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ANTON MAKARENKO

(1888-1939)

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The establishment and development of educational theory and the education system in the USSR was closely **bound up** with the scientific creativity and practical **labours** of an outstanding group of Soviet educators. Pride of place among the educators who fought actively to establish democratic ideas and principles in educational theory and practice belongs to Anton Makarenko (1888-1939); his name **rightly figures high** among the world's great educators, and his books, published in editions of millions on all the continents of the globe, enjoy enormous popularity in the widest circles. Makarenko's work is the subject of research in many countries of the world and efforts are made to apply his ideas creatively in the education of children today. On the other hand, it still happens—and not **infrequently**—that, in specialist and popular literature alike, the 'Makarenko **phenomenon**' is explained in a one-sided or sometimes **erroneous** manner.

For some reason, certain foreign students of Makarenko's life and work consider that he was a '**self-taught genius**', and portray his educational system without any reference to its historical links with the progressive education of past and present. This is **to some extent due to** the fact that in his published and widely known works, Makarenko himself makes comparatively few direct references to his attitude towards the world educational **heritage** and to his contemporary felloweducators in the Soviet Union and abroad. The most recent Soviet research, however, based on documentary evidence, shows that despite his extremely **modest** origins and the difficult circumstances of his early years (his father was a painter and decorator and he himself began to work at the age of 17 as a teacher in an elementary school for the children of railway-workers), Makarenko was deeply versed in the history of education. Many important principles which he established theoretically and proved in practice are the development of the ideas of Pestalozzi, Owen, Usinskij, Dobroljubov and other distinguished past proponents of democratic education in the world.

Examination of **hitherto** unpublished literary, promotional and educational writings by Makarenko, and of notes and documents from the educational establishments that he

directed, provides further confirmation of the **unwavering attention** which Makarenko devoted to the works of the leading Soviet educators of his age [...]. Attempts to portray this most eminent Soviet educator as an isolated 'peak in an empty plain' are thus quite unjustifiable. Equally untrue are the claims by some students of Makarenko's work that his activities and ideas were for a long time isolated from the world of education and from progressive society in general. Even before the Second World War, during Makarenko's lifetime, his vitally positive and optimistic ideas influenced educators [...] who — like Makarenko himself — have since acquired worldwide renown. [...]

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Makarenko's experience and theoretical **legacy** have lost none of their relevance for the teaching of young people today. [...] One must not, of course, underestimate the originality of Makarenko's work and educational ideas. As we have said, he started along his creative path in the company of other educationists who had affirmed, in theory and in practice, the idea of a unified education based on work. Nevertheless, his ideas on many questions relating to the theory and methods of communist education went beyond current thinking and looked to the future of socialist education and teaching, noting the problems that would occur in their subsequent development.

Among the current problems of socialist education in which Makarenko's theories exercise an important influence are the relationship between education and politics and between education and the other sciences, the logic of educational theory, the essence of education, the relationship between educational theory and practice, the role of education in the creation of lifestyles, parallel educational activity, and the integration of education with everyday life. Makarenko's ideas concerning the relationship between education and other disciplines, whether in the humanities (philosophy, ethics, aesthetics and psychology), or in the natural sciences (biology and physiology) deserve serious attention. More particularly, his far-reaching investigation of the essentials of a new, socialist pattern of moral and ethical relations led him to enunciate this very important idea: *make as many demands as possible on a man, and at the same time show him as much respect as possible*. This idea is occasionally criticized by some modern educators for putting the principle of demanding something of people in such a prominent position in the 'demand-respect' dyad. Makarenko himself pointed out that from a genuinely humanitarian point of view, respect for and demands on a person were not separate categories and attitudes, but were dialectically related facets of an indivisible whole. Makarenko's views on the nature of the relationship between education and psychology, biology and — more specifically — physiology are extremely important in

tackling the theoretical problems of education, as is his associated criticism of the methodological ideas of paedology.

As we know, paedology **laid claim** to being the fundamental Marxist science of children, supposedly using the combined evidence of all the social and natural sciences about the formation of the young person. The science of education, on the other hand, was assigned the role of a purely applied, technical discipline which, on the basis of the theoretical material of paedology, was expected to issue recommendations regarding actual teaching methods in school. In a number of his books and lectures (including *Report to the Ukrainian Educational Research Institute*, 1928; *Experience of Working Methods in a Children's Labour Colony*, 1931-32; *Teachers Shrug Their Shoulders*, 1932) Makarenko criticized the sociology- and biology-based ideas of paedologists, with their vulgar notions of the 'primacy' of environment and inheritance and their appeals for the passive following of what they termed the 'nature of the child', associating them with the theorists of 'free education'. He further criticized **paedocentrism** and underestimation of the educational role of the teacher and the children's collective and of the emerging personality's own activity.

While fighting for a purpose-oriented education that would shape man and be answerable to society for the results, Makarenko did not repeat the limited views of French materialists who contended that 'education is all'. In Makarenko's view, the power of education in a socialist society was increasing with the skilful use by teaching specialists of advances in psychology, biology, medicine and all the human sciences, which were required to play an auxiliary role in the practical organization of the educational process and in educational research. The problem of educational logic was held by Makarenko to be closely bound up with a grasp of the essence of education.

Calling education 'the most dialectical science', he worked on the assumption that: education is a process that is social in the broadest sense....With all the highly complex world of ambient activity, the child enters into an infinite number of relationships, each of which constantly develops, interweaves with other relationships and is compounded by the child's own physical and moral growth. All this 'chaos' is seemingly quite unquantifiable but nevertheless gives rise at each particular instant to definite changes in the personality of the child.

ENGLISKI JEZIK

MASTER STUDIJE, 6. NOVEMBAR 2015.

I Read the text carefully

II Find the meaning of the bolded words

III Use the bolded words in the sentences of your own

IV Give a heading for each paragraph

V Write a short summary for each paragraph

Marina Cvekovic