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PAVEL PETROVICH BLONSKY

(1884-1941)

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The work of Blonsky, an outstanding Soviet psychologist and educator, was exceptionally wide-ranging. A man of scholarship and erudition—philosopher, psychologist and educator—he stood out by the depth and boldness of his thought in framing and solving the scientific problems of his day. Blonsky's name is associated with the founding and development of the Soviet schools of psychology and educational sciences. He was the author of some two hundred works on psychology, education and philosophy, including pioneering monographs, textbooks and methodological and experimental investigations which contributed in the 1920s to the establishment and development of the entire Soviet system of education, and it was by Blonsky's works, translated into other languages, that the state of Soviet education and teaching were judged abroad.

Life and works

Blonsky was born in Kiev, the son of a minor official, on 14 May 1884. He was educated here, first in the classical high school and then at the university, where he graduated from the classics department of the history and philology faculty. Blonsky's student years (1902-07) coincided with the first revolution in Russia. For his active involvement in the revolutionary movement he was repeatedly imprisoned.

In the years preceding the October revolution, Blonsky's view of life was full of contradictions due to the influence of different currents of thought, but his practical teaching activities, which dictated his interests and research, played a major role in shaping his outlook and scientific views. From 1908 he taught education and psychology in girls' high schools in Moscow. After obtaining his Master's degree in 1913, Blonsky became an assistant professor at Moscow University. It was during this period that he began to give lectures on educational psychology at summer courses for teachers in various cities. In his lectures, Blonsky developed the idea of the need for the all-round development of children. He frequently expressed ideas that were too advanced for his time and in 1914/15 his appointment as a lecturer at the Tikhomirov advanced courses for women was not confirmed.

Blonsky made a thorough study of the works of leading Russian and foreign educationists, such as Ushinsky, Tolstoy, Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Fröbel, Gansberg, Scharrelmann and Dewey. Of the ideas contained in this educational legacy, he was particularly impressed by those concerning the national characteristics of education and culture, the training of pupils for creative work, the scientific foundations of teaching methods, the need to plan the education system on a strictly rational basis, and the importance of sound theoretical and practical training for teachers.

No sooner had the Soviet State come into existence than Blonsky became a proponent of the new socialist school and an active participant in its creation. 'I consider it the greatest of good fortune'—he wrote—'to have lived at the time of the October Revolution. Such times force us to rethink our ideas radically, call everything into question and lay bare the most deeply hidden principles. At the same time, it is doubtful if there can be anything even remotely comparable to the vast creative upsurge that occurs at such moments. I am happy that the spirit of the October Revolution inspired me in my educational work'.[2]

In the autumn of 1918 he was made a professor at Moscow University and at several other higher educational establishments. He played an active part in the organization of the Academy of Socialist Education (later to become the N.K. Krupskaya Academy of Communist Education) and became its first rector. Krupskaya, Tsetkin and Lunacharsky lectured there and, with the help of a devoted and hard-working body of teachers, Blonsky made the academy the leading institute of education.

During his teaching years, Blonsky trained a large number of teachers, educationists and psychologists. He was sensitive and caring in his educational work with young specialists, giving them self-confidence and encouraging initiative. He also contributed to such periodicals as *Trudovaya Shkola* (The Labour School), *Sotsial'noe Vospitanie* (Social Education), *Narodnoe Obrazovanie* (National Education), and *Na Putyakh k Novoi Shkole* (Towards the New School), joining their editorial boards.

In 1922, Krupskaya enlisted Blonsky's services in drawing up curricula for schools. Working with her in the scientific education section of the State Academic Council (GUS) was largely responsible for giving a Marxist trend to his educational and psychological views.

Krupskaya supported Blonsky's studies of child development and his other psychological and educational investigations. Their correspondence contains passages on their joint efforts to introduce work as a subject of study in schools.

