

Pedagogical Heritage of Atis Kronvalds (1837-1875)

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Abstract: The article is devoted to Atis Kronvalds – a teacher, public person, a member of the New Latvian movement, one of the most prominent Latvian personalities in the 19th century. We are celebrating A. Kronvalds 180 anniversary in 2017. The aim of this article is to analyze his pedagogical heritage. The main methodological approach is hermeneutic, and the research methods are sources and literature analysis. All his short, but active and creative life he has devoted to pedagogical work and education issues. Working in schools he has drawn to several essential conclusions, which he tried to implement in life. Firstly, teachers cannot and should not work alone, especially when Latvian pedagogy is making its first steps. Therefore A. Kronvalds organized the meetings of local teachers that have developed in first general conferences of Latvian teachers. Secondly, he cared a lot that there were textbooks that corresponded to the requirements of the particular time. Thirdly, as a practicing teacher he considered that the teacher was responsible for what was going on in the classroom and school not only to parents but also the nation. His works, articles, published reports and letters reveal important ideas in pedagogy that are rooted in the views of European Enlighteners and the experience gained in practical work at school. The article analyzes views and theoretical ideas of A. Kronvalds that are arranged in a definite system to give an insight into the initial stage of the formation of Latvian national pedagogy in which he played a leading role. The pedagogical legacy of A. Kronvalds is presented in the following fields: the development of pedagogical terminology and his thoughts about languages; working out the regularities between the subject of pedagogy science and upbringing; the link between school and society; the importance of parents in upbringing; working out the content and methods of a folk school; origins of adult education; pedagogy science as the theoretical foundation of teacher's profession.

Key words: Atis Kronvalds, Latvian national pedagogy, upbringing.

Introduction

The analysis of the pedagogical heritage of Neo-Latvians reveals that it has been Atis Kronvalds who has contributed the most to the development of theoretical foundations of pedagogy during the second half of the 19th century and who has devoted all his life to practical pedagogical work. This has been acknowledged both by his contemporaries and historians of pedagogy in their publications. "The reflections and aspirations of all the most important pedagogical ideas of the Enlightenment are found in A. Kronvalds' works who has put them in practice in Latvian schools and the activities of national (folk) teachers" (Anspaks, 2003, 99). "A. Kronvalds' contribution to the theory of upbringing is significant" (Staris, 1991, 130). "We can with good reason consider A. Kronvalds as one of the most vivid developers of Latvian national pedagogy" (Staris, Ūsiņš, 2007, 189). This is the year of Atis Kronvalds - 180 years have passed since his birth therefore we consider it necessary to activate his pedagogical heritage.

In 1938 unveiling the monument to Atis Kronvalds in Sigulda, the minister of education at that time Augusts Tentelis has said: "It is a sacred duty of each nation to remember and pay deep respect to those men who have helped it obtain its self-esteem, wellbeing and a better situation among other nations whether it has been military, science, art, diplomacy or another field of activity. Showing respect and remembering can be done differently - from just remembering in one's thoughts to the most magnificent monument in the most visible form. Such remembering strengthens the nation, makes its mind alert creates noble determination and awakens the will for new ambitions. One of the most eminent and noblest men for our nation has been Atis Kronvalds" (Tentelis, 1938).

The aim of this article is to analyze Atis Kronvalds' pedagogical heritage.

Methodology

The hermeneutic approach to the analysis of history sources has been applied in the article which includes the formulation of questions and fore-understanding, criticism of sources and the text, semantic analysis of the text, understanding the situation of the text's emergence, analysis of additional sources,

evaluation of syntactic means, search for the text structure, checking the argumentation used in the text, performing the hermeneutic circle from parts to the whole and revealing the social and culture context (Klafki, 1971). The study applies biographical approach to the analysis of historical sources and A. Kronvalds's life-span. Biographical approach follows the Belgian pedagogical historians' A. Van Gorp, F. Simon and M. Depaepe's theories of biographical approaches and methods used in social sciences (Van Gorp, Simons, Depaepe, 2015). Understanding of the interrelationships of historical age and personality is based on the valuable visions of the philosophers' and psychologists' of the era, which determine the kind of action and manifestation of the human nature in their life activities, denoted by the specific conditions of the historical period (Kūle, Kūlis, 1996; Karpova, 1994).

