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ANTONIO GRAMSCI'S PEDAGOGICAL VIEWS ON THE ITALIAN EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN 1920S

ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ ВОЗЗРЕНИЯ АНТОНИО ГРАМШИ НА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНУЮ ПОЛИТИКУ ИТАЛИИ 1920-х гг.

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This article is dedicated to the research of the pedagogical views of a famous philosopher and thinker Antonio Gramsci on the educational system of Italy in 1920-s. To understand Gramsci's attitude to the realized educational reform we conducted a content analysis of the text of his philosophy work 'Prison notebooks'.

Keywords: research, pedagogical views, educational system, educational reform, a content analysis, works, methods.

В данной статье нами представлено исследование педагогических воззрений известного философа и мыслителя Антонио Грамши на образовательную систему Италии 1920-х гг. Для того чтобы понять, как Антонио Грамши оценивал проведенную образовательную реформу, нами был проведен контент-аналитическое исследование текста его философского труда «Тюремные тетради».

Ключевые слова: исследование, образовательная система, образовательная реформа, контент-анализ, философские труды, методы.

Introduction. The modern transformations that are taking place in the axiological, informational and conceptual fields of social activity arouse interest in all aspects of the history and theory of the science of education. Contemporary pedagogy is at the level where the possibility of further development is conditioned by the study and recognition of diversity as a qualitative characteristic of reality. It is the need for a detailed understanding by the science of education of its methodological, general historical and academic prerequisites and their relevant perspectives that makes philosophical works on socio-cultural, political and psychological aspects relevant, which, in turn, influenced the modern trends in the development of pedagogy. The interest in the problems of the methodological and general theoretical prerequisites for forming the characteristics of the pedagogical projection of their leading ideas is due to communitarianism, the transformation of the modern socio-political picture of the world, as well as the widespread popularization of the sociophilosophical trends of Eurocommunism, neo-Marxism, post-Marxism [1]. Modern science is characterized by the fact that it is customary to define peculiar trends by the name of their author. It is important to note that terms such as 'Gramscianism' and 'Neogramscianism' are actively used in modern science. This, of course, testifies to the importance of the concept of philosophical judgments of the thinker, the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). The philosophical teachings of this

thinker have made a significant contribution both to the history of Euromarxism and to pedagogy in general. This is confirmed by a large number of scientific studies of his thoughts on learning and education. Currently, Gramsci literature in the field of pedagogy can be found all over the world in English, Italian, French, Portuguese and other languages. [2–8]. In scientific research, Gramsci's pedagogical interpretation underlies the teaching of critical pedagogy [9], as well as language and its relation to the concept of hegemony [10]. Other authors who study issues related to adult education often refer to the research of A. Gramsci [11], while some scientists use his views to interpret modern problems, others focus on his pedagogical works [12]. His philosophical works are a theoretical source and an effective guide to the actions of both the European movements of the 'new left' and the 'new right'. Of course, this proves the unconventionality, thoroughness and popularity of his philosophical and theoretical views. According to domestic and foreign scientists, the influence of Antonio Gramsci on the formation of the doctrine of educating members of a new equal civil society has not been adequately evaluated, considering the degree of research into his pedagogical heritage [1; 13 p. 48].

Main part. In his writings, Antonio Gramsci devoted considerable attention to the formulation of a blueprint for a national educational system and an enlightenment project aimed at the implementation and advancement of a socialist propaganda apparatus. In detail, but not

completely systematized, he considered the issues of education in his writings 'Prison Notebooks', which he wrote during his imprisonment [14]. Russian and foreign scientists admit that this work is difficult to analyze, because it is written in the form of notes., which were reviewed and clarified by the author in the process of writing it. However, it should be noted that A. Gramsci himself, being a researcher of political and social processes, did not claim that his works were the ultimate truth and repeatedly stressed that they needed to be refined and more detailed research. Scientists who have studied his work claim that 'perhaps the reason for this is prison censorship, which did not allow Gramsci to write everything he thought about' [15]. Nevertheless, from the large amount of material contained in the 'Prison Notebooks' [15] and 'Intelligence forming. The formation of a man' [16], one can single out a common leitmotif – the theme of party and state policy in the field of education [1].

In his 'Prison Notebooks', Antonio Gramsci delved into an analysis of the contemporary socio-political landscape in Italy, specifically focusing on the educational reforms implemented during the 1920s. The authors of these educational reforms were two prominent Italian philosophers who concurrently served as ministers of education. Consequently, Gramsci devoted significant attention in his scholarly work to Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), a well-known Italian politician who served as minister of education from 1920 to 1921. Croce was instrumental in designing the educational reform; however, it remained unimplemented during his tenure due to his unwavering refusal to collaborate with the fascist government. The fundamental principles of the reform, augmented by several provisions reflective of fascist ideology, were subsequently implemented by Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944), who assumed the role of minister of education between 1923 and 1928 [1].

