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THE COLLABORATION OF SCHOOL AND FAMILY DURING THE SOVIET UNION PERIOD (EXPERIENCE OF GEORGIA)

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The main essence of the article is the study of Georgian experience of school and family collaboration during the Soviet Union regime. The study aims to determine the characteristics of the school-family connection in the Soviet educational system, to explore the cause-and-effect relationships and to explain the presented event based on theoretical-philosophical and state approaches. The current relevance of parental involvement in the field of education aroused great interest in establishing the historical heritage of post-Soviet countries. The historical research method was used in the research process. Interpretation of past events, evaluation and concluding were implemented through primary and secondary sources, data collection, organisation, analysis, and synthesis. The study found that the strategy of school and family collaboration in the Soviet Union was based on socialist pedagogy and the theory of communist upbringing of the young generation. As a result of the reform, the concepts of child-rearing, family and social upbringing, the relationship between educational institutions and the pedagogical education of parents were introduced and established in the field of education. A systematic approach to the issue was identified, both at the legislative and institutional levels, as well as in terms of formal and non-formal educational activities. The practice of close cooperation between educational institutions in the Soviet Union, through a centralised management system and mass control mechanisms, was aimed at achieving party goals for education, such as the upbringing of the Soviet man and its ideological indoctrination.

Key words: Parent involvement, parenting theory, socialist pedagogy, parental pedagogical education, educational policy, school reform.

Мета дослідження – визначити особливості зв'язку школа-сім'я в радянській системі освіти, дослідити причинно-наслідкові зв'язки та пояснити такий взаємозв'язок використовуючи теоретико-філософський і державний підходи на прикладі Грузії. У процесі дослідження використовувався історичний метод дослідження. Інтерпретація минулих подій, оцінка і висновки були



здійснені за допомогою первинних і вторинних джерел, збору даних, їх організації, аналізу і синтезу. В ході дослідження було встановлено, що стратегія взаємодії школи і сім'ї в Радянському Союзі базувалася на соціалістичній педагогіці і теорії комуністичного виховання молодого покоління. В результаті реформи в сферу освіти були введені і закріплені поняття виховання дітей, сімейного і соціального виховання, взаємини між освітніми установами і педагогічна освіта. Питання взаємозв'язку сім'я-школа в Грузії розглянуто із застосуванням системного підходу, як на законодавчому, так і на інституційному рівнях, а також з точки зору формальної та неформальної освітньої діяльності. Практика тісної взаємодії навчальних закладів Радянського Союзу через централізовану систему управління і механізми масового контролю була спрямована на досягнення партійних цілей в освіті, таких як виховання радянської людини і її ідеологічна індоктринація.

Ключові слова: батьківська залученість, теорія виховання, соціалістична педагогіка, педагогічна освіта, освітня політика, шкільна реформа.

Introduction. The importance of family-school cooperation in the development of students at school and the improvement of academic achievement has been confirmed by scientific studies. Although scientific research on parental involvement has been conducted around the world for decades, regulating countries' legislative bases, and taking international initiatives, the issue has not lost its relevance in modern times.

Proceeding from the current challenges, countries must emerge from the peculiarities of developing their educational systems. Because the social, political, economic, cultural, or educational spheres of each of the Soviet Union's countries have been significantly affected by the Soviet Union's seventy-year historical legacy, it is essential to explore the Soviet practice of parental involvement.

The Georgian education system has been influenced by Soviet policy. Nowadays, it is under an intense reform process and is still trying to eliminate past heritage. Therefore, the findings of the article will significantly help policymakers and education professionals of Georgia and other post-Soviet countries to find, on the one hand, plausible explanations for ongoing school-family collaboration practices and, on the other hand, to plan and implement targeted policies to address existing challenges.

Methodology. The aim of the research is to study the Soviet policy on parental involvement and school-family cooperation, to identify its characteristics and to explain the cause-and-effect relationships of the existing practice. The historical research method was used in the research process. The primary and secondary sources were used to collect and analyse information in order to interpret, evaluate and draw conclusions of past events. The paper examined the theoretical and philosophical visions recognised in the Soviet Union, the state's propaganda policy on the creation of a teacher and child cult, introduced school and family cooperation and control mechanisms in terms of school reform, and then described the state strategies for parental pedagogy. Due to the limitations of historical research, there has been a shortage of articles published in the modern period, so the research materials are dominated by archival documentary materials and old periodicals.



