

Fighting for Survivor: Ideological and Ethical Conflicts of A.S. Makarenko with Dzerzhinsky Commune

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Abstract: In the paper the Authors tried to analyze how A.S. Makarenko's educational system might grow while in the early 1930s the control over social and political life in Soviet Union was strengthened. Using unpublished and previously classified materials, the Authors events which took place in the Children Labor Dzerzhinsky Commune, established in Ukrainian capital Kharkov, whose activity represented the highest point in development of A.S. Makarenko's pedagogical theory and practice. Facts that led to establishment of the Commune, age and social status of pupils, employment policy, difficult relationships between Makarenko and NKVD leaders, many "not pedagogical" – criminal and amoral factors, conflicting with Anton Semenovich's works have been carefully analyzed. Authors outlined conflict between the educator and Commune administration based upon different approaches to social and moral education of youth. Makarenko's perspective was more humane and less ideological than the one of his opponents.

Keywords: A.S. Makarenko; NKVD; Children Labor Dzerzhinsky Commune; morally defective children; criminality; V.A. Balitskii; pedagogical system; photo camera; production.

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1. Introduction

Dzerzhinsky children labor Commune managed by A.S. Makarenko is a very special case in Soviet and world history of pedagogy as a unique for its structure pedagogical phenomenon, representing the most effective and innovative professional and educational institution in A.S. Makarenko's pedagogical carrier. Makarenko's labor Commune, a unique facility in terms of efficiency, was just one of numerous institutions whose activity was aimed at adaptation and rehabilitation of

so-called street children left without parental care after the Bolshevik revolution. The authors emphasize the fact that the fight against child homelessness was among the main aims of early Soviet politics. We support Italian researcher D. Caroli who wrote that the modernization of state institutions of social control (supervision) after the October Revolution contributed to the use of social rather than criminal measures against street children and juvenile offenders. Meanwhile, in other European countries, the re-socialization of juvenile criminals was carried out only through measures of criminal nature. This circumstance is important, because it highlights the direction of the social policy of the period, but at the same time, it demonstrates how this direction determined, among other things, the educational activities of A.S. Makarenko, which went largely against the official line of the Soviet authorities, who used various measures of medical (social hygiene), ideological and psychophysiological nature in order to solve this problem, and regarded homeless children as «morally defective» children.

Based on these premises and numerous scholarly publications devoted to this topic, we agree with D. Caroli that A.S. Makarenko managed to overcome this narrow narrative of moral defectiveness. He understood, like A.V. Zalkind, the supporter Freud's perspective, that youth used antisocial behavior as a form of self-preservation, as a way to survive in severe social conditions, and that work per se, this ethical fetish of the Bolsheviks (as A.S. Makarenko aptly put it), could not develop those moral and social qualities in children, which they needed so much after their graduation from the institutions headed by A.S. Makarenko. Rejecting the pedagogical approach to child-rearing and labor as an ideologically omnipotent means of rehabilitation, the outstanding educator regarded the children to be people unaccustomed to the conditions of society. A.S. Makarenko created an axiological (value-oriented) system of upbringing, whose rules were recorded in official documents (the Constitution, regulations), which formed the legal and moral basis of life in the institutions. These circumstances enabled him to determine the foundations of the basic culture of the individual, as it was argued by both domestic and foreign scholars studying Makarenko's legacy. In our opinion, it is exactly this ideological and pedagogical conflict with the Soviet authorities that led to the conflict that resulted in the dismissal of A.S. Makarenko which is the main topic of this article (D. Caroli, 1999, p. 1302).

As it is well known, after an intensive period of pedagogical and economic development, the institution created by the Ukrainian Cheka and managed by Makarenko attracted the interest of administrative and civil circles, was covered by the Soviet and international new media, turned into a powerful production facility whose pupils manufactured competitive technologically advanced production (first Soviet electric drills and film cameras – the well-known FED) that Soviet Union had to import from developed countries before.

By 1936, the annual output had reached 22 million of rubles (Rost vypuska produktsii po kommune, 1936), but the best «performance indicator» of the commune was around a thousand of boys and girls with criminal record who had been gathered from the streets, railway stations and became socialized citizens of the young Soviet Union.

Considering that Dzerzhinsky labor Commune was under the supervision of main Ukrainian control organs like General Political Department and People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, a question remains open: to what extent could A.S. Makarenko move freely in pursuing his humanistic principles while working under the guidance of the most «non-humanistic» Soviet institution? With reference to this issue, archive materials collected for years can help us understand how the educator fought for defending the principles of his pedagogical theory.

2. Studying the history of educational institutions established and managed by A.S. Makarenko

Study of history of Dzerzhinsky children labor commune managed by A.S. Makarenko poses many challenges for researchers because only a restricted number of documents is freely available. The researchers have access to declassified Fund of Kharkov Regional State Archive, covering only the period between 1934-1941 and documents of Makarenko Fund of Russian State Archive of Arts and Literature. Consequently, we do not have enough credible sources that may shed light on some important aspects concerning work of A.S. Makarenko in such unique for its educational and social features institution.

In systematic works about A.S. Makarenko's biography scholars made an emphasis on the Commune because almost unanimously they regarded this institution as the triumph of his pedagogical system. In works by such scholars as L. Adolphs, S. Weitz, G. Hillig, E. Medynskii, M. Morozova, H. Rasmussen, E. Heimpel et alii, with varying degrees of completeness we can find references to pedagogical elements of his work in the Commune. Archive materials and Makarenko's works concerning the Commune in chronological order were published in 2008-2010 by well-known Makarenko researchers A. Frolov and Y. Ilaltdinova (Nizhnii Novgorod, Russia) gave a more complete picture of some important events.