Recalling the years in the scientific education section of the State Academic Council, Blonsky wrote: 'In 1932 the Council was disbanded. But there can be no denying that it stimulated educational thinking throughout the country. This can be seen in the substantial volume of educational literature, both theoretical and classroom, which was then published. [...] The results of the work of Soviet experimental schools were published, all the new ideas to be found in foreign educational literature were snapped up avidly, people traveled abroad to find out how education was organized and they tried to introduce into Soviet schools anything that seemed valuable. Educational controversy seethed and disputes were aired in public debate and in the press. All manner of public discussions and public criticism of different educational principles and measures raged around Krupskaya. The GUS invited the teaching profession to share its ideas, doubts and achievements, and many articles in the periodical *Towards the New School* reflect the varied creative endeavours of teachers of that period'.[3]

Blonsky combined a vast amount of practical teaching with theoretical work in education and psychology. His research at the Institute of Scientific Education, the Institute of Nationalities and the Institute of Polytechnical Education was enormous in volume and of great importance. During the civil war and the period of foreign intervention, he produced books such as *The Labour School* (1919) in two volumes, *The Reform of Science* (1920), and *An Outline of Scientific Psychology* (1921). Between 1918 and 1930 he wrote over 100 works, including the first textbooks for schools and higher educational establishments.

After the publication of the well-known decree 'On Pedological Distortions in the People's Commissariat of Education System' (1936), many of his theoretical propositions were

subject to severe criticism, going as far as the complete denial of the positive significance of his practical and theoretical work.

For the last ten years of his life, Blonsky worked at the Institute of Psychology, where he directed the thought laboratory and trained specialists in psychology.

He died on 15 February 1941.

Blonsky's psychological views

In resolving educational problems, Blonsky made use of psychology, to which he devoted a great deal of theoretical and experimental research. He was the first psychologist to demonstrate the need to give scientific psychology a Marxist trend.[4] It was only after heated discussion and by no means instantly - recalled A.A. Smirnov—that the basic tenets of dialectical-material philosophy concerning the psyche as a property of highly organized matter, a function of the nervous system and a product of the brain, and concerning the social conditioning of the personality, gained the upper hand and received general recognition. Fierce battles had to be fought to defend these positions by the pioneers of Soviet psychological science, Blonsky and Kornilov, who were the first to raise the banner in the struggle to create a Marxist psychology. 'Their historical services to Soviet science are great and unforgettable'.[5] Blonsky was among the first to oppose idealistic psychology, applying Lenin's theory of reflection to the study of concrete psychological questions, primarily memory and thinking. The genetic or historical principle, on which Blonsky based his investigations, dominated the field for many psychologists in the 1920s.

While mechanistic and biologistic tendencies are discernible in Blonsky's early psychological works, an effort to counter vulgar sociological and mechanistic views clearly emerges in *Psychological Essays* (1927). In these, he criticizes American psychologists who attempted to explain all sociological problems from a purely psychological point of view. Noting the close link between psychology and sociology, Blonsky considered that this link parallels the interrelationship between psychology, physiology and biology. In order to progress—he claimed—psychology must draw upon comparative anatomy, physiology and the history of the development of mankind. His notion of the link between psychology and other sciences is not without significance today. At the same time, he opposed the substitution of biology and physiology for psychology, calling this process an 'over-simplification' and drawing attention to the mistaken tendency to confuse psychology with sociology. 'Nevertheless'—he wrote—'this often happens. What is published in the United States, for example, under the heading of ''social psychology'' is nothing more than a construction of subjective psychological sociology, i.e. the replacement of sociology by psychology. We should therefore approach attempts to create a social psychology with extreme caution, so as not to produce a pseudo-sociology here instead of psychology'.[6]

Blonsky attached great significance to practical methods of scientific psychological investigation. He stressed the importance of observation and experiment, and was among the first to advocate the investigation of mass psychic phenomena by using mathematics. 'Yes,'—he said—'we who long ago discovered America still have a long way to go before we discover the ''central link within ourselves'' [...] we have still to discover ''social man'' and his links with the environment, and not by abstract reasoning but by mathematical formulae'.[7]

Blonsky was influenced by Pavlov's teachings concerning conditioned reflexes when considering such psychic phenomena as habit, association, etc. However, he was far from over-estimating Pavlov's importance, particularly in the 1930s. It was this fact, according to some

specialists, that linked him with other psychologists who did not adhere to the Pavlovian doctrine of the natural science basis of psychology and pursued their researches independently of it.[8] We find the explanation elsewhere. Towards the end of his life, Blonsky came to realize that the Pavlovian physiology of higher nervous activity could not by itself explain the neurophysiological mechanisms of mental phenomena. New research was needed to go more deeply into the physiological mechanisms of the psyche, to connect them with blood chemistry, the activity of the endocrine glands and so on.