Main part. Education in the Soviet Union played a vital role in the construction of the new socialist country, which was tasked with changing the human mind and the mission of reorganising the existing social society. To achieve this goal, the government took control of both educational institutions, as well as the issue of family upbringing under the state strategy. Soviet policy was based on the philosophical-theoretical views of socialist pedagogy recognised in the Soviet Union.

Soviet socialist pedagogy was based on the teachings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on the upbringing, teaching, and education of the young generation. The concept of upbringing occupied a special place in Marxist pedagogy. Carl Marx and Friedrich Engels, along with state institutions, considered the family to be one of the essential links in the development of new moral education concepts (as cited in Vasadze, 1988). They criticised the practice of family upbringing in Tsarist Russia, arguing that the form of upbringing had changed significantly with the emergence of socio-economic poverty and the practice of involving parents in industrial activities in the country (as cited in Vasadze, 1988, p. 146). Therefore, philosophers must have considered the active involvement of parents in the upbringing of their children.

The school was considered to be the primary means of carrying out philosophical views of Soviet science and a state policy based on it in the Soviet Union. The author of the doctrine of communist upbringing, V. I. Lenin, considered the school to be the party's policymaker, forming a communist moral (Brower, 1973) in youth in the spirit of loyalty to the party and the people. Lenin noted that "we declare that school without life, without politics, is a lie and hypocrisy" (as cited in Vasadze, 1988, p. 401). Consequently, it was the school that had to make a close connection with the families and form the practice of family upbringing according to Soviet principles.

Soviet scientist A. S. Makarenko focuses on the involvement of parents in the process of upbringing and the connection between family and school in general. Makarenko presented his views on the leading role of the school in the upbringing of the individual and at the same time on the great importance of the school-family connection. It is also noteworthy that Makarenko was one of the first to raise the issue of the interconnectedness of the educational institutions of the socialist society. He considered it necessary not only for the school and the family but also for the "joint action of the school, the family, the Communist Party, the pioneer organisation, the productive organisations and even the living space" (as cited in Vasadze, 1988, p. 507). V. A. Sukhomlinsky formed his views on the collaboration between school and family and its role in the upbringing of students. In his book, "I Give My Heart to the Children", he singled out the topic "Parents of my Students" (Sukhomlinsky, 2016, p. 16). V. A. Sukhomlinsky advocated for the promotion of pedagogical principles among parents and emphasised the role of the family in the proper pedagogical work of the family.

Soviet pedagogy relied heavily on the views of scientists, theorists, and philosophers working in the present period on the arrangement, management, and prioritisation of the educational system. These theories were also based on government policy, which, with its strong propaganda means, invaded the public consciousness and prepared it for specific party purposes. For ideological preparation of the society, penetration into each family and each person influence, the Soviet



authorities resorted to a strategy of creating a cult of teachers and children. In the Soviet Union, teachers were recognised and valued by both the state and society. The state pursued a targeted policy to strengthen teacher authority in society. A considerable amount of resources were spent on teacher training, payroll programs, and also on propaganda campaigns (Sakhalkho Ganatleba, 1986). The teacher's slogans were "Honor and Glory to the Soviet Teacher", "Glory to the Soviet Teacher!" Posters were created, various awards, orders and medals were awarded, such as the title of Socialist Hero, the Order of Labor Glory, the title of "People's Teacher of the USSR", N. Krupskaya Medal (Sakhalkho Ganatleba, 1986). Teachers, poets and artists praised the work of teachers for their work. The purpose of creating a similar type of authority for teachers was to make the population respectful of the teacher and make her the most trusted and role model in society. In return, the government demanded wordless trust and obedience in the pursuit of partisan and state interests (Sakhalkho Ganatleba, 1986).

Teachers began to spread ideological education in the community, the main target of which was children. Children were given particular importance in the Soviet Union, and they were seen as guarantors of a socialist future for the successful implementation of the Marxist revolution internationally. Therefore, children were treated well and raised for political reasons. The main motive for the creation and effective functioning of the youth organisations - Komsomol, Young Pioneers and Little October - was to fulfil the state mission, which should have played a key role in raising children with communist morals.

The creation of a cult of teachers and children through active propaganda through the population prepared the ground for the introduction of the principles of Soviet pedagogy, first in school life and then in the whole society, with great pain and enthusiasm.

