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Pedagogical discourse on the new Ukrainian school 1917–1921: using newly gained independence to reach out to the world’s ideas after the fall of the Russian Empire

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the leading ideas of the Ukrainian educators and the reform of school education in the era of the Ukrainian revolution (1917–1921), in the context of the values of both Europe and the wider world. Under Soviet rule (1921–1991), this period was obscured by a false narrative, but with the proclamation of Ukraine’s independence in 1991, this page of history has been rightfully restored in the scientific space of a democratic state. For the international audience, it will be interesting to study the use of world pedagogical thought during the development of Ukrainian education more than a hundred years ago as an example of great expectations and subsequent lost hopes. School education in Ukraine should be based on national, humanist and democratic principles. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian revolution was defeated, and Bolshevik forces captured Ukraine; nevertheless, its democratic achievements laid the foundations for the creation of the national education system in modern independent Ukraine.

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Introduction

In the year of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the restoration of Ukraine’s independence, a re-examination of the history of education has become relevant, in particular in the days of the Ukrainian revolution (1917–1921). Unfortunately, under Soviet rule, this period was buried under a false narrative, and state sources were not available to the general public for research. Let us recall that after the overthrow of the Russian autocracy in February 1917, and the proclamation of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, fundamental changes took place in the life of Ukrainian society: in difficult socio-political and socio-economic conditions, the newly independent state and its strategic component, the national education system, began to develop. The Ukrainian government and the conscious public saw that an important task was to build a new Ukrainian school system, taking into account world, and in particular, European, experience. Ukrainian teachers were given a real opportunity to reform the inherited imperial,

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class-bound, non-nationalised, bureaucratic school system.¹ Which direction should school education reform take? What principles should form the basis of school education? What experiences, and the ideas of which foreign educators, should be used to reform national education? These and other issues are still being acted on to this day, more than a century later, in the context of the development of the modern ‘new Ukrainian school’.²

Historiographical knowledge of the problems shows us that Ukrainian scholars (V. Maiboroda, 1992; M. Sobchynska, 1995; S. Filonenko, 1995; N. Rotar, 1996; V. Verstyuk, 1997; M. Kukurudziak, 1997; O. Mashevskyyi, 1997; A. Pyzhyk, 1998; Y. Telyachyi, 2000; V. Boguslavska, 2001; N. Samandas, 2001; I. Likarchuk, 2002; N. Gupan, 2010; O. Zavalnyuk, 2013; M. Kapelyushna, 2013; K. Bakhanov, 2015; O. Demyanyuk, 2016, etc.) have already covered various aspects of the development of education during the Ukrainian Revolution. In particular, in our publications (L. Berezivska, 2006, 2011; 2017; 2018; 2019) we revealed the organisational and pedagogical principles of school education reform within certain territorial and chronological boundaries,³ and introduced both unknown and little-known sources into domestic and foreign scientific circulation,⁴ as well as the ideas of well-known Ukrainian teachers, educators, and public figures, whose names were removed from the pedagogical discourse on this issue during the Soviet era (V. Durdukivskyyi, O. Muzychenko, I. Ogiyenko, S. Rusova, I. Steshenko, J. Chepiga, S. Cherkasenko and others).

Although their lives and their scientific and pedagogical activities have become the subject of various investigations by modern educational scientists (L. Berezivska,

¹At that time, an inherited imperial structure of general secondary education operated in the Ukrainian lands, according to which the primary school (one- or two-class parish schools, one-class and two-class county schools and district city schools) functioned separately from the secondary school (male and female district schools, commercial schools and theological seminaries). The question arose of creating a single school accessible to all strata of society, which would unite the primary and secondary levels. The gymnasium was considered to be the best example of a single institution of secondary education, widely used in Europe. In 1919, with the establishment of Soviet power, gymnasiums ceased to exist on Ukrainian lands. They were revived with the proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991.

²The term ‘new Ukrainian school’ is historical. It arose with the establishment of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917 and the desire of the Ukrainian people to build *a new school* on the foundations of the European pedagogy. This was stated by Ukrainian teachers at that time in the pages of the *Vilna Ukrayinska Shkola* (Free Ukrainian School) journal. The *old school* on the Ukrainian lands, which were part of the Russian Empire, was authoritarian, non-national, built on the foundations of Russian pedagogy. With the proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991, Ukrainian educators returned to the term ‘new Ukrainian school’ and this is currently being built in Ukraine on democratic European foundations, in contrast to the totalitarian Soviet school. This illustrates the long-term struggle of the Ukrainian people for their freedom, independence and a native school.

³L. D. Berezivska, ‘Proekt yedynoi shkoly v Ukraini pro dvanadtsiatyrichnu zahalnu seredniu osvitu (1917–1920 rr)’, *Pedahohika i psykhohohiia. Visnyk NAPN Ukrainy* no. 1 (2017): 77–84 http://lib.iitta.gov.ua/706452/1/L_Berezivska_%20Ped_psux_1_2017_text.pdf (accessed September 17, 2021); L. D. Berezivska, ‘Reforma shkilnoi osvity v dobu Tsentralnoi Rady yak pershyi natsionalnyi dosvid’, *Shliakh osvity* no. 2 (2006): 40–46; L. D. Berezivska, ‘Reformuvannia shkilnoi osvity v period Hetmanatu P. P. Skoropadskoho (29 kvitnia – 13 hrudnia 1918)’, *Istoryko-pedahohichniy almanakh* no. 2 (2006): 4–15, <http://ipa.udpu.edu.ua/article/view/15106/12929> (accessed September 17, 2021).

