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## CHILDHOOD AS A PHENOMENON IN THE LIGHT OF GERMAN PEDAGOGY

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*The article is dedicated to the problem of childhood as a phenomenon in German pedagogy. The main objectives of the article are as following: the theoretical analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature highlighting different aspects of the problem under research, and analysis of methodological renewal of German pedagogy during non-Herbert period and reformist's movement prosperity of the XX<sup>th</sup> century. German pedagogy has been studied by foreign and domestic scientists: O. Kotsyubynskyi, N. Abashkina, T. Tokaryeva, N. Osmuk, S. Stelmakh, I. Rudkovska, K. Tkachova, I. Stashevskaya, H. Kornetov, M. Boguslavskyi, M. Pevzner, I. Batchayeva, L. Nesterova, N. Yudin, S. Kulikov, V. Veykshman, O. Piskunov, Z. Ravkina. In the article the analysis of complex reassessment of educational tendencies which gave the impetus to the implementation of educational formulae "vom Kinde aus", "führen oder wachsenlassen" has been conducted. The particular attention is paid to the need of childhood's understanding as one of the socio-cultural phenomena, which is connected with the adult's space.*

**Key words:** child, childhood, German pedagogy, pedagogy, educational paradigm.

### Introduction

The logical result of the modernization process is the constant presence of open, sometimes unspecified response to the problems of education of children. Nowadays Ukrainian education is largely determined by the perception and understanding of the cultural and educational traditions through the insight into the history of some problems of education in different countries made possible by modern researchers who find out and use interesting facts from history of education thus contributing to the introduction of innovative content, forms, methods and means of present-day family education.

Ukrainian education is full of elements of creative approach to studying the invaluable heritage of the educational theory and practice of European countries. The Federal Republic of Germany is one of them. Special role in the formation of the fundamentals of Ukrainian education science has been played by German scholars. The actual contribution of them into the development of Ukrainian pedagogy is not estimated

properly, although the programs of several family centers operating in Ukraine are based on actual materials of German research. Replacing the existing theoretical and methodological apparatus and teaching practice by basic theoretical principles on and experience of German pedagogy should be made in the light of changing attitudes to child.

In the turbulent time of political upheaval the family was the first major educational institution. After reorganization of Gerbart's system, the social and family education accumulated rich ground for change as it became ineffective and needed elimination. This turn of events caused the increase in the number of appeals to humanistic achievements of educational theory.

Today, intercultural cooperation allows creating adaptive environment for borrowing useful foreign experience in Ukrainian educational field. In this context, the history of pedagogy has an interesting model to study – the reformist movement during the early XX<sup>th</sup> century, which imposed a noticeable imprint on the Ukrainian

educational theory. This means the application of adequate educational method that relates to the uniqueness of the child, without the use of templates. Its development stage coincides with the socio-economic changes in the period of strengthening educational contacts on national and international scale.

In practice, there arose a problem of education tolerant approach to improving educational influences on personality. L.Tolstoi in "Education and upbringing" identified some aspects of education, in the first place – parental desire to educate their children as the parents themselves are or could be".

### **The aim of the study**

Germany has always been the cradle of all main pedagogical movements and the most productive creative laboratory. German pedagogy was able to reach a new level, was deprived of scholastic approach, which gave ground for the development of all spheres of public life. Being linked with the concept of humanism, it granted every child an opportunity to become a full personality and symbolically these years were called "the century of child" or "non-violence education". Its semantic content is determined by many scientists as a pluralistic phenomenon with such dominant components – the principles of democracy, anthropology and socialization. A wide range of alternative educational institutions – schools of social education, forest schools, rural communities, schools with shorter school day and others – emerged in the course of applying pedagogy-centric ideas in promotion of "cognitive stimulation of students". In their internal organizational structure they resembled the family environment.

The science of pedagogy, being newly created relatively independent educational branch, together with related sciences – pedagogical psychology, history of childhood, teaching pathology – accumulated certain achievements of these disciplines and recognized the direct dependence of biological and social factors, the influence of which was considered to be unavoidable and unchangeable. Pedagogy was intended to solve all the "painful questions of education" (Dewey, 1938), having defined the features of development and impact limits on a child.