Furthermore, scholars, expecting G. Hillig, quite superficially analyzed administrative problems A.S. Makarenko had to deal with in this period. Only researchers of Marburg Laboratory in a separate publication «Makarenko Referat» which started the well-known collection «Opuscula Makarenkiana», focused on demotion of Makarenko in 1932, one the most dramatic events during Makarenko's work in the Commune. In this work, curiously called «Bumping on pedagogical paths or Makarenko's "march" in 1932», German scholars systematized all available by the mid1970s documents concerning this question: Makarenko's works and letters, newspapers, and extracts of different studies (Hillig, 1975).

3. Who established the Commune and who became its member?

Initiative to establish Children' Labor Commune of State Political Directorate of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic named after F. Dzerzhinsky, whose goal was the fight against child homelessness and support for socialization of neglected young people was launched by Vsevolod Apollonovich Balitskii (1892-1937). During the meeting of State Political Directorate held on the 9th of April in 1927 (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 10, 15) he presented the proposal of perpetuating

the memory of F.E. Dzerzhinsky, an outstanding Soviet politician. Lack of relevant experience and skilled personnel among Cheka officers led to practical difficulties. The Commune had to become a model institution because of its status of permanent memorial and its affiliation to State Political Directorate. Consequently, a matter of urgency was the choice of pedagogical techniques and approaches that might ensure the success of the Commune (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 10, 15).

This situation generated intense debates, especially considering the fiasco of Ukrainian model institutions for social education like orphanage named after Bolshevik Artem and orphanage named after All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee. They worked for a very short time and did not gain any relevant pedagogical experience.

Above mentioned circumstances led to Makarenko's appointment as the head of the Commune because Makarenko had already been the chief of the Kharkov Gorky Colony, the most successful children's institution for correction and rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents in Ukraine.

However, Balitskii did not limit the SPD task merely to organization of the Commune. In brief, he defined the role his department had to play in the following way: to sustain, to grant modern facilities, to give full support. In this regard in the Central apparatus of SPD a Council for Commune affairs was created and was requested to create on a voluntary basis commissions in local SPD branches with the aim of supporting Commune. Main goal of Council and commissions was defined: to manage all activities of the Commune, to raise funds for support the Commune, to mobilize attention of SPD clerks, Soviet and economic bodies (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, p. 8).

It should be noted that when the Commune was created, SPD made the decision to give to this institution a long-term and systematic support. In this regard a campaign among clerks, command staff of internal forces and SPD political personnel to donate 0,5% of their monthly income on a regular basis for supporting the Commune was carried on. Along with such measures, it was emphasized that other kinds of material of financial assistance were needed (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, p. 8).

Th first members staff of the Commune were appointed on the 20th of November 1927. Excepting Makarenko, the employees included a tutor of Gorky Colony T.D. Tatarinov, an economy manager and a cook (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, 15). For the sake of comparison: in August 1935, by the time when Makarenko was fired by the Commune, the number of personnel had been already 1051 people, and among them there were 14 managers, 86 specialists with higher education and employees holding senior posts, 70 specialists with secondary education and front-line personnel, 9 economists and planners with special education, 444 workers, 428 others¹. Such trend towards increased in number of employees of the colony did not stop later and by 10th of December 1935, 1076 people worked in the Commune².

¹ State Archive of Kharkov Region (further SAKR) file R-4511, inventory, storage number 1, storage number 9, document. 23.

² Ibid., storage number 10, document 92.

First pupils (50 boys and 10 girls, as Makarenko stated in his paper “Turned new pages” (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, p. 15), arrived in the Commune from Gorky Colony on the 25th of December 1927. In other documents a different male/female ratio of pupils is reported: 44 boys and 16 girls³.

Shortly after 40 more teenagers picked up from the street came from Kharkov detention center. The following increase in the commune population (50 new pupils of the Commune came from orphanages) occurred in the first half of September 1928 (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 15, 18).

Later, in connection with large-scale manufacture reorganization in the Commune, especially what concerns the construction of electric tools plant, a project to increase the number of pupils up to 150 was conceived by the Commune administration and approved on the 21st of July 1931. At that time, the Commune accepted about 50 new pupils who had come there thanks to special recruiting commissions sent all over Ukraine (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 27-28). Furthermore, on the 13th of November at Kharkov railway station a massive operation involving rounding up homeless children was carried on. Later Makarenko would describe it several times in his public speeches. The group of rounded up street children was incorporated in line of pupils of the Commune and solemnly led to the Commune where their clothes were burnt as the symbol of new life and joining the commune.

Thanks to such measures, by the 20th 1932 the number of pupils had reached 300 units. In May, a new “railway station raid” implying rounding up street children took place which led to arrival of 30 new pupils of the Commune. A gradual increase of pupils of the Commune occurred during the whole 1932. By the 1st of October there were 333 pupils, at the end of the year their number rose to 342 (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 27-28 and 54).

Like in Gorky Colony, social characteristics of pupil of the Commune had a significant relevance, as far as data got from them were used for organization both of pupil of the Communes’ professional training and of Commune educational work. We were able to find data concerning the end of 1930. At that moment, in the Commune there were 1 12-year-old pupil (0,7 %), 9 13-year-old pupils (6 %), 26 14-year-old pupils (17,4 %), 42 15-year-old pupils (28,2 %), 34 16-year-old pupils (22,8 %), 19 17-year-old pupils (12,7 %), 10 18-year-old pupils (6,7 %), 6 19-year-old pupils (4 %), 2 20-year-old pupils (1,4 %). As we can see the predominant age is 14-16 years.

The social background of pupils of the Commune, coming from working class (71 people, 47,6%), from peasants (57 people, 38,2 %), from families of clerks (14 people, 9,4 %), or from those whose occupation is unknown (7 persons, 4,7 %) gave hope that they could have genetic predisposition to physical work. Evidence concerning «orphanhood» and «street life» of Dzherzhinets gave us quite unexpected results: most of them (110 people, 73,8%) had relatives, and 86 people (58%) have

³ Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, file 332, inventory. 2, storage number 29, l. 1.

never been street children⁴. It is documented that among pupils of the Commune there were persons having criminal records⁵.