⁴L. D. Berezivska, *Reformy shkilnoi osvity v Ukraini u XX stolitti: dokumenty, materialy i komentari: Navchalnyi posibnyk dlia studentiv vyshchyykh navchalnykh zakladiv: Khrestomatia* (Luhansk: LNU imeni Tarasa Shevchenka, 2011), <http://lib.iitta.gov.ua/9770/1/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%96%D0%B1%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA.pdf> (accessed September 17, 2021); L. D. Berezivska, ‘The Ukrainian Educational Journal *Vilna Ukrayinska Shkola* (1917–1920): A Source of the History of Ukrainian and Foreign Education’, *History of Education Researcher* no. 101 (2018): 3–11; L. D. Berezivska, ‘Reformuvannia zahalnoi serednoi osvity v Ukraini u XX stolitti kriz pryzmu dzheloznavstva: Naukovo-dopomizhnyi bibliohrafichniy pokazhchyk (Vinnytsia: Tvory, 2019): 251, <https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/716674/>, <http://dnpu.gov.ua/ua/ourpublications=20781> (accessed September 17, 2021); L. D. Berezivska, ‘Reformuvannia shkilnoi osvity v dobu Ukrainsoi revoliutsii (1917–1921): istoriohrafia ta dzhelera doslidzhennia’, *Istoryko-pedahohichniy almanakh* no. 2 (2018): 34–42, <http://ipa.udpu.edu.ua/article/view/135954/132923> (accessed September 17, 2021).

N. Bogdanets-Biloskalenko, N. Dichek, I. Zaichenko, E. Kovalenko, I. Likarchuk, N. Pobirchenko, O. Sukhomlinska, etc.), that have brought them back from oblivion to the pages of the new Ukrainian history of education,⁵ the information and bibliographic resource ‘Outstanding Teachers of Ukraine and the World’ from V.O. Sukhomlinskyi State Scientific and Pedagogical Library of Ukraine of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine presents the lives and creative work of Ukrainian and foreign educators, and reflects the degree of their research in the scientific space.⁶

When analysing foreign historiography, it was found that the study of the ideas of educators, scientists and public figures, and their contribution to the development of education, took an important place in historical and educational works. Thus, the Italian scientist Giuseppe Zago reveals the role and development of biography in the history of pedagogy in Italy, and therefore the relationship between biography and the historiography of education.⁷ Analysis by the Chinese researcher Ku Xiao-yuh links the contribution of the leading historian of English economics R.H. Tawney (1880–1962) to the progress of secondary education and the establishment of a democratic school system. The Swiss scholar Anne Bosch explores the discourse on school education reform projects as part of Switzerland’s educational policy during the 1960s and 1970s.⁸ The Greek scholars Dimitris Anastasiou, Sophia Iliadou-Tachou and Antonia Garisi shed light on the influence of school hygiene and the pedagogical movement on the early development of special education in Greece during the period 1900–1940, and the leading role of Emmanuel Lambadarios in the process.⁹ The Irish researchers Brian Fleming and Judith Harford present Daniel O’Connell’s contribution to the development of Ireland’s national primary education in the first third of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ The Swedish scholar Bjorn Norlin considers the ideas of Jan Amos Comenius on the management of education and moral education.¹¹ The Australian researcher

⁵L. D. Berezivska, ‘Vnesok Sofii Rusovoi u rozbudovu natsionalnoi osvity: za materialamy zhurnalu “Vilna ukrainska shkola” (1917–1920)’, *Naukovi zapysky. Seriya: Psykholoho-pedahohichni nauky* no. 1 (2016): 286–90, http://lib.ndu.edu.ua/dspace/bitstream/123456789/547/1/nz_2016_1.pdf (accessed September 17, 2021); L. Berezivska, ‘Idea of National Education of Children and Youth in Yakiv Chepiha’s (1875–1938) Pedagogical Works’, *Science and Education a New Dimension. Pedagogy and Psychology* 4, no. 79 (2016): 7–10, http://seanewdim.com/uploads/3/4/5/1/34511564/ped_psy_iv_39_79.pdf (accessed September 17, 2021); L. D. Berezivska, ‘Ideia natsionalno-patriotychnoho vykhovannia shkoliariv u dobu Ukrainskoi revoliutsii: za materialamy zhurnalu “Vilna ukrainska shkola” (1917–1920)’, *Ridna shkola* no. 1 (2016): 57–62, http://lib.iitta.gov.ua/106919/1/statya_berezivska.pdf (accessed September 17, 2021); O. V. Sukhomlynska et al., eds., *Ukrainska pedahohika v personaliiakh: Navchalnyi posibnyk dlia studentiv vyshchyykh navchalnykh zakladiv: u 2 kn* (Kyiv: Lybid, 2005).

⁶L. D. Berezivska, ‘Elektronnyi informatsiino-bibliohrafichniy resurs “Vydatni pedahohy Ukrainy ta svitu” yak osnova profesiinoi pidhotovky pedahohiv’, *Osvita dlia myru = Edukacija dlia pokoju: zbirnyk naukovykh prats: u 2 t* (Kyiv, 2019) 2: 222–28, https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/717478/1/statya_2019.pdf (accessed September 17, 2021); see also <http://dnpb.gov.ua/ua/інформаційно-бібліографічні-ресурси/видатні-педагоги/> (accessed September 17, 2021).

