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Section B:

AMERICA-EUROPE. ASPECTS OF EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SPHERES OF SOCIETIES: SHARING EXPERIENCES

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ZAHARENKO – KNIGHTS OF HUMANE PEDAGOGY

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Abstract. History does not have so many knights of pedagogy, such Teachers whom thousands of students are grateful to, whose names are carved on the tables of human memory. Yanush Korczak and Oleksandr Zaharenko are among them, they were eager to do good to the people, they gave lives for the humanity, for the happiness of everybody. The course of life of two prominent Teachers is discussed in the article, the professional credos of prominent teachers-humanists are singled out. We cited a famous French writer-humanist Saint-Exupery in the epigraph.

In our opinion, his quotation is a professional credo of all famous teachers' humanists. Besides, these Fox's words (the character from "Little Prince") appear to be the combined motto of several teachers humanists, namely: a Polish educator Yanush Korczak who was announced an Educator of 1979 by UNESCO; a Ukrainian pedagogue Anton Makarenko, announced an Educator of 2008 by UNESCO; a prominent educator and a great teacher-humanist Olexandr Zaharenko, an academician from Sahnivka, a small village in Cherkasy region.

Keywords: humanists, educator, Cherkasy region.

*...Don't you forget:
from now on you are responsible for
those, whom you have tamed.
Antoine de Saint-Exupery¹*

Basic content statement. Both Anton Makarenko and Olexandr Zaharenko, as well as Yanush Korczak are the followers of the best traditions in their own countries – Ukraine and Poland. We are greatly convinced that they carried out their missions on Earth: they lead their lives full of sympathy for the destinies of their pupils, for the peace in the native land, their motherland, also with great talents of righteousness and bound by the truth, self-sacrifice and a deep conviction that "a person should have beautiful both a soul and clothes as well as thoughts", strongly believing that a teacher can't live without giving his heart to the pupils.

It's a pity we don't know which books Yanush Korchak kept on his desk, but we did witness the books kept on Olexandr Zaharenko's desk where among the books by A. Makarenko, V. Suhomlynskyi, M. Pyrohov, K. Ushynskyi we saw Ya. Korchak's books.

Yanush Korchak was convinced that it is impossible to make the world happy without creating a fair school.

Olexandr Zaharenko's belief is well illustrated by the thesis: "If there is a school, there will be a village and a state".

Although Yanush Korchak is the best representative of Polish elite of the end of the 19th – mid 20th century whereas Anton Makarenko and Olexandr Zaharenko represent the soviet intelligentsia of the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century, their pedagogic ideas and methods of their realization, the success of their activity and their beliefs had much in common in terms of the content.

The first thing to be stressed is their conviction that the reforms in adults' life should be started with children's souls, wise constructing of their lives and defending them from evil, envy, the feeling of inequality; to see and to find the springs of the Pure, the Kind and the Light in children's souls, but to seek with one's heart, not with one's eyes, looking into child's eyes, as eyes "are often blind, especially adults' eyes". In "Rules of Life" Yanush Korchak cited Goethe: "If a person's eye were not so similar to the sun, it wouldn't see the sun in the sky" and added "so, whose eyes are as similar to the sun as the child's?"^{3,p.481}. Both A. Makarenko and O. Zaharenko, as well as Ya. Korchak were dreamers themselves and considered it impossible to bring up a true person with the qualities that would make him as well as people surrounding him happy without a feeling, namely a dream.

"A dream is a fairy tale...develops into a programme, which is serious, strict, which demands and binds... becomes an oath at the banner of life,"^{3,p.499} – Polish educator spoke. Practically all his stories illustrate vividly the meaning of a dream in destitute children's lives. Those children created the community "KHU" – "Knights of Honour Union", the members of which "are prohibited to lie, treat the animals cruelly, smoke, mock at the young, but are obliged to defend the small children and to help them..."^{3,p.431}, "...everybody should believe that he has a chance to turn over a new leaf, that he has merits alongside drawbacks"^{3,p.490}.