We came to this conclusion on account of his psychological writings, in particular the article 'Change in the Alkalinity of Saliva in Relation to Change in Mental State', in which he sums up his research into changes in the alkaline radical of saliva—pH—as a function of the activities being carried out by the experimental subject, such as dreaming or allowing the mind to wander, or solving complex mental problems. Blonsky's position in this respect is supported by psychopharmacological research on biochemical mechanisms, the role of humoral factors and the endocrine system in mental activity.

In his books *Memory and Thinking* (1935) and *The Development of Thinking in Pupils* (1935), and also in his articles about the psychology of proof and its characteristic features among children, the problems of involvement in movement, practical activity and thinking in relation to perception, and the psychology of desire, Blonsky dialectically examines the processes of memory, perception and will in relation to peoples' actual activities, formulates a genetic or 'phasic' theory of memory, and shows the internal connection of memory with thinking and speech. Memory, by rising to a higher stage in connection with the development of thinking, draws closer to thinking. At every stage in life, Blonsky noted, we can observe this connection and the transition of memory to thought. In fact, he maintained, not only is memory a support of thought, but thought, when it reaches a certain stage in its development, begins to exert an ever greater influence on memory, becoming its support. The influence of thought on memory can be seen in memorization and recollection, which at the highest stage of memory, by drawing close to thought, actually become thought.

Blonsky started from the dialectical principle of the interconnection of perception, memory, thought and speech, and this principle was widely applied by him in the study of the processes of understanding and assimilation. Understanding, he used to say, requires knowledge of various kinds that are combined in such a way as to make sense of the whole. Understanding does not simply mean knowing, but knowing 'what and why'. He thoroughly investigated the process and stages of understanding. From the standpoint of dialectical materialism he also tackled the problem of assimilation, demonstrating how perception, memory, thinking and speech are mutually related in assimilation at different stages of development. He delved deeply into the part played by thought in assimilation.

He was the first Soviet psychologist to carry out experimental research on the process of understanding and set the study of this problem in educational psychology on the right track. He made a detailed analysis, from a logical standpoint, of the way schoolchildren think. He also carried out a comprehensive in-depth study of the way in which judgements of various kinds (problematical, hypothetical and disjunctive) and conclusions, as well as the characteristics of proof, take shape and develop among children. Commendably, he never, as a researcher, separated the development of memory, thought and other mental processes from the overall development of the human being.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Soviet psychology made use of Blonsky's ideas concerning the application of the materialistic approach to mental phenomena, using objective research methods

and linking psychology with life. But his psychological work is of more than historical interest. His work is a well-developed system enabling us to understand the complexities of human mental activity and to understand what can be employed to solve educational problems and how to do it.

General educational issues

It would be difficult to name a field of education in which Blonsky was not active since his scientific interests ranged from pre-school education to university-level teaching, in the same way that he vigorously propounded the idea of a connection between school and life, and devoted considerable attention to teaching methods, vocational training and polytechnical education.

Before the October Revolution he regarded education as an empirical science, discounting its links with politics and economics. Considering education to be the development of the child's innate and natural abilities, he supported the biogenetic principle. In defining the goal of education he followed in the footsteps of Pestalozzi and Fröbel who derived it from the child's own nature.

His educational views in the pre-Revolutionary period nevertheless had progressed in favour of a new school of life, in which pupils did useful work and became self-reliant.