⁷G. Zago, ‘La biografia nella storiografia e nella storiografia dell’educazione. Linee evolutive di un rapporto complesso’, *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* 3, no. 1 (2016): 203–34, <http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/ete.2016.003.001.11> (accessed September 17, 2021).

⁸Anne Bosche, ‘The Back Office of School Reform: Educational Planning Units in German-Speaking Switzerland (1960s and 1970s)’, *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no. 4 (2016): 380–94.

⁹Dimitris Anastasiou, Sophia Iliadou-Tachou and Antonia Harisib, ‘The Influence of the School Hygiene and Paedology Movement on the Early Development of Special Education in Greece, 1900–1940: The Leading Role of Emmanuel Lambadarios’, *History of Education* 44, no. 4 (2015): 437–59.

¹⁰Brian Fleming and Judith Harford, ‘Irish Education and the Legacy of O’Connell’, *History of Education* 45, no. 2 (2016): 169–87.

¹¹Björn Norlin, ‘Comenius, Moral and Pious Education, and the Why, When and How of School Discipline’, *History of Education* 49, no. 3 (2020): 287–312.

Dorothy Cass describes the views of the famous educator Clarice McNamara (1901–1990) on the reform of school education during the 1920s and 1930s.¹² We have suggested only a few examples, but they eloquently testify that one of the most popular subjects on which modern historians of education reflect is how the ideas of famous figures from various historical periods affected the development of education in general and school education in particular, as well as its reform. Unfortunately, it has so far not been possible to find any research on the Ukrainian educators and scientists of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921, because this period was removed from Soviet history, and neither Ukrainian nor foreign historians were allowed any access to archival documents. Only with the proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991 were historians able, objectively and comprehensively, to study this historic period and introduce it into the Ukrainian narrative. Scientists are now writing a new history of Ukrainian education, bringing back from oblivion the names of banned educators; the time has come to introduce the names of these Ukrainian educators into global narratives.

A historiographic study of our chosen subject has made it possible to establish the originality of this research: pedagogical discourse on reforming general secondary education during 1917–1921. In the context of world and European dimensions, it has not previously been holistically investigated. In the process of the source study, the works of Ukrainian educators and public figures that had been published in the periodicals of the period were selected and systematised.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the leading ideas of Ukrainian educators and public figures about the reform of school education in the days of the Ukrainian revolution (1917–1921) through the prism of world and European values, and to realise them for the development of the new Ukrainian school.

The Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 and the reform of school education

In the eighteenth century, Ukrainian lands were divided between Russia and the Austro-Hungary, and throughout the nineteenth century the Russian autocracy in the Russian Empire implemented anti-Ukrainian policies aimed at the assimilation of Ukrainians. The result of the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people against these policies was the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921. Aspirations of state-building were a prominent feature of the Ukrainian revolution, and during its time several models of statehood were tested, and against this backdrop of the formation of a Ukrainian state, alongside ongoing Russian aggression, school education reforms were put in place.

Four models of state were tested, each with its accompanying education reforms. The democratic Ukrainian People's Republic during the Ukrainian Central Council, from March 1917 to 29 April 1918, using school reform as a means of creating a single democratic national school; reform processes in the field of school education under the conservative Ukrainian State of Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi (April 29 to 14 December 1918); and finally reforms between December 1918 and November 1921 under the left-democratic Ukrainian People's Republic of the Directory and the liberal-democratic Western Ukrainian People's Republic that were a continuation of the

¹²D. Kass, 'Clarice Irwin's Visions for Education in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s: "what might be"', *History of Education Review* 48, no. 2 (2019): 198–213.

educational policies of the Ukrainian Central Council. None of these models, however, were fully implemented.

The reform of school education during the Ukrainian Revolution stands out among other reforms of the twentieth century primarily due to the fact that it was based on national principles; the introduction of the Ukrainian language, the teaching of Ukrainian studies, the creation of the Ukrainian school, and the introduction of a national component into both the curriculum and children's upbringing as vital components of Ukrainian civilisation. This had a positive impact on the development of Ukrainian school education as a major factor in the self-identification and unity of the nation. Ukrainian governments began to implement an education system which was democratic, national, child-centred, based on active and creative methods of teaching. However, due to difficult internal and external conditions, primarily the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution and the establishment of Bolshevik rule in Ukraine with the subsequent change in social order, the reforms remained unimplemented.

The Ukrainian government's national educational policies were based on the ideas of the Ukrainian teachers and public figures who were already battle-hardened in their struggle for the revival of the Ukrainian school before the Ukrainian Revolution, in the era of Russian anti-Ukrainian policies.

Filling out biographical portraits of Ukrainian educators

We do not set out to detail the biographies of well-known Ukrainian educators of that time; however, we do want to provide the individual touches to their biographical portraits that were removed from the pedagogical discourse during the Soviet era. Sofia Rusova (1856–1940) was an educator, social and educational activist, writer, theoretician and practitioner in the field of preschool education, the author of manuals, and one of the organisers of the women's movement in Ukraine and abroad. Oleksandr Muzychenko (1875–1940) was an educator, lecturer, director of various educational institutions, public figure, and the author of textbooks and works on pedagogy. Yakiv Chepiha (Zelenkevych) (1875–1938) was an educator, psychologist, public figure, methodologist, theorist and practitioner of primary education and the author of textbooks. Petro Kholodnyi (1876–1930) was a chemist, pedagogue, artist, and a statesman and public figure, namely a Minister of Public Education of the Ukrainian People's Republic. Ivan Sokolyanskyi (1889–1960) was a scientist, a pedagogue in the field of special education, and the author of an original method of teaching the deaf and blind. Hryhoriy Ivanytsya (1892–1938) was an educator, author of textbooks on the Ukrainian language, textbooks for labour schools¹³ and schools for adults, and manuals on methods of teaching the Ukrainian language and translation studies. What united them in their scientific searches for ways to develop the new Ukrainian school was a thorough examination of Western European and American pedagogy. An interesting fact is that some of them had trained abroad. For example, A. Muzychenko had trained in Germany (1906–1908), where he studied the works of Johann Friedrich Herbart, Wilhelm Rein and others, and P. Kholodny lectured in France.

