangover in the last two decades. These problems include: the shortage of public funds for financing advanced educational institutions, the gap between elite and public schools, the low educational level of citizens who show an absence of even basic elementary knowledge, the falling prestige of the teaching profession, and the phenomenon of talented and arrogant individuals abandoning the sphere of education. These problems finally lead to the various forms of youth revolt, from peace demonstrations and strikes up to the burning of cities.

The restoration of the internal unity and stability of the spiritual, cultural and intellectual domains of the modern world of learning requires certain interaction and assimilation of principles, public responses and methods of education and upbringing in two dimensions: in the system of primary, secondary and higher education, and in the national and international educational arenas. These factors determine the logic and structure of this paper covering the characteristics of some modern problems of Russia, in the first section, and the analysis of the theoretical investigations of Lev Vygotsky in the domain of child psychology and the practical pedagogies of Alexander Makarenko, related in the second section, as a set of interrelated ideas, principles and their reception, applicable in modern globalizing education.

1. Social and economic problems of Russia and the crisis of values in education

1.1. Economic growth and changes in educational priorities

Creation of material values as a result of economic growth does not influence directly the school system, education and upbringing. Phases of educational progress and economic cyclical development do not coincide. The development of Russian schools through the last decade of the 20th century shows quite clearly that the economy and education are not directly interconnected.

The Russian population gained access to education in the beginning of the 20th century. The development of Russian education was stimulated by industrial capitalism and was characterized by a high degree of differentiation and specialization (Peaucelle & Konovalov (2005)). Historical cataclysms interrupted the process of general educational expansion and elementary education became obligatory in the USSR only in 1936. The dynamics and efficiency of the latter introduction in the 1930's were very high, intensifying "Stalin's" industrialization and the acceleration of technical and innovative progress. However, the most important role was played (outstripping the economic growth push) by the wide-spread social and cultural paradigms for liquidating illiteracy and providing the population with incentives for a new understanding of human existence. Education was included in the system of values of the Soviet society, and this notion was developing disregarding the low level of increase in human welfare compared to the growth of the country's industrial potential (Akulenko (1929), p.51). Sociological research concerning the attitude of Russians to different aspects of education, carried out in 2001 by the Moscow Institute of Public Opinion, concerning the quality of the Russian educational system shows that opinions were as follows: 48 % of respondents considered that the Soviet Union was the world's leader in the field of education; 11 % believe that Russia retains that distinction this year. The majority of respondents were convinced that it was more difficult than during the Soviet period to receive a good education. More than half of the respondents estimated their own level of training as high and only 5 % noted that it was deficient. The majority of respondents would like their children and grandchildren to receive a longer and more thorough education.

A survey of the population's propensity to save showed that 20-22% of citizens are ready to invest in education. This indicator occupied third place (after savings "for a rainy day" and savings for medical treatments) in the ranking. Despite the level of economic development and the dynamics of economic growth, the attitude of Russians toward education proves the marked discrepancy between economic and educational trends in the current period. According to the

opinion poll data by Kuznetsova (2006)², the sharp reduction in the standard of living, the downswing in growth and the levelling of economic development were accompanied by a traditionally high aspiration of Russians towards education up to the end of the 80's and the beginning of the 90's. This survey showed a relative decrease of interest by youth in the period 1990-1995 in studying fundamental, natural and applied engineering sciences, compared to an increase of interest in the economic and legal fields. Since 1995 there has been a revival of students' interest in engineering, information technology and communication specialties.

Nowadays Russians are focused on material and individual values. Within such a crisis of ethical values the purposes of schooling, always considered as a cornerstone in the social system, become the objective of reforms. Aimless, vague vision about the function of education becomes the factor of dissociation in the understanding of pedagogical tasks, which are connected to the psychology of the person and of the society.

Twice during the 20th century Russia experienced painful economic, spiritual, political and cultural revolutions that caused similar consequences: demographic crisis, social and cultural degradation, disruption of the system of values, and an increase of child homelessness. We look now at the Russian situation since the second rupture, the collapse of the Soviet Union.