Insisting that education should be based on the latest advances in the study of human nature by the social and natural sciences, he posed the question of the part played by heredity in the shaping of the personality. He himself, however, assigned a decisive role to education. Human development—he used to say—is the product of spiritual values such as science, art and religion. 'Education humanizes the pupil by means of values - in the literal sense of the word'.[9]

It should be noted that education and development are not the same thing. The concept of 'education' is narrower than that of 'development', although education is one of the factors that contributes to development. It should, according to Blonsky, equip pupils with the knowledge they need in the struggle for existence. 'Only through education'—he claimed—'can a person become a true human being'.[10]

He was the source of many fruitful ideas in the educational literature of the Soviet period. His views on the influence of the classical educational legacy on the development of education are of considerable interest. It was necessary—he stressed—to make critical use of the ideas bequeathed by the great educators of the past. Instruction in the history of education could provide a sound basis for the study of a systematic course on educational science. He believed that the classical systems had firmly established the philosophical foundations of education. His own publications reveal an interest in certain educational theories current in the West and the United States of America (particularly those of Dewey and Scharrelmann).

He wrote a number of textbooks on education. The year 1916 saw the publication of his *Teacher-Training Course*, which was twice re-issued. His *Educational Science*, which first came out in 1922, ran to seven editions and was the standard textbook for higher teacher-training establishments.

The characteristics of particular age-groups of children occupy a significant place in Blonsky's writings on educational psychology. In the 1920s he based the division into age-groups mainly on biological factors that were entirely anatomical and physiological (the development of teeth and endocrine glands, blood composition, etc.). A purely biological approach is clearly at work here. Nevertheless, he firmly maintained at a later stage that 'the characteristics of every development stage must be composite: not just one factor, but a distinctive combination of factors is characteristic of a particular age'.[11] He was won over by the idea of the integral study of children, making wide use of advances in education, psychology, physiology and biology in his

researches on age-group characteristics. Since then, psychology, genetics and educational science have made great strides, yet the integral study of the child that Blonsky so desired has still not been organized as it should, so that his researches in this respect are of unquestionable value.

In his enthusiasm for the integral study of the child he turned to pedology. In the books he wrote in the 1920s (particularly during the first half) he regarded children at an early age as instinctive and emotional beings. Among children, he wrote, the need for society arises only in the final stages of the pre-school age. Towards the end of the 1920s, his views change regarding children and the factors which shape personality. He places more emphasis on the role of education in the mental development of children. For example, in his booklet *Difficult Pupils* (1930), which points to a link between intelligence and knowledge, he observes: 'Intelligence depends most of all on living conditions and education and least on heredity'.[12] Similar views can be found in subsequent publications up to 1936. 'Without education and instruction'—he writes—'children cannot develop. No innate or inherited characteristics can create a competent and fully developed human being without suitable education and learning'.[13]

Much later, Blonsky's ideas about the mental development of children were corroborated by the researches of Soviet psychologists. The findings of these studies demonstrate the important role of learning in the development of a child's motor system and perception (A.V. Zaporozhets et al.) in working out ways of memorizing and recollecting (A.A. Smirnov, P.I. Zinchenko et al.), and in the shaping of intellectual activities and processes (N.A. Menchinskaya, P. Ya. Gal'perin, D.B. El'konin et al.), and papers on this were given at the eighteenth International Psychological Congress in Moscow.[14]

In his studies of age-group characteristics, Blonsky collected a great deal of material on the mental life and the physical and socio-political development of schoolchildren. His observations on school-age children are still of particular interest to us today.

Rejecting the claim of Western educationists that children are apolitical, he maintained that even young schoolchildren in fact had marked political leanings. Blonsky had a negative reaction to educational science and psychology describing the teenage years as 'catastrophic'—a period of 'severe crisis'—based on the writings of specialists such as Bernfeld, Bühler, Stern and Hirschfeld, who ascribed all teenage characteristics to the specific phenomenon of puberty. Such 'pan-sexualist theories', he said, do not correspond to reality. 'To derive the whole social life of the adolescent from his search for a Gretchen is an example of sentimental and romantic theorizing which there is probably even no need to criticize in detail, so flagrant is the contrast with reality'.[15] At the same time he considered it essential to take into account the teenage characteristics connected with puberty.

The year 1935 saw the publication of *Essays on Child Sexuality*—the first serious study of sexual development and education in the USSR. It contains such matters as the sexual experiences of boys and girls of different ages, the influence of childhood sexual experiences on adult sex life, the psychology of love, first love, etc. He states that the social environment, supervision and instruction have a large part to play in sexual maturation. Puberty, in his view, is an important but not the main factor in development. He attached great significance to the child's growing strength, observing that the teenager's physical maturity is matched by increasing intellectual and social maturity.