The sources used in the present article are collected works by Atis Kronvalds which helped to find the answer to the question how the pedagogical thought developed during the national awakening in the second half of the 19th century and how it was presented by works of A. Kronvalds, the teacher and the author of the most extensive pedagogical articles.

Results and discussion

Atis Kronvalds was born in Liepāja district, in the tailor's family with six children. Supported by the pastor H. E. Katerfeld he attended Springer's private school in Durbe, then Liepāja district high school (1854-1857). He devoted most of the time to reading books. He could spend the whole night on them; if he felt sleepy he put his feet in cold water. He did not finish the school owing to several reasons – sense of freedom, love, the conflict with the teacher of religion and, as he put it: "I had no true interest and liking to learning on the terms of imposed 'needs' rather to follow one's will of trying and willing to achieve something" (Kārklīšs, Goba, 1936, 33). In 1858 A. Kronvalds got the right to work as a home teacher of religion, Latin, German and Russian languages and started working as a home teacher in Lithuania in Dr. Pfeffer's family – he himself described this times as "descending to hell" (the pain caused by love) and "resurrection", as he put it, because of successful self-education by reading the works of German classic authors, pedagogical works and the Lithuanian language (Baumanis, 1975). Dr. Pfeffer did not want his son to go to studies alone and therefore invited Atis Kronvalds to accompany him and thus, he had studied medicine for half a year in Berlin but had to leave studies due to the shortage of financial support.

At the age of 24 A. Kronvalds returned to Durbe and became the home teacher in the pastor E. Procktor's family. During that time he published a textbook "Mazā vācieša pirmais solis" (The First Step of the Little German) (1863) which he presented to his foster-father with "the reverence of heart and child's gratitude to the man who with all his heart helps to strive for true education" (Baumanis, 1975, 29).

Working in Durbe, A. Kronvalds came to the idea that teachers could not and should not work on their own, isolated, especially at the time when the Latvian national pedagogy was making its first steps. He organized the first meetings of Latvian teachers or "conferencettes"; started with only six teachers the meetings soon doubled. A. Kronvalds organized the book exhibitions for teachers to let them acquainted with the latest publications, to identify their missing knowledge so that they could prepare their own teaching materials. It became possible due to the activities of A. Kronvalds who had laid the foundations for the tradition of book exhibitions (called 'book tables'). A. Kronvalds, all through his pedagogical career, initiated different meetings of teachers that could unite and support teachers in their complicated work.

A. Kronvalds considered that teachers needed their own newspaper; he popularized this idea not only in Kurzeme but also among the teachers of Vidzeme by sending a letter to Vidzeme Teachers' conference in Valka in 1864. Even more, he urged teachers to establish a newspaper by which they could be able to talk about schools and teachers, about schooling, about teachers' meetings, about school books that have been written and still need to be written (Kronvalds, 1936).

In 1865 A. Kronvalds was enrolled at Tērbata University for pedagogical courses. During this time period he wrote the textbook "Der Unterricht in der Heimatskunde" (1867), (translated in Latvian in 1922 as "Dzimtenes mācība" (Motherland Studies)). During Tērbata period A. Kronvalds attended different teachers' meetings thus strengthening his views in modern pedagogy. He was interested in natural sciences, history, and psychology and especially in linguistics. In 1868 he received a certificate that allowed him working as the teacher of district schools (Baumanis, 1975). After receiving the certificate A. Kronvalds worked at Tērbata teachers' seminary. During this period, he communicated

with people who shared his views in Kurzeme and Vidzeme about raising the Motherland to an honourable position, polishing the Latvian language and strengthening the Latvian spirit.