¹³A 'labour school' is one with an emphasis on the practical, and is often, broadly speaking, a vocational training college.

After the defeat of the Ukrainian Revolution, Ukrainian educators split into two cohorts. Some were forced to emigrate due to their rejection of Soviet ideology and persecution, while others believed in the Soviet government and tried to defend the development of education on a national basis in Soviet Ukraine. For example, S. Rusova, born into a French-Swedish family, was forced to emigrate in 1921 to Prague, where she continued to carry out research and teaching activities. In particular, she took an active part in the opening of Mykhailo Drahomanov Ukrainian Higher Pedagogical Institute, the Ukrainian gymnasium, and ran a shelter for Ukrainian immigrants' children. She continued to develop the concept of a Ukrainian education, as is reflected in her numerous works ('Single Active (Labour) School', 'Didactics', 'Modern Trends in New Pedagogy', etc.). The problems of establishing a national Ukrainian education also found a place in her speeches at international forums in Rome (1923), Prague (1927), Geneva (1929).

Ukrainian educators such as H. Ivanytsia, O. Muzychenko, and Ja. Chepiha, believing in the Soviet government and, in particular, its declared intention to develop Ukrainian education on the basis of domestic and foreign experience, continued their scientific and teaching work in Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s and early 1930s. They suffered a difficult fate, repressed for their 'anti-Soviet views' and for defending the development of the Ukrainian school and national education, and became victims of Stalin's totalitarian system.

We believe that the creative work of the Ukrainian teachers on the reform of general secondary education is a contribution to the treasury of both Ukrainian and world pedagogy.

The problem of building the new Ukrainian school

With the proclamation by the Ukrainian Central Rada (the first Ukrainian government – L.B.) of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917, the strategic issue of the development of the Ukrainian school was raised in the pages of pedagogical publications and congresses, namely: first of all, the national component in the educational process with the introduction of the mother tongue as a language of instruction, and with Ukrainian studies subjects (the Ukrainian language and literature, the history of Ukraine, the geography of Ukraine). The essential core of these discourses was the appeal of world experience. It is noteworthy that the discussion of urgent problems in the columns of the journal 'Vilna ukrayinska shkola' (*Free Ukrainian School*) (1917–1920) was especially active. The journal had constant headlines: 'School in Western Europe and America', 'The Latest Trends in European Pedagogy as the Basis of a New School' and more. Even now, in the course of the creation of the new Ukrainian school in the context of integration processes, these words are relevant for us:

A system of new "real" schools¹⁴ in a free Ukrainian republic is the form, attractive and charming, which we must fill with our content. We no longer have the right to point to Petrograd about alleged interference in our cultural and national work. We must, first of all,

¹⁴A 'real school' is one with up to date 'active' teaching methods and a more forward looking curriculum including modern languages, physical, mathematical and natural sciences and technical drawing. It is the compliment to, or possibly the opposite of, a 'classical' curriculum of ancient languages, mathematics, history and geography. 'Active' teaching methods are those encouraging involvement and individualism of the pupil.

sincerely tackle the colossal work of restructuring our entire school system from top to bottom on the new foundations of the European pedagogy.¹⁵

In the introductory article, the members of the journal's editorial board argued convincingly that the school for the Ukrainian people should be Ukrainian.¹⁶ This idea was developed by S. Rusova. She emphasised that 'a native, national school is the first political and socio-pedagogical demand of every nation that sheds its chains, sheds the ice of indifference that enveloped its heart in the times of clampdown and the and oppression of its free thought, its national consciousness. Only a native school can cultivate civic consciousness, and a sense of human dignity.'¹⁷ She put forward arguments against an 'alien' school with Russian as the language of instruction, which she considered a 'school of political slave education'.

In the context of the problem of the national revival of the Ukrainian people, the Ukrainian educator I. Sokolyansky agreed with these opinions. He expressed the opinion that school education in various nations 'can develop normally, being in strict contact with the development of the world pedagogical thought'.¹⁸

Of great importance is S. Rusova's explanation of the concept of 'nationalisation of schooling' and its components: native language, national content of education, folk song and folk art, which provide 'such an atmosphere at school that gives mental satisfaction to students and promotes the free development of their spiritual strength'.¹⁹ She believed that the creation of a free national school is the basis for raising a free, conscious, strong nation. That is why, in her opinion, it was necessary to introduce such subjects as the native language and the history and geography of Ukraine in the new national school. In addition, Rusova expressed the idea of the global nature of the creation of a national school:

Culturally and pedagogically, a national school evokes a conscious attitude towards both one's own humaneness and towards strangers, and it awakens interest among students, and this interest pulls them towards wider and wider horizons, to become conscious figures in the world cultural life of all brother nations.²⁰

Reflecting on national upbringing, Sofia Rusova turned to foreign experience: 'in Germany, the famous pupil of Herbart Rein, in France, Beaumont, and in Italy, Montessori; all, with their new schools and kindergartens, establish upbringing on a national basis, on the principle of bringing school closer to the child's native environment'.²¹ At the same time, she warned that 'in pedagogy there can be no common world patterns according to which education and upbringing are formed and on which the school is placed: there is one scientific principle – everywhere school must correspond to the psychology of children and their individual inclinations, and it must satisfy the local

¹⁵ 'Nova shkola v Ukrainskii Respublitsi', redaktsiia zhurnal, *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 3/4 (lystop.-hrud.) (1917) (rik pershyi): 130.