Blonsky devoted considerable attention to the goals of education. In most of his works written during the Soviet period, he tackled this problem from a Marxist standpoint, constantly stressing the role of society, the community and work in the education and fulfilment of children and adolescents. According to him, the balanced development of the human personality could be

fostered by combining education of the mind with aesthetic, physical, moral and work training, and with polytechnical instruction.

Acting as one of the organizers and theoreticians of the new socialist school, he maintained that contemporary education does not consist of vocational training, where the adolescent learns a trade, but of 'polytechnical' training, which provides all-round scientific and industrial skills providing access to the world of contemporary culture'.[16]

A single polytechnical school, combining knowledge with action and instruction with skill, would be a school of will and intelligence, shaping the character and forming the child's mind. A major contribution would be made by industry which, as Blonsky put it, would help to link knowledge with action by providing social training.

Blonsky believed that the struggle for a new kind of school would be long and arduous. The new school would take much more effort to achieve than all the rest. 'But if we finally win through to it, the people will have everything they need to celebrate their final and most decisive victory'.[17]

Basic problems in teaching

Blonsky's educational legacy is rich in ideas about teaching, and particularly about the cognitive activities of pupils, the development of thinking and memory, and the conditions for the effective assimilation of knowledge, skills and habits. Among his solutions to a number of problems concerning educational content and methods, one outstanding achievement was the curriculum he devised for Soviet schools at the time of their original creation and early development.

Blonsky worked hard to free curricula from the abstract, dogmatic, religious and moral subjects that had predominated under the old order. In educational content he gave pride of place to the natural and social sciences, which underlie the materialistic outlook, and attempted to approach every discipline from the standpoint of its contribution to the preparation of pupils for working life.

For him, the chief requirements of educational content were a scientific basis, an ideological and political bent, a link between school and life, and consideration of the characteristics of particular age-groups and individuals. When devising a curriculum, he made a special effort to relate science to the subjects taught at school; he was therefore in favour of everything that was new and progressive in the development of scientific thought serving as an inspiration for formal education. It was essential, Blonsky maintained, to give secondary pupils a valid notion of contemporary physics. Believing that pupils take in genuine scientific knowledge more actively and deeply than any of the pseudo-scientific or obsolete knowledge that lingered in the curriculum, he called for a bold espousal of contemporary science. In his view, primary school was an introduction to mathematics, and secondary school a mathematical education. In his book *The Labour School*, he proposed a mathematics curriculum that would stimulate the development of mathematical thinking. To this end, he introduced some algebra in primary school and some higher mathematics in secondary school. This was a feature of the Soviet curriculum until the present.

Reacting to Lenin's ideas about the scientific organization of work, Blonsky wrote two articles, 'The Alphabet of Work' (1922) and 'The Organization of Work as a Secondary-School Subject' (1923), in which he defined the content of a course explaining the scientific basis of the organization of work. In the latter article, which was highly appreciated by Krupskaya, it is stated that the work process consists of several stages—the organizational, implementation and

checking—the most important of which is the organizational phase, calling for such qualities as creativity, initiative, judgement, alertness, foresight and the ability to work out what knowledge is required and how to obtain it. It is when a task is being organized that, in his view, the most varied knowledge has to be called on.

Together with Krupskaya and S.T. Shatsky, Blonsky helped to prepare the State Academic Council's curricula, which played an important role in the development of Soviet schools. These curricula were drawn up in the 1920s, a time when experience was still lacking and uncharted courses had to be steered, while confronting great difficulties and, at times, errors. Blonsky himself admitted to such errors. When they occurred, however, he tried to discover their causes and to correct them. Thus he did not support composite curriculum building for senior classes and resolutely declined to take part in compiling curricula by the composite method, which he believed was suitable only at primary-school level. Nevertheless, for him as for other Soviet educators, the essential shortcoming of composite curriculum building was dislocation in the continuity of knowledge.