1.2. Demographic crisis

Reduction of birth rate is a consequence of demographic recession, social, economic and spiritual crises. Statistics show that since the 90's, the number of inhabitants of the country has decreased by 700 thousand people annually. The increase in population since 1992 is negative (less than 6% since 1999, for example) and is generated by a decrease in the birth rate (from 16% in 1985 to 8% in 1999) and an increase in the death rate (from 8,3% in 1970 up to 15,9% in 2001). This trend is partly compensated for by migration during recent years (Tinguy de A. (2004)), increasing the cultural division of the society. Demographical movements caused a decrease in the number of children and teenagers in the age group of 5 – 14 years old (-12 ‰ during the period

² The author (Kuznetsova) within the last 25 years of teaching in the economic faculty of St.Petersburg State University (a branch of world economic and political economy) questioned students in the first course. One of the questions was as follows: «where do you want to work after graduating from the University? ». This question was accompanied by variants of answers: at the University, in business, in state or party management, in a secondary or high school. Up to the middle of the 80's of the 20th century, 70 % of students wanted to work in higher education, 16 % in business, 13% in governmental bodies, and 1 % in secondary or high schools. In the middle of the 90's answers of respondents were distributed as follows: 16 %, 70 %, 13 %, 1 %. In 2006, the students were polled again, and the answers were of respondents were distributed as follows: 9 % wanted to work in higher education, 80 % in business, 74 % in financial institutions, 45 % in governmental bodies, 6 % in schools . 83 % of those interrogated would like to work in Russia, and 60 % want to work (half of them temporarily) abroad.

between 1990 and 2000), generating a decrease in the number of pupils in primary, secondary and high school. In the same period demographic changes account for an increase of population in the age group of 15-19 years old (+17 %), potential pupils of the secondary special schools and the universities. By 2015 the United Nations predicts a decrease in the 5-14 years age group of Russians by 38 % and by 47 % for the 15-19 years age group. Such tendencies in demography will reveal relative "excess" in schooling infrastructure, especially in the higher levels.

Low population density due to large-scale territory, often unfavourable for economic development, and the tendency toward depopulation of rural communities, is considered to be traditional problems of Russia. The population census (2002) revealed 9000 villages without any resident population and 34,000 villages with fewer than ten inhabitants³.

Nowadays the problem of education in the remote, sparsely populated rural areas can be solved by means of re-structuring cultural communications, increasing the funds of libraries, virtual education, computerisation⁴, and the development of distance education by correspondence, by organization of tours of highly-qualified teachers across Russia, and by Olympiads and competitions, among other approaches.

1.3. Corrosion of societal and cultural traditions

Theoretical sociology posits that certain norms and values recognized by the society are part of the cultural sphere of the public system, and interruptions in the set of these norms and values make all other societal changes irreversible.⁵

The contentment and optimism of the population depend on the economic welfare of each person. Steady economic growth and growth of real incomes of the population since 2000 after amazing recessions in 1992 and in 1998 (Boutillier and alii (2008)); have generated in the consciousness of a significant part of the population a "constrained" optimism about their family's economic situation. The peak of contentment was reached in 2002. Since then, and until 2006, despite continuing economic growth, the parameter of satisfaction in average personal welfare

³ According to the Constitution guaranteeing the right of all Russian inhabitants to education, schools can be closed by the decision of the local rural council only. Thus, the cessation of their activity cannot be initiated by the State, for example for economic reasons.

⁴ To provide qualitative education in classes with low enrollment the Ministry of Education suggests introducing distant remote training, for example, by construction of parabolic aerials at the rural schools connected to communication satellites. Such technical equipment is able to transfer educational programs to thousands of schools far from the central part of the country. However, such teaching means of children in rural places can reproduce some negative occurrences that young people of cities are suffering, called by psychologists a "hush-hush" world, or virtual society.

⁵ Levada (2000), for example, points out three main changes of the social and cultural norms and values in Russia: denationalization, opening of the social order, and individualization or privatization of normative regulators of public life.

stabilized. That means that an increase of gross domestic product and of national income stops having an effect on the improvement of wellbeing of the population and/or that an up-swing in the business process may not be accompanied by adequate social development. It seems that a significant reason for such dissonant movement of economic and social developments may be explained by a gap between the educational principles of teachers, tutors and parents and the new virtual culture, uncontrollable by them, conquering the most susceptible part of a society that is its children and teenagers. Therefore, the essential characteristic of modern evolution, which changes the mechanisms of thinking, perception, and values, is a concentration of population in cities and the transformation of the environment of education from industrial and agrarian into industrial and informational. Children actively absorb features of the surrounding social environment in spite of the lessons of parents and teachers. Indeed, when a child has easy access to TV or a computer and engages in the unlimited interactive dialogue with persons of the same age, any attempts at a pedagogical up-bringing and interference appear inefficient as the consciousness of the pupil is entirely displaced in a semantic reality essentially distinguished from a reality of adults⁶.

