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Philosophical-anthropological and historical-cultural aspects of the educational activities of Kh.D. Alchevska (to the 185th anniversary of her birth)

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Abstract: *The article offers a comprehensive philosophical and historical-cultural analysis of the activities of Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska (1841–1920) as one of the key figures of the Ukrainian and Eastern European public education movements.*

The purpose *of the work is to study the philosophical-anthropological dimension of Khrystyna Alchevska's pedagogical concepts, the historical-cultural aspects of the emergence of Alchevska's educational views and their spread.*



Methods. *An interdisciplinary approach was applied, combining historical and philosophical anthropology, historical-cultural and biographical methods. The key methodology of the study is the history and philosophy of Ukrainian education. The article uses a complex interdisciplinary approach that combines three methodological frameworks: hermeneutic, historical, cultural and philosophical and anthropological. This combination is substantiated by the specifics of the source base (memoirs, pedagogical texts, bibliographic indexes) and the very nature of the phenomenon of Christina Alchevska's activity, which is at the intersection of the history of education, social history and philosophy of culture.*

Results. *The intellectual origins of her approaches, the organizational model of the Kharkiv Women's Sunday School (1862–1919), the concept of «reading as a thinking activity», as well as two basic corpuses of texts, namely «The Book of Adults» and the three-volume index «What to Read to the People?» are considered. Based on memoirs, program documents, and modern historiography, the philosophy of education of Alchevska, its ethical and anthropological principles, gender dimension, and socio-political limitations of the imperial context are reconstructed. In particular, the project of Khrystyna Alchevska's Sunday schools and the activities of the New Ukrainian School and adult education (andragogy) are compared: from the pedagogy of partnership and public schools to interpretive practices of reading, media literacy, and bibliotherapy.*

Conclusions. *It is shown that the key ideas of Khrystyna Alchevska's education are surprisingly well-consonant with the New Ukrainian School (NUS) and the ideas of global education throughout life (adult education). The basis of Khrystyna Alchevska's Sunday schools and the modern school is the pedagogy of partnership, based on trust and dialogue. The community discovers its educational potential in Alchevska's activities, which are realized through open libraries and reading clubs, where education builds a «house of shared meanings».*

Important are such interpretative reading practices discovered by Khrystyna



Danylovna as «reading with explanations», which becomes a method of forming critical thinking, and evidence-based selection of content with the help of local councils with the participation of students and librarians.

It is shown that the educational paradigm of Kh.D. Alchevska offers not only a vivid historical example, but also a methodology of national stability, where trust, work of thought, evidence-based selection of cultural content, and democracy are the basis of the school.

In today's context, especially in the New Ukrainian School, adult education and postgraduate training, these principles enhance school autonomy, promote quality reading, and ground education in human dignity.

Keywords: *Khrystyna Alchevska, Sunday school, adult education (andragogy), history of Ukrainian culture, philosophical anthropology, history of Ukrainian pedagogy, reading, partnership pedagogy, education.*

**Філософсько-антропологічні та історично-культурні аспекти
просвітницької діяльності Х.Д. Алчевської (до 185-річчя від дня
народження)**

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Анотація: *Стаття пропонує комплексний філософський та історико-культурний аналіз діяльності Христини Данилівни Алчевської (1841–1920) як однієї з ключових постатей українського та східноєвропейського рухів народної освіти.*

Мета роботи - дослідження філософсько-антропологічного виміру педагогічних концепцій Христини Алчевської, історично-культурних аспектів виникнення просвітницьких поглядів Алчевської та їх поширення.

Методи. Застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід, що поєднує історичну та філософську антропологію, історично-культурний та біографічний метод. Ключовою методологією дослідження є історія і філософія української освіти. У статті використано комплексний міждисциплінарний підхід, який поєднує три методологічні рамки: герменевтичну, історично-культурну та філософсько-антропологічну. Така комбінація обґрунтована специфікою джерельної бази (мемуари, педагогічні тексти, бібліографічні покажчики) та самим характером феномену діяльності Христини Алчевської, що перебуває на перетині історії освіти, соціальної історії та філософії культури.