¹⁶ 'Zamist peredmovy', redaktsiia zhurnal, *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 5/6 (sichen – liutyi), (1918) (rik pershyi): 1–2.

¹⁷ S. Rusova, 'Natsionalizatsiia shkoly', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 1 (1917): 5.

¹⁸ I. Sokolianskyi, 'Na pedahohichni temy', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 1 (1917): 7.

¹⁹ Rusova, 'Natsionalizatsiia shkoly', 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

needs of the population’.²² This view is being put into practice in the modern educational space.

The introduction of the native language was a leading component of the revival of the Ukrainian school

The educators attached great importance to the introduction of the Ukrainian language into the educational process as the language of instruction. And this is no surprise, as the Ukrainian school and language were prohibited in the Ukrainian lands which were part of the Russian Empire until 1917. The introduction of the native language is the leading component of the revival of the Ukrainian school and, as S. Rusova wrote:

The use of the native language in upbringing and education is the best intimate conductor of thoughts, feelings and impressions. That is why the first conscious requirement for the just psychological satisfaction of the nation is this national school requirement.²³

According to I. Sokolyanskyi, citing foreign experience, it is native language that plays the greatest role in the revival of a nation: ‘Actually, history does not know such nations, the cultural and national revival of which would not begin from their native language, or from the requirements of a school with a native language of instruction’.²⁴

V. Rodnykov (little is known about this man; in the journal ‘Vilna Ukrayinska shkola’ (*Free Ukrainian School*) he is listed as a private associate professor) turned to the ideas of the Czech educator, J. A. Comenius, whom he considered the father of the new European pedagogy, and the creator of the idea of a unified school. He cited quotations from Comenius’s works about the importance to the educational process of such principles as democracy, humanism, nationality, and in particular, the principle of native language learning, and the principle of individuality. He noted: ‘with the help of the native language and books written in this language, it is easy to guide the child through the circle of real knowledge. After that, it will be even easier for a pupil to learn the Latin language, adapting only new names to already known things. Depending on what has been said, Comenius does not allow “voluntarily jumping over the native language” and obliges everyone to go through a school using their native language, because this school will give him the elements of everything that a person will need throughout his or her life.’²⁵ Based on the analysis of J. A. Comenius’s ideas, Rodnykov came to the conclusion that a unified school system should prepare a child for life, so that later this child could continue to receive an education and ‘become a specialist in this or that life occupation’.²⁶

Principles, curriculum, methods and structure of the new Ukrainian school

The subjects of pedagogical discourse were the principles, curriculum, methods and structure of the new Ukrainian school. The named aspects were considered individually or together in the articles in specific projects from the new Ukrainian school. In a paper

²²V. Rodnykov, ‘Ideia yedynoi shkoly v svoim pershim dzhereli’, *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 8/9 (1918–1919): 90.

²³Rusova, ‘Natsionalizatsiia shkoly’, 4–5.

²⁴Sokolianskyi, ‘Na pedahohichniy temy’, 7.

²⁵Rodnykov, ‘Ideia yedynoi shkoly v svoim pershim dzhereli’, 90.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 91.

delivered at various educational meetings, P. Kholodnyi reported on the essence of the plan of a unified school. This document was developed in 1917 by a special commission of the School Education Society and approved by the Second All-Ukrainian Teachers' Congress. The discussion around this project testifies to the serious appeal of the achievements of the world pedagogy to Ukrainian educators. For example, he described the experience of organising a unified school with a direct transition from primary to secondary school, which would enable 'all children of the people to move forward, depending on their talent and their parents' wishes', as existed in such countries as Denmark, Sweden, Norway, America, Switzerland and Austria, and in and some German cities such as Munich and Mannheim.²⁷ Considering the present, the facts he cited by way of comparison are interesting. In Denmark, after a general education school for children up to the age of 11 or 12, there was a four-year period of schooling beginning with the English and German languages, and after that, another three-year period with three branches: classical, new languages and natural mathematics. In Norway, a twelve-year system of general secondary education was very convenient and democratic: after three years of primary school, children moved to nine years of secondary school, where they obtained secondary education for five years, then four years of classical or higher real education. The American system was distinguished by the following features: after kindergarten, children spent four years at public school, then another four years at high school, and finally, four years at secondary school. The transition from school to school was free. From other places he singled out the Mannheim system (Germany), which 'provides for the individual needs of children depending on their talents, and free education in secondary school'.²⁸ To P. Kholodnyi's mind, this project of the German professor Wilhelm Rein was also interesting: from six years old, children studied at one school for six years, in the fourth year of which they began to learn new languages; three years before finishing this school it became clear which pupils were incapable of mastering languages Those children who had to go through the public school system (a compulsory one for eight years), went on to the additional seventh and eighth grades to finish their schooling.²⁹ Based on a comparative analysis of domestic and foreign experience, the creation of a national school was suggested, the curriculum of which would meet the requirements of pedagogical science.³⁰ The structure had to be as follows: a primary school for four years from the age of 7, then a secondary school for three years, after which pupils could continue their education for four years at a secondary technical school or a gymnasium.³¹ The well-known Ukrainian teacher Ya. Chepiga produced a model for a labour school, or vocational training college. He considered it 'the only real means of education', which is 'dictated by the life itself'.³²

