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«HOUSE OF THE FREE CHILD» – AN EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION (1906–1909)

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Abstract. A retrospective analysis of the activity of the «House of the Free child» by Kostiantyn Mykolaiovych Venttsel has been made in the article. It has been found that K. Venttsel founded the House of the Free Child» based on the idea of a pedagogical community where adults and children are equal, where pedagogical communication is cross-pollinated, where every moment of a child's life is filled with meaning, where punishments, force, fixed timetable are unacceptable, where there is no place for curricula and manuals. The time spent at school was divided into five periods, namely: community service; satisfying children's curiosity or assisting children in meeting their scientific inquiries; systematic but free production labor; free art classes; a breakfast break, free exercise, children's games, and more. The cycle of school subjects, their contents, timetable – all these was determined by children themselves and thus became the embodiment of their conscious self-will and expression of desires.

Key words: «House of the Free Child», K. Venttsel, social education, creative potential, freedom of the child, idea of pedagogical community, production labor, free art classes.

Introduction. Public dissatisfaction with the education system of the late nineteenth – early twentieth centuries gave impetus to the development of the social-pedagogical movement that arose in the mid-nineteenth century. At this time, schools of new type began to appear with primary schools, lyceums, traditional gymnasiums, progymnasiums, zemstvo schools and parochial schools.

At the same time, the ideas of collectivism, community service, activity participation of a pupil in the educational process, self-government, etc. were implemented in such educational institutions.

1. History of creation of the «House of the Free Child»

Institutions seeking to embody new principles of education and learning include K. Venttsel's «House of the Free child», which became one of the first experiences of Russian's labor schools. Although it officially began its existence on October 1, 1906, preparation for its opening had been underway since 1903, when a special structure had been created under the guidance of the teacher to develop the organization of free, rational education.

The basis for the creation of a new experimental institution of K. Venttsel was a small family kindergarten, founded during the first year of the Commission on organization of family schools. Its activity was characterized by gathering the Commission members' children several times a week for joint play and employment. Such meetings took place at each of the families' home in turn for

two years. However, over time, there was a need for daily classes, full incarnation of spiritual and intellectual aspirations of children, as noted by one of the parents O. Horbunova-Posadova, «Children grew up, our pedagogical thought grew on the experience too, and we wanted to embody our ideal practically, on a large scale» (Kistyakovskaya, 1923, p. 11).

In 1906 organizers of the preschool institution reached out through newspapers calling on parents to participate in the creation of a new educational institution – the «House of the Free Child». It should be noted that three groups of people responded to the call: those who were looking for an advanced school for their children; those who sought to realize their pedagogical potential; those who have expressed desire to provide moral and material support for new ideas.

Another step towards the creation of the «House of the Free Child» was the development of its concept, which K. Venttsel first presented in the form of a lecture «How to create a free school» (House of the Free child). In 1906, a brochure was published under the same title, and in 1910 the pedagogue focused more on the basic aspects of the creation and existence of a new experimental school in the publication «New ways of raising and educating children».

The peculiarity of the «House of the Free Child» lay in the fact that it was created as an alternative to the traditional state school. It was democratic in character, apolitical and independent of government, accessible to anyone regardless of gender, religion or financial situation – «children of capitalists, proletarians, noblemen, porters should equally find place in it» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 53). The «House of the Free Child» was open to parents, the public, and anyone interested in educating younger generation. However, in view of the disagreement on being under state control, which means executing a generally recognized program, following the traditional school, the administration decided to start the institution illegally.

Starting from October 1, 1906, the «House of the Free Child» was opened. Created on the basis of the concept suggested by the pedagogue, the educational institution consisted of about 40 children aged from 5 to 10 years. The range of pupils had various characteristics. Along with ordinary children who followed knowledge, active participation in the life of the school, realization of their creative potential, there were «not ordinary children», as noted by one of the workers and organizers of the school O. Horbunova-Posadova, «These were children, cared about my parents especially much, <...>» spoilt children, single, infirm, over-taught by caring parents at home ... Among them were children difficult to bring up, who needed treatment and absolutely special living conditions» (Kistyakovskaya, 1923, p. 21).

The «House of the Free child», according to one of its workers M. Kystiakivska, «at the moment of opening was characterized as something new that does not fit in the limits of any institution: it was not a school, not a kindergarten, not even a children's club» (Kistyakovskaya, 1923, p. 46). The characteristic features of the institution's activities during the first year were that it had no clearly defined leadership, participation in management was taken by both parents, teachers and children. The «House of the Free Child» had no support staff and permanent teaching staff, all household works were performed by children themselves, and classes in most cases were carried out by parents.

