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RESEARCH OF FUNCTIONING OF RURAL PRESCHOOL INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE IN THE PERIOD FROM 1945 TO 1963

Liudmyla Melenets

It is necessary to study the peculiarities of the functioning of preschool institutions in rural areas of Ukraine in the past. This gives an opportunity to see certain patterns and conventions, to identify positive experiences that were once rejected or forgotten, the opportunity to reveal how contemporaries, responded to such problems, what was the pedagogical argument and its implementation in practice. The historical facts of the organization of public preschool education in the Ukrainian village, which has its own rather complex, contradictory phenomena and processes, are generalized. The focus is on the periodization of the development of preschool institutions in the countryside of Ukraine in the chronological framework of 1945–1991. There are three periods of formation and development of rural preschools: I period (1945–1963) – the revival and formation of preschools in rural areas, II period (1963–1984) – the implementation of preschool education in rural preschools, III period (1984–1991) – renewal of the educational space of preschool institutions in rural areas. The subjective factor of the process of development of rural preschool institutions in Ukraine during the I period of the revival and formation of preschool institutions in rural areas is revealed (1945–1963). Prospects for further historical and pedagogical research in revealing the problem of implementing preschool education and updating the educational space in rural preschools of Ukraine are outlined

Keywords: preschool institutions, countryside, history of education, issues of periodization

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1. Introduction

The history of public preschool education in the Ukrainian countryside has its own rather complex, contradictory phenomena, facts and processes. Today it is necessary to study the peculiarities of the functioning of preschool institutions in rural areas of Ukraine in the past, as it is possible to see certain patterns and conditions, to identify positive experiences that were once rejected or forgotten, the possibility of revealing how contemporaries responded to such problems and its implementation in practice.

The analysis of educational policy in a certain historical period leads to reflection on the declared goals, to the search for real action, comparing specific achievements with defined goals, justifying the achieved positive results and mistakes. It should also be guided by the thesis that the results of educational policy are time-delayed results that can and should be evaluated, although their social consequences are manifested gradually [1].

2. Literature review

Such scholars as L. Berezhivska [2], O. Sukhomlynska [3], and others focus on the importance of historiographical analysis in historical and pedagogical research, pointing out, at the same time, the difficulty of solving this issue: unpreparedness of researchers to use the historiographical method; misunderstanding of

the importance and necessity of historiographical analysis. Historiographical and source analysis, which focuses on primary sources, helps to identify unexplored or little-studied scientific and pedagogical problems, the concentration of research efforts around them. The study of the works of historians of education provided us with the separation of the relevance of the study of the functioning of rural preschools in Ukraine in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the scientific achievements of N. Gupan [4], I. Zaichenko [5], we often find approaches to the periodization of the history of pedagogy by socio-economic and political characteristics and the periods of formation of Ukrainian statehood. It is emphasized, that periodization is only the author's version, which can be perceived by scientists or refuted, replacing it with another. Moreover, the author's periodization is always the result of the scientist's creative activity and reflects the level of his/her professional competence.

We consider it necessary to develop a periodization of the development of preschool institutions in rural areas of Ukraine in the chronological boundaries of 1945–1991 and to reveal the basic patterns of their functioning in each period, as periodization is based on determining the dynamics and direction of rural preschool development. We have determined such criteria of periodization – socio-political, socio-economical, cultural conditions of development of Ukraine in general and

rural areas in particular; state regulatory policy; typology of preschool institutions.

Three periods of formation and development of rural preschool institutions were identified by us: I period (1945–1963) – the revival and formation of preschool institutions in rural areas, II period (1963–1984) – the implementation of preschool education in rural preschool institutions, III period (1984–1991) – renewal of the educational space of preschool institutions in rural areas.

The participants in the educational process – heads, educators, musicians and other employees, the public were the driving force behind the development of these institutions. Not only in accordance with the Law "About Strengthening the Link between School and Life and about the Further Development of the Public Education System in the Ukrainian SSR", adopted in April 1959, but also on their own initiative and conviction, they directed all their strength, skills, desires and enthusiasm to educate a new human – the builder of communism with a harmonious combination of spiritual wealth, moral purity and physical perfection (as it was propagated at that time). The subjective factor in the process of development of rural preschool institutions in Ukraine is human activity (human factor).