Constantly striving to increment the number of its pupils, the Commune sometimes became too crowded for its members and as result, the recruitment process had to be terminated. So, by December 1934 not only Dzerzhinsky Commune but also other NKVD children's colonies were overcrowded: the commune could not accept 40 street children from the collective farm named after Balitskii with which this institution maintained closed links⁶. Despite this, NKVD did not stop massive rounding up street children and encouraged them to stay in children's institutions: only for 10 days of August 1935 at 29 USSR railway stations 7743 street children were detained among whom 1729 (22,3 %) were rounded up for the second time. The authors of the documents emphasize that the task of NKVD organs was not only to put juvenile offenders or street children in labor colonies, remand homes and children's institutions of other departments, but also «to make sure that such children stay in those facilities to be separated from criminal environment and homelessness in order to prepare them for autonomous working life»⁷.

4. Under the GDP friendly care

The fact that, unlike Gorky Colony, Dzerzhinsky Commune for the whole time of its existence was closely monitored by SPD -NKVD, i.e. by the state body among whose functions were persecution and extermination of real and alleged enemies of Soviet political system, represented an indubitable circumstance for appointing Makarenko's in the Commune. Control over all the activities of the institution was carried out complying with the orders of chairman of Ukrainian SPD V.A. Balitskii, and other chiefs, and using a specially constituted control organ, the Board, having as its members representatives of Ukrainian GPD administrative staff.

Board members were nominated on the 9th of January 1928; the composition of the board periodically changed as it happened on the 23rd of November 1929, the 21st of July 1931, in March 1932 and several more times (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, 15, 21, 27; Makarenko, 2008a, 304). At different times members of the Board included the director of Economic department of SPD of the Ukrainian SSR Iosif Mikhailovich (Ios-Ghersh Mikhelevich) Blat (chairman of the Board)(1896-1937), the vice-chairman SPD of the Ukrainian SSR Karl Martynovich (Eduard Ivanovic) Karlson (1888-1938) (chairman of the Board), Alexander Iosifovich (Osipovich) Bronevoi (real surname Faktorovich, 1898-1940) (chairman of the Board), the future chief of Police General Department and deputy people's commissar of Ukrainian Department of Interior Nikolai Stanislavovich Bachinskii, (chairman of the Board), secretary of the Board, the secretary of department of SPD of the Ukrainian SSR, Yaakov Vulfovitch Pismennyi (1902-1937), Mikhail Markovich Bukshpan, the sister

⁴ Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (further RSALA), Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, file 332, inventory. 2, storage number 29, l. 1.

⁵ (SAKR), file. R-4511, inventory. 1, storage number 10, document. 86.

⁶ Ibid., storage number 6, document. 69.

⁷ Ibid., storage. 13, document 29.

of people's commissar of Ukrainian Department of Interior Natalia Apollonovna Balitskaia (1899 – ?), the head of Ukrainian NKVD Fire Department Efim Davydovich Elkin (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 115-118; Хиллиг, 1991, p. 41; Hillig, 1999, pp. 243-255; Hillig and Nevskaia, 1994a, p. 215; Hillig and Nevskaia, 1994b, pp. 271, 275, 287; Shapoval, Prystaiko & Zolotarov, 1997, pp. 154, 158, 439, 443, 532)⁸ and others.

Even after all government institutions of Ukraine moved to Kiev in 1934, the Commune Board continued its work. Its Chairman, A. Bronevoi, tried to keep close relations with the Commune. He wrote: «I am responsible for the camera plant until the program will be completed. Considering that I am far away from Kharkov, I can be responsible only if I am provided with daily updates concerning the situation with the camera plant and construction works»⁹.

It should be noticed that the position of head of the Commune did not protect A.S Makarenko from rigid and sometimes rather rude interference of SPD in his work. We can find a good example of such interference in Board resolutions concerning Makarenko's annual report (1930): «To forbid comrade Makarenko to make principal decisions without authorization by either the Board or the Board Chairman»¹⁰. The Board tried to keep under a full control all the aspects of life in the commune. We rely on several facts.

When remuneration of pupils of the Commune was introduced, the Board both supported the revision of provision concerning remuneration and offered Makarenko to set up immediately a Savings bank in the commune for keeping cashes, including salaries of pupils of the Commune¹¹. The Board kept on putting pressure on the Commune as well after Makarenko was transferred from the post of head of the Commune to the post of Head Teacher in 1932. At the beginning of February 1934, A. Bronevoi resented that not only acceptance in the Commune, but also graduation, marriage, and provision of former pupils of the Commune with accommodation must have not place without his authorization¹².

Later, Makarenko explained that he accepted to work as Head teacher for family reasons, but at the same time, in a letter never sent to Bukshpan rhetorically Makarenko asked himself:

Do I have the right to throw away all my work and to reject the conclusions of my experience that are strictly necessary for the Soviet Union, and to turn into a correction officer, an «assistant» of random, though honored and respected people, who have nothing to do with Soviet upbringing? (Makarenko, 1986, p. 50).

The demotion of Makarenko set up a slightly different system of relationships inside the Commune due to special features of people surrounding the educator, first and foremost, the administrative staff of the institution. An official of Ukrainian NKVD M.A. Maksimov became his successor as the head of the Commune and assumed his duties on the 10th of March 1932, but officially became the head of the institution

⁸ RSALA, file 332, inventory. 2, storage number 29, ll. 21-22.

⁹ SAKR, file. R-4511, inventory. 1, storage number 1, document 24.