As such an alternative educational institution, which aroused increased public interest, could not exist for a long time illegally, in the second year of its existence; the «House of the Free Child» continued its activity as officially registered kindergarten of M. Hutsevych. This made some adjustments to the activity of the institution: administration body in the person of the head appeared, the school was subordinate to the «Club of joint education and training of children» (whose head was K. Venttsel); a well-known figure of pre-school education, leader M Stanilovska was invited for senior group children. The administration also decided to prohibit excursion visits to the «House of the Free Child» during classes, as it was found that «... frequent visits by strangers reflected negatively on the moods of the children and the leaders» (1907 – 1908, p. 16).

Despite all the efforts, in spite of a large number of supporters of the ideas of free education, which were implemented in the school, among parents, sincere faith in the undeniable success of the case in the circle of leaders, the «House of the Free Child» ceased to exist in 1909. It was the third year that became critical for the activity of the institution: «At this time children, the core of the school, grew up: a part of the parents decided that they needed a diploma in the future, that classes are needed according to curriculum, and our school, unfortunately, broke up,» stated O. Horbunova-Posadova (Gorbunova, 1918, p. 82). In addition, during the entire lifetime of the institution, a number of problems emerged on the way of successful implementation of the developed concept that became especially noticeable from year to year: low material support, insufficient number of professional teachers, lack of funds, lack of support from the state, etc. However, despite this, it should be noted the regularity, integrity and humanity of the pedagogical system, which has laid the foundation for the activities of this new, experimental school, its progressivism and innovative character.

2. Organization of the «House of the Free Child» activity

Developing the project of the «House of the Free Child», K. Venttsel sought to make this institution a «pedagogical community» consisting of children, their parents and teachers, to create a community «... trying to get as close as possible to the type of ideal society ...» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 10).

Connecting people in such a way the pedagogue aimed at «... uniting their children and helping them to create a school in which they could develop freely physically and spiritually in the direction determined by their individual nature» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 53). It was in the unity of children, parents and teachers that K. Venttsel saw the basis of the new school's functioning.

Strongly criticizing the system of education of the time, whose activities were mainly aimed at intellectual development of students, K. Venttsel did not aim to make the «House of the Free Child» a place of study. In the first place, he sought to organize the institution of a full and versatile life of the child, «... in which what is combined with the word of studying accumulates only one component that appears on the stage only when it is needed and when it naturally arise out of the needs of the child's life» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 53). Forming his school according to this principle, the pedagogue first of all sought to create a place where children could play, run, develop, engage in creative and productive work that would meet their inclinations, abilities, desires, – «house of joy, happiness and freedom».

A significant difference is also observed in the methods of creating a school. Since any educational institution starts its activity by developing lessons plan, a curriculum, finds teachers and a premises and only then meets children, K. Venttsel proposed a new method of creating a free school in which children appear at the outset: «... there is no ready school, it just needs to be created, and children, together with their parents and all those who care about their free physical and spiritual development, participate in the creation, in creativity of the school, and this school is created not immediately, not suddenly, but by long, slow, free, natural, spontaneous and organic development» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 53). The pedagogue was convinced that the school, built in this way, would become something of value and importance to the children, the second home where they would want to go.

Describing the «House of the Free Child», K. Venttsel emphasized the status of the educational institution, which radically differentiated it from traditional institutions. The significant difference was that «... the first place was taken by education, which implies a holistic personality, while intellectual education, or studying, fits here only as a component, as a secondary and subordinate element» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 10). Such status of the school gave K. Venttsel a certain advantage as a representative of the theory of free education, since it did not require a curriculum, which the scholar replaced with a «life plan».

Describing the «life plan» developed by the pedagogue, we should first pay attention to daily routine. The time spent at school was divided into five periods, however, K. Venttsel did not provide any of them with a clearly defined time interval or set sequence:

1. Community service.

2. Satisfying children's curiosity or assisting children in meeting their scientific inquiries.
3. Systematic but free production labor.
4. Free art classes.
5. Breakfast break, free exercise, children's games and more.