Результати. Розглянуто інтелектуальні витоки її підходів, організаційну модель Харківської жіночої недільної школи (1862–1919), концепт «читання як мислєдіяльності», а також два базові корпуси текстів, а саме «Книга дорослих» і тритомний покажчик «Що читати народу?». На матеріалі мемуарів, програмних документів і сучасної історіографії реконструйовано філософію просвіти Алчевської, її етико-антропологічні засади, гендерний вимір та соціально-політичні обмеження імперського контексту. Зокрема порівняно проєкт недільних шкіл Христини Алчевської та діяльність Нової української школи й освіти дорослих (андрагогіки): від педагогіки партнерства та громадських шкіл до інтерпретативних практик читання, медіаграмотності й бібліотерапії.



Висновки. Доводиться, що ключові ідеї просвітництва Христини Алчевської напрочуд добре співзвучні з Новою Українською школою (НУШ) і ідеями глобальної освіти протягом життя (освіти дорослих). В основі недільних шкіл Христини Алчевської та сучасної школи є педагогіка партнерства, заснована на довірі та діалозі. Громада відкриває свій освітній потенціал у діяльності Алчевської, що реалізує себе через відкриті бібліотеки та клуби читання, де освіта вибудовує «будинки спільних смислів».

Важливими є відкриті Христиною Данилівною такі інтерпретативні практики читання як «читка з поясненнями», що стає методом формування критичного мислення, та доказовий добір змісту (контенту) за допомогою локальних рад з участю учнів та бібліотекарів.

Показано, що просвітницька парадигма Х.Д. Алчевської пропонує не лише яскравий історичний приклад, а методологію національної стійкості, де довіра, праця думки, доказовий добір культурного змісту та демократичність, є основою школи.

Перенесені в сьогодення, зокрема у форматах НУШ, освіти дорослих і післядипломної підготовки, ці принципи посилюють автономію школи, підвищують якість читання як інтелектуальної практики та укорінюють освіту в гідності людини

Ключові слова: Христина Алчевська, недільна школа, освіта дорослих (андрагогіка), історія української культури, філософська антропологія, історія української педагогіки, читання, педагогіка партнерства, просвітництво.

Problem statement. Next year marks the 185th anniversary of the birth of Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska - an outstanding Ukrainian educator, teacher, organizer of public education, public figure, philanthropist and writer, whose multifaceted activities left a deep mark on the cultural and educational development of Ukraine in the late XIXth and early XXth centuries. On the eve of this anniversary



date, it is especially relevant to honor the memory of this extraordinary figure, as well as to reflect on her significant contribution to the establishment of national education, the formation of spiritual values and the development of Ukrainian culture.

Today, given the growing importance of humanitarian education and the need for spiritual renewal of society, addressing the figure of Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska takes on a new meaning. Her life and work are an example of selfless service to the people, the establishment of national ideals through education and culture – the foundations on which modern approaches to the formation of a citizen in independent Ukraine should be built.

In this context, numerous historical, cultural and philosophical questions arise regarding the establishment of the foundations of national pedagogy in the XIXth century, which require critical reflection.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The very figure of Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska and her pedagogical activity attracted the attention of her contemporaries. Ya. Abramov [1] and R. Ivanov-Rozumnyk [11] draw attention to the activities of Kh. D. Alchevska as a representative of the true intelligentsia, chronicles of Sunday schools are published [24]. D. Miller outlines the results of Kh. Alchevska's activities on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her pedagogical activity [18]. The role of Khrystyna Alchevska in the functioning of Sunday schools is revealed by D. Grakhovetsky in the 1920s [7], M. Shelgunov addresses the pedagogical heritage of Sunday schools in the 1950s [25]. In the 1970s, Alchevska's outstanding role was first highlighted in comprehensive studies by M. Mukhin [22], in particular, he devoted his dissertation to this issue [21]. In the 1990s, Alchevska's global mission was recognized [29], monographs were also created dedicated to the role of public education, in particular, this is the monograph by T. Kolomiyets, which explores the Kharkiv Society for the Spread of Literacy among the People (1869–1920) [15], the first bibliographical reviews dedicated to Kh. D. Alchevska were created [10; 17]. At the turn of the millennium, Alchevska's extraordinary role in educational activities becomes clear, in



particular, publications that reveal that this name is forever engraved in the development of both Ukrainian and world education, for us the title of N. Morozova's article on the role and significance of Khrystyna Danylovna is indicative - she cannot be erased, cannot be forgotten: «No way will I be erased from history» [20].