In 1873 A. Kronvalds left the well-paid teacher's position in Tērbata and accepted the invitation of Piebalga community therefore he moved to Vecpiebalga and worked as a parish teacher till the end of his life. Here he established the classes in which he taught the Latvian, German and Latin languages, history, geometry and sciences. The classes started at the end of September with 13 pupils. There were neither maps, nor the globe, nor the library but in a short time these shortages were greatly eliminated by Pauls Vītolīšs, A. Kronvalds' pupil. "The first two weeks were difficult. We were used to sitting at our long school desks wherever each of us liked to. We had to sit straight and firm at A. Kronvalds' lessons. It was not allowed to lean back and waddle. Both hands had to rest on the table all the time; we had to look straight into his eyes and write only when he said: write!" (Kārklīšs, Goba, 1936, 121) The lessons passed in dead seriousness, silence and order. He had expressed his serious attitude to the teaching/learning process also in several letters. Out of lessons A. Kronvalds had been joyful; he liked to joke and pupils remembered him smiling only twice during the lessons. In winter once a week A. Kronvalds organized "merriment evenings" for his class with singing, making music and talking. These meetings were attended not only by pupils but also by their relatives, thus he involved also the community in the work of school; each participant paid a rouble to support the school library. They discussed scientific issues, learned about the ancient Greek history in these evenings; in spring they went outside to Piebalga hillocks to explore plants and insects.

The year 1873 in Latvian culture is mainly connected with the first General singing festival but it is equally important for Latvian national pedagogy because this is the year of the first General Latvian teachers' conference. It was attended by some 200 people and A. Kronvalds was elected its leader, his deputy was J. Bētiņš, the music teacher of Irlava teachers' seminary. This allowed A. Kronvalds addressing teachers of the territory of Vidzeme and Kurzeme on regular bases to urge them unite because he considered the uniting of Latvians the foundation of the national awakening.

The conference agenda included issues about the development of singing, the child's physical and intellectual development, the preparing of textbooks and orthography issues. However, the key success was uniting of Latvian teachers, the increasing of their self-esteem. The first conference passed the decision to organize the second conference in 1874. The attitude of German nobility and clergy was negative to such an outcome of the conference. A. Kronvalds wrote in his letter to teacher J. Bētiņš before the conference: "Let God help us prepare better for the second conference than was it possible for the first one" (Kronvalds, 1936, 142).

A. Kronvalds was a competent leader of meetings. It had been recognized by Matīss Kaudzīte and other participants of the conference: "(..) two important qualities that can be seldom observed with other leaders of meetings have to be mentioned. Others when leading debates considered their duty only giving floor to speakers according to their turn and maybe observed that no speaker went beyond the boundaries of laws and politeness otherwise they could speak what they wanted. (..) A. Kronvalds, in his turn, did not allow the debater to deviate even a step from the subject under the discussion and when it was thoroughly treated then he presented the core of the bias in a special thesis or sentence and thus the listeners got a clear message of what had been discussed and what they are advised to speak about" (Kaudzīte, 1994, 229-230).

Permission was not received for the 3rd conference and among the mentioned reasons was that "teachers started demonstrating stronger feeling for self-respect: they had clearly shown that there were no children who were unable to make steps by their own feet without outside guidance" (Kaudzīte, 1994, 232).

The first work in the parish school was to ensure discipline because nobody had actually listened to the old teacher. Atis Kronvalds was strict; he considered order to be the background of success. He had been harsh when pupils were untrue in words or actions. However, one February morning the news came about Atis Kronvalds' death, and "all pupils are weeping and sobbing like the ones who have lost forever not only all good and nice hopes but also something even greater, their spiritual father" (Kārklīšs, Goba, 1936, 124).