Analyzing the plan proposed by the scholar, it should be noted that an important place in the life of the school is taken by work. Studying pedagogical heritage of J. Pestalozzi, F. Frebel, E. Lozynsky, P. Kropotkin, and others, K. Venttsel became fascinated with the idea of labor education, which became the foundation of the school's existence: «... only when a serious working atmosphere is created in the «House of the Free Child», we can be sure that the development of the children getting education in it will go in a normal, healthy way» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 10). However, adhering to the previously defined «life plan», the pedagogue tried to bring into existence of the school not just labor, but production labor, because he believed that «production labor is such a factor in educating and teaching children which should radically overturn the entire existing education system» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 53). K. Venttsel was convinced that children should not just work, but do the work that is related to their time at school and ensure its full existence. Thus, the pedagogue identified a range of works that can be attributed to the spectrum of production labor:

1. Ensuring proper condition of the premises and belongings.
2. Cooking.
3. Work on furniture for school.
4. Manufacturing tools.
5. Making toys.
6. Manufacturing the simplest educational tools.
7. Design of objects for aesthetic decoration of the «House of the Free Child».
8. Sewing towels, aprons for children, spare clothing, knitting.
9. Production of cardboard boxes for keeping things.
10. Plants and animals care.
11. Binding books for the library and ensuring order in it.

The fact that there were no classrooms in the school, it consisted of workshops of different profiles in which children could do various kinds of work in the field that is of interest to them, testifies to the fundamental place of production labor in the «House of the Free Child».

Thus, K. Venttsel tried to take production labor to a new level – level of «living encyclopedia»: «... production labor will be the main, chief activity, and book training – additional, and it will be organically linked with production labor and naturally arise out of it and naturally lead to it» (Venttsel, 1907 – 1908, p. 44). Considering production labor as an integral part of studying, K. Venttsel did not pursue the goal of raising a specialist in a certain field, that is, to form a professional carpenter, bookbinder, etc., first and foremost, he sought to «... promote comprehensive harmonious physical and spiritual development» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 53). The pedagogue was convinced that production labor, in addition to practical skills in a particular field of activity, can also give a child theoretical knowledge in study subjects. As an example, the scholar mentioned carpentry, which gives an opportunity to study geometry and mechanics, activity in the kitchen – contribute to the study of physics, chemistry, botany, zoology, and agriculture and gardening give a child an opportunity to be in harmony with nature, which is a rich source of various types of knowledge. According to K. Venttsel, providing arrangement of training under such strategy, «we will be able to single out the range of sciences that really interest children, and only in this way the program of their scientific education can be outlined ...» (Venttsel, 1907 – 1908, p. 33).

Considering the role and importance that the pedagogue gave to production labor, high demands were placed on the candidature of the head of these classes. The scholar was convinced that it is possible to transform negative behaviors into creative production process by means of manual labor and on the basis of the child's admiration for a certain type of activity.

Touching upon the issue of teaching children in the «House of the Free Child», K. Venttsel gave an imperative role to self-education in this process, since he believed that «without personal work, without personal effort, there can be no education» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 28). Based on this, the main task in the field of education, according to the pedagogue, was in creating favorable conditions for the full acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities by a child.

K. Venttsel meant favorable conditions by not conducting classroom activities, giving lectures and reading books, but on the contrary – freedom of actions. He called for the child to be able to become acquainted with life, nature and people on his own: «the child will look, perceive, sniff, feel, touch, listen, he will influence life, nature, people and will think over all this on himself» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 29). «K. Venttsel was convinced that it was much more important to open up to a child a wide world of nature, beauty, sounds than to open a book. At the same time, the scholar did not completely abandon study literature, he only changed the principle of its use by children: «They will refer to books as to scientific works, not as textbooks, and they will use not one book, <...> but many and mostly such, in which prominent figures in a particular field of knowledge shared the results of their independent work with others, in which they expressed their original thoughts, talked about their discoveries, and the way they went to those discoveries» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 31). K. Venttsel tried to convey to the entire pedagogical community his deep conviction that the child should not be looked upon as a pupil, but as a small seeker of truth. That is why the pedagogue thought it would be more appropriate if a child created his own textbook. This, according to K. Venttsel, should be a book that would contain information obtained by children in a particular field of knowledge, and a story about the way he went in order to get positive results. The pedagogue was convinced that such book would be valuable for the child: «... it will remind him of the struggle and efforts towards the acquirement of knowledge, it will serve as a living symbol of success already achieved and will stimulate him to further victories in the field of gaining knowledge» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 31).

3. Studies in the «House of the Free Child»

K. Venttsel's approach to learning subjects is unusual and uncharacteristic of a traditional school. According to the idea of the «Cult of the child», the pedagogue abandoned usual lessons, replacing them with «free engagement of children in scientific subjects» (see Appendix F). In addition, the scholar also changed the content of the lessons, basing them on the child's life principle and its interests, which made it possible to combine theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

Among the subjects studied in the «House of the Free Child» were the following: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Science, Geography, Technology, Native language, Foreign language, Social studies, History. We shall dwell in more detail on these subjects and the methods of teaching proposed by K. Venttsel.