1.4. Child homelessness

A certain layer of people could not adapt to contemporary social conditions. According to sociological research carried out by the Institute of Social and Economic Problems of the Population of the Russian Academy of Science, 10% of citizens and among them 25 % of children⁷ form a group named by journalists the "social dregs" (beggars, vagabonds, homeless kids, etc.). The main reasons for kids' homelessness are: poverty, negligence from adults, lack of purposeful activities for children, and the school's loss of its basic socialization role.

Stagnant poverty of families with children (e.g., multiple-child families, incomplete families, families of invalids, and the jobless), where average per capita monthly income does not reach 1000 roubles (30€), is the most significant factor causing child homelessness. Parents are not able to combine work activities, earning a decent income and providing appropriate education for their children. Neglected children, meaning those with no parental or other control over them, who do not meet expectations concerning education, training, growing up and fitting in, are often pushed to the streets and into criminal groups. Absence of a governmental socialization function, economic and social misfortunes of families, antisocial behaviour of parents (drug and alcohol

⁶ The solution to this problem could be the creation of educational centers similar to the Center for the Complex Formation of the Person of Children and Teenagers, in which the organization of teaching and the educational process is carried out not within the framework of a class-fixed system, but in multi-age collectives involved in work activity.

⁷ Official statistics on homeless children do not exist, but official data show that the number of children, without the care of parents and residing in orphanages is about 200 thousand.

addiction, glue sniffing), violence against children and other family members, and homelessness specifically occurring in families of migrants (first of all, refugees) are some additional reasons for negligence.

One more factor pushing children onto the streets is their inactivity during leisure time. Recently the number of children 14-15 years old who have abandoned school owing to learning difficulties has increased. Inactivity during leisure time results from the inaccessibility of culture and sports facilities, which were free of cost during the Soviet period. Nowadays these facilities are costly and their number is crucially decreased.

During the reform period school has lost its basic socialization role. School has retained its training function, but stopped raising pupils, so it has lost its close ties with families, which were an effective mechanism for the prevention of child neglect and homelessness. Therefore it is wrong to explain the social misbehaviour of teenagers only by their deviant personal characteristics, which could be changed by individual psychological therapy. Misbehaving is part of the teenagers' loss of awareness about his responsibility in a collective society and his alienation from the basic institutions of socialization.

Catastrophic growth of the number of socially maladjusted children and teenagers has brought about the creation in the 90's of special networks of social-rehabilitation institutions for work with minors, and has generated the development of a new scientific discipline, «rehabilitation pedagogies», uniting medical, psychological, general pedagogical knowledge as well as study of mental defects and physical handicaps.

2. A scientific heritage of Russia

Apart from the class/lessons system invented by J.A. Komenski⁸, Russian education was initially based on German, French and English schools. German traditions gave Russia the basis disciplines for studies; the French and English traditions provided the taste for sophisticated intellectual dialogue between pupil and teacher. Joining these elements with the ability for deep intuition and perceiving the world in its integrity, has led to the Russian style of education, which takes its roots in traditions of national education as well as in the theory and practice of Russian educators of the 18th to the 20th centuries, such as Tatischev, Pososhkov, Lomonosov, Betskoj, Radishev, Belinsky, Chernishevskij, Dobrolubov, Herzen, Ushinskij, Tolstoj, and Sukhomlinskij. The basic feature of Russian education, a nucleus that pulls together other characteristics, is its intellectual force and its skill in cultivating and fostering intelligence and intellectual pursuing.

⁸ Czech public figure of the 16th century.

In contemporary Russia, the variety of socially recognized values of individualism and of education adapting the individual personality to economic needs has caused the development of a wide spectrum of pedagogical approaches, from the extremely pragmatic up to anarchical, including a return to Russian pedagogical theory and practice of the 1920's and 30's. The need to analyze pedagogical innovations through the initial stage of "the Soviet school" formation derives from a certain "mirror reflection" (in relation to the modern) of the social characteristics of the transition from the capitalism to the centrally planned model of economy, and from individualistic principles of education to mass and collectivistic approaches.