¹⁰ RSALA, file 332, inventory. 2, storage number 29, ll. 21-22.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² SAKR, file R-4511, inventory. 1, storage number 1, documents. 4-5.

in August. M.A. Maksimov, as M.M. Bukshpan argued, accepted the post «only for the love of the Commune». Bukshpan explained that the replacement of Makarenko with Maksimov was due to the creation of a large factory and a considerable increase in number of the commune members, needing, as Bukshpan put it, the appointment of «a party senior member and good chekist, who could be the mastermind of this whole enterprise» (Makarenko, 2008a, pp. 304, 342). Subsequently, Makarenko estimated Maksimov's pedagogical qualification in the following way: «Comrade Maksimov did not have proclivity for pedagogical logic, and he did not decide anything, others made decisions, and sometimes but circumstances made decisions without seemingly educational meaning. But there was a hope that he gradually would learn how to solve pedagogical problems».

Makarenko's optimism, however, was unfounded. Makarenko complained that for several months of Maksimov's work he heard enough of «trivial narrow-minded aphorisms» (Makarenko, 1986, p. 49). In the August of the same year, Ivan Porfirevich Sudakov was appointed executive head of the Commune and then its head (Makarenko, 2008a, 356). I.P. Sudakov, an official of SPD of the Ukrainian SSR Republic, according to the 31st of 1928 Board resolution became a member of the first Council for Affairs of the Commune, and a member of the Audit commission. His work as head of the Commune coincided with the 5th anniversary of this institution and that is why he was the only one whose portrait is on the pages of anniversary issue –the collection of works «*Second birth*» (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, 35; Makarenko, 2008a, p. 33) unlike the rest of the heads of post-Makarenko period. The dynamic of relationships between the new head and Makarenko is well reflected in Makarenko's correspondence with his wife. In the early November of 1932, i.e. during the time of active preparation for the anniversary, Makarenko wrote: «I start quarrelling with Sudakov. He is getting more and more active; he requests to write a report on pretty much any trifle. The point is that he really enjoys writing resolutions in the left upper corners of documents».

Further in the letter Makarenko described how Sudakov crossed out Makarenko's directive subscribed by Komsomol unit, Commanders' council and general assembly, writing: «Amend and report to me». Such action really enraged both Makarenko and leaders of Commune self-government; the educator wrote a report of protest. Very fast, the day after, Sudakov assured Makarenko that this whole affair was a misunderstanding and granted full freedom to Makarenko (Hillig and Nevskaja, 1994b, pp. 173-174).

In another letter to his wife, Makarenko described his real relationships with Sudakov and, at the same time and evaluated professional skills of I. Ia. Teper who had replaced Sudakov as head of the Commune. The educator wrote: «Teper is worse than Sudakov, because he is smarter than him, and it means that Teper has the right to judge and make decisions in cases when Sudakov would never dare to decide, and when it was enough just to shout at Sudakov» (Hillig and Nevskaja, 1994b, p. 193). As we see, despite his subordinate position, Makarenko was able to defend his authority as leader, at least, in questions related to his sphere of competence. As for Sudakov, not so much evidence of his administrative work in the Commune left (Makarenko, 2008b, pp. 76, 92, 98).

Before he came to the Commune, Isaak Iakovlevich Teper had worked as operative in *Ukhtapechlag*, a group of NKVD colonies in the far north of European part of USSR, near the cities of Ukhta, Pechora and Vorkuta. He was Sudakov's deputy for a few months in 1933, then in August he was appointed as executive head of the Commune. Officially he headed the commune from the 23rd of February 1934 to June of 1934, when he returned to the post of deputy head. On the 31st of December 1934 under the resolution of Commanders' Council, Teper and a group of heads and officials of the Commune were awarded with the title of honorary pupils of the Commune¹³.

Makarenko gave a comprehensive and witty description of Isaak Iakovlevich in the same letter, where he compared him with Sudakov: «Teper will make a big mess in the Commune and definitively he will destroy it. He is all too smart, he is clever in every particular case, but he cannot connect two cases together smartly enough, his mind absolutely lacks ability to synthesis» (Hillig and Nevskaja, 1994b, p. 193). Presumably, his further fate was tragic. It is well known that the former *Narkom* of Internal Affairs I.M. Leplevskii after his arrest, in May 1938 during interrogation «confessed» that exactly Teper was in contact with anarchists and Trotskyists on assignment of Balitskii, who allegedly created the «right-Trotskyist group (Leplevskii) inside SPD in 1933-34 which colluded with anti-Soviets organizations» (Shapoval, Pristaiko, Zolotarev, 1997, p. 179).

I. Ia. Teper, probably, did not have enough time to cause too much damage to the Commune because he was soon replaced by A.I. Marusinov who was the head of the institution from the 16th of June to September 1934. Considering that Marusinov hold his post for a very short time, there is lack of information about his work, and, consequently, we have no sources for objective assessment of him and his attitude to Makarenko. Only recently biographical data about Marusinov previously unknown to Makarenko researchers have become available. Alexander Ivanovich Marusinov- Bernstein was born in 1895, in the family of a bookbinder. He finished a private school in Iekaterinoslav. During WWI he served as private. Since 1918 before his designation to Commune he served as armorer of Red Army Nevelskii regiment on the Eastern front, worked as political Advisor of the 2nd Orsha regiment, political Advisor of political directorate of Turkestan front in Tashkent, head of Department for dissemination of political literature of South-western railway, clerk of Intelligence Agency of Red Army headquarter in Ukraine and Crimea, security officer of SPD Kiev provincial and divisional Operational Department, Head of SPD Odessa Regional General Division, head of Personnel Department of SPD Donetsk Regional Division. After the discharge from the Commune, Marusinov worked as NKVD Head of Personnel Department of Kharkov Region Direction, Head of Ukrainian Administrative and Economic Board of Ukrainian NKVD Direction. His last workplace was Soviet NKVD Taishetskii detention camp in Irkutsk region (Makarenko, 2008b, pp. 251, 257; Shapoval, Prystaiko, Zolotarev, 1997, p. 513)¹⁴.