By showing the true lifetimes of his characters in his story "Slava" Yanush Korchak demonstrates how the dream is realized, how difficult it is to overcome obstacles in order to reach the desired goal. Having a dream to become a doctor, Vladek finally became a famous hospital orderly, the best one.

Olek became a trade union organizer, "his dream came true: he became a real commander. Although his army isn't armed with bayonets or cannons, it is numerous, strong and courageous"; Manya, who could tell interesting stories, express the thoughts in her own way and compose verses since childhood, "...works at a carpet factory, and her diaries are published in the newspaper. As they will not publish any rubbish in the newspaper...".

In the letter to his childhood friends Vladek wrote: "I didn't become a doctor. I'm a hospital orderly, but a famous one... As you see, my dear friends, I'm also famous... I wonder how every dream comes true in our life!"^{3,p.442}.

Olexandr Antonovych Zaharenko has created the conditions for the children to grow their dreams, not Manilov's type, but the true dreams, possible to be realized, which realization would bring joy and satisfaction both to the dreamer and the surrounding people. The famous educator even formulated one of the conceptual ideas of his work – the pedagogy of a particular dream: "A school is a small state. It can't exist without an idea, a concept which involves and captures the children, teachers and parents. The idea is always continuous. It always exists and is peculiar to everybody. When the idea disappears and a new one doesn't come, poor be that establishment, school, state which undergoes degradation, which ceases to develop. It is useless to live there, as there is no progress but boredom. The idea should be absolutely specific, clear to every person..."⁷.

Practically all the school-leavers of Olexandr Antonovych's school became the ones they were dreaming of. The 4-volumed "Encyclopedia of school kin (autobiographic data, memoirs, reflections)"^{2,p.867} contains the letters of almost all the school-leavers (over 2 thousand).

It is due to the pedagogically reasonable formulation of a specific dream, that the teachers' community managed to organize the life of children and their parents in such a way that the dream "gradually overwhelmed all the pupils and was a frequent topic of discussion during the school parents' meeting..."^{2,p.39}. The school has got several new constructions: a planetarium, a fountain "Kolosok", a 25-metres-long swimming pool and a nice gymnasium, the Well of Conscience, a library with Internet access and literature presented in 20 foreign languages, a village-school museum, also they grew a dendropark and a rose-garden "Memory plot". The school-leavers who dreamt of becoming artists presented the sculptures and monuments to the school. The experience of building the school museum proved that the school community together with the existing leaders is able to fulfill hard but useful for further development tasks..."^{2,p.38}. Kosoborodov Volodymyr, a village dweller and father of school pupils writes "...there will be a lot of memorable dates in the school history..., every event ...the result of combined creative efforts of teachers and pupils, which united their souls and hearts longing to fulfill their dream"^{2,p.45}. Here is one more extract from the book "Storks over Sahnivka": "Former school-leaver of Sahnivska secondary school Katya Taran worked at a regional radio station (by the way, at school she dreamt of becoming a reporter – O.B., L.P.). She settled the microphone and asked Olexandr Antonovich: - Tell us a few words about the results and prospects of school work. What do you dream of? – Our results are not kept in granary or warehouse, - started Olexandr Antonovych with a smile as if not noticing the microphone. – The results may not be seen or held in one's hands, they are in our pupils. So, Katya, you graduated from the University, I often hear your voice over the radio and I'm proud of you, I'm really glad. Sometimes I may be ashamed of someone. As for the prospects, we (I mean the school community) have both close and distant ones, - Zaharenko held on his reflections. – Both teachers and pupils are great dreamers.

– What do you dream of?

– I even happen to dream of a trifle, – he gave a smile. – Dream of convenient desks, for example... The latter is not a trifle, by the way... The school has even more serious problems. – It's high time to create new textbooks, adopt syllabuses to some extent..."⁵.