In the 2000s, Alchevska's activities as an innovator [23], important in particular for the new Ukrainian school [5; 19], a person who was ahead of the development of the humanities, in particular hermeneutics [6], pedagogy (V. Ivashchenko. R. Paliychuk [12]) and philosophical anthropology [16], this is a new world of understanding for adults, a special toolkit of «reading» [6]. In 2024, M.Kerasiuk&L.Matiushko [28] in particular consider the concepts of Khrystyna Alchevska in connection with the formation of the school of national pedagogy, in particular Sofia Rusova.

Of particular interest, the activities of Kh. Alchevska are in connection with the modern development in Andragogika, in particular the publication of the last year O.Anishchenko, S. Pryima, Y. Rogushina, A. Gladun [4] and S. Tsybul'skaya [26]. The place and significance of the work of Alechvska in the history of Ukrainian adult pedagogy are covered by D. Caroli [27], L. Lohvytska, N.Martovytska, T.Sheleh [30], in N.Sogu [31] refers to the great prospects of such pedagogical strategies.

At the same time, a comprehensive assessment of the educational activities of Khrystyna Alchevska has not yet been given.

The allocation of previously unresolved parts of the general problem.

The article uses a complex interdisciplinary approach that combines three methodological frameworks: hermeneutic, historical, cultural and philosophical and anthropological. This combination is substantiated by the specifics of the source base (memoirs, pedagogical texts, bibliographic indexes) and the very nature of the phenomenon of Christina Alchevska's activity, which is at the intersection of the history of education, social history and philosophy of culture.

The basis of the hermeneutic strategy is the classical tradition of interpretation of the text (G.-G. Gadamer, P. Ricoeur), which views interpretation as a way to discover



the hidden meanings and ensure their actualization in the present. Hermeneutics is used in two dimensions: as an interpretation of pedagogical buildings («Book of Adults», «What to Read the People?»), As well as the autobiographical text «Pre -intelligent and experienced», as an analysis of the practice of «reading with explanations» at the Alchevska school in the role of a dialogue. unfolds in a collective discussion. The use of hermeneutics suggests that Alchevska's pedagogy was not reduced to knowledge, but was built as a process of joint comprehension of meaning.

The historical and cultural perspective (K. Jaspers, J. Huizinga, modern cultural and historical studios) provides consideration of Alchevska's pedagogical practices in the context of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This approach is important for three tasks: reconstruction of socio-political background: imperial censorship, prohibition of the Ukrainian printed word, the movement of Sunday schools, the female issue; cultural localization of Kharkiv as an intellectual center of the Ukrainian tradition (public school, women's teaching); Showing diachronic continuity from Alchevska practices to pedagogical innovations of the 21st century in the new Ukrainian school and Andragogik.

The philosophical and anthropological approach (M. Scheler, G. Plesner, B. Waldenfels) is substantiated by the fact that the pedagogical concept of Alchevska was not only didactic but also anthropological in essence. Her basic ideas (human dignity, work of thought, Koinonia, where the school is a model of community, where education is built on trust, mutual support and ethical obligation for «other», and moral responsibility) are revealed in anthropological coordinates, where a person acts as a subject of dignity: Think, judge and make moral decisions. Anthropological roots also have the concept of reading as a work of thought: the practice of systematic reading and comprehension of texts is considered as an anthropological act of human self-formation. Alchevska's pedagogy is aimed not only at literacy, but on the formation of a person capable of thinking, sympathizing and responsible for the common good. The philosophical and anthropological approach can cover the humanistic and ethical



foundations of Alchevska's pedagogy, in particular its attention to the dignity, freedom and subjectivity of man.

In the conditions of the modern rethinking of national educational priorities, the appeal to the pedagogical heritage of outstanding figures of the past acquires special importance. In this context, honoring the memory and rethinking the ideas of Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska is extremely relevant. Her activities in the field of public education not only played a decisive role in the development of pedagogical thought in Ukraine in the second half of the XIXth – early XXth centuries but also laid the foundations for the formation of the ideal of a highly moral, intellectually developed and socially active personality.

The modern Ukrainian school is in a phase of deep transformation: from content renewal to building a «pedagogy of partnership» and a culture of trust, which is recorded in the conceptual documents of the NUS reform [5; 19]. Such guidelines as student subjectivity, cooperation between the school, family and community, inclusiveness, and competency-based approaches require historical precedents that confirm their viability in crisis contexts [5]. The experience of Khrystyna Alchevska, who, in the conditions of imperial prohibitions and systemic inequalities, created an effective centre for adult and women's education, offers just such a precedent. Her school, opened on June 10, 1862 in Kharkiv, became a laboratory for the democratization of knowledge, social mobility and cultural mediation between «high» literature and the «popular» reader.