¹³ RSALA, file. 332, inventory. 2, storage number 30, ll. 3-5; SAKR, file R-4511, inventory. 1, storage number 3, document. 64.

¹⁴ SAKR, file R-4511, inventory 1, storage number 3, document. 64.

Last manager of the Commune, Makarenko had to closely work with was Pavel Konstantinovich Tikhonov, a former Ukrainian SSR SPD clerk, who has been managing the institution from the 19th of September 1934 to May 1936. His name is associated with an order dated 29th of September 1934 encouraging the appointment of most capable pupil of the Commune for administrative and technical positions. Moreover, several times Tikhonov took part in pedagogical board meetings and actively participated in debates concerning further education of Pupils of the Commune, establishment of technical schools and other issues. The status of Pavel Konstantinovitch was quite high, considering that the 31st of December Tikhonov and Teper were awarded with the badge of honorary pupil of the Commune by self-governance board. Government highly appreciated Tikhonov's participation in development of manufacturing: in October 1935 Tikhonov and three technicians of the Commune got government awards from Ukrainian Central Executive Committee for successful output of FED cameras (Abarinov and Hillig, 2000, 71; Makarenko, 2008b, pp. 257, 283-284, 316, 319, 324)¹⁵. It is possible that Makarenko was in good terms with Tikhonov: in a letter to his wife, he wrote that «everyone claims that I pay a visit: Kogan, Tikhonov, pupils of the Communes», complaining that during his last visit to Kharkov he had not enough time to pay a visit to all his acquaintances (Hillig and Nevskaia, 1994b, p. 269).

In Galina Stakhievna Makarenko's letter to her own's son, we can one of few misunderstandings between A.S. Makarenko and the manager of the Commune concerning summer expedition of pupils of the Commune in 1935, a fact which can be scarcely found in documents. Galina Makarenko wrote: «Up to now, Tikhonov called "a fiction" all Anton's demands concerning expedition. Nevertheless, the author of such a letter reasonably presupposed that Tikhonov expressed the opinion of NKVD under whose responsibility the Commune was» (Hillig and Nevskaia, 2001, p. 80).

It is worth emphasizing that pedagogical principles on which Dzerzhinsky Commune lied were the cause of a violent conflict of A.S. Makarenko with official Ukrainian pedagogical science.

Since the 16th of January 1928 first administrative task for the Board of Commune was the approval of teaching-educational plan, programs, and admission criteria. Shortly after, the Board approved the Constitution of the Commune, but the 8th of February the Board chairman I.A. Blat sent to Ukrainian Scientific-Research Pedagogical Institute (USRPI) an official request titled *Observations on Dzerzhinsky Labor Commune* wherein he expressed the hope that "theorists and practitioners of social education shall actively participate in elaboration and definition of basic principles of life and work" of the new institution. In the above-mentioned document, it was stated that the Commune was a monument to Dzerzhinsky, and, consequently, it ought to be a model institution and embody all Marxist achievements in the field of social education. *Constitution of Dzerzhinsky Labor Commune* and *Operative plan of educational work of Dzerzhinsky Labor Commune*, two key documents of this educational institution both drawn up by Makarenko, were delivered along with

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the letter. I.A. Blat characterized those documents as something original in social education system (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, p. 16)¹⁶.

Institute officials set out their position about the *Operational plan* and the *Constitution* in a statement that has not been found yet. However, it is possible to get an idea of the content of this quite critical document using Makarenko's sharp, polemical, and acrimonious answer named «*counter statements, all too counter statements*» (Hillig, 1991, pp. 32-37; Makarenko, 1986, pp. 247-249). The 11 questions of this document concerning organizational criteria of the Commune formulated by Makarenko, prepared by the Board, and eventually transmitted to the Institute were sharply critical. Although this document is not known to researchers, its content is partially reflected in the summary record of the meeting of USSRPI's section for social pedagogy dated 13th -14th of March 1928 when key documents of the Commune were discussed. All original documents concerning those events with extensive comments and analytical introduction have been published by Marburg colleagues in the collection «*On the top of the Olympus*» in 1991 (Hillig, 1991).

Report, interventions during discussion and Makarenko closing remarks in the dispute of 14th of March (the summary record dated 13th of March has not been found yet), are main evidence about views A.S. Makarenko had at that time about key organization principles for residential educational institutions, the balance of role of children self-governance and educators, its goals and means for enhancing pupil's professional development. Eventually, most of systemic elements for organization of educational institution proposed by Makarenko were successfully implemented, and their further and significant development made of Dzerzhinsky Commune an innovative educational phenomenon.

5. Other «not pedagogical» factors

Remarkable pedagogical success of the Commune gives the false impression that the institution represented a completely favorable environment for validating planned by A.S. Makarenko pedagogical proposals. Recently discovered archive records paint a gloomy picture with many “not pedagogical” factors which, paradoxically, increased the reputation of the Commune while A.S. Makarenko fought against them. Unfortunately, neither in Makarenko's works nor in his letters we can find clear indication about how the educator responded to difficulties, but a detailed reporting about the latter gives us the chance to show how the fight for supporting Makarenko's pedagogical ideas was dramatic.

In spring 1932, as Makarenko's managerial functions were restricted, one of the typical trends of development for the Commune, no longer meeting obstacles, was a gradual conversion of this model educational institution into an industrial plant. A sui generis uncompleted manifesto against the described development of the Commune was Makarenko's letter to M.M. Bukshpan, written near August 1932. Therein we find the most important thesis by Makarenko: «The statement that education is not need, that only the work in manufacturing educates is one of the foolish ideas pedagogical

¹⁶ Ibid., file R-917, inventory 1, storage number 85, documents 1-9.