Trying to comprehend old, new and alternative pedagogical experience, integrating it with modern forms of culture, we face a problem in the absence of uniform education practice, though it was traditional, developing, new humanitarian, religious and theological education. Today's Russia reveals such tendencies in the sphere of education as a crisis of classical model, the creation of experimental schools, alternative forms of training, integration into the global culture; the democratization of school, the creation of a system of continuous education, humanization and computerization; restoration and development of the traditions of the Russian school.

The following philosophical-pedagogical ideas have been developed in Russia: the concept of stage-by-stage formation of intellectual actions (P.L.Galperin (1966)), the idea of developing training (V.Davidov (1996), A.Zankov (1990)), problem-solving methods (I.Lerner (1980), (1981)), the theory of content choice for the training process (V.G.Alexeev (1906), (1907)), socio-historical psychology (L.Vygotsky) and the school of work education in the collectives (A.S.Makarenko (1977)). We analyze the last two schools, demonstrating a unique combination of child breeding up as a personality and educational practice in bringing up homeless children in extreme conditions.

2.1. Socio-historical psychology of Vygotsky and upbringing of the child

In the beginning of the 1930's the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky posited that education and upbringing should precede and orient the development of a child. The main element of the education (upbringing) process should be development, as for knowledge, it should not be the purpose of education, but only a means of an individual's development.

Knowledge is made up of artefacts and elements of culture. As means of production (created by humans), artefacts transform the person and his psychology. Knowledge is created by humans too and it appears to be the means of cultural development and mutual relationship between

individuals. The first social communications of a child and his first collision with a linguistic system determines the forms of his brain activity⁹.

Later this process becomes internal and children's primary functions are replaced with higher level psychological functions. All factors of an environment are decisive in a socio-historical development of consciousness. There are new ways of the behaviour, new methods of information acquisition, new systems of understanding reality, and new motives for actions according to complex models of social practice. Formation of complex forms of comprehending reality and activities is accompanied by radical changes in brain processes, which influence forms of comprehension on an emotional level and appear to be the sources of human activity. Vygotsky (1925) has named this phenomenon "the semantic and system structure of consciousness".

All higher level psychological functions represent social relationships and they create the structure of a person (free and conscious moral individuality). Their nature, structure and way of action are social; even higher level functions transformed by psychological processes remain quasi-social. The social information created is coded in meaningful cultural systems and is transferred through the function of various specific institutions. Language, written language, systems of measures, new information technologies and communications, among others, represent signs. Due to the signs, psychological functions develop their two important features: strong-willed character and integrity of consciousness.

Vygotsky's ideas are important because they qualify human knowledge as a product of social history and specify a way of carrying out scientific historical analysis. Besides, these ideas represent means of expansion of consciousness and a way of creating rules. Vygotsky's principles are especially important in the development of the personality and interest in the surrounding world during the first years of life. A person indoctrinated during early stages of his life, with the symbols of the social culture of a society does not require later any "re-education" or "re-adjustment" by society.

In Russia children usually go to school at the age of seven. There are many reasons for late introduction of children to a school track. First, there are no schools with specific juvenile pedagogy, because there are no traditions of raising children of this age outside the family, since such a style has not been created¹⁰. Furthermore, it is necessary to take into account the weak population density of the country. This fact always complicates the organization of the school

⁹ « If languages have universal properties, which are reflected in human consciousness as such, each language offers unique «conceivable world» and a unique point of view » (Chomsky, N. (1966).

¹⁰ « Style is the most gentle and perishable piece. It is necessary to look after it, take care about it daily. Style is created very slowly because it is inconceivable without accumulation of traditions, which are positions and habits accepted not only by pure consciousness, but by conscious respect for experience of the senior generations, for great authority of the whole collective living in time». (Makarenko (1936), page 276).

process in the countryside¹¹. And finally, school education is not necessary for the development of a child until age seven. Vygotsky explains this latter phenomenon in terms of the development of a human being, and more precisely, by the development of the semantic and system structure of his consciousness, which occurs through four crises that a child experiences, approximately at the ages of 1, 3, 7 and 13 years old. It is at these crisis points principally that new qualities of mentality appear and they determine the formation of human creative capability. The influence of environment on the child changes after each crisis. Environment could stay objectively the same, but its influence changes crucially during the moment of transition from one stage of development to another. Each crisis represents a series of internal transformations of the child.