The history of the creation of a unified school system in Ukraine, and the essence of the project, was described by Oleksandr Muzychenko. He noted that the draft document was based on his materials about the theory of a unified school system and its state in Western Europe and America, as well as P. Kholodnyi's developments concerning

²⁷P. Kholodnyi, 'Yedyna shkola', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 2 (1917): 66.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Kholodnyi, 'Yedyna shkola', 66.

³⁰Ibid., 67.

³¹Ibid., 65–8.

³²Ya. Chepiha, 'Do trudovoi vilnoi shkoly!' *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 8/9 (1918–1919): 85.

solving the issue in Ukraine. Muzychenko explained not only the pedagogical aspect of the 'unified school', but also the social one: 'the school will serve the entire community: children of the various classes will pass through it equally, regardless of the social standing or any other status of their parents'.³³ He believed that the main task of the projected school should be a child's upbringing. The content of your education must be filled with knowledge about the life of your area, your region, in order to see its beauty and treasures. At the same time, teaching the native language would be compulsory at all levels of school, whereas the study of a foreign language, especially Russian, could only begin in the fourth or eighth year of the first degree. An eleven-year general education school was suggested: four years elementary, three years secondary, and four years senior. Children started learning at the age of seven or eight.

In his report at the Second Delegate Congress of the All-Ukrainian Teachers' Union, O. Muzychenko presented the main provisions of the unified school, the blueprint for which was developed based on foreign experience.³⁴ In his opinion, the school should be free and compulsory. Showing the arguments for an essentially unified school, he gave three options for consideration by educators: 1) based on the principles of a child's abilities and talents, the availability of education for all segments of the population in various types of schools; 2) a thoroughly organised twelve-year real school that is the same for everyone and leads on to university; 3) combines the first and second options, namely: the creation of a school based on accessibility, compulsory education for children of all the strata of the population, an individual approach to pupils, and variability.³⁵

Accordingly, he suggested three models for the structure of school education, including two foreign ones: 1) a general compulsory school for seven years and then a real one for five years (twelve years in total), which enables education at universities; 2) compulsory school for eight years and then four years (twelve in total) with the right to a wide choice of subjects for obtaining a classical, real, neophilological, commercial or other education leading to higher education (America); 3) a six-year compulsory school then a two-year compulsory school for those pupils who do not plan to obtain higher education. The rest can continue their education according to their abilities in various types of school (classical, real, economic, mathematical, non-philological), and then enter a university (Germany).³⁶ All three models are based on the individual principle of training.

It is advisable to remember the project for the development of school education in Ukraine, substantiated by the chairman of the Central Rada, Mykhailo Hrushevskyyi. He proposed its three-stage structure: 1) a four-year elementary school for children from six years old; 2) a six-year secondary school; 3) a two-year higher general according to 'groups', or profiles (with a preference for political or natural sciences), or special education. Considering the urgent need of the young Ukrainian state for trained specialists in various sectors of the economy, the scientist believed that the network of professional schools should be expanded.³⁷

³³O. Muzychenko, 'Do istorii yedynoi shkoly na Ukraini', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 8/9 (1918–1919):143–45.

³⁴O. Muzychenko, 'Pytannia pro yedynu shkolu na Ukraini', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 8/9 (1918–1919): 86.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 87.

³⁷'Kultura krasy i kultura zhyttia', in *Mykhailo Hrushevskyyi*, ed. S. Pankova, V. Levchenko, O. Budzynskyyi, M. Kucherenko (Kyiv, 1998): 80–1.

Having analysed the pedagogical experience of A. Faria's school in Bierges (Belgium), Ya. Chepiga highlighted the advantages of its activities (an individual approach to the child, adaptable classes, active teaching methods, a system for assessing students' knowledge, etc.). In addition, he highlighted the ideas that were relevant not only for school education in Ukraine then, but also, in our opinion, now: the connection between school and the rest of life, the joint education of both sexes, free and creative educational activities for children at school without coercion, creative work from teachers, prioritising the interests of the child in the construction of the educational process, and the differentiation of teaching.³⁸

The problems in preparing and carrying out school reform

Ukrainian educators and public figures also dealt with the problems of preparation for, and implementation of, the reform, which we partially mentioned above. So, H. Ivanytsya considered the procedural aspects of school reform: 'When reforming a school system, and even when developing a plan for these reforms, one must not rely on a few commissions and random decisions and resolutions, but on the experience of the entire community of Ukrainian teachers'.³⁹ Another of his ideas is also good: 'If we really want to create a unified national Ukrainian school throughout the entire space of conciliar Ukraine, then we must take into account both the life paths that the history of the school followed in the lower parts of the composite Ukraine, and the general experience of the Ukrainian teachers'.⁴⁰ As you can see, he argued the importance of taking into account domestic as well as foreign experience, in particular paying attention to the peculiarities of school development in different regions of Ukraine.