Researchers emphasize that in the second half of the XIXth century, the active development of the Sunday school system began in Ukraine – a unique phenomenon of domestic pedagogy, which provided access to education to wide segments of the population, especially women and children from poor families. These schools became not only centers of basic literacy, but also an environment for the spiritual and moral growth of the individual. They formed a deep understanding of the importance of the educational process, realized its role in shaping the inner world of a person, his ethical



guidelines, sense of dignity and social responsibility.

The school founded by Khrystyna Alchevska was just such a center – an informal academy of spiritual education, where knowledge was presented in harmony with moral and ethical education. It became an example of how pedagogical activity, based on deep love for people, a sincere desire to change society through education, is able to have a significant and lasting impact on future generations.

Thus, an appeal to the legacy of Kh.D. Alchevska is not only an act of historical memory, but also an attempt to comprehend the values that should be the basis of modern educational policy: humanity, spirituality, accessibility of knowledge and pedagogy of the heart, which contributes to the formation of a harmonious and responsible personality.

Formulation of the objectives of the article (Task statement). The purpose of the work is to study the philosophical and anthropological dimension of the pedagogical concepts of Khrystyna Alchevska, the historical and cultural aspects of the emergence of Alchevska's educational views and their spread, an attempt to build a new national school that influenced modern Ukrainian pedagogy.

In accordance with the goal, the **following tasks** have been formulated:

- 1) to consider the historical and cultural context of the formation of the personality of Khrystyna Alchevska and her school;
- 2) to analyze the ethical principles of Khrystyna Alchevska's pedagogy, in particular Sunday schools, their historical significance for the national Ukrainian culture and school;
- 3) to analyze the historical and extra-historical (worldview) aspects of the pedagogy of the heart of Khrystyna Alchevska, as well as the prospects for their reception in modern educational paradigms.

Presentation of the main material of the study. The rapid development of the economy expanded the social base of education in Ukraine in the middle of the XIXth century, which led to the emergence of new organizational forms of cultural and



educational work. Born from the creative initiative of progressive forces in Ukraine, Sunday schools were the first, collective in organizational terms, form designed for the education of the poor strata of the population. A qualitatively new form of education from all points of view, regardless of the reactionary policy of the Russian imperial regime (up to the very closure of them by the highest circular in June 1862), showed remarkable vitality.

The success of the first Sunday schools in Ukraine, their quantitative growth, depended entirely and completely on the democratic principles developed by the Sloboda advanced intelligentsia and laid the foundation for the activities of these public institutions [15].

In the text of the statute, first published by D. Grakhovetsky, the requirement of polite address to students was put forward as a necessary condition for teaching, and the 2nd paragraph morally obliged teachers to «constantly keep in mind – to satisfy the needs of students – to know, and to teach according to their own needs» [7, pp. 51–73].

The first Sunday school in Kharkov was opened in the early 1860s by the gymnasium teacher P. I. Ladovsky together with the geography teacher Belikov. The second men's Sunday school was opened at Kharkov University, the administrator of which was a student Sakovich, the trustee – Professor of Physics V. I. Lapinin. Teachers M. P. Balin, M. M. Beketov and others conducted classes with their students in the classrooms of the chemical laboratory. The third women's Sunday school was founded by the Holevy sisters, and the trustee of this school was D. I. Kachenovsky, a professor at Kharkiv University.

During the period 1859–1860, four schools were opened in Kharkiv – three for men and one for women – for workers and the urban poor. And a year before the reform of 1861, there were five Sunday schools in Kharkiv, in which 1200 students studied with 200 teachers [15, p.67].

Free education, free teaching, collective labor and its publicity, equal rights of all students – these are the main principles that were developed and consistently



implemented by the founders of the first Sunday schools. The draft Sunday school programs provided, in addition to elementary literacy and arithmetic, the teaching of history, geography, chemistry, natural science, drawing, hygiene, agriculture, as well as foreign languages, as was the case in one of the Kharkiv schools; the so-called «subjects that were not studied in county schools» - the highest level in the primary education system.

The government's point of view on the task of Sunday education was completely opposite. Having familiarized itself with the project of the first Kharkiv Sunday school in 1859, the Minister of Education declared: «They should not even encroach on the direct development of the intellectual abilities of students, to the level which only students of the gymnasium can reach... Their purpose, as elementary district schools, is to teach literacy, writing, arithmetic and those moral principles that are communicated by the law teacher, to which some information about real subjects that are directly related to simple folk life can be added» [18, p.164].