The most appreciable point of crisis is at the age of 7, and is the beginning of internal and external differentiation of the child's personality. «Loss of spontaneity signals the involvement of the intellectual component, which is inserted between experience and direct action, and is antithetical to a baby's naive and direct action» (Vygotsky (2000), page 991). Emotional structures are forming at seven years old, and the child begins consciously to pattern his behaviour, and his own emotions begin to make logical sense. The level of the individual's awareness of himself, of his successes and of his position in the world is established on the basis of the seven years crisis, leading to the child's first understanding of the logic of emotions and feelings. At this age family education becomes insufficient and the schooling period must start.

The task of school is the creation of a micro cycle of increasing complexity of thought, from abstract to concrete, as a means of acquiring theoretical knowledge and becoming capable of theoretical thinking. Training is carried out beginning with theoretical knowledge, the essence of which is neither rules nor definitions, but understanding the principles of the subject or phenomenon, and preparing to acquire and to create new knowledge. The teacher follows this sequence of actions: definition of purposes; planning and organization; carrying out the plan; and analysis of the results of each activity. Each of these stages has specific influence on the development of a person. The process of defining purposes develops feelings of freedom, constant allegiance to the purpose, honour, pride and independence. Planning activity promotes independence, determination, creativity and initiative. The stage of carrying out the plan fosters diligence, skill, accuracy and discipline. The analysis stage supports the qualities of rational vision, honesty, good judgement, awareness, responsibility, and duty to others. These qualities and abilities

¹¹ Obligatory elementary education before 1936 was impossible due to the inaccessibility of schools for children in the territories with weak population density (in Siberia and the Far North) and due to the resistance of Moslems, culturally dominating Central Asia, against education for women.

are formed in primary school. Therefore the teaching methods of a primary school should focus on the development of the person rather than on learning rules, facts and norms.

As a result of the revision of "traditional" views on education and on its interconnection with training, Russian psychologists have set the main task of child development as the subject of various aspects and forms of human activity. One of the first attempts to realize these ideas was undertaken in the 1950's and 60's by L.Zankov (1990) who created an approach to pedagogy for the primary school, named «harmonious and intensive». Another direction is «developing culture», offered by D.Elkonin (1989) and V.Davydov (1996) in the 1960's and used in experimental schools.

Another specific feature of Russian school education is the concentration of lessons either in the morning, up to the midday meal, or after midday. This specificity is explained by the shortage of school space at the same time in some regions. But this concentration of lessons appears to be an old tradition which exists in the German culture as well. It allows children to spend a certain part of a day doing housework or helping elderly members of the family. The result of such a schedule is the development of additional and personalized learning opportunities outside of the general educational program. During the Soviet epoch practically free-of-charge out-of-school cultural, sports and scientific education was accessible (basically in the cities) to all children of any age.

2.2. Youth Labour Education: the Theoretical and Practical Works of A. Makarenko

In the 1920's there was pedagogical research that resulted in a set of teaching methods and principles appropriate to the period and to the ideology of the command model in Soviet Russia. Significant attention was paid to problems of polytechnic training, to the content, forms and methods of vocational training in schools, and to the connection between school and the industrial sector. Schools of vocational training were created in factories as well as professional schools for rural youth at collective and state farms. Attention was paid to the problem of balance between the professional and political aspects of education. The idea of collective self-management in schools arose also. The struggle against child homelessness in the 1920's became the most important task of Soviet education¹².

¹² The USSR after the October revolution and the civil war took serious measures toward overcoming homelessness. The number of children requiring immediate help from the state reached 4-6 million in 1921, 2.5-4 million in 1923. The well-known child commission led by F.E. Dzerzhinski was organized for the unification and coordination of the activity of all state departments for assistance to children and the struggle against child homelessness. In the Volga region alone in 1921-22, 5 million children received meals and clothes, 150 thousand were evacuated, and 200 thousand were accepted into the maintenance of the Red army and trade unions. In 1923 state aid was provided to more

Anton Makarenko (1888-1939) is one of the most talented founders of Soviet pedagogical science. As the author of the concept of the formation of the person in collectives, he realized his pedagogical and psychological ideas in the centres of child development which he managed in the 1920's and 30's. One of these centres was a colony for minor homeless children and offenders. Working on pedagogical problems, Makarenko elaborated a series of psychological practices and carried out the principles that we particularly appreciate, especially in the current Russian context.

