

Potential of Volunteer's Activity of Students in Solution of Urgent Social and Pedagogic Problems

¹Sergei Belentsov, ¹Nadezhda Tarasova, ¹Alesya Kuznetsova and ²Svetlana Dyumina

¹Southwestern State University, Kursk, Russia

²Kursk Institute of Continual Professional Education

(Training and Retraining) of Specialists for Education, Kursk, Russia

Abstract: The article is to investigate the origin of the children's patriotism, which is a key factor of child's personality formation and a form of civic participation of children in socially useful activities. This study attempts to explore and identify the basic conditions, trends and mechanisms of formation, educational and social-political transformations in Russia in the second half of the XIX-early XX centuries, which are the factors of patriotic education of school children by the example of children's voluntary work. The article reveals the concepts of "voluntary work" and "volunteering"; considers the history of their appearance and formation; provides the main characteristics of voluntary work; identifies and describes the major effective forms of patriotic education of the youth in the second half of XIX-early XX centuries; discusses the stages of historical formation and demonstration of patriotism in Europe and Russia by the example of environmentally friendly (environmental) children's "May unions"; describes the most common forms of labor help and charity of scholars in Russia during the war and analyzing the activity of the school labor squads as children volunteer organizations; considered an idea of formation of love and respect to the past, historical heritage by organizing the excursion activities; reveals the potential of voluntary work as an effective mechanism for solution of urgent social and educational problems.

Key words: Voluntary work • Youth policy • Patriotic education

INTRODUCTION

The transformations in the social, economic, political and cultural fields are related to formation and development of the young generation [1]. According to the Concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation until 2020, "civil education and patriotic education of young people, promotion of the legal, cultural and moral values are the primary objectives. This problem can be solved by the development of voluntary work (volunteering) of young people and the creation of conditions for the activities of youth associations and non-profit organizations" [2].

Voluntary work for the welfare of society has been considered as an integral component of the patriotic self-consciousness of an individual [3]. Along with term "voluntary", its analogue "volunteering" is often being used. Both these terms have been developing in their

understanding for years. The terms of "volunteer", "volunteerism" and "volunteer activity" appeared in foreign sociology in the 20-30's of XX century [4].

For example, among the explanation of the 25 000 foreign words which have entered the Russian language, the roots of "volunteer" word derives "from the French *volontaire* and the Latin *voluntarius*, -voluntary or serving in the military without remuneration" [5].

Later, these terms have changed. In the explanatory dictionary of modern Russian language, the volunteer is a person who "voluntary participate in any matter (usually new, difficult and dangerous for life)" [6].

In a large Law Dictionary, the term "volunteer" is a synonym to enlistment. A volunteer is: "1) In international legislation, -the individuals who voluntarily enter the army of one of the warring countries; 2)... the citizens who carry the charitable activities as the unpaid labor in the interests of the beneficiaries including the benefit of a charitable organization" [7].

In the sociological dictionary “volunteer is a person who voluntarily, i.e. by its own free will decided to devote a part of own life to others, helping them to overcome the life’s difficulties” [8].

Thus, the term “voluntary work” in the modern context, or “volunteering” was hardly widespread in Russia until the mid 80’s of XX century. Etymologically, the terms “volunteer” and “free-will worker” are almost synonyms, although reveal a specific distinctive feature for Russian definition which includes the *moral principle of activity*.

Voluntary work in our study will be considered as an integrative concept that includes social and pedagogical aspects [9]. First, volunteering is socially significant, conscious activity of people, carried out without forcing, regardless of age, race, sex and religion in activities aimed to the social, cultural, economic and environmental problem solving in the society, which is non-profit activity. Secondly, the volunteering is an effective form of socialization of young people, stipulating the opposition of consumer psychology and appropriate behavioral pattern, promoting the individual growth and development of citizens (volunteers) performing those activities.

The problem of patriotic education of students in different periods of Russian history had always been solved by specific approaches and measures. In the end of XIX - early XX centuries (until 1917), several events and processes have significantly influenced the patriotic education of youth such as: the emergence of humanistic paradigm of education; economic growth and the development of market relations; the revolutions and the subsequent political reforms which became the beginning of the democratization of social and political system and foundation of civil society.

