

Meleshko Y.G.

Postgraduate Student,

Kremenchuk Mykhailo Ostrohradskyi National University

EDUCATION IN POLTAVA REGION DURING THE GERMAN OCCUPATION IN 1941–1942

In the first months of occupation part of the school premises was used by the Germans for barracks or hospitals. Many schools lacked fuel; textbooks and tutorials, there were not enough teachers. Auxiliary Ukrainian administration was also in the formation stage, including education departments, who had to exercise total control to work on schools and to look after the development of the school network. There was also some uncertainty about the Nazis educational policies.

During the first year of occupation most primary schools in Poltava region have resumed their work. It worked in Poltava district 72 elementary schools with 166 classes, with about 4,000 children enrolled, although there were 8258 school children in the area. There were 37 schools in Kremenchug district (3942 students), Mirgorodsky – 47 schools (12096 students), Dykansky – 32 schools (2548 students), Nekhoroshchansky – 28 schools (3437 students), Pokrovogachansky – 27 schools (1589 students) and more.

A large proportion of children, especially since the age of twelve, remained out of school. Thus, in Poltava, out of 18,870 children under 16 years old, only 1,720 attended 11 elementary schools. In addition, in 8 vocational schools (agricultural, land management, pharmaceutical, music, arts and crafts, paramedics, woodworking and crafts) were educated as early as 1960 students. So, different forms of education in Poltava covered only about 20 percent of children. The situation in the villages of the region was not the best [4].

In developing the concept of a national school editorial «About the Ukrainian school» set before the educators of Poltava region a number of tasks, the successful solution of which would be to build a national school. First of all, had to be determined character and the tasks of the school, develop curricula, to arrange educational facilities and provide schools with textbooks and nationally conscious teachers. «The first requirement for our school, – said in the article, – to serve the interests of her people, was really a national Ukrainian school» [1, p. 114]. According to O. Potylchak, One of the

regions, where at first the occupying power started taking measures to organize medium-technical schools and colleges, was Poltava region. Only in the Novosanzhar district in February 1942 were opened 4 high schools to train specialists in the agricultural trade, afforestation, animal husbandry, gardening and horticulture. In Kozelshchyna district a school of herders and livestock breeders worked [2, p. 699]. A few days later the newspaper «Voice of Poltava region» published the basic principles of curricula «elementary» ukrainian school, which was designed for eight years of study and was based on the classical principles of European and national pedagogy. From the content of the sciences, – said in the article, – that their children will learn at school, their outlook depends, but from the sequence in the study – systematic, the soundness and duration of knowledge. The curricula of the national school were to be included basic humanitarian elements (language, literature, history), natural (science and geography) and mathematical (arithmetic, algebra, geometry) sciences. From the first to the last year of school, as required items, included physical education lessons, painting, sang with music and handmade. Following the traditions of national education in the past, the law of God was included in the curricula. «Curriculum, – said in the article, – should ensure the national character of education and education in the Ukrainian school». Therefore, the study of Ukrainian language and literature, geography and history were given priority. Ukrainians who found themselves in enemy-occupied territory, they hoped that even under occupation, children would be able to get a full secondary education. Head of the Kremenchug district O. Alei even announced paid education for students of 8–10 classes in the amount of 50 rubles for a year. Orphan children, disabled people and children repressed by Bolshevik parents should be exempt from tuition fees. Construction of a national Ukrainian school was one of the main objectives and derivatives of the OUN groups, who, following the German troops, left for the Dnieper Ukraine. The department of public education of the Kremenchug district was headed by P. Shvyd. In the first months of the German occupation of training in a few schools in Poltava, who resumed work was indeed national in nature. In addition to the obligatory portraits of Hitler, portraits of Shevchenko, Frank, Hrushevsky, Vynnychenko, Petliura and other figures of the Ukrainian liberation movement hung on the walls, and at the entrance – Ukrainian coat of arms. The first songs, what children studied at school, were the national anthem «Ukraine has not died yet» and Shevchenko's «Testament». National School, which was revived by the efforts of patriot teachers, needed new textbooks.

The department of education of Poltava city government has begun to draw up them November 1, 1941, and at the beginning of 1942 for the first time in Ukraine under the German occupation was issued a Ukrainian primer, reader for clasees 1-4, textbooks in Ukrainian and German languages, school collection of Ukrainian songs [1, p. 114–115]. In the Kremenchug newspaper «Evening Leaf» for April 17, 1942 there is an article entitled «They are learning German», which says «In Kremenchug region, the question of learning German is well posed. To this end, special courses have been organized in the city and many surrounding villages, where the young people are mostly interested, learn the language of our liberators. The courses are organized by many organizations and institutions, such as with the District Authority, etc.» [6, p. 1].

In the funds of the State Archives of Poltava region some of these textbooks have been preserved, including «Native Word» (Ukrainian primer for elementary school), compiled by O. Kustolian with the help of Poltava teachers Garmash, Golubitskaya, Goreev and Grevtsov. The circulation of the textbook was quite significant as for that time – 10 thousand copies. Methodical assistance to the authors of the primer provided by the well-known Poltava-Methodist teachers F.I. Pokhivaylo and I.E. Mikhailenko. In February 1942 in the dilapidated premises of the Poltava printing house a Reader for the second grade of elementary schools was also issued, prepared by Fedor Poshivaylo. The materials for it were selected from textbooks published in the pre-Soviet period for the Ukrainian schools of Grinchenko, Belousenko, Lubenets and Cherkasenko. Somewhat taken from the Belarusian and Russian readers. Some of the texts were written by the editor himself [1, p. 115].

The vast majority of schools in Poltava region started working on or since December 1941 (in Kremenchug), or since January 1942 (in Poltava). By this time, the fascist apparatus of violence and terror had finally formed, which covered all spheres of public life of Poltava, including education. In the beginning of 1942 in full the educational policy of the Nazis began, which became part of the general plan of colonization and the spiritual enslavement of the Ukrainian people. Studying in Ukrainian schools restored only on condition, that the school premises were not used by the Germans for their own purposes. Teachers were previously tested for loyalty to the occupiers, from the textbooks and the tutorials removed everything, reminiscent of the Soviet past [5, p. 85]. By order of E. Koch, at the Reich Commissariat Ukraine, the secondary education system was abolished, which was replaced by four-grade public schools, which «aboriginal» children were taught to read,

write, count and work physically. Contrary to the clear prohibitions on occupying power, thanks to the sacrifice of teachers, sometimes managed to retain full high schools of the pre-war model. However, these «islands» secondary education were constantly under severe ideological control by the occupation apparatus [3, p. 201].

Student success, as well as attending school, remained low. In the first class, the success rate of the Kremenchug district was 59 percent, second – 65, the third – 62, the fourth – 53. In Zinkiv district it was respectively 61, 65, 68 and 67 percent. There were not enough textbooks everywhere, notebooks, pencils, etc. Children often wrote on old newspapers, and instead of the ink used elderberry juice. Some children left school for various reasons, not even getting a primary education. Thus, in the Zinkiv district during the 1942/43 academic year 100 students dropped out of the first class, from the second – 41, the third – 104, the fourth – 107. Student attendance was 61, 61.1, 52.5 and 47.1 percent, respectively [5, p. 87].

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