Collectivism, joy, and the family principle of colony organization

Relations among members of a collective are based, according to Makarenko, on «responsible dependence». Makarenko analyzes the sphere of individual motivations and the mechanisms for the formation of qualities socially ennobling a person. He gives a paramount place in the person's development to ethically comprehensible needs, in other words, the needs of collectivists. Makarenko wrote that " ... educational theories prove that the hooligan cannot be expelled from a class, and the thief cannot be expelled from a commune ... verbalizes bourgeois individualism, which is used to dramas and individualist personal 'feelings', ignoring hundreds of collectives that perish because of this individualism, as if these collectives do not also consist of individuals!". The requirements of the collective are supposed to be the principles for raising a person one who participates in the collective, and thus in these requirements. Here the personality becomes a new actor in education. The person is not the object of educational authority, but is rather its subject, and becomes a subject who expresses the interests of the collective.

According to Makarenko, the person cannot be in this world if he does not have anything joyful to look forward to. In organizing educational establishments, he put forward the idea of happiness, the achievement of the happy childhood. The mission of school is «to organize joy, to cause it by everyday life and to make it a reality ... persistently to transform simple types of pleasure to more complex and humanly significant ones» (Makarenko (1936), page 298). Makarenko emphasized the value of games as a source of joy and as a form of organizing collective activity. In his analysis the main component of a game was the method of "pedagogies of success», with a belief in opportunities for the person, as is shown in collective activity and also serves as a means of bringing up children with a conscious belief in their own opportunities and strengths.

Makarenko put forward the idea that the creation and strengthening of traditions is a necessary stimulator and the major basis of happiness, beauty and solidifying the collective. «In creating traditions it is necessary to use minimal instinctive conservative approach, to trust to yesterday, to

than one million children, orphans. A state system of social-legal protection of minors was generated, with specialized agencies for the struggle against homelessness, a commission on the affairs of minors, and children's homes and communes were formed. Much work was carried out also after the Great Patriotic war (1941-1945). Suvorov and Nakhimov schools were created. They have played a major role not only in the education of the young generation as a whole, but first of all in the lives of those without parents.

our comrades who have created some value and hence have no interest in destroying these values ... ». Among such traditions Makarenko created the tradition of militarization of the collective, a game that has its own aesthetics in terminology and ranks (assuming a "beautifully organized" one-person management). «The military tradition decorates the collective, creates an external skeleton for the collective in which it is nice to live and which therefore stimulates happiness ... ». Makarenko called for an aesthetics of a military life, smartness and clearness which should not be converted into regimentation and strict drill. He introduced in the colonists' everyday life concepts absolutely rejected by the revolution, but traditional for Russian school pedagogy: the concepts of debt and honour. Honour, he believed, the most valuable character trait that a person should acquire, could be achieved only by careful fulfilment of one's personal debt, before comrades, before tutors, before the country.

Makarenko's pupils had no family; their family was a colony. Family relations among colonists were based on the principle of concentration of children of different ages (Makarenko (1977), pages 177 – 180). Collectives organized by this principle of association of different ages have a significant educational effect; they create closer interaction between age groups and are a natural means of constant accumulation of experience and its transfer from the senior to the junior generations. Youngsters receive varied information and they acquire habits of behaviour, worker skills, and respect for adults and their authority. Adults thus care about youngsters and take on responsibility for them that nurtures the qualities necessary for the Soviet citizen: commitment to human rights, magnanimity and persistence, the qualities of the future family man or woman.

Labour education and material encouragement

Human beings have continued to live because of labour. There are many kinds of work « ... heavy, unpleasant, uninteresting, demanding patience, and work requiring a habit of overcoming painful sensations of oppression; many types of work are possible only because a person is accustomed to suffer and endure... » (Makarenko (1936), p.272). The first stage in the resolution of conflict between necessary and pleasant work in a society that is interested in the development of its citizens, is the institutionalisation of a differential pay scale. The factor most strongly influencing wage levels in the USSR was the nature of labour. The more tiresome, monotonous, risky, displeasing labour was remunerated by higher wages. The prestigious, creative, honourable work of actors, medical doctors, researchers, and academics, with a strongly attractive potential, brought the salary down.