3. The aim and objectives of research

The purpose of the study is to identify the features of the functioning of rural preschools in Ukraine in the period from 1945 to 1963.

To achieve the aim, it is necessary to solve the following objectives:

1. Focus on the problems of the postwar village and ways to solve them;
2. To reveal the features of the development of various forms of public preschool education in the countryside in the specified period;
3. To generalize the historical facts of the organization of public preschool education in the Ukrainian village, which led in the late 50s to the idea of uniting groups of children of early and preschool age in one preschool institution.

4. Materials and methods

In the process of scientific research, general scientific methods were used - analysis, synthesis, systematization of archival documents, legislative acts to substantiate the initial positions of scientists and practitioners on the problem under study. The chronological-system method was used to consider the specifics of the functioning of preschool institutions in rural areas of Ukraine in dynamics and time sequence. To highlight the identified facts and phenomena that determined the peculiarities of the development of rural preschools in the period 1945–1963, we used a specific historical method.

5. Research and discussion results

Ukraine, which was at the epicenter of Hitler's military strategy, suffered significant human, material and cultural losses during World War II. More than 28,000 villages were destroyed, of which 250 were completely burned and their inhabitants executed. Ukraine's fields, roadsides, forests and other lands were "stuffed" with hundreds of thousands of unexploded ordnance. The

problem of labor shortages has sharply arisen (Ukraine has suffered significant demographic losses - about 10 million people, or more than 22 % of the total population). Along with men, women and children were involved in physically hard, low-skilled and harmful work. The result of the war was mass orphanhood and homelessness [6].

The post-war village, which was financed on a residual basis (no more than 7 % of total allocations), performed at least three tasks: to meet the needs of industry in raw materials, to solve the problem of food supply in cities, to grow enough agricultural products for export to Eastern Europe. Trying to carry out these large-scale tasks in conditions of chronic lack of funds, the official authorities practice traditional command methods: increasing pressure on the countryside, bringing order – the campaign to eliminate violations of the collective farm statute (1946); direct repression – deportation to Siberia of persons who "maliciously evade labor in agriculture" (1948); attempts to restructure the organization of agricultural production – the policy of consolidation of collective farms (1950). In the postwar period, the population of Ukraine was formed under the active influence of migration processes (demobilization, re-evacuation, repatriation, deportation) [7, p. 495, 498].

The main task in the 1950s was to solve the food problem, which required radical reforms of the entire process of agricultural production. The beginning of the reform was initiated at the September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1953). In the mid-1950s, agriculture became profitable for the first time in many years due to the priority of its development. It was the period of the greatest rise in the history of collective and state farm production in the USSR. Gross agricultural output in 1954–1958 increased by 35.3 % compared to the previous five years. Gross grain harvest in Ukraine increased by almost 20 % between 1954 and 1958, sugar beet – twice, meat production – more than twice, milk – three times. Among the factors that led to a sharp rise in agricultural production was the improvement of the material and technical base of agriculture [7, p. 518].

The powerful rise of agriculture could not be achieved without the active labor activity of women, in particular without the further introduction into agricultural production of the achievements of agricultural producers, many of whom were women. In order for women to show all their creative abilities and talents, it was necessary to create the best living and working conditions, which meant that first of all it was necessary to provide their children with preschool institutions.

The postwar period in the history of preschool education is characterized by an intensive shift in the development of various forms of public preschool education (nurseries, kindergartens, preschools, boarding schools, sanatoriums, etc.). It is also characterized by the hard work on creating program documents and content of preschool education development of methodical bases for employees of preschool institutions and variants of standard projects of preschool institutions both for the city, and for the village.

The work of preschool institutions in the first postwar years was marked by raising the ideological and political level and business skills of heads and educators

of kindergartens, improving the quality of educational, methodological work, work with parents and further strengthening of the material base.

Expansion of the network of kindergartens and providing conditions for improving the quality of preschool education in the specified period was determined by government decisions, in particular the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from 08.07.1944 "On strengthening the protection of motherhood and childhood", "Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars kindergartens and improving their work". This resolution provided not only for the reconstruction of preschools, built in the pre-war years, but also for the construction of a large number of new preschools.