The activities of Sunday schools also caused dissatisfaction among the head of the III Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prince V. Dolgoruky, so in December 1860 he submitted a note to Alexander II on the activities of Sunday schools, in which he proposed that the authorities take the lead in this movement, place it under the strict control of the Ministry of Public Education, and limit the programs of Sunday schools: «the government cannot assume», he wrote to the tsar, «that half of the population owes its education not to the state, but to itself or to the private charity of some separate stratum. The middle stratum of society and the invisible engines that counted on its strength became the leaders of this important cause» [1, p. 18]. Here, the «middle class» refers to the Commoner, those people whose life was based on intellectual work, while the term «intelligentsia», which more accurately identifies this stratum in the social structure of Ukraine, began to be used later [11, p. 6-8].

The result of the reactionary policy of the authorities regarding Sunday schools was their immediate closure, but in such a short period of time they still made a huge



contribution to the development of Ukrainian culture and education.

Sunday schools arose not only as a form of cultural and educational work among the people, but as the first legal form of communication and rapprochement of representatives of the then intelligentsia with the workers and lower classes, and this communication disciplined them, united and integrated them into unions of like-minded people, for whom the ideas of enlightenment became the theoretical basis in everyday activities.

The prominent public figure M.P. Balin first drew attention to this in his notes. His opinion, which is that despite the short period of existence of Sunday schools, «...they did not disappear in vain, as is commonly thought», is quite appropriate to reinforce with comparative statistical data on the number of students and teachers of Sunday schools in Kharkov. «More than 300 teachers were enrolled in five Sunday schools», writes M. P. Balin, «there were up to 1,200 students in Sunday schools. Studying in these schools was in groups, and students turned to teachers for additional lessons and books for their apartments. We will properly assess the importance of the old Sunday schools for Kharkov if we remember that in 1860, Kharkov had only 50,000 inhabitants, there were only 400 students, and there were almost no gymnasium students» [8, p. 10]. Thanks to these statistical data, we are able to trace the rapid beginning of the educational movement in Slobozhanshchyna. And this is not surprising, because Kharkiv, being an older university center, had a significant number of cultural and educational forces in comparison with other cities of Ukraine.

Regarding the above, we can conclude that the democratic principles that underlie the activities of public schools made this form of education the most suitable for the people.

As noted earlier, the initiative in establishing public, or, as they were then called, private Sunday schools of the new period, as well as exemplary primary and vocational schools for children of the poorest strata of the population, belonged entirely to the Kharkiv Literacy Society. Already in the first year of its existence, women's Sunday



and daily primary schools were opened in the working-class district of the city on Moskalivka. In 1870, the Kharkiv Literacy Society opened a men's Sunday school, and at the same time, the founding member of the society, Kh.D. Alchevska, after eight years of illegal classes with female students, obtained the right to officially open a private women's Sunday school, where an evening department was opened for the first time.

This was a unique phenomenon in the field of education. For example, we can give the following comparison: on January 1, 1897, about 3.5 thousand people studied in 49 Sunday schools of Ukraine, subordinate to the Ministry of Public Education, during the same period, 700 female students studied in Alchevska's school [22, p.111].

The outstanding historian of Slobozhanshchyna, D. P. Miller, a professor at Kharkiv University, who took an active part in the educational movement during his student years, in an article dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary of Kh. D. Alchevska's pedagogical activity, recalling her first steps in this field in the women's Sunday school opened in 1862, gave a brilliant description of the motives that guided the advanced intelligentsia and its aspirations, which found complete mutual understanding in the auditoriums and classes crowded with adult students: «The upliftment of spirit, the ardent desire to enlighten the people and raise them to their own level of development and understanding of the surrounding life were so great that this inspired school worked wonders. It not only taught intelligent literacy very quickly using the phonic method, it attracted people with a charming power, and its huge classes were filled with those who wanted light» [9, p. 10].

Despite the ban on Sunday schools, Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska opened a private women's school in her home, and this school was in an illegal position for almost eight years. Finally, on March 22, 1870, the Kharkiv Sunday School of Kh. D. Alchevska was officially opened.

From the first day of its opening, it opened its doors wide to those who supported the cause of spreading knowledge among the masses.