In order to understand how Antonio Gramsci evaluated the pedagogical views of Giovanni Gentile, we conducted a content-analytical study of the text of the 'Prison Notebooks', which was carried out in accordance with the general rules for conducting such studies in pedagogical research [15–18]. The semantic unit of our analysis is the concept of 'Giovanni Gentile'.

Due to the voluminous nature of the text in the 'Prison Notebooks', we chose a judgment as the unit of account, reflecting Gramsci's attitude towards the pedagogical ideas expressed in the works by Giovanni Gentile. We then quantified the text, first identifying those paragraphs where the name of Gentile appeared, serving as an indicator for further exploration of his thoughts.

Based on the semantic analysis of these selected parts, we determined the idea that each paragraph was dedicated to. Any paragraphs that did not address pedagogical topics were excluded from the study. The next phase of our investigation involved the process of calculating and interpreting the units of analysis we had performed. This entailed reducing pedagogical concepts to their respective terms, which are employed in the study of educational issues. The results of these calculations were then incorporated into encoding tables, which were subsequently visualized as histograms using Excel tools [1].

In the subsequent stage of our inquiry, we undertook a comprehensive analysis of the frequency with which A. Gramsci referred to the contents of the conceptual and categorical framework of pedagogy. The context in which these references occurred was carefully examined, leading to the formulation of meaningful conclusions. Through our analysis of the 'Prison Notebooks' text, containing 10 instances of Giovanni Gentile's name, we were able to categorize Gramsci's opinions on educational reform into six distinct clusters [1], as depicted in Figure 1.

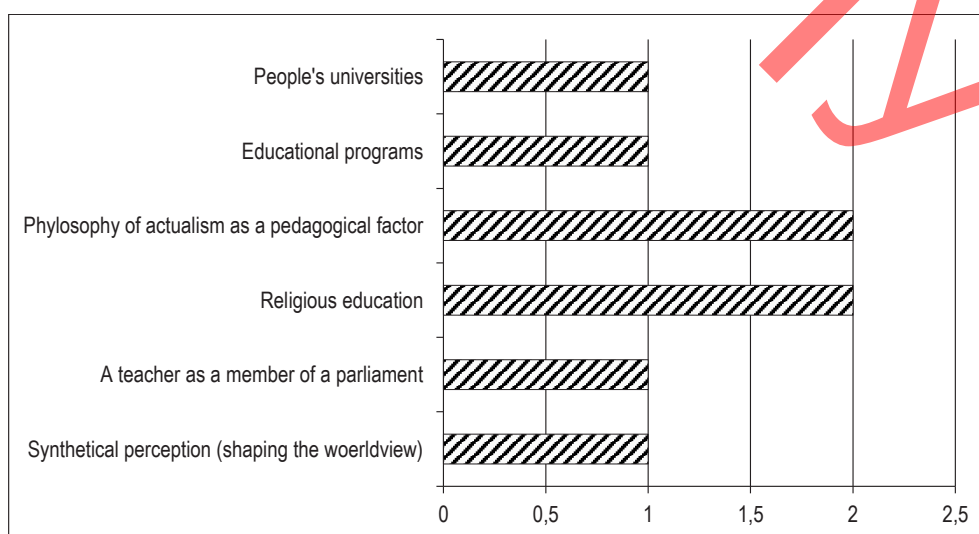


Figure 1 – Distribution of thematic clusters on educational issues in Antonio Gramsci's work 'Prison Notebooks'

The histogram reveals that in assessing the pedagogical approaches implemented in the 'educational reform of Gentile', Antonio Gramsci drew upon the teachings of the 'philosophy of actualism', developed by Giovanni Gentile. Gramsci's primary focus lies on the perspective of the philosopher who upholds the principle of mental primacy, a tenet of idealist philosophy. Antonio Gramsci aligns this position with the challenge of applying critical thinking techniques in the creation of educational curricula. Rhetoric is viewed by Gramsci as a formative element: it does not create artists, shape taste, or establish criteria for appreciating beauty; rather, it serves the purpose of establishing cultural conformity and the linguistic proficiency of educated individuals.