A.Kronvalds' contribution to pedagogical theory

Although in his short life A. Kronvalds has not written fundamental theoretical works in pedagogy, his works, articles, published reports, letters and essays reveal significant for pedagogy ideas that are rooted

in the views of European enlighteners and the experience gained in working at school. The article offers an insight into A. Kronvalds' pedagogical views and theoretical ideas that are arranged into a certain system in order to ascertain the origins of the formation of Latvian national pedagogy in the second half of the 19th century.

Developing pedagogical terminology and thoughts on languages

A. Kronvalds has contributed much for improving the Latvian literary language and this has facilitated also the establishment of the pedagogical terminology that is the indicator of the development of any science. Following the linguists' conclusion that no one has surpassed Atis Kronvalds in the art of using short, snappy and in most cases very original neologisms; it has to be stressed that since the time of A. Kronvalds' activities notions that he had developed have taken a stable place in the and for the science of pedagogy, as well as for school practice: education, means, pencil, character, subject, development, action, history (in Latvian) and many other.

A. Kronvalds had frequently spoken and written about the importance of the Latvian language in educating the Latvian nation. This relates with the requirement voiced by Neo-Latvians that teaching in school has to take place in the mother tongue, that language has to be cared for because the language is the true guarantee for the development of culture. For instance, in his article "Vārdiņš par mūsu valodas piekopšanu" (A Word about Caring for our Language) he emphasises "(...) we acknowledge the weight and the need of the language of itself; (...) one has to keep to the language which they (children and adults) understand, which serves them as the true tool for exercising their mental strength," and he urges: "Then let us exercise also our language in schools as it really becomes and is our necessity" (Kronvalds, 1937, 511 – 512).

However, as the writing "Tautiskie centieni" (National endeavours) shows, A. Kronvalds did not immerse into narrow local patriotism but pointed also at the necessity of foreign language knowledge in education and science. Writing about the national teachers' seminaries he emphasised: "(...) the mother tongue must be the dominating. But it does not mean that it has to be the only dominating one. The studies of the German and Russian languages in our Latvian seminaries will bring different benefits to a teacher in later everyday life and therefore, if only it is possible, the languages have to be learnt diligently" (Kronvalds, 1936, 114). A. Kronvalds indicates in the foreword of the textbook "Mazā vācieša pirmais solis" (The First Step of the Little German): "(...) it is true and great foolishness if one thinks that a person who wants to stay a Latvian should not learn other languages(...) This is a very praiseworthy thing to learn (also) other languages as soon as it is possible because the Latvian language does not reach so far in the world because the piece of land where it is spoken is small" (Kronvalds, 1937, 596).

Development of regulations about the subject of pedagogy science –upbringing

There are the following the most important problems of upbringing and solutions in Atis Kronvalds' works:

1. Upbringing is presented as the means of the personality development with the help of which "it is possible to achieve true humanity" (Kronvalds, 1936, 175). A. Kronvalds is convinced that "knowledge alone does not make us neither cleverer nor more decent, nor even more virtuous" (Kronvalds, 1936, 190). He points out the necessity of socialization saying: "People are not created to live in their own solitary loneliness. People have to and need to live in cooperation or communities..." (Kronvalds, 1936, 175). A. Kronvalds has paid attention also to the history of pedagogy writing about upbringing as adopting the experience of previous generations.
2. The link between school and community/society has been revealed: "Thus we see that a good school does not exist either somewhere in the air or in some separated isolation rather it has grown closely together with life and the nation (...) School has to build a more spacious house of education and upbringing on the foundations that parents have laid in the hearts and minds of their children..." (Kronvalds, 1936, 184). Kronvalda Atis addresses the power of example which is so significant in pedagogy and points out that "the folk school is followed by the broad school of life. School, a good school can contribute both to decent upbringing of children and useful teaching (...) but unfortunately schools are not able to complete everything" (Kronvalds, 1936, 186).
3. Parents' role in upbringing has been substantiated: "There is a greater power in parents' hands in children's upbringing than schools have"; "What children have absorbed in their father's home they take with them as mental inheritance for all their life" (Kronvalds, 1936, 13) — such and similar

ideas are found in many of Kronvalds' works. For several times he has also pointed benefits of cooperation for the family and school: "Parents, sending their children to school, do not stand aside from their children's upbringing and teaching; therefore, first of all, school has to take a similar road with the parents, do the same work, namely, both would be striving to reach the same aim to bring children to humanity" (Kronvalds, 1936, 186).