Reflecting on the organisational principles of school reform, O. Muzychenko turned to the pedagogical work of the prominent Franco-Swiss philosopher-educator Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who 'gave a completely different, so far not fully recognised and practically not fulfilled, understanding of the school task; a different interpretation of the role of a teacher, another concept of education and training'. Based on the knowledge of the ideas of this world famous scientist, Oleksandr Muzychenko came to the conclusion that 'education and training should be created from within the pupil, and not outside; education and training should not consist of the external influence of the teacher on the pupil, but according to the pupil's activities. In other words, a pupil is not a vase to be filled with even the best fruit, but a fire to be fanned, then to require only a minimum of brushwood'.⁴¹ Thus this educator eloquently emphasised the importance of using an individual approach to a child. The functional model of the Rousseau school is based on the principle of child centrism. This opinion was supported by O. Muzychenko. At the heart of the educational process should be a child, independently seeking the truth under the guidance of a teacher, and this will allow the formation of an 'active person'. Muzychenko believed that 'the organisation of the new school system should come out of the pupil's questions and interests, that is, first of all, to ensure education for all

³⁸Ya. Chepiga, 'Shkola v Zakhidnii Yevropi y Amerytsi, Nova shkola v Bierzhi A. Fariia (Belhiia)', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 1/3 (1918–1919): 184–91; and Ya. Chepiga, 'Shkola v Zakhidnii Yevropi y Amerytsi. Nova shkola v Bierzhi A. Fariia (Belhiia)', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 4/5 (1918–1919): 191–9.

³⁹H. Ivanytsia, 'Na porozhi novoi shkoly (Kilka pobizhnykh zamitok do reformy shkoly na Vkraini)', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 8/9 (1918–1919): 92–9.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 93–4.

⁴¹O. F. Muzychenko, 'Reforma shkoly chy shkilna reformatsiia?' *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 4 (1918–1919): 202.

children of the people to the degree of schooling that the child's talent allows, and then give free rein to the child's initiative, that is, to be most flexible and individualised'.⁴² In this context, he provided various examples of the organisation of schools. For example, in Mannheim, a school system was formed allowing each pupil to move up from one level to another, taking into account only his abilities and interests.⁴³ Muzychenko also became interested in the experience of the organisation of education in France; in particular, he described it as democratic, accessible, based on an individual approach to a child, and on the national principle. He also recalled the ideas of the German chemist and philosopher Ostwald about the need to create a democratic school. He suggested introducing an individual approach in the educational process in Ukraine. In particular, he noted: 'the individual characteristics of the child and his independence will be developed only when the child is given the opportunity freely to choose a group of subjects, when only minimum programs are mandatory, and the right to distribute them will be entrusted to each school in its own way'.⁴⁴

At the same time, he raised the issue of individualising teaching methods. In his opinion, 'school should not so much provide a specific circle of knowledge, but rather increase the child's overall mental performance, creating on this basis a free, developed personality, an individuality'.⁴⁵ Oleksandr Muzychenko reinforced this method of experiment or research by citing the English scientist Henry Armstrong, the French teacher C. Lezan, and the British philosopher John Stuart Mill.

He also convincingly proved the importance of the labour principle underlying the new Ukrainian school. O. Muzychenko believed that a labour school is 'not teaching, but undertaking the upbringing of a pupil's mind', 'creativity, independent, intense thought of a pupil'. Such a school should become a 'school of joy', 'the joy of children's life'.⁴⁶

The foundations of the labour school through the prism of fine arts were studied by the artist and educator T. Safonov. He wrote: 'a free unified labour school in Ukraine should open the doors wide to art education and create beauty in the school'.⁴⁷ The teacher relied on the ideas of 'the famous Munich school reformer G. Kerschensteiner', as he called him, about the importance of art education in the development of the child and the people. Referencing the developments of J.-J. Russo, the artist reinforced the need to build the educational process in the Ukrainian school on the understanding of the child and a respect for his interests.⁴⁸ He also noted the need for an introduction to pottery and weaving, and quoted the American educator and philosopher John Dewey.⁴⁹

Developing the concept of a unified active (labour) school, S. Rusova focused on the organisational and substantive approaches to its reform:

Not a single reform can happen immediately: it is only the goddess Venus who emerged from the foam of the sea in her beauty immediately; but to go towards reform – this is the

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., 202.

⁴⁴Ibid., 204.

⁴⁵O. F. Muzychenko, 'Reforma shkoly chy shkilna reformatsiia' *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola*, no. 6/7 (1918–1919): 3.

⁴⁶Ibid., 9–10.

⁴⁷T. Safonov, 'Obrazotvorchi mystetstva ta yikh rol v yedynii trudovii shkoli', *Vilna Ukrainska Shkola* no. 1/3 (1919–1920): 25.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid., 26.

duty of all our educated citizenship, and the pedagogical departments of universities in Ukraine also have a duty to develop this reform both theoretically and practically.⁵⁰

The scientist identified the obstacles in the way of school reform: the unpreparedness of teachers, the lack of experimental schools and appropriate instructors. At the same time, she explained the essence of the active methods in a general education school, which, in her opinion, contributed to the best development of all the abilities of a child. Rusova formulated her considerations on the basis of the ideas of the Russian teacher and public figure Pyotr Lesgaft.