One of the first visitors (in the fall of 1870 and the fall of 1871) to the Sunday school of Kh.D. Alchevska was the outstanding Ukrainian teacher, educator, methodologist, organizer of folk schools and primary zemstvo schools in Ukraine, Mykola Oleksandrovych Korf. The general conclusion of M.O. Korf was as follows: «The Kharkiv Sunday school has taken a big step forward: from a literacy school... it has turned into a full elementary school, which is worth visiting for anyone who wants to see the application of the best teaching methods in all subjects of the elementary course» [22, p. 76].

Such a conclusion was not without reason; a lot of organizational work was carried out in the school. At their first pedagogical meeting, the schoolteachers first defined the goal and objectives of the school. Later, at the pedagogical meetings, issues of curricula, methods of teaching individual subjects, issues of specialization in teaching subject lessons, a school museum, the compilation of lists of students by teachers, and the issue of journals were discussed. Extracurricular activities were considered: extracurricular activities of students, books for extracurricular reading, school holidays and their significance.

What Alchevska called «explanatory readings» can today be described as an interpretive practice, where the text becomes a «situational teacher»: students jointly unfold the meaning, tying it to their own experience. Such reading goes beyond informing; it is an exercise in judgment, communication, and moral imagination [6].

In her memoirs «Rethought and Experienced» [2], Alchevska not only reconstructs her own path to pedagogy, but also records key situations in the formation of her professional mission, for example, the experience of self-study, the early practice of teaching peasant children, and the awareness of inequality in access to knowledge. In 1862, she opened a private women's Sunday school, which operated illegally for a long time; after the bans on the Ukrainian printed word and teaching in Ukrainian, she switched to the Russian language of instruction but retained the nation-building content of reading (history, moral literature, ethnographic topics) [23]. Her memoirs are an



important source for the reconstruction of the pedagogical diary, interaction styles, and ethics of care.

For example, the understanding of the teacher's personality in the learning process is indicative. Kh.D. Alchevska is particularly impressed by this category of people who do not engage in «hunting for mistakes» of students, but treat them as partners, they enter the school «with love for the work», «they try to find as much good in it as possible, like a mother in a beloved child, they admire everything that can be rejoiced at, inspire trust and openness, which can actually help criticism to look into the soul of the school» [2, p.15].

In the late 1880s, the educational activities of Kharkiv teachers gained wide popularity in the circles of the international pedagogical community. Such recognition was primarily facilitated by the work of Ya.V. Abramov entitled «Private Women's Sunday School in Kharkiv and Sunday Schools in General» (Kharkiv, 1890), dedicated to Kh.D. Alchevska's Sunday School [1].

In Paris, at the World Exhibition in 1889, Kh.D. Alchevska herself presented two significant volumes of the book «What to Read to the People?» [3] – the fruit of many years of work by Kharkiv teachers. The first of the volumes, published in 1884, caused, in the metaphorical expression of the publicist and literary critic Mykola Vasilyevich Shelgunov, a ««light earthquake» in the minds of ... the intelligentsia» [25, p.370].

«The teachers of Kh.D. Alchevska's school were the first at that time to give an answer to the questions that worried the public». In particular, the index resolutely rejected the old statement that books for the people should supposedly be written in a «special language» [3]. The rich material of the experiment, which the teachers conducted for many years, made it possible to assert that the people subtly understand and appreciate works of fiction.

Recommending to readers «from the people» the literature of many countries and peoples of the world, the authors of the critical and bibliographic index came to the conclusion that «bright images created by great talents are close and understandable



not only to their people, but also to all humanity, because they contain universal human torments, joys and sufferings» [22, p. 79].

Highly appreciated by the international jury of the exhibition, the work of Kharkiv women won two gold and two silver medals, to the authors of the most meaningful sections, and an honorary diploma to the editor-publisher. Gold medals were awarded to public teachers A. M. Kalmykova and L. G. Semchenko (Efymovych), silver medals to M.O. Ivanova and O.D. Chirkova (Gordeeva), who, working together with Kh.D. Alchevska, made a huge contribution to the development of Ukrainian education and culture. It is also necessary to mention the activities of M.M. Saltykova and O.P. Hryshchenko in the schools of the Kharkiv Literacy Society, and many other teachers, who formed the main core of the pedagogical team headed by Kh.D. Alchevska and did a lot to promote Sunday education and the education of the common people.

Thanks to the publication of the index «What to read to the people?» [3] since the early 1880s the school of Khrystyna Alchevska has become a real methodological center for organizing adult education [4], as well as popularizing the latest pedagogical approaches.