The true science of education studies this question of the nature of labour, sorts out the «mechanics of human effort, specifies what place in it belongs to human will, vanity, shame, conformity, imitation, fear, competition and how these features are combined with the phenomena of pure consciousness, conviction, and rational reasoning... » (Makarenko(1936), p.273).

One important principle related to labour education is an industrial version of the young people's collective organization, defined by such statements as: all pupils are divided into groups that work together; each group should be located in a separate common bedroom; and groups should be located together in a dining room. These primary collectives organized according to an industrial principle should not be distorted because it is essential to create a friendly collective. Frequent changes of pupils from one place to another harm production and destroy primary collectives. In general, strengthening primary collectives in the structure on a on-going basis is a firm basis for the whole educational process.

We are paying much attention to the organisational principles of pupils' collectives because they are the reverse of those recognised by modern labour division with its excessive flexibility. Fluctuating groups in schools, similar to flexible labour personnel, create a feeling of instability and of lack of support in times of difficulty. The experience of the organization of modern collective life has shown that the position of the person in the collective may be individually active, but collectively inconsistent, passively benevolent, or negative¹³.

The Idea of Personal Security in the Collective

The educational system created by Makarenko was a pedagogically organized lifestyle environment for teenagers, directed toward social improvement of the individual, where the main rehabilitation function was carried out by the educational nurturing atmosphere of the collective of children and adults, representing a «complete social organism», the «free association of people ... a well disciplined, inner collective world connected through close ties of friendship». The main purpose and, simultaneously, a principle of this collective life was the idea of the security of the individual. Makarenko stressed the role of the head of an educational establishment and his/her responsibility for the harmony of the teaching activities of tutors and teachers. He insisted that the teachers concentrate on forming the “educational collective” and he emphasized the necessity for simultaneous attention to each person's development, through the influence of the collective on each pupil's upbringing (the concept of «parallel pedagogies») and through the teacher's influence.

¹³ Let's note, in particular, the features of a position that we have called inconsistent. Such a condition is created when a teenager aspires to active participation in common activities, aspires to leadership in those activities, but the collective for various reasons rejects rather than accepts him. Such position confronts the teenager, touches him, causes responses and quite often results in the most unpredictable consequences.

The essence of Makarenko's pedagogical theory was defined in the principle of «paying both attention and respect to the person, as much as possible».

A.S.Makarenko considered that raising good children and educating offenders cannot be carried out by different methods. The principles of education, even if they show a correct balance of laws, influences and social requirements can be only a part of the entire pedagogical code.

Harmony in the organization of collective activity combined with an individual approach can be considered also to evaluate the special work of the supervisor of the collective, directed towards understanding elements of age and sex development. A.S.Makarenko's collective doctrine sharply condemned a «fuss with the lonely person».

Nowadays attention to the personality of each member of a collective is a parameter of judging the efficiency of any form of educational activity. The purpose of bringing up the collective and the person in the collective should be considered on a humanistic basis, that is, the humanization of relations between people. In a collective, especially children's collective, humanistic ideas can be carried out in a system of relations where a phenomenon of humanization is not only the means but also the purpose of the collective and of the person's upbringing.

The organization of production in a commune

The most important phase of production from the perspective of pedagogical and economic theory was planning. Makarenko considered that the business plan «...is the thin lace of norms and relations. This is the lace connecting any details, any movement of parts and any logistics from machine tool to machine tool...», which defines the quantity and quality of outcomes, the monitoring system, and the system of communications with suppliers. Choosing a form of production for a commune, Makarenko has defined the following initial considerations for engineers and teachers: 1) contemporary machines and equipment, providing high efficiency of work, 2) orientation to train qualified workers in high demand who can succeed in a modern machine engineered industry; 3) the output of production should have high quality, necessary for the Soviet economy and releasing it from imports; 4) fostering labour management and economic skills, participating in collective economic and administrative activity, acquiring real specialties and developing a vitally active role. Makarenko pointed out that one of the substantive provisions of the personal and social concepts is the development of the qualities of free and independent persons, the owners and creators of their own lives.