The recommendations made by S. Rusova for the effective implementation of educational reform are innovative: the organisation of courses for teachers of various academic subjects using the methods of an active school for the exchange of their experience; the dissemination of programmes for teachers' seminars and the intensification of courses in natural subjects, the introduction of craft knowledge for the purpose of training labour teachers; business trips abroad for the best teachers to familiarise themselves with world experience. At the same time, she believed it was important to build 'a national school, with its own special features, and in its vital needs and forms of its own national life'.⁵¹ Successful implementation of the school reform, according to Rusova, was only possible with the close cooperation the public and teachers.

She argued the importance of transforming the intellectual school into a new active one. According to her, in the conditions of that time, it was most sensible to arrange it in rural gymnasia. To illustrate this, she cited the example of the new Landeserziehungsheim School of Litz in Harz, Germany. What were the benefits? The closeness of the education to nature, to the rural activities and the work of craftsmen, the physical activeness and the positive effect on a child's health, the mastering of natural knowledge and the use of Ukrainian artefacts. She also expressed this positive opinion: 'In general, children should treat their schooling as something personal, something to nurture especially when it is good for common interests. All this gives the school the democratic and social direction that is most conducive to the education of true citizens.'⁵² At the same time, S. Rusova described the experience of the Belgian school in Bierges as an example of an active school, 'where pupils are required to have a lot of initiative, responsibility, self-initiated activity and collective unification'.⁵³ She also discussed the new schools in America, in which pupils were offered the chance to devise the tools they needed for working themselves, taking into account their historical and cultural traditions. She also focused on the use of the genetic method of teaching, propounded by the American scientist Stanley Hall.

In our opinion, a kind of generalisation of the vectors of development of school education, which Ukrainian teachers outlined more than a hundred years ago, is found in the words of Sofia Rusova:

Ukraine today is in a very difficult economic, political, cultural and social situation. First of all, it needs a school system – an active and national one – which would unite the children of all the strata of society, of all the classes, and which would give them not just a primary or secondary education, but a continuous one, which would meet the needs of every cultural

⁵⁰S. F. Rusova, *Yedyna diialna (trudova) shkola: vstupna lektsiia na kaf. pedahohiky lektora Kamianetskoho un-tu S. F. Rusovoi* (Leipstsyh : Ukr. vyd-vo v Katerynoslavi za dopomohoiu Ukr. hromad. komitetu v ChSR, 1923): 24.

⁵¹Ibid., 26.

⁵²Ibid., 28.

⁵³Ibid., 29.

figure of the twentieth century. This school, with its active social education, will give Ukraine the new citizens necessary for its new life, with awakened activity, enduring will and well-developed creative forces.⁵⁴

To emphasise her thoughts, she quoted the statements of the outstanding Czech teacher Jan Amos Comenius about the huge enthusiasm for the general welfare of the country and the creation of a school, 'which would teach our children to serve the good and the native land'.⁵⁵

Conclusions

Summing up, we will note that the pedagogical discourse of the era of the Ukrainian Revolution (1917–1921) was centred around the idea of creating a new Ukrainian school based on the most advanced achievements of both world and domestic pedagogical science and practice. During this time, Ukrainian educators and educational figures actively turned to foreign humanistic thought, and studied the innovative experience of educational institutions in different countries. Their works are replete with quotes and reflections of famous educators from England (Henry Armstrong, John Stuart Mill), Germany (Kerschensteiner, Ostwald, Wilhelm Rein), France (C. Lezanne), the newly independent Czechoslovakia (Jan Amos Comenius), America (John Dewey, Stanley Hall), Italy (Maria Montessori) and Switzerland (Jean-Jacques Rousseau), and from philosophers, on the strategic importance of a national, democratic, active, humanistic, child-centred schooling for the development of the state. The result of the discussion that erupted in the pages of periodicals and educational congresses was the development of the reasonable model of a twelve-year (in the original version, eleven-year) three-stage general education school. School education in Ukraine should be based on the following principles: a unified school (the continuity of all its links, the content of the education and the connection between the school and the child's life); democratisation of education (equal access to school education for all strata of society, introduction of a state run system of education management, various types of educational institutions, the right of pedagogues to choose textbooks and teaching methods); nationalisation of education (systematic Ukrainisation and de-Russification, ensuring the rights of national minorities), humanisation of education (creating conditions for the development and realisation of abilities and the mental development of a child); science (basing the reform on the ideas of pedagogy, psychology); labour (active – the introduction of active teaching methods, manual labour); the individual approach and differentiation; and free and compulsory education. The introduction of the native language and its teaching was considered by Ukrainian teachers to be the leading component of the revival of the Ukrainian school.

Unfortunately, the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921 was defeated and the Bolshevik forces captured Ukraine. For 70 years its territory was under Soviet rule that carried out a systematic Russification policy in relation to all social components, primarily to education, with the aim of assimilating the Ukrainian nation into the mythological Soviet people. And yet, the great democratic achievements of the Ukrainian revolution,

⁵⁴Ibid., 30.

⁵⁵Ibid., 31.

in particular the introduction of the Ukrainian language into the educational process, the restoration of the Ukrainian school and the development of its conceptual foundations, laid the foundation for the creation of a national education system in independent Ukraine.

Today the lessons of the past should stand as a warning on the path of the reform process, and a solid brick for the entry of the new Ukrainian school into the world and European educational space, and the development of Ukrainian statehood. Further studies are required for pedagogical discourse regarding the content of general secondary education, in particular curricula for the Ukrainian school in 1917–1921. They were not widely introduced into the educational process through socio-political changes and remained on paper, but they are waiting in the archives for their researcher.

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