Despite the idealistic nature of his stance on mental processes, Gramsci acknowledges Gentile's distinction between thinking techniques and rhetoric. We devote particular attention to Gramsci's analysis of Giovanni Gentile's concept of 'analytic education'. Within the framework of his philosophical thought, Gentile introduces the notion of 'analytic education', which he defines as a process of acquiring knowledge through analysis. Antonio Gramsci criticizes his position, because he believes that, despite the use of the term «analytical education» in the works of J. Gentile, it is 'about synthetic education' aimed at spreading a worldview that has become the norm of life, i.e. religion' [19; 20]. Gramsci contends that, in line with the Concordat, the state has voluntarily assumed the responsibility of funding the educational initiatives of the Holy See, which are implemented through the Cathedral of San Paolo. The state transfers funds equivalent to the amounts annually allocated to the Ministry of Education specifically for this Cathedral (Article 13) [21]. Furthermore, according to Article 16 of the Concordat, the government has pledged not to impose any taxes or fees on the educational institutions of the Vatican, including the Gregorian University, Biblical Institute, Oriental Institute, Archaeological Institute, Russian Seminary, Lombard College and the House of Concentration for clergy of Saints John and Paul. Gramsci rightfully noted that these provisions extend beyond the realm of religious education, which has traditionally been provided through Sunday schools, sermons and communal prayer. He believed that after the Concordat was signed, these activities ceased to be conducted within the framework of a religious state but rather within the context of civil society [22].

Gramsci was convinced that J. Gentile's concept of religion as the 'infancy of humanity', developed within his philosophy of activism, was nothing more than sophistry and thus served the interests of clericalism. Gentile's plan to introduce religion into elementary schools as part of educational reform led to its inclusion in secondary

schools, strengthening the Vatican's influence. Antonio Gramsci emphasizes that the influence of Catholic Church representatives extends beyond mere verbal persuasion. He argues that the Church seeks complete submission from its followers, and submission, in turn, serves as an effective formative tool [1].

Conclusion. To summarize the foregoing, we may state that Antonio Gramsci was highly critical of the reform of education that took place in Italy, which led to the formulation of his own vision for educational reform. This project was developed based on Gramsci's conviction that the educational system should strive to elevate individuals both intellectually and morally. The conducted content analysis of the text of Gramsci's 'Prison Notebooks' allowed us not only to identify the thinker's attitude to the education reform, but also to demonstrate those aspects of the reform that caused particular criticism of the philosopher. Thus, the most key positions are criticized – the problem of religious and political education, as well as the problem of the formation of educational content [1, p. 55].

A. Gramsci considers the problems of changing the education system as an opportunity to implement the 'philosophy of practice' (Gramscian version of the understanding of Marxism). The fundamental distinction between Gramsci's vision for educational reform and the reform implemented in Italy during the 1920s under the influence of Catholic ideology lies in their respective approaches. While the latter aimed to maintain ordinary individuals at the level of a primitive philosophy rooted in everyday meanings, Gramsci's philosophy of practice sought to elevate them to a higher level of consciousness, fostering an intellectual and moral foundation that would enable the political progress of the masses rather than limited intellectual circles. [1, p. 22]. Gramsci believed that education reform should be aimed at ensuring that the broad masses of the population are able to achieve 'intellectual elevation', as well as 'bring to life intellectual elites of a new type who would grow directly among their masses, remaining in contact with the masses' [1, p. 31]. According to A. Gramsci's new popular elites should unite the masses, however, traditional elites who have graduated from universities are not oriented towards consolidation even within one social stratum: 'intellectual groups find themselves fragmented between different social strata or within the same stratum. University... It does not perform any unifying function' [1, p. 33, 13].

In accordance with our analysis, we came to the conclusion that Antonio Gramsci examines issues related to the role of education in the process of national consolidation, intellectual and moral development of all segments of society in both critical and analytical and creative discourse. Consequently, despite the fact that Antonio

Gramsci wrote his works a long time ago, nevertheless, they still remain relevant, since many aspects that he critically evaluated in his philosophical writings have not found their final resolution.

Based on the foregoing, we can conclude that Antonio Gramsci's theoretical legacy is currently in demand by supporters of a wide variety of political and ideological movements. At the same time, it is a source of productive ideas that are formulated, clarified, and implemented by representatives of various socio-pedagogical trends, trends, and schools. To one degree or another, the appeal to the ideas expressed by Antonio Gramsci in the first third of the twentieth century is determined by the peculiarities of his socio-political and civic position, which is expressed in a number of his journalistic and polemical works. Many of them were written «for the spite of the day», as a response to the statements of political and party figures who, in order to clarify their conceptual positions on the political structure of the modern world, turned to

arguments drawn from the field of education, enlightenment, and the theory of pedagogy. The value of Antonio Gramsci's ideas, which were outlined in his work «Prison Notebooks», is seen by supporters of post-Marxism in the fact that he turned to the concept of «intelligentsia», which formed the main body of the protest movement in the seventies. A. Gramsci saw its advantages in the fact that it not only possesses universal and professional knowledge acquired in the official education system, but is also able to develop meanings and actualize the mechanism of faith in the best destiny of man in the public consciousness. Its ideological and intellectual potential is so high that, under certain circumstances, it is quite capable of forming collective faith in bright ideals and, by its example, captivating the less intellectually advanced masses, acting as their ideological outpost. And even though his pedagogical views and ideas were based on the problems of education of his era, they still remain actual today.

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