Khrystyna Danylivna proposed a model of flexible, free, inclusive adult education based on the pedagogy of partnership between teacher and student, and a new didactics of «reading with explanations» was proposed [3].

Systematic study of readers made it possible to identify their interests, hear the «voice of the reader» and reflective responses, which led to multi-cycle editing of reading lists. Starting with language, knowledge was structured around history and ethics, their reflection in literature, with their subsequent impact on daily practice.

The three-volume «Adults' Book» (1899–1900; with later reprints) [14] actually became the first systematic textbook corpus for the gradual education of adults over a period of three years. It was created by teachers and students of Sunday schools under the close supervision of Alchevska. The structure combines literacy, reading, historical



and cultural subjects and moral stories; the texts are selected according to the criteria of comprehensibility, high human dignity and application of the methodology with practical «benefits» in everyday life. «The Book» combined didactic clarity and respect for the intellectual experience of an adult, became a prototype of modular courses and withstood numerous reprints.

The three-volume index «What is the people to read?» (1884–1906) [3], in our opinion, can be considered one of the first examples of the participation of the «reader from below» in the formation of the canon, when professional reviews of books are combined with the reviews of «readers from the people themselves». The pedagogical intuition of Khrystyna Danylivna Alchevska opens up new horizons of education, when there are no «universal» texts, and the public and adults have the right to choose, where the teacher's task becomes to provide a space for respectful discussion. Today, this corresponds to the approaches of informed choice [16], communicative freedom, participatory assessment of content quality, and ethical moderation of cultural space.

The flow of visitors to the Kharkiv school increased, numerous letters were received with requests regarding the organization of similar educational institutions, teaching methods, selection of literature, and structure of curricula. Educators, public figures, and enthusiasts from different regions, wishing to adopt successful experience, began to personally visit the school to familiarize themselves with its activities in practice.

Over time, the school developed a so-called «portion» of materials, which was sent to those wishing to receive explanations and various information about conducting a Sunday school.

It included: «Programs for all subjects of study in Sunday school», developed and tested over two decades by the school teachers, the publication of which was carried out for the first time in 1885; two volumes «What to read to the people?», forms of reports and library cards, a journal for recording students and the material covered by groups, etc. The «portion» also included the above-mentioned brochure by Ya.



Abramov, supplemented by various reference materials prepared by the schoolteacher M.M. Saltykova [24].

Year after year, Kh.D. Alchevska's school gained more and more followers who embodied educational ideas among the people [3, 4]. Enthusiasts who attended the school were firmly convinced of the invaluable benefits of Sunday schools and were ignited by the light and energy of the Kharkiv teachers.

Improving the forms and methods of teaching every day, the teaching staff of the school felt the need for new manuals for teaching adults in schools. The answer to these needs was three editions of a class reading book called «Adults' Book» [13-14]. Not only teachers of the Kharkiv school were involved in the creation of this work, but also colleagues from other Sunday schools, scientists and specialists from various fields of knowledge at the end of the XIXth century. The first edition of «Adults' Book» was published in 1899-1900 [13]. In the future, this manual was reprinted almost annually for two decades. The uniqueness and universality of this manual is evidenced by the fact that it was used not only by students of Sunday schools and Sunday evening classes of workers (for whom it was created), but also by students of all types of craft schools, readers of teachers' libraries of primary schools, public libraries, etc.

Over time, the networks of Sunday schools expanded and there was a need to find ways to unite them and spread the pedagogical experience they had acquired. The World Exhibition in Paris, held in 1889, gave impetus to the "Sunday schoolers" to organize similar exhibitions on their territory.

On the initiative and participation and direct leadership of Kh.D. Alchevska, five of them were organized, two exhibitions were held directly in Kharkiv (1896–1897, 1901–1902). The organization of exhibitions certainly influenced the number of Sunday schools opened, if in 1889 only 10 were opened, then, for example, in 1897. they were already 50 [22, p. 83].

The spread of effective forms and methods of education and the promotion of this type of educational institutions also served as the «Chronicle of Sunday Schools»,



which for ten years was a permanent column in the journal «Rus'ka School» (1897–1907). The «Chronicle» was created on the initiative of Kh. D. Alchevska, who was the editor of all materials that covered the issues of setting and conducting adult education [4].