“handcraft” is full of. As for educator, thanks to such “endless assault” over winter and spring 1932 the commune did not achieve significant educational success».

Opposing typical for his opponents the exaggerated use of isolated educational means, Makarenko tried to show to the leadership of the Commune that plants are just a part of the common work over the collective: only school and education can define the progress we make (Makarenko, 1986, p. 49).

Paradoxically, quality and liquidity of Commune production, undoubtedly one of material results of organization and hard work collective, proven to be one of circumstances which started to threaten the life of the Commune.

Negative reaction to request of having just one working shift, which could not allow increase production and, at the same time, could not give chance to meet country demand is outlined in Teper’s official report to Bronevoi (November 1933). It is shown that during that year about the 50% of purchaser orders were executed and for the coming year this rate was expected to be even lower in response to growing demand. A request to increase the production of electric drills of Moscow supply and logistic division (MSALD) to which the Commune delegated authority was rejected as well. Few days after another purchase order of Ukrainian supply and logics division for 3000 electric drills was issued and this fact made the upon-mentioned question sharper than ever. As Taper stated, purchase orders of those organizations had as consequence the production of 6-8 hundred additional items, while 11000 items were produced per annum¹⁷. The request for a second working shift was evidently met, as testifies a service note dated 5th of April 1935 about increasing energy consumption of Commune’s factories¹⁸.

Further, when the Commune Dzerzhinsky turned into a strong industrial site and the volume of output was increased to meet the demand, its pedagogical role radically changed. At this point, production factors became more prominent than pedagogical, and in conjunction with this the Board and NKVD organs tended to measure the efficiency of the Commune according to production results, ignoring pedagogical achievements. All those facts related to re-organization of institution had a negative influence both on implementation of Makarenko’s educational system and on many pedagogical tasks.

Recruitment policy led by Administration of the Commune was under the influence of SPD Division Personnel and the Board of the Commune as well. It meant that recruitment of workers by certain criteria to create a professional microenvironment, as we can notice in Gorky Colony, was almost outside of Makarenko’s influence.

Complement of Commune staff was implemented in several ways, but principally using freelancers and recommendation of SPD -NKVD. What concerned recruiting, the role of Makarenko was rather limited and during his direction of the Commune (in the Spring 1932) became quite insignificant. Now we know some management decision taken by Makarenko as head of Commune. In May 1934, he signed few hiring and dismissal orders by which 79 people were fired and 65 hired (Makarenko, 2008b, pp. 237-238).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, file R-4511, inventory 1, storage number 2, documents 22-24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, storage number 9, documents 4-5.

A disposal of 1934 is an eloquent example of total control SPD had over recruitment policy: «At the latest by 5th July of current year [...] lists in 2 copies of all employees and engineering staff of the Commune, excepting workers and pupils of the Commune as at 1st of June of the current years must be presented». This information must have 9 positions including home address. Further, it was required to submit such lists monthly¹⁹.

Anyway, despite all the precautions of NKVD, sometimes in the Commune worked people whose personal characteristics were very far away from pedagogical task of the institution. A clear example of how recruitment system was inadequate can be found in a quite usual source for NKVD, i.e. a denunciation written in 1934 by an unidentified employee of the Commune. The author of the letter (writing as «Devoted») wrote:

Last time the labor commune is full of new engineering staff. Most of them knew each other for work or for acquaintance, and generally. the trend to have «reliable people» [everywhere] is the main criterion to be hired. Main attraction is meal. Devotion an honest worker must have has no room here, as far as they had left their previous work and did not even expect their successors for fear of losing this cushy job²⁰.

Anyway, the weakness of such recruitment policy concerned not only appropriate vacancy management but also the best possible use of employees²¹.

For the sake of objectiveness, it should be remarked that Chekist direction of the Commune tried to ensure with well trained and effective specialists the Commune and, for such goals, sometimes they had to win back qualified experts, as it was with chemical engineer A. B. Goikhman who, just graduated, was sent by mistake to another factory. Mostly we can see that this fight for qualified personal is due to egoistic and pretty cynic motivations, more likely reminding usual for SPD rejection of human material. A clear example is the letter dated 10th of July 1934 from Bronevoiv to Marusinov:

As engineer-communist Grossitskii did not meet our expectations and must be replaced as far as possible [...] with another engineer-communist. Let him go to Pipe works [...] Bushanskii as manager of technical college is not good enough and we have to replace him with an educator-communist who may manage that college²².

It should be noticed that we can often find evidence of actions like those in the Commune archival documents.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, storage number 4, document 47.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, storage number 1, document 27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, document 6.

²² *Ibid.*, document 2s, 23.

Despite the efforts, this inefficient recruitment politics led by administration gradually became such a blatant case that SPD officials were forced to step in. In early May 1934, Bronevoi sent a letter to Commune administration and, consequently, to Makarenko calling to remove several shortcomings V.A. Balitskii pointed on during Ukrainian SSR SPD Board meeting. In particular, the letter mentioned that:

Because of staff turnover, at this moment the Commune turned into a thoroughfare, there are few people having a working stage over 6-8 months: it has as consequence lack of responsibility, interferes with skill acquisitions (that is fundamental in the Commune), it makes a mess and interferes with mastering the techniques, [...] with converting the Commune into a well-coordinated, fully functional enterprise. [...] Actually, in the Commune there should be no extra personal. Staff cuts that had been carried out were completely inadequate. There are still too many people hanging about in the Commune and that is why we have no personal accountability, confusion, dirt, and disorder [...] ²³.