### **Theoretical framework and research methods**

Having comprehended this area of research, the German pedagogist E. Meiman suggested dividing pedagogy into three interrelated branches: anthropology and anthropometry that give a comparative analysis of physical and spiritual development in different conditions of life; medical examinations that describe functions of the child's body organs and the difference of these organs in adulthood; testing and confirming experiments in psychiatry and psychopathology.

It should be emphasized that the comparative material has been obtained by systematic investigation with the target impartiality in trying to find ways to implement the proper educational objectives. Scientific and practical interest in reformist educational theory was conditioned by a numerous national studies in comparative education, which demonstrated commitment to the outstanding problems of the aforementioned study and understanding of holistic education category in the context of foreign experience. O. Kotsyubynskyi, N. Abashkina, T. Tokaryeva, N. Osmuk, S. Stelmakh, I. Rudkovska, K. Tkachova, I. Stashevskaya analyze thoroughly the ideas about civic, artistic and musical education.

Various aspects of this paradigm were studied in foreign psycho-pedagogical science: analysis of the "new education" in terms of civilizational approach (H. Kornetov, M. Boguslavskyi), nature of innovation processes in the German education of the reformism period (M. Pevzner, I. Batchayeva, L. Nesterova, N. Yudin, S. Kulikov, V. Veykshman, O. Piskunov, Z. Ravkina).

### **Results**

Explaining the existence and rapid rejection of different educational systems by German society, researchers prove that this occurs primarily when the paradigm stops working and "goes into the shadow" though later it "can reappear as the leading one again or be one of those which will continue to be focused on" (Hering & Hövel, 1996).

That's what happened to the authoritarian paradigm of education, which at one time served as the official state doctrine in Germany. According to the scholar, the reason for its long existence was traditional paternalism – "strong and strict father teaches his son to live right, and the son will be ready to face challenges of life" (Hering & Hövel, 1996), where such things as suppression of liberty and child corporal punishment were justified though did not give proper effect. The discussions of this problem had the main aim of developing axiological foundations of humane contrary to authoritarian education" (Warde, 1960).

The apparent discrepancy and inconsistency of the traditional education practices to the demands of the time put forward the principle of child's self-education as the leading determinant. First of all, contradictions in the structure of the traditional Herbart's system did not prepare young people for "cooperation" with society, and most importantly, they did not ensure complete dichotomy between teachers and students, parents and children. It means that the reorientation of the education implied reorganization and reformation of relations in these small social groups. At the beginning of its emergence, the new theory of education was characterized

by: idealization of childhood, belief in absolutely perfect child nature, beauty and harmony of the child's soul, belief that the accumulated parents' own experience is the basis of their children full development and it is used by children for developing their own personal properties, elimination of any child abuse and belief in the child's internal activity (Brezinka, 1978).

G. Litts talked about education and teaching of children without coercion, about the right of children to recognize and "promote" their interests in the family circle and outside". He stressed that the child should develop a "healthy self-confidence and confidence in the face of others". To teach children to correctly form this feature G.Litts insisted on the necessity for children to have a compulsory structured daily schedule of practicing different activities: studying, playing, working. Landererziehungsheim, as he pointed out, was created as a prototype of the family. Coordination of the developing educational activities for children in these institutions was held as follows: "a teacher with small quantity of children (10–15 persons) formed something like a family. The day began with a joint breakfast, before which children read passages from the Bible or sang songs" (Luise, 1998).

Further routine covered classes with short breaks, work in the garden, workroom or in the field, visiting the church, later there were talks near the river, children were engaged in sports, artistry. Classes were considered by children not just as entertainment but as the desire for something beautiful, pure, perfect. Being usually located away from cities, such institutions kept the children away from the negative impact of civilization. Educational tasks were performed through so-called living together with parents – joint plays, celebrations, evening talks. In O. Cherkasova works we can find contemporary description of the Hamburg schools. Their specificity was the direct emotional experience gained from any activity (Steiner, 1921).