Blonsky took great pains to encourage an active and self-reliant attitude among pupils during the educational process. Education—he used to say—called for an active approach and it was best not to 'receive' it but to 'build' or 'make' it for oneself. In this context, his remarks on the stimulation of practical and independent activities to develop cognitive capacity are still of interest today. Being active creatures—Blonsky maintained—children suffer from inactivity, immobility and passive contemplation. By nature they want to be busy. They should be helped to find material enabling independent work to be done so that this propensity of theirs does not lie idle. Even the very best of schools—he pointed out—cannot provide as much knowledge as is needed in life. Classroom teaching, as he put it, is unable to provide pupils with such a quantity of knowledge that they will have no need to obtain more. A person cannot retain all the knowledge he acquired during his schooling. That is why one of the fundamental tasks of the school is to equip pupils with the abilities and skills of self-education.

Blonsky always advocated 'active methods' of instruction. The old system—he used to say—relied on memory rather than thought. The instruction it provided did not stimulate independent thinking. Under the new system, studies had to be made interesting, attractive and capable of satisfying the pupils' intellectual curiosity. One such approach he dubbed the 'experimental method', since in his view it facilitated the active and critical perception of thoughts, and cultivated an inclination to question received ideas and the habit of doing so. At the same time, this method gave pupils the ability to find their way in the world in which they lived and helped to stimulate their creative abilities. Among the merits of the 'experimental method', Blonsky drew attention to its diversity, in particular the scope for 'experimentation' by the children themselves. This he contrasted with 'demonstration' and the copying of other people's experiments, understood as verifying knowledge already taught in the laboratory. He included regular and systematic observation of natural and social phenomena by the pupils. Another important method that attracted his attention was the 'method of everyday activities', which he regarded as a way of linking theory to practice so that pupils were equipped to solve practical problems. Blonsky's views on 'active methods' are attuned to contemporary needs since educational science today is, among other things, perfecting active teaching methods that will stimulate independent thinking on the part of pupils.

In the late 1920s, he defended the project method and the Dalton Plan. At the same time, he cautioned educators against an unrestrained use of the project method and expressed concern at the fact that some of them viewed the Dalton Plan as an educational panacea.

The conditions he considered essential to the learning process were the capacity for work, degree of mental development, organizational ability and willingness to study. At the same time, he classified pupils according to these criteria. His views on difficult children, in particular his advice and recommendations on how to work with them, are of great interest.

Teachers and their training

Teachers receive considerable attention in Blonsky's writings. He repeatedly stressed the need to train and retrain them. The teacher's task in life was to educate the people who were to build the new society, and to organize and create the school of work. Blonsky was the organizer and an active proponent of the labour school. It was of the utmost importance—he emphasized—that teachers should love children, be close to them and know how to instruct and educate them.

The duties of teachers should include a mastery of their subject and the ability to arouse the pupil's interest in it, a knowledge of educational methods and techniques, an ability to teach pupils how to think, a knowledge of the characteristics of different age-groups, concern for the children's health, and a contribution to the shaping of their convictions and the development of high moral principles, aesthetic awareness and discernment. Hence Blonsky was in favour of combining the functions of education and instruction in a single person, namely the teacher.

As a member of a team, the teacher, in Blonsky's view, had to be supported in his work by the teaching body and bear in mind its educational role. While noting that children needed educational guidance, he frequently spoke out against the 'aberrations of school management' as seen in attempts to organize it without the help of an educationist.

Teachers should constantly improve their knowledge and skills, and here, as Blonsky emphasized, self-education comes into its own. Teachers, if they do not study, are not teachers; before cultivating the minds of children, teachers should first cultivate themselves. Without self-education and creative development it is impossible to teach.

Blonsky played an active part in the training of teachers. In the early years of developing the Soviet schools he headed the Academy of Social Education (which later became the N.K. Krupskaya Academy of Communist Education). This was a new kind of higher educational establishment, which trained some 4,000 educational workers. Its goal was to train politically active people capable of acquiring knowledge by themselves.

As the Director of the Academy of Social Education, Blonsky emphasized labour training for teachers by involving them directly in working activities. From their first year, students were familiarized with factories, workshops, museums and all the sights of Moscow and its environs. Almost simultaneously, practical courses began in the various branches of working life. Students worked directly on the shop floor and in laboratories and studied various kinds of agriculture.