In our study, we have attempted to identify and describe the general forms of patriotic education of students in the second half of XIX-early XX centuries such as: environmentally friendly (environmental) children’s union (aimed to protect the birds and animals as the prototype of neighbor protection), labor help and charity during the war (the idea of charity and creative activity) and excursions activities (the idea of formation of love and respect to the past and historical heritage).

In the beginning of XX century, V.V. Rozanov, appealing to formation of children’s “May unions” for protection of the birds and animals, wrote: “There is no better way to develop compassion and kindness to the neighbors as practical help to someone or something, the practical concern of anyone or anything. However, a

man can not serve as an object of child’s concern since a child is not able to compassionate and he needs a living creature which smaller and weaker a child... Carrying the animals, a child as a future adult, learns how to treat them lovingly, compassionately and poetically, thoughtfully looks at this world far removed from a man and however, already animated, the needy and the suffering beings, will transmit these feelings and attitude to the adults in future” [10].

In 1865, children’s union was created in the village Utgreen (Smithies town, England) to protect the animals. However, it is traditionally believed that the first “May union” for the protection of birds has been organized by Professor Z. Topelius, famous writer of XIX century in Finland and the Swedish literature, because it characterized by a clear organization and a set of rules maintained by its members.

By the beginning of XX century, similar unions, clubs and associations have been established in numerous countries [11]. In France, the number of “school associations” exceeded 4 000 and actively increased. By 1903, there were more 300 “May unions” in Finland. In Norway, similar unions were created in Bergen. In Germany (Frankfurt-on-Main) and its suburb, there were about 30 “May unions”. “Greater German State Union for patronage to animals” in Bremen was founded by F.S. Kutman by 1903 and included more than 10 000 members. In Italy and Spain, the British societies for patronage to animals supported the active agitation work: illustrative materials (books and leaflets) were spread among citizens to rise the children’s interest and love to the animals. The journal “Animal World” published by the Society of Animals’ Patronage has popularized the creation of these societies. Over 5 years, 1 500 000 copies of this journal were released and most of those were distributed for free.

The teachers of that period have reported that children’s activities in the schools aimed to the preservation of birds’ nests gradually appeared as the help to their friends [12]. “Children try to arrange their affairs between each other to avoid the complaining to their mentors. If any of the children by taking on the obligation to be compassionate to animals, will break his promise, the comrades try to friendly persuade him avoid such misconducts in the future. In this case, there were no denunciations to each other” [13].

In Russia, the first “May union” for the protection of birds and other animals was founded in the family estate Elizavetino owned by E.E. Vaganova in the Pskov province. The ideas of Z. Topelius served as a basis of

the rules for a union. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has approved the regulations of "May union" and it was officially recognized as a public organization on June 1, 1901.

Ministry of Public Education actively supported the idea of creation of these unions. The journals "Zadushevnoe slovo", "Narodnoe obrazovanie", "Lesopromyshlennyi vestnik" and a newspaper "Novoe vremya" have popularized this idea.

Other forms of patriotic education of the young generation are the labor help and charity, especially apparent during the First World War, which began in 1914. The interest of children and teenagers to military actions was unusually high. "War with its terrible effect provides the good basis for the development of the moral characteristics of the young generation. A sense of strong patriotism has been formed in children when they realize that the love to homeland, the threat of danger of country enslavement are key factors uniting against the common enemy, makes forget all the discords and awake the desire to win a war at any price and achieve the victory and independence of the homeland... This makes stronger confidence that the work of each individual, though small, but united, will significantly facilitate the life of those are fighting and dying, defending the honor and freedom of the homeland" [14].

Participation of the young generation in the war was described in many documents. For example, the weekly illustrated art-literary magazine "Iskry" regularly published the material on the young defenders of the Homeland: "Vasily Naumov, 12 years old-a little hero scout, the peasant boy from Krestnikova village, Simbirsk uyezd, was twice wounded and awarded with two St George's Crosses, St George's Medal and promoted to the senior non-commissioned officer" [15].