An active policy on the opening of preschool institutions and their activities in the countryside was traced in the regulations of regional and district councils of workers' deputies. For example, an excerpt from the minutes of the 4th meeting of the Brusyliv District Council of Workers' Deputies of the Zhytomyr Region dated February 6, 1945 "On the allocation of premises for kindergartens", which states that based on the fact that the premises where the kindergarten had been located before the war, was temporarily occupied by a club, the executive committee of the District Council of Workers' Deputies instructs the head of the district department of public education fellow Roshchina to enter into an agreement with the director of Brusyliv MTS (hereinafter – machine-tractor station) and rent a residential MTS building, which is currently unoccupied [8, p. 22]. The decision of the meeting of the executive committee of the Baranivka district council of workers' deputies of the same region from 28.05.1945 № 120 "On the work of nurseries at the collective farms of Baranivka district" obliged to open nurseries on all collective farms by June 1, 1945, and the district department to take more decisive measures against those heads of collective farms who did not respond to the repeated orders of the Executive Committee of the District Council of Workers' Deputies and Inspector of the Department of Maternity and Childhood Comrade Ilchuk opening of nurseries [9, p. 230]. About self-removal of heads of collective farms of the Yemilchinsky area, which is in the Zhytomyr region, and insufficient care of the Department of Agriculture and the District Department of Public Education on the opening of seasonal preschools is stated in the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Yemilchyn District Council of Workers' Deputies of March 16, 1949 No. 71 "On the opening of collective farm playgrounds in 1949". The document says that in recent years there were no seasonal playgrounds in the collective farms of the district, as a result of which a significant number of mothers-collective farmers did not provide a minimum of working days, in addition, during the spring and summer field work, most children of preschool age were left without proper supervision and education, thus there were cases of injuries and diseases of children [10, p. 273–274].

Preschools, district and regional departments of public education annually reported to the Ministry of Education of Ukraine on the implementation and overfulfillment of the national economic plan for the contingents

of kindergartens, which was able due to satisfactory attendance of children throughout the year. Other ministries and departments, to which preschools were subordinated, had weakened control over the state of their staffing. Thus, in some districts of the Chernihiv region until 1950 there was a poor attendance of children during the year in kindergartens of state farms and kindergartens, subordinated to the departments of the sugar industry. For this reason, the regional department of public education was forced to close a kindergarten in one district, and from the second half of the year to transfer the funds to another. There were cases when, due to the lack of premises, the allocated funds, which were intended for the opening of a kindergarten in the area, were transferred to increase the contingent of children in kindergartens in the city [11, p. 2–3].

Archival sources indicate that the network of permanent nurseries of all departments at the end of 1945 was about 250 institutions. By August 1946, the number of permanent kindergartens in the villages of the republic had grown to 667. However, their network was uneven.

The network of seasonal kindergartens and playgrounds, which opened in all districts during spring and summer field works, was also uneven, namely in collective farms, state farms, and machine-tractor stations for the period from April-May to September-October. According to the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 21.02.1948 "On the organization of preschools in collective farms, state farms and village councils of the USSR", Sumy Regional Department of Public Education in coordination with the Regional Agricultural Department distributed the planned contingent of 26,000 children according to the number of collective farms. On September 1, 1948, there were 864 playgrounds in the Sumy region, covering 21,769 preschoolers.

In 1949–1950 in the Chernihiv region, 23,498 children were covered by seasonal preschools against the plan of 22,000 children. In March-April, in accordance with the orders of the regional department of public education under the program of the Ministry of Education in the districts of the region there were held ten-day seminars for educators of seasonal preschools, which covered 673 people. Collective farm educators held a workshop in kindergartens in Pryluky. Preschool workers assisted in the organization and conduct of seminars. They went to areas where there were no permanent preschool institutions [12, p. 8–10].

Regional two-week courses were also held for heads of kindergartens in rural areas; they improved their business skills and acquired knowledge about the management of the pedagogical process of kindergarten work. At the courses, the heads got acquainted with the practical work of kindergartens by organizing open days in the best institutions of Chernihiv [12, p. 52–55].

Methodical management of the work of collective farm playgrounds was carried out by one of the inspectors of the district department of public education. However, he was not a specialist in preschool education.