Discipline according to Makarenko is not a means but a result of education and upbringing. It is the ethical and political phenomenon that should be conscious. First of all, conscious discipline is the modality for the most likely achievement of the collective's purpose. If the person opposes the collective, the interests of the collective must be stood above the interests of the person. In addition, discipline puts each separate person in a more protected and freer position. Furthermore, discipline is aesthetic and beautiful. And finally, a person can do pleasant things without discipline but the disciplined person can do even unpleasant things with pleasure.

Discipline assumes a combination of requirements and respect for the person. During the first years of his work Makarenko set requirements for performance levels, but never punished pupils for offences, at least never punished them severely. There are methods of attraction and compulsion: weak forms of requirements as well as the strong forms, or threats. It is a spectrum from the dictatorial rules of the organizer-supervisor up to the free decisions of each person on his own, within a background of the rules of the collective.

A reasonable system of punishments and penalties is not only lawful, but also necessary. It helps form a strong character, brings about feelings of responsibility, trains the will, creates human advantages, and fosters the skill to resist and overcome temptations. Punishment is not only a right, but also a duty when it is necessary and useful. Makarenko considered that either the collective or its representative can punish. The essence of punishment is that the person experiences a reprimand from the collective, knowing that he has acted incorrectly. There is nothing depressing about punishment but only an experience of having made a mistake, an experience of disapproval by the collective. Makarenko opposed any regulated forms of punishment. Punishment from his point of view should be extremely individual, completely adapted to the specific person, although in the area of punishment there can be certain laws and forms limiting the right of punishment.

The role of rewards in collective teaching is great. Important if not paramount value was given by A.S.Makarenko to the stimulation of pupils' work by various means, including an implementation of material rewards for positive results in work activities¹⁴. Pupils in Makarenko's commune were rewarded for personal achievements in industrial, ethical or household functions.

¹⁴ The experience of earnings distribution among pupils is interesting. A.S.Makarenko together with the council of commanders distributed money earned as follows: one fourth of the money was deducted for the maintenance of younger members of the commune; another quarter was deposited to the pupil's savings bank account until their departure from the commune; an eighth of the earnings was transferred to the disposal of the council of commanders for various kinds of companionable mutual aid and for awards, and in particular for payment of additional grants to former communards who entered higher educational institutions and Universities, for a lump sum payment to those pupils who were going to enter high school, and finally for the organization of cultural activities, such as visiting theatres, concerts, and cinemas. The remaining three eighths of monthly earnings was distributed as pocket money to the pupils, was kept in the cash department of the commune and was given out to the pupils for personal needs.

There was a ladder in rewards: a gift, a monetary reward and, the highest award, gratitude before the collective during a collective meeting. The latter award was considered by the communards as the supreme award. The best groups fight for this recognition before the entire commune collective.

Concluding remarks

The contribution to the educational sciences of the school of historical and social psychology, initiated by Lev Vygotsky, is great. The scholars of this school helped us to understand why the spread of knowledge by means of education is universal. In addition, this scientific school promotes an expansion of the limits of social consciousness, which is not only the result of human involvement in a society but also the way to reveal oneself through creative activity.

The combination of the innovative ideas of socio-historical psychology by L.Vygotsky and the proclaimed, introduced and described principles of A.Makarenko are closely connected to the European schools of education, represented in the second half of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century by George Kershensteiner's «school of labour», John Dewey's «school of experience», Wilhelm Lay's «school of action», the Catholic communities of the "Salesians" and the «rural educational houses» in Germany.

L.Vygotsky was a founder of «development education», and Makarenko, innovating in «personality projection», was the designer of the program for the development of human consciousness, and «has gone further» than European theories, domestic pre-revolutionary and even modern programs and plans of rehabilitation. These Russian scientists and educators involved in the worldwide development process are promoting the search for a way out of contemporary societal problems. They added to the understanding of the causal interaction between educational and economic development, solving the problems of child homelessness, and pave the way for the successful creation of new world socio-cultural artefacts, that serve as the basis for the development of superior psychological functions. Both theoretically based practices of education had anticipated improved social environment through the reasonably happy conditions for child development and the creation of childhood community groups. Makarenko and Vygotsky were convinced that the children's community can be better structured than adult's one and could become a cultural model for normal cohabitation for all. It turned out, that in their work they undertake social forward-looking design. Such radical cultural and historical projects at the first half of the 20th century regarding the transformation of individuals and human society could arise only because the necessary conditions occurred in the society and among them the prevalence of activist attitude.

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