Blonsky's pioneering activities at the Academy, which took the form of production work in industry and agriculture, obtained the approval and support of Krupskaya. 'During that time'—she recalled in 1929—'comrade Blonsky and I thought deeply about how to train contemporary teachers with a knowledge of production, the countryside and the factory. Comrade Blonsky made it the practice in the Academy of Communist Education for students to spend their first six months working in industry, and not as engineers or lecturers, but on the shop floor. This left a deep imprint on all their work. There were some interesting reports on their work in factories'.

At the Academy, students were given everything necessary to provide them with a good training for teaching. Considerable emphasis was placed on art, music, recitation and so on. All students received artistic training provided at the Academy.

The Academy attached importance to teaching practice, which was active and compulsory. Students in the pre-school faculty worked in kindergartens, while those in the school faculty worked in the Academy's own school. They also did practical work in children's homes and reception centres, where they worked with homeless children. Educational work with the homeless was intimately linked with educational theory, child health and psychology acquired at the Academy.

Thus the Academy provided training that was sound for its time in general, vocational and polytechnical education. It produced a large number of teachers specializing in pre-school training, school education, political educational work and the organization of the national education system. There is no questioning the value of what was done in this regard by Blonsky.

Blonsky was no bookish theoretician, but a teaching enthusiast and a committed, forward-looking protagonist of educating the people. His works are among the most treasured of Soviet psychology and educational science.

Notes

1. *Mihail Gerasimovich Danilchenko (Russia).* Doctor of educational sciences. Professor at the Lenin Teacher Training University (Moscow). Among his publications in Russian, we could mention: *The Psychological Theory of Blonsky* (1970); and *The Heritage of P.P. Blonsky* (1971).
2. P.P. Blonsky, *Izbrannye pedagogi*[illegible]*eskie proizvedenija* [Selected Works on Education], Moscow, Isdatel'stvo APN, RSFR, 1961, p. 43.
3. P.P. Blonsky, *Moi vospominanija* [My Memoirs], Moscow, 1961, p. 173-74.
4. P.P. Blonsky, *Reforma nauki* [The Reform of Science], Moscow, 1920, p. 34.
5. A.A. Smirnov, 'K 50-letiju sovetskoj psihologii' [Commemorating Fifty Years of Soviet Psychology]. *Voprosy psihologii* (Moscow), No. 5, 1967, p. 13-14.
6. P.P. Blonsky, *Psihologiceskie ocerki* [Psychological Essays]. Moscow, Izdatel'stvo, 1927, p. 147-48.
7. P.P. Blonsky, *Izbrannye psihologiceskie proizvedenija* [Selected Psychological Works], Moscow, Prosvescenie, 1964, p. 53.
8. Cf. A.A. Shein, 'P.P. Blonsky kak psiholog' [P.P. Blonsky as a Psychologist], *Voprosy psihologii* (Moscow), No. 3, 1964.
9. P.P. Blonsky, *Kurs pedagogiki* [Teacher-training course], Moscow, 1916, p. 67.
10. P.P. Blonsky, *Vvedenie v doskolnoe vospitanie* [Introduction to Pre-School Education], 2nd ed., Moscow, 1917, p. 7.
11. P.P. Blonsky, *Pedologija* [Pedology], Moscow, 1934, p. 51.
12. P.P. Blonsky, *Trudnye skol'niki* [Difficult Pupils], 2nd ed., Moscow, 1929, p. 45-46.
13. P.P. Blonsky, *Izbrannye pedagogiceskie proizvedenija*, op. cit., p. 443.
14. Cf. *XVIII Mezdunarodnyj psihologiceskij kongress. Obucenie i umstvennoe razvitie* [Eighteenth International Psychological Congress. Education and Mental Development], Moscow, 1966.
15. P.P. Blonsky, *Izbrannye pedagogiceskie proizvedenija*, op. cit., p. 492.
16. Ibid., pp. 226-27.
17. P.P. Blonsky, *Trudovaya skola* [The Labour School], Moscow, 1919, p. 48.