The existence of such "home houses" provided "a simple, healthy, effective life and social idealism". The atmosphere of intra-school life was humane, providing conditions for shaping "strong character, will, willingness to help one another" (Steiner, 1971).

We can say with confidence that the life of inmates in such institutions was as close to the family life as it was possible. The intensive development of social pedagogy was observed in this period of the authoritarian paradigm destruction that strongly affected theoretical principles of education in Germany. It is important to note that the appearance of social pedagogy caused a lot of new diverse, critical views. Scientists stressed that the reformist principle of socialization was dualistic in nature and it implied, on the one hand, the development of

child's individuality (individual socialization) but on the other hand, the formation of values and norms of joint life (sharing the "collective ideas").

An interesting way of the parents' pedagogical teaching ("pädagogische Führung") was suggested by the founder of cultural pedagogy Theodor Litt. According to it, there is the distinction between "to direct" and "to bring up". "Directing children is completely mechanical and thus can be compared to driving. The tutor sets the goal and realizes the path to it" (Luise, 1998).

The opposite point of view – "to raise, to bring up" – implies organizing.

Th. Litt considers that the child "is unfolding from inside" according to his/her immanent law. The educator here plays the role of "a gardener who is growing and cultivating". During the reformist pedagogy scholars were more and more inclined to believe that education should "proceed from the interests of the child".

Considering the need to provide impetus to form their own initiative and will, each rising personality this phenomenon had different controversial views. It is important to note that representatives of all the new trends of education had a common vision of the child – as a source of educational standard. In this context, educational theory – reformism regarded as a cultural construct of childhood, the analysis of structures "vom Kinde aus" and "führen oder wachsenlassen" proves it.

When the state and other social institutions cause the feelings of doubt, resistance and suspicion in the majority of population, the family becomes the object of sacralization. J. Herring stated that there was brewing a destructive wave of unrest as to the traditional pedagogy in Germany. But for the abandoned attitude to the problems of childhood, there became urgent the issue of erosion of the "old school and education system" (Hering & Hövel, 1996).

In our opinion, the search for solving these problems should be conducted in the light of implementation of anthroposophic paradigm ideas. Waldorf pedagogy with its network of educational institutions and family centers existed, according to research by F. Kalthren (Brezinka, 1978), almost till 1938. In other Western European countries it existed a little longer. Medical and educational centres created after the R. Steiner's system were very advantageous as they involved parents to cooperate with the school through organizing weekly educational events. The National Socialist regime in 1935 banned the work of such institutions, their activity was restored shortly after the fall of the Third Reich. Stuttgart became the new cultural center of the revival of the anthroposophy ideas. It was joined by Nurnberg, Kassele, Bochume.

The concept of the "Waldorf pedagogy in Ukraine" project has identified and justified the

development of educational programs, taking into account the specifics of its harmony with Ukrainian humanistic traditions. It has classified humanity principles specified by R. Steiner. Based on the characteristics of each period of the child's development, according to the age and potential, the project is aimed at the full development of children's creativity and imagination.

The work also presents a systematic reflection on the achievements, the correct selection of the theoretical and methodological support for the introduction of Waldorf theory in Ukrainian educational space. There is observed the positive trend to optimize the content of education, to provide children with rationally arranged subject-game environment. The recommendations made by the youth services of the Federal state of Saxony state that the content of family education should be formed indirectly, abstracting from the family type (full, partial etc.), having created a complete family atmosphere (Luise, 1998).

## Conclusions

In the process of forming self-sufficient family education content it is recommended: to use the experience of German family centers (natural type houses, advisory centres for families); to actively introduce methods of free education (synchronous interaction of parents with a child in the family, cultivation of various forms of interactive activities with creative elements – rhythmic games, excursions, talks while playing with parents etc.); to widely implement principles of the pedagogy of personality to overcome socio-dictated subjective attitude towards the child as a

generalized abstract collective member of society; to organize family education on the basis of priorities of interests, individual inclinations, child's activities and initiatives while reducing the formalized attitude of parents to this process.

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