4. Thoroughly developed trend of upbringing that relates to the tendencies of national awakening and the increase of self-esteem in the second half of the 19th century — facilitating the love to Motherland. Seven tools of upbringing are substantiated in the article "Tēvzemes mīlestība" (Love to Motherland): knowing one's Motherland; history of the Motherland; respecting and caring for the mother tongue; teaching to keep to the good traditions of forefathers, the spirit of community; holding in respect the most honest sons of the Latvian nation; teaching of religion has to be the blessing of love to Motherland (Kronvalds, 1936).

Establishment of the content of teaching/learning methodology in folk schools

The care of Neo-Latvians about practicing the Latvian language as the language of instruction and upbringing activate the national spirit; therefore A. Kronvalds emphasised these endeavours to improve the content of education in accordance with the progressive pedagogical ideas of the world and needs put forward by life itself. Atis Kronvalds has managed to do much also in this field. He has included a special section in his article "Kāds vārds par mūsu tautas skolām" (Some Words on our Folk Schools): "What should be taught in folk schools" — the mother tongue, writing, calculation and geometry, nature science, earth description or geography, history or the world stories, singing. He also gave comments regarding each school subject on what, how and why should be taught (Kronvalds, 1936, 195-221).

For instance, one of the aims of teaching the mother tongue is the following: "Pupils are to be taught to write their thoughts in such a way that all writing corresponds to the language rules and that the thoughts are clearly understandable to everyone" (Kronvalds, 1936, 208); on singing — "Thus singing restrains our hearts, our minds from evil thoughts and urges towards good, decent thoughts; nice singing serves people as the source of joy and blessing in life" (Kronvalds, 1936, 221).

A good example of the textbook is "Dzimtenes mācība" (Motherland studies). A. Kronvalds has substantiated the necessity of this school subject— the objective of Motherland studies is to introduce the comparative observation of simple geographical phenomena and to consolidate this activity with exercises, training, and tasks from geometry that have to be supported and strengthened with the help of drawing. A. Kronvalds' approach is put like this: ensuring the links among separate school subjects, as well as the ability to search for and find appropriate teaching/learning methods (Kronvalds, 1936, 142).

How to teach? Answers to this question can be found in several works written by A. Kronvalds. An obvious example is presented by the methods of teaching the Motherland studies: "Connect studies with the basis that is accessible to pupils. (..) teach descriptively! (..) Teach in such a way that every subject and each piece of ideas is the foundation for pupil's further more complete development. (..) Aspire to this and try to take pupils along with you so that they in their thoughts and deeds with the help of Motherland studies reached independence! (..) Of all the things the teacher of Motherland studies himself must have thorough knowledge of the Motherland" (Kronvalds, 1936, 162-171).

A. Kronvalds' idea about the educative potential of teaching cannot be replaced by mechanical cramming. He expresses the view that every teacher must achieve such a quality when children would reach understanding of what they learn, do it consciously; that educative learning would promote not only their intellectual development but also refinement of aesthetical feelings.

On problems of pedagogical psychology

A. Kronvalds has paid his attention to the problems that later became the research field of pedagogical psychology. He has grounded the necessity to explore the child's nature, the development of abilities and taking into consideration the child's individuality. A. Kronvalds writes about the child's "fantasy activity", "awakening and maintaining their interest in learning", "the course of learning and teaching that is appropriate to the child's mental abilities, development and rules of order" (Kronvalds, 1936, 161).

A. Kronvalds makes teachers pay their attention to the fact that every child is different, how important it is to understand it, why to do this; and reminds: “(..) you are entrusted human souls, other people’s children; first, be able to find the necessary foundation before you start building the house” (Kronvalds, 1937, 373).