It is clear that the Commune suffered from staff turnovers and further. Since 25th of May to 10th of June 1935 39 employees have been fired, and, this way, we must pay attention to that 64% of workers resigned from their job, while 31% of workers were compulsory dismissed because of absenteeism, indiscipline, refusal to work, false information about themselves ²⁴.

Among other things, we must notice a detail making the Commune a not so favorable place to implement educational techniques created by Makarenko, as he successfully did in other institutions. Over few last years when Makarenko worked in the Commune, this latter significantly suffered from tensions with adult not educational personnel. This fact could not but be a disruptive factor of Makarenko's pedagogical strategy considering that pupils of the Commune could hardly failed to notice, considering that one of pedagogical means used by Makarenko was the «dialog of generations».

There are two documents having prominent evidence concerning regular conflicts with engineering staff. The first document is a report dated 4th of February 1934, signed by Parusov, head of optic assembly factory to the director of the Commune, where we can read: «Considering hostile relations with the Head of Camera factory, circumstance making impossible to work, I beg you to issue my dismissal order by which you will appoint my successor to whom in the course of February I will transfer documents concerning implementation of February work program and January work program that I overfulfilled». The second document we quote without reductions, is a denunciation dated February 1934 by engineer Piontek addressed to the director of the Commune:

I communicate that the 7th of February, when I started working in construction workshop, I met comrade Bepenson (?) who told me: «Keep in mind that if you want to be too honest, we will destroy you. The day after, comrade Bepenson told me “You'd never have to enter the Commune”. When asked why he (Bepenson) and

²³ *Ibid.*, documents 14, 16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, storage number 10, document 64.

Ushan [had spoken] against that I would work there, he answered that it would be difficult to work with me there for him. [...]»²⁵.

As it turned out, Piontek was a rather active citizen, he disapproved secretariat of Head of building workshop considering it unnecessary and the appointment of removed from office of kitchen supervisor Shapiro to the post of kitchen supplier, considered unethical that the Head of building workshop could give bonus himself.

A second significant circumstance that could not but complicate general condition of Makarenko's work with the Commune collective was serious criminal situation inside. If Gorky Colony sometimes suffered from criminal acts of pupils, in the Dzerzhinsky Commune some staff workers proved to be thieves. It is enough to quote data for the year 1934: the 17th of February, the Head of Management unit Didorenko drawn up an act where it was described that security detained the storekeeper of building workshop, the upon-mentioned Shapiro, who carried out of the Commune flour, butter, sugar, candies, onions, and bread with a total weight of 7 kilos and 800 grams. Around the same time, one of SPD sources nicknamed «*Cherdak*» informed of how rudely Shapiro treated workers, how many foodstuffs he squandered, and *Cherdak* also talked about Shapiro's frauds with currencies and gold. As the author of the denunciation stated, Shapiro had found that job thanks to the head of the Commune building workshop Umanov who was a relative of him. Using the protection of the latter Shapiro could carry out illegal activities. In the denunciation it was also remarked that Umanov illegally cancelled an amount of 10 000 rubles in Shapiro's accountable documents²⁶.

Unfortunately, such cases were not so rare. In December, the Direction of Kharkov NKVD department was informed that Serebrianskii, the deputy of Commune Chief Accountant, already having a criminal record for economic crimes, in collusion with the storekeeper Gladikh, corrected report cards and records for hiding a lack of foodstuff: 500 kilos of butter, 15 tons of flour, a high amount of sugar, textiles and other goods²⁷. In some cases, the criminal «biography» had begun in previous workplaces of employees. For instance, when Shapiro got charged with misappropriation, it was proved that in the past Nosik, president of Commune union trade organizations was held responsible for complicity in theft. In these days, the newspaper *Vysokovoltnik* reported that the Attorney's office initiated criminal proceedings against Nosik for similar crimes when he worked at Kharkov hydroelectric power station²⁸.

In the Commune another socially negative aspect interfering with educational work was drunkenness among employees and workers. Makarenko wrote that the collective of pupils of the Commune firmly asked for indisputable expulsions if one of their comrades abused alcohol. That is why, he stated, that even though in the Commune lived many 18-19 aged boys, having in their majority pocket money «The pupils of the Commune never drunk and radically did not tolerate adult drunkenness» (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, pp. 47-48). Some evidence confirmed abusing alcohol by adult employees of the Commune. Special

²⁵ *Ibid.*, storage number 4, documents 20, 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, documents 28-30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, storage number 12, document 27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, storage number 4, document 10.

Plenipotentiary of Kharkov regional NKVD direction Demidov communicated to director of the Commune that chauffeurs Kostenko and Meshriakov while carrying tents and other equipment to Sviatogorsk, the place where on the Summer the pupil of the Commune will break ground several times drunk a lot of alcohol. Similar evidence we can find in the memo addressed to the director of the Commune Thikonov, where it was stated that 26th of November 1934 during working time a drunken brawl had place in the attic of foundry which attended instructors of stamping and turret-lathe groups and foreman of maintenance crew²⁹.

If Gorky Colony incorporated a limited number of adult workers, pupils of Dzerzhinsky Commune had to work with a rather large number of so called non-salaried locksmiths, lathe operators, millers, opticians, engineers, economists, and other employees whose ethical, cultural, and professional qualities were out of Makarenko's zone of control. As documents confirm, most of all ethical principles of Makarenko's pedagogical system suffered from such situation. An emotional letter dated 2nd of November 1933 from Bronevoi to the Commune production manager, eloquently speaks much for itself: «You have to bear in mind that we are not only a factory, but a factory with school, and, more than this, we are SPD, and we must be a model of discipline and order, and now our workshops look like a bazar, and not like a SPD factory with school»³⁰.