Another similar aspect in the views and activity of Anton Makarenko, Olexandr Zaharenko and Yanush Korczak is their attitude to mutual understanding between a teacher and his pupils as it is of great, basic importance. In the introduction to "Rules of life" (pedagogics for children and adults), giving grounds of the title of his work, Korczak writes: "We, children, have a lot of troubles because we don't know the right way to live. Sometimes grown-ups explain calmly but most of the times they get angry. But it is so unpleasant when somebody gets angry. It's difficult to understand, impossible to ask and different contradicting thoughts pop into the head"^{3,p.445}. "Don't oppress the children" – this motto makes up the ground of Korczak's pedagogy. He took part in all children's activities even in taking the duty or cleaning the lavatory. He tried to make the situation that the equality, mutual help and understanding should never be violated. Very often the educator reflects on the problem how not to break the line between the equality, kindness on the one hand and permissiveness, familiarity on the other, how to follow Anton Semenovych Makarenko's statement "the more a person is respected, the more demands you have to him". In the mentioned above book "Rules of life" Korczak wrote: "I often thought what it means "to be kind". I think that a kind person is the one who realizes to full extent what another person feels. ... If someone tortures a frog or a fly, a kind person would react: – What would you feel if you are treated the same way?"; "...I realized that it is of no use to race to rescue..."; "I realized that involuntary concession would do no good both at home and at school as they are short-term. Then the situation would get even worse..."; "I realized that it is better not to interfere at all than judge without having any ideas about the roots of the quarrels"^{3,p.448-449,476}.

Olexandr Antonovych advised his colleagues and the parents "to become a real connoisseur of children's souls, a real educator, a real authority, don't get restricted by the boundaries of the lessons. Spend as much time as possible with pupils, make their out-of-school life interesting and meaningful. Then you will achieve success, you will derive real pleasure from teaching work"⁸; "Dear mothers and fathers, grandmas and grandpas, scientists and post-graduates, ministers and academicians. Every citizen. Keep holding your child's hand as long as you can... Make this day the most desirable to a

child, so that when falling asleep he might say: "What a wonderful day it was!" Do so – and you will see that childhood happiness is not in expensive toys, sweets or fashionable clothes but in communication with native dear people, having common games, occupation, creative activities, in the wish to show the child's skills, agility, pride for his kin, school, village"⁴.

The citations are too long, but we would like the reader himself to feel the spirit of Great Educators, the spirit of the time they lived and did good to the people; that humanism and wisdom they possessed do not have time or territory limits.

They were sure that in spite of all the life troubles and restrictions, Good exceeds Evil thousands times, that being kind is the most difficult thing, that a person should have a special talent, boundless tolerance and patience, sacrifice for the sake of charity and other people's peace. Those were the things they proved by their lifetime and professional deeds. Like Korchak, Olexandr Zaharenko created children's republic: the first one did it in the orphan asylum in ghetto; another one did it in brigade village far from civilization and cultural centres. There was no tyranny, violence, unlimited power as their schools were based on cooperation and mutual respect. According to the regulations both teachers and pupils were equal and realized that they need each other, that the main laws of life should be the laws of justice, morality and humanism.

These educators – a Pole and Ukrainians – managed to attain such success due to the fact that they had such great predecessors, educators-humanists as Yan Amos Komenskyi, Hryhoriy Skovoroda, Iohann Pestalotsi, Jan-Jak Russo, Pamfil Yurkevych, Kostyantyn Ushynskyy, Lev Tolstoy and others.

History does not have so many knights of pedagogy, such Teachers whom thousands of students are grateful to, whose names are carved on the tables of human memory. Yanush Korchak, Anton Makarenko and Oleksandr Zaharenko are among them. They were eager to do good to the people, they gave lives for the humanity, for the happiness of everybody.

We would like to finish this article using Sergiy Yesenin's line of verse "To Pushkin":

"I'm standing like in front of Eucharist,
Responding to myself:
I'd better die from blissfulness,
Obtaining such a fate..."⁶.

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