The leading institution for mass spreading the principles of the Soviet pedagogy and Soviet policy it was considered to be a school. There was a generally accepted view that it was the school that had to socialise children. Consequently, the most significant responsibility came from this institution. However, the school would not be able to carry out its mission independently, apart from the family, which was very well understood by policymakers, and throughout the Soviet Union, educational reform clearly defined the importance of school, family and society cooperation (Chabe, 1971).

The objectives of the Soviet educational reform clearly and unambiguously defined the directions of school and family upbringing of children and adolescents. The joint action of these social institutions should have shaped the communist worldview, ideas and views of the adolescent. The school, as an institution, assumed the function of managing the performance and organisation of this mission. The mentioned educational establishment pursued a variety of strategies for dealing with families; in particular, it carried out individual, group and collective work with parents, where the principles of a systemic approach were presented.

Individual work with parents meant that the teacher in charge of a class would study the parenting skills of each parent through particular questionnaires and then develop specific recommendations for improving or changing the parenting methodology in the family. To do this, the tutor resorted to well-proven family



practices in the Soviet Union. The group of parents working in the Soviet school was a form of group work. The committee consisted of 3-5 people from each class. The Parents' Committee carried out various initiatives according to the action plan, and it is also essential that they take responsibility for resolving problematic issues. For example, in order to influence parents who were less involved in school life, the parents' committee was tasked with studying these families and finding "means of influencing carefree parents" (Svadovski, 1965). The form of collective work with the parents included the general meetings of the class, which were conducted by the tutor and the teachers of the subject participated in the meeting. Also, one of the forms of the meeting was the meeting of the parents with the school principal, where, due to the general need of the school, the issues related to education were discussed.

"Parents' Day" was considered a form of joint work between school and family, when parents attended lectures by teachers, school principals, schoolteachers, and pioneers, consulted, and established close ties with the school. The role of parents in improving the school's material conditions and upbringing was particularly prominent in the Soviet school. It is well known that parents' committees often took the lead in matters related to school renovation or construction through funding from collective farms, factories, and factories. It should also be noted that parents of different specialities in schools opened sports and creative circles for students, not only to meet the needs of the class but also to ensure the functioning of the after school teaching and upbringing practice in the Soviet school system (Svadovski, 1965). The Soviet school had a well-defined educational policy, the implementation of which was mandatory. Activities on the part of the school in terms of family-school cooperation were aimed at establishing Soviet ideology in family practice and strengthening the involvement of all possible institutions in the process of the ideological upbringing of students. In the Soviet Union, under the centralised management of school education, the issue of implementing all types of directives or initiatives was under high control.

In the Soviet Union, the issue of state policy was strictly controlled, and therefore, there were specific strategies in all areas, which minimised the number of deviations from the strategy. There were also appropriate punishment practices in the direction of school-family cooperation. The most common practice was public disclosure. The school held public meetings of parents who did not meet the public and school requirements of the Soviet regime. One of the types of punishment was the issue of sending information about the child's behaviour at the parent's workplace. In the case of disciplinary violation, the school sent a letter to the institution where the student's parent worked in order to respond to the relevant service (Vadachkoria&Bashinjaghovi, 1975). One of the most severe manifestations was the practice of confiscating a child from a family and transferring it to a boarding school (Svadovski, 1965).

The mechanisms of mass control characteristic of the Soviet government took on particularly severe forms during Stalin's time when the school and family were responsible for the student's misconduct. According to the archival documents, verbal or non-verbal expressions unacceptable to the Soviet system by students were declared anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary, and the trial of school teachers, principals, and parents of these students and the shooting of Stalin's lists (IDFI, 2019).



The Soviet government, through its centralised management system and mass control, continuously monitored the activities of the subjects or institutions involved in the upbringing of the next generation. The scale of control reached its most substantial and most inhumane scale during Stalin's rule, which did not last long. However, the fight against the system by public disclosure has proved to be a characteristic feature of the Soviet system of government throughout its existence.

Soviet policy was directed not only to the strict control of the upbringing practice in the educational institutions, but it was highly interested in mass dissemination of pedagogical education. Accordingly, the government has been paying close attention to the organisation of the school system, as well as extracurricular activities and the organisation of educational activities outside the school.