Female teaching and the education of adult women at Alchevska's school were not only an instrument of literacy, but also a practice of subjectivity. Despite the imperial restrictions of language policy, the local experience of the school maintained Ukrainian cultural continuity within the framework of “small practices”, reading rituals and public lectures, through the selection of texts, historical plots and customary material.

Historiography records some ambivalence of Sunday schools: on the one hand, there is progressiveness and social effect, on the other hand, there are forced compromises with the official language and censorship policy. However, it was the ethics of «small steps» in educational discipline, reading and conversation that ensured the lasting effect of the new pedagogy for more than half a century. «Founded by Kh.D. Alchevskaya in 1862, the Kharkiv Sunday School existed for 57 years. For more than half a century...this school, in which more than 17 thousand women received education, played a leading role in the development of Sunday schools throughout Russia. Not only the history of the Russian Sunday school is connected with the school of Kh.D. Alchevskaya. It was there that a fairly clear methodology for teaching adults was developed, programs for all subjects were developed, and the first textbooks were created» [22, p. 89].

Sunday School of Kh.D. Alchevska was, according to contemporaries, an exceptional phenomenon in the world practice of extracurricular education of workers, which was confirmed by her participation in four more international and five all-Russian exhibitions and the election of its leader as vice-president of the international league of public education.

The key ideas of education of Khrystyna Alchevska are surprisingly well in tune



with the New Ukrainian School (NUS) [5]. and the ideas of global education throughout life (adult education). The basis of Khrystyna Alchevska's Sunday schools and the modern school is the pedagogy of partnership, based on trust and dialogue. The community discovers its educational potential in Alchevska's activities, which are realized through open libraries and reading clubs, where education builds a «house of common meanings». Important are the interpretive reading practices discovered by Khrystyna Danylivna, such as «reader with explanations», which becomes a method of forming critical thinking, and evidence-based selection of content (content) with the help of local councils with the participation of students and librarians.

Also, Khrystyna Danylivna for the first time raises the question of gender equality and women's leadership in school communities, provides a historical precedent of female teaching as effective and meaningful, vulnerable groups (adult students, displaced persons) receive support through «short formats» of education (evening and Saturday modules).

«Bibliotherapy» proposed by Alchevska [3]. as a guarantee of emotional well-being is especially relevant in the conditions of modern war, where reading is considered a way of moral recovery in conditions of threats and trauma.

Alchevska's «School Diary» continues in the research component of modern teaching, in the collection of anonymous reader reviews and analytics of the use of book collections.

Conclusions. The history of public Sunday schools is primarily the history of the struggle of the progressive intelligentsia for the right to exist as one of the most effective forms of extracurricular education for the people. The number of these schools was small for obvious reasons: their opening and normal functioning required not only significant material costs and physical effort, but also constantly met with the reactionary policy of the tsarist government.

A distinctive feature of true enthusiasts of public education who worked free of charge in Sunday schools was a clearly defined ideological basis, revealed in the



commonality of educational goals and objectives.

In this context, the Khrystyn Alchevska school became a unique space where the educational process was deeply connected with the national idea, moral education and the disclosure of the creative potential of each student. A special place in her teaching activities was occupied by the popularization of the Ukrainian language and literature, which, under the conditions of the imperial interdict and Russification policy, acquired the character of a cultural feat.

Alchevska's philosophy of education is a kind of humanistic personalism that cares about the interests of every person. Dignity is the starting condition of education, since everyone can act morally, reading is considered as intellectual self-discipline and the search for meaning. Education is socially oriented, where the community offers an educational «circle of safety» to vulnerable categories - women, workers, wounded in wartime (the latter is described in the diaries of Kh.D. Alchevska).

In addition to pedagogical activities, Kh.D. Alchevska actively worked in the field of bibliography, compiling textbooks, literary reviews, thereby strengthening the methodological basis for the development of public education. Her literary work also reflected a deep love for her native culture, a desire to convey to the general public the high ideals of humanism, knowledge, and spiritual growth.

Khrystyna Alchevska operated in the context of several intersecting traditions: the European educational ideal of autonomy and moral self-improvement (the line of «education as emancipation»), Sunday schools as a cooperative form of community self-organization, and the domestic line of cordocentric ethics and «self-education through reading». Thanks to Khrystyna Alchevska's educational activities, not only knowledge was disseminated, but also the formation of national consciousness, value orientations, and worldviews of students took place. Her students not only mastered the educational material, but also went through the path of spiritual growth, based on the principles of respect for their native language, culture, history, and humanity as the highest value.



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