In the new "Program-methodical instructions for the kindergarten teacher" (1947), the work of kindergartens was aimed at improving the quality of preparation of children for school. Systematic, purposeful education of children in the classroom, during which educators gradu-

ally prepared children for the new school routine, was introduced in the practice of preschool institutions [13, p. 86–119]. During this period, there is a manifestation of special attention to the development of physical and mental abilities of children. Ukrainian scientists, such as M. Sheiko "Education of basic vital movements of preschool children of an older group", T. Gubenko "Creative play as a factor of mental education of preschool children of a middle group", E. Sukhenko "Preparation of kindergarten children for schooling" worked on these issues at that time.

The period of revival of educational institutions took place under the slogan "people's structure". Centralization and unification of project support dictated the development of a simplified architectural solution of standard projects, template components for buildings. The project of the combined kindergarten-nursery for 50 children was discussed in July 1951 at a meeting of the Architectural Council under the Council of Ministers of the USSR. It was considered to be expedient, economic and convenient in operation in rural areas and especially in small collective farms. In order to create the most favorable living and hygienic conditions for children, as well as to increase the number of children for the period of summer field work, the project in addition to the premises, specified in the norms, provided also verandas, infirmaries with an area of 6.5 square meters and procurement area of 6 square meters. The positive thing was that the volume per 1 child was 2.9 cubic meters (with the verandas) [14, p. 98].

With the increasing number of preschool institutions, the number of children, coming to school from kindergarten, also increased. Educators had inexhaustible opportunities in the organization of children's mental activity, the education of a large number of skills that would help children to join a new life for them, in school. Therefore, the new task arose – to systematically and persistently prepare children for new activities for them. During these years, "Uchitelskaya Gazeta" discussed the preparation of preschool children for school. Preschool pedagogy was criticized for the fact that the "theory of free education" still lived in it, there was a strong spontaneity, that the educator did not control the child's behavior enough, that there were almost no games and activities in kindergarten that would educate children to have patience, perseverance, attention. Preschool pedagogy took into account the requirements of the school.

In 1956, in the Cherkasy region, the spirit of mass building of preschool institutions was born. The preschools were built according to standard projects in every collective farm and almost in every brigade. To solve the problem of full coverage of all preschool children with public education, as well as creating equal conditions for urban and rural children, there was constructed about 710 typical premises of kindergartens, in addition to the existing network of seasonal collective farms, in the collective farms of Cherkasy region. And all year-round education of children of collective farmers in preschool institutions became a new feature of the village in the early 60's. This was a clear indication of the implementation of the Law on School, which provided for increasing the role of the state in the public education of children.

At the end of the 1950s, in accordance with the ministerial recommendations, the practice to unite groups of young and preschool children in one preschool institution during summer field work became very popular. Various resources were found and later the standardization of this process reflected in the regulations on the joint preschool institution (kindergarten) (1960) and on children's preschool institutions in the collective farms of the Ukrainian SSR (1963).

6. Conclusions

Summarizing all said above, the development of public preschool education, which took place in rural areas of Ukraine in the period 1945–1963, had a significant impact on the further development of education in general and preschool in particular.

1. Focusing on the problems of the post-war village and ways to solve them, we found that the rise of agriculture could not be achieved without the active work of women. In order for women to show all their creative abilities and talents, it was necessary to create the best living and working conditions, which meant that first of all it was necessary to provide their children with preschool institutions.

2. Revealing the peculiarities of the development of various forms of public preschool education in rural areas during this period, we can state: the network of permanent preschool nurseries was insignificant, and the network of seasonal kindergartens and playgrounds, opened in all agricultural areas during spring and summer field work, was uneven. The teaching staff to work in such kindergartens had to take two-week courses or ten-day seminars in order to implement an active policy on the education of physically healthy and ready for school children.

3. Generalization of historical facts of the organization of public preschool education in the Ukrainian village, testifies: work of preschool institutions both in the first postwar and following years passed under a sign of increase of ideological and political level and business qualification of heads and educators of kindergartens, improvement of quality of educational, methodical work, work with parents and further strengthening the material base. Significant advances in the construction of preschools, which took place under the slogan of "folk building" led in the late 50's to the idea of uniting groups of children of early and preschool age in one preschool institution.

This study contributed to the study of the development of education of children and youth living in the Ukrainian countryside and does not cover all issues of rural preschool development (1945–1963), which was called the period of revival and formation of rural preschools.

Prospects for further exploration should be focused on the problems of implementing preschool education and updating the educational space in rural preschools in Ukraine.

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