The need for joint work of the school and the family union, as well as the school, the family and the community, was determined at the legislative level by the 1979 resolution (Vasadze, 1988, p. 536). Moreover, the school reform states that the development of the parent pedagogical universal education system will play an essential role in improving family upbringing (Dolidze, 1986). Krupskaya attached great importance to the relationship between teachers and parents and stressed the need to conduct pedagogical activities directly with parents in schools (Krupskaia, 1938). Therefore, the Soviet school was characterised by lectures on current issues of child-rearing, which were attended by representatives of the school, as well as stakeholders and organisations.

Dimitri Uznadze raised the issue of the necessity of pedagogy of parents, which indicated that “not only teachers but also future educators need pedagogical training, ie. To every citizen as a future parent” (Uznadze, 2005, p. 427). Consequently, the work in the Soviet Union was directed at both formal and non-formal parental education. There were various journals “Our Children” (Krupskaia, 1938), “Family and School” (Svadovski, 1965), “School and Life” (Vadachkoria & Bashinjag-hovi, 1975) under the auspices of the State Committee for Education to produce pedagogical propaganda for the masses. In Russia and Ukraine, there were “parents' universities” where teachers and doctors gave lectures to raise awareness about parenting (Nargizishvili, 1986). It is also noteworthy that in the Soviet Union, there were “public education councils” that discussed issues related to education and upbringing. Lenin considered the work of these councils to be necessary, on the one hand, to “listen to the masses” on the part of teachers, and on the other hand, the population to listen to and follow the advice of teachers (Krupskaia, 1938).

Representatives of both the scientific field and state institutions paid great attention to the issue of public-family upbringing in the Soviet system. Active work was being done to improve the school's practice, as well as to provide non-formal education – publishing, training courses or university education. However, it should be noted that all the activities mentioned above were aimed at achieving the party goals of the government under the ideological spirit in order to form a new Soviet society.

Conclusion. To sum up, the article has achieved its goals regarding the thorough examination of Georgian experience on school-family collaboration while being under the Soviet Union's regime. It has determined the characteristics of school-family cooperation, has defined the cause-and-effect relationships and has explained



the presented event based on theoretical-philosophical and state approaches of that time. The study has revealed that the issue of school-family cooperation and basic ideological principles were defined at the state level. The mentioned policy, as it was typical to the Soviet approach, was spread commonly in all countries of the Soviet Union and Georgia was one of them too. The Soviet government developed the principles for the formation of a new society based on the ideological-philosophical views of the founders of the theory of Marxism, socialist pedagogy and the communist upbringing of adolescents. Philosophy of upbringing included the change of the human mind and the formation of a new, communist generation of adolescents, its ideological indoctrination.

It was necessary to use institutional power to create a new society, and of course, the primary function, in this case, was assigned to the school. However, it was clear to decision-makers that only one institution could not accomplish the task of changing the minds of the young generation, and that family involvement was essential. Consequently, not only based on the recommendations of scientists but also based on legislative records, the requirements of school, public and family upbringing of children and adolescents within the framework of school reform were clearly defined. Responsibilities have been placed on both the family and the school, as well as various youth organisations and the society in general.

In parallel with the reform of school-family upbringing, the Soviet Union adopted a strategy of introducing and propagating the cult of the teacher and the child, which prepared a solid ground in society for the implementation of specific goals. Within the framework of the school reform, the role of the school in the direction of close cooperation between the family and the school and the increase of the pedagogical education of the parents was determined. In the form of individual, group and collective work introduced in the school, the state was subject to the state goals of family upbringing. It is clear from the practice of the Soviet school that parents were a kind of human and financial resource, both in terms of regulating the material and technical issues of the school, as well as in the management of the educational process. Purposeful policies on the dissemination of pedagogical education in parents were pursued in both formal and non-formal education. Using control mechanisms characteristic of the Soviet system the practice of public disclosure of people and families and the sending of reprimand letters to the service, and even more so by the civilisation of fear reigning under Stalin cases of deviation from Soviet politics were strictly controlled and minimised.

The established practice of close communication between school and family was achieved through the creation of a cult of teachers and children, under a centralised management system, and through mass control to fulfil the mission assigned to education by the government in the process of creating a new society. The unity of the school and the family through high public involvement has become a powerful tool for educating the new generation, which has succeeded in introducing communist ideology into the generations and achieving state, party goals.



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