The children ran to the army and battle-front almost from all cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Odessa, Kiev, etc.), hamlets, villages and towns. Only in September of 1914, the gendarmes in Pskov took off the trains more than 100 children riding to the front. All this evidenced the deep patriotic senses of Russian youth.

It was necessary to find an effective way to create a favorable atmosphere in which children could make a possible contribution to help their homeland in the rear avoiding participation in war battles. The children were involved in to active and sometimes independent help to the homeland. They saw off the front troops during mass mobilization, corresponded with soldiers, met the first wounded, helped the sanitary corps, prepared the gifts to the soldiers and collected the stuff for the wounded and

disabled. The labor help of students was a bright example of children's patriotism in Russia during the First World War, which appeared in: supply the army and the citizens by food, assisted to poorest scholars in education, especially the scholars, whose families have lost their breadwinners in the war, etc.

In May of 1915, a society "Narodnaya pomoshch" has organized the voluntary groups of secondary school students for agriculture works and political propaganda. In "Draft regulation on labor squads of students" compiled by the Commission on extracurricular agricultural education on April 16, 1916, the main tasks, functions and composition of school associations, are defined. It is noted that the labor squads of students are formed to supplement the shortage of labor force in agriculture and are purposed to help the families of soldiers as well as for work in the vegetable gardens arranged to supply the troops and infirmaries by vegetables and other agricultural works, such as hay mowing and crop harvesting.

On the one hand, the labor squads were a solution for the problem of labor shortage appeared due to the participation of the majority of adults in the war, on the other hand-carried the educational potential: obtaining the real knowledge about soil, plants and animals and whole rural life. Geographical frames of organization of labor squads have expanded very fast. In the fall of 1915, the labor squads existed in more than 20 provinces and regions of Russia. At least several hundred scholars joined in the labor squads in the spring and summer of 1916, in almost every province of the European Russia to work.

Excursion work was also very effective form of patriotic education of scholars, development of joint activity skills and transition of a group to the higher level of development [16]. In the beginning of XX century, the organization of student excursions on Christmas and Easter holidays has become common practice. In these days, the students guided by their mentor went to St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kiev, where they visited the museums, art galleries and city sight-seeing. In summer, longer trips were arranged: for the Caucasus, Crimea, to the White Sea with a visit of the Solovetskiy monastery, for Finland, Urals, Volga, etc. There were trips abroad, for instance to Western Europe.

In the theological educational institutions, the excursions for scholars were also widespread. The main purpose of the excursion work is the development and strengthening of love to the homeland and the glorious past of the Great Russian people in scholars. For example,

the excursion to the Crimea with a stop in Kiev and the Caucasus with a visit the New Athos was organized for the foster children of the Kursk seminary. The Holy Synod has recognized by the direction from July 2-29, 1908 no. 4718 “the organization of readings and talks about the great historical anniversaries and pilgrimages, excursions for students to survey the national sacred objects and ancient monuments in the spiritual education as useful” [17].

It was noted that the excursions possess the great educational value and are an effective method for intellectual development of a child being a factor of social education [18]. The excursions teach students to be independent, develop their courage, energy, observation, enterprise and promote the strong, firm and independent character formation in people [19].

CONCLUSION

Thus, voluntary work from a pedagogical point of view has a significant *psychological and pedagogical potential* [20], which first of all appears in the implementation of educational and developmental functions. In Russia, in the second half of XIX-early XX centuries, the following forms of patriotic education of the young generation were formed: volunteer organizations aimed to help the younger brothers; labor squads helping in the farms of soldiers, designed to protect the homeland; excursions troops. All this has contributed to the development of patriotic feelings of the young generation. The materials and the conclusions of this study can be used to develop the programs of patriotic education of young students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was financially supported by Russian State Scientific Foundation within the frame of scientific-research program “Volunteering as a Tool of Patriotic Education of Scholars in Russia in the Second Half of XIX-Beginning of XX Centuries”, no. 12-36-01352, type-a2 and “Youth Radicalism in Russia in the Second Half of XIX-beginning of XX Centuries (Academic Branch (1860-1904))”, project no. 11-06-00270.

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