It must be acknowledged that direction of Ukrainian NKVD was always proud of Commune achievements, made every effort to popularize this institution, and approved educational methods Makarenko used. Even in the jubilee work «*Second Birth*» the head of the Board A. Bronevoi wrote that the remarkable industrial success of the Commune was an accomplishment of public and amateur organizations, self-government authorities, numerous and various clubs, and specially mentioned «the educational methods structured in a completely new way», that «raised the collective and made him implement industrial and training program» (Bachelis, Shakhovskii, Goldfarb, 1932, p. 11).

An emblematic example of how created by Makarenko institution were appreciated is the Order #897 dated 20th November 1935 of Ukrainian NKVD *On the results of inspection of Kharkov region NKVD Labor Colonies Gorky and Andreevskia*, where, recognizing the decayed state of Gorky Colony, it was remarked that «For Kharkov region it is particularly inadmissible that in the city we have old NKVD Communes the Colony employees may so much to learn from. Meanwhile, up to now there is no contact between Colonies and Commune and educational managers of the Colonies in recent 4 months have never been in the Commune». In this document the director of the Dzerzhinsky Commune Thikonov was ordered to send one of educators and 5 best pupils of the Commune among those who had already graduated³¹.

6. «Instead of an epilogue»

²⁹ *Ibid.*, storage number 3, documents 76-77; *Ibid.*, storage number 12, document 31.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, storage number 1, document 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*, storage number 8, document 25.

The overview of this period of Makarenko's life in the Commune, cannot be complete if we do not mention that his writing and scientific promotional had begun at the time. In 1930, the educator systematized and literary processed N.E. Fere's impressions about expedition in Don Steppes during which he studied the work of first large grain mechanized sovkhoses. As result of collaboration of two Gorky Colony colleagues, an educator, and a farmer, we have the scientific promotional work «On an enormous front» (Fere, 1971; Makarenko and Fere, 1974).

In 1931 the State Ukrainian Medical Publishing House issued brochure *Homelessness and fight against it* whose spurious authorship led to disputes Makarenko researchers. Even if this work was published under the name of G.S. Salko, the workers of Marburg Laboratory *Makarenko-Referat* and even Ukrainian scholar F. I. Naumenko argued that the brochure had been written by A.S. Makarenko himself. Professor Zilberstein of Kharkov pedagogical institute named after G.S. Skovoroda shed light on such question as illustrated N.N. Oksa. According to the latter, A. S. Makarenko prepared two papers for the magazine *Sovietskaya shkola*, whose editor in chief was Zilberstein: *Causes of homelessness in Ukraine* and *Forms and method of combating it*, but Ukrainian SSR People's commissar for education N. Skrypnik forbidden to publish them, as he had red. It is evident that the publication of such material in another publishing home and under someone else's name was Makarenko's necessary step. A.I. Zilberstein validated this assumption, showing a copy of the book with inscription «From the author», gifted him personally by Makarenko (Karpenchuk, Oksa, 2001, p. 33).

One year later, thanks to active help by Gorky, Makarenko published in Central State Fiction Publishing house his essay on Dzerzhinsky Commune *Marsh of the Thirtieth year*, a first attempt to talk about his own pedagogical experience giving it an artistic shape (Makarenko, 1983, pp. 7-102). Literature triumph of Dzerzhinsky Commune's head teacher was the well-known *Pedagogical poem*, published in *Seventeenth Year* and *Eighteenth year Almanac* edited by M. Gorky. The first part was issued in the February of 1934, while the second in the beginning of 1935 and the third at the end of March 1936 (Makarenko, 2003; Makarenko, 2008b, pp. 201-281; Makarenko, 2010, p. 127).

In January – February 2011 the author had an interview with Ivan Demianovich Tokarev the last graduate of the Commune, living in Russian Federation. He was given a question concerning changes in inner life of the Commune after A.S. Makarenko had left in 1935. As he recalled, there were not radical changes: factories worked, schools were open and daily schedule was respected. As for Tokarev, at that time, the attitude of direction towards boys and girls graduating the Commune was something different: the graduation of the pupils of the Commune was not so solemn as before, scholarship for students of Universities and Technical institutes was canceled.

Ivan Demianovitch also confirmed that the pupils of the Commune and pedagogical collective were sorry for Makarenko, but he remembered that former director very often paid visit to them, sometimes he attended general meeting, had conversation with senior pupils. Contacts with his «creature» Makarenko resumed 10th January 1936 after a six-month break, when NKVD suggested that «direction and responsibility» for educational work in Dzerzhinsky and Balitskii Labor

Communes are deal of Ukrainian SSR NKVD Department of Labor colonies, where Anton Semenovich worked since 1935 till 1937 (Abarinov and Hillig, 2000, p. 75).

7. Conclusions

Even though in several cases pedagogical and ethics views of SPD and Makarenko corresponded, Dzerzhinsky Commune was to a certain extent a clear culmination of ideological and pedagogical lack of freedom in his long educational practice. Even if there are not enough explicit evidence concerning many facts described in the paper, it is possible to suppose that a pragmatic man like Makarenko, could not but notice how deep was his absence of professional and moral independence when he tried to satisfy pedagogical ambitions of main state punitive organ. In such a situation, he was clearly forced to accept some compromise to defend his pedagogical, ethical, and esthetical principles. At the same time, it is not out of question that described moments of confrontation strengthened resilience of Makarenko's educational system and were a test bench of its versatility. Of course, all above mentioned facts concerning such «exemplary institution» (denunciations, conflicts, theft, drunkenness and so on) that Makarenko has been seeing for height years of his live, to a great extent interfered with his search for new pedagogical methods, but, at the same time, could not prevent Dzerzhinsky Commune from making history of education as full culmination in development of discovered by progressive educator educational system having almost no analogs.

The presented data set reaffirms the proposition that among evaluation criteria of pedagogical system such category like sustainability should be doubtless taken into consideration, i.e. the system's ability of working in destructive context.

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