A. Kronvalds in the article “Palīdzies sev pats” (Help Yourself) gives an insight into the importance of the man’s self-education problem — “individual’s help one-selves” by indicating that “help from outside can (..) reduce one’s own inability, activate strength for a number of times while the help from inside always turns out to be a strengthening thing” (Kronvalds, 1937, 305). A. Kronvalds’ conviction that teachers and parents’ assistance in the personality formation process is necessary but their work will be in vain if the child himself/herself had not promoted the intellectual development. He reveals his view on the “soul and spirit” as well as sense organs in the articles “Jutekļi” [Sense organs] (Kronvalds, 1937, 659-667), “Cilvēka iekšējais un ārējais veids” (Man’s Inner and Outer Mode) (Kronvalds, 1937, 636-642).

The origins of adult education

There is not a substantiation of adult education in the modern sense of this concept in A. Kronvalds’ heritage; however, much has been done in this field with his active participation: first libraries, reading unions are established, youth evenings are organized in the second half of the 19th century during which topical social and culture issues were discussed.

Teachers’ conferences that were organized on A. Kronvalds’ initiative became a place where the teachers could share their experience, appraise practice outcomes, and get acquainted with the latest textbooks and materials.

One of the tasks put forward for school was — “the school must build its own broader space of teaching and upbringing and it has to prepare its pupils so far that when they leave the school they are ready to enter the broadest school of life” (Kronvalds, 1936, 184).

Setting requirements for the Latvian folk (national) teacher

A. Kronvalds has written not only how “important, powerful and successful” is the teacher’s work but has also substantiated the core requirements for the teacher: he has to be well prepared, educated; he has to love his work, work with ardour; the teacher has to work on fulfilling the topical needs of the people; he has to know profoundly the language of his people, his country and its history; another important task is - to know his learners, to promote their self-awareness. “Schools are built everywhere, everyone needs and deserves well-prepared school masters or teachers,” A. Kronvalds writes and popularizes Tērbata Teachers’ seminary (Kronvalds, 1937, 674 – 678) which, according to his opinion, ensures the best teacher education because “some shilly-shallying person or dabbler cannot be appointed a master for performing such important and hard work; it needs the power and strength of a thoroughly and properly educated man” (Kronvalds, 1937, 399); “diligently taught, fully employed teacher who has admitted that he works for the wellbeing of the nation” (Kronvalds, 1936, 195). Speaking about the national teachers’ seminaries in Valka and Irlava, he emphasizes that “... each seminary student has to, possess, firstly, his knowledge and skills in the language in which he will have to teach his learners later in life, and, secondly, he has to be well prepared practically to work as a teacher” (Kronvalds, 1936, 114 – 115).

In 1868, A. Kronvalds in his letter “Cienītam amata biedram Tauriņam” (To the Honorary Fellow Master Tauriņš) writes: “Therefore it will be very useful that sharing brotherly love day in and day out we address loudly each other: wake up, stand up, work! Such calls will refresh the idle, energize the weak, strengthen and encourage the strong” (Kronvalds, 1937, 614). Let these words and A. Kronvalds’ pedagogical heritage in general make us – today’s teachers - stronger and more confident!

Conclusion

Atis Kronvalds’ whole short life has been devoted to pedagogical work. The Neo-Latvians’ conviction and the experience gained in pedagogical work have served as a background for the substantiation of his pedagogical ideas that confirm the beginnings of Latvian national pedagogy in the second half of the 19th century. The analysis of A. Kronvalds’ pedagogical articles and his life activities confirms a significant milestone in the development of pedagogical thought, that contributed to the revival of the Latvian national teachers who in their turn initiated teachers’ rallying to cooperation, strengthening their self-confidence and the development of education. This was an important step

towards the establishment of the Latvian University in 1919 where pedagogy became an academic discipline and has been developed since then as an independent science.

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