First of all, we should pay attention to Mathematics, which in the «House of the Free Child» branched into two subjects – arithmetic and geometry. It should be noted that both disciplines were to be studied by children not in specially organized classes, but in daily life. To do this, the pedagogue suggested teachers, while teaching arithmetic, to give children the opportunity to:

1. Stack and replenish inventory.
2. Record information about the purchase of materials for works, their distribution, delivery, calculation of the amount of materials, time calculation, comparison of the duration of work of children and adults, the calculation of the average time, etc.
3. Purchase products, make records about the purchased, calculate quantity, weigh, etc.
4. Produce measuring instruments: scales, weights, etc.
5. Make consistent anthropometric measurements of their peers: height, weight, breast volume, head size, arms, legs and more.

K. Venttsel saw Geometry classes similar in their essence:

1. Drawing up a plan of housing and surrounding areas.

2. Drawing plans of possible works.
3. Comparison of geometric images – results of previous activity.
4. Production of various geometric shapes of cardboard for children's toy designs.

Physics and Chemistry were of a practical nature. In addition to discussions with children about the phenomena of the world around them, joint research was conducted to explain the essence of certain processes, which would provide an opportunity for free experimentation. The subject of study, according to the teacher, could be the phenomena of nature, measurement of temperature, humidity, wind speed, etc.

With enthusiasm K. Venttsel described Astronomy classes that allowed children to gather together and observe the starry sky, study various constellations, the motion of the moon and its phases. The teacher sought to turn these activities into sacraments that «... will be shrouded in a light poetic sheet» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 25). K. Venttsel advised to continue conversations about what the children saw in the evening, in the afternoon, and their subject was the Sun.

Trying to organize the life of children at school in harmony with nature, K. Venttsel emphasized the importance of studying such subject as Science, which he associated with the care of plants and animals, field trips, work in the garden. The important thing, in the pedagogue's opinion, was that during these lessons children learned how to care for the sick, dress wounds, and prepare the simplest medicines. In addition, children were to make a calendar together with adults that would display everything they happened to watch from the life of nature that day.

K. Venttsel sought to do Geography lessons interesting and active in their form. For this purpose, excursions, stories of the leaders about their travels, compiling diary of the trips together with the leader were envisaged. In addition, studying geography, according to the scholar, would help to provide children with information about the food they consume in everyday life, their country of origin, etc.

Taking into account the age of the children, their curiosity, K. Venttsel tried to satisfy their curiosity at Technology lessons, during which he planned acquainting with technical production of those objects that surround children in daily life. For this purpose the pedagogue provided excursions to factories, workshops, as well as acquaintance with the collection of layouts of different machines, tools and mechanisms used in the production of certain things.

Native language occupied a prominent place among the subjects of the «House of the Free Child». Trying to follow the opposite of traditional school way, K. Venttsel proposed a new method according to which native language «... will be freely learned by children not in the form of a particular subject of study, but in connection with the current needs of life in the «House of the Free Child» and at home (Venttsel, 1910, p. 27). K. Venttsel tried to model all lessons of native language down to oral and written presentation of observations, experiences, thoughts and fantasies on certain issues by the children. In contrast to the school in which children thoughtlessly copied other people's thoughts, in the «House of the Free Child», «children themselves will draw up their textbook, that is, collecting those extracts from poetic and artistic works that they particularly liked» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 28). In addition, as a method of teaching, the pedagogue offered children with the help of adults to keep a journal that would reflect the brightest moments in the life of the «House of the Free Child». One of the most interesting, in our opinion, methods of learning native language is K. Venttsel's idea of organizing correspondence between children of different educational institutions, since it allows not only to realize practical skills of native language, but also to establish communication, to establish indirect communication with children of different cities and schools.

While the need to learn native language was out of the question, learning a foreign language K. Venttsel treated with caution: «... foreign languages will be learned no sooner than the native language will be learned so that children will be able to use it freely, and will be studied to such an extent that acquisition of this purely verbal knowledge does not harm acquisition of more necessary real knowledge and created through the study of foreign languages memory does not lead to a decrease in

children's creativity» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 28). The pedagogue proposed correspondence with children living and studying abroad as a method of learning a foreign language only if these requirements are met, and to use this correspondence for the purpose of learning a certain foreign language.

K. Venttsel considered Social science an important branch of knowledge for the study, which, in the opinion of the pedagogue, should be studied in the process of staying in the «House of the Free Child», during which a child can learn the concepts of «work», «rights», «state», etc. It is the environmental phenomena, the scholar believed, that should be the starting point for conversations in which «... the issues of society will be broadly and deeply addressed to children»(Venttsel, 1910, p. 29). This position of the pedagogue revealed the essence of his desire to create an ideal pedagogical community at school, urging that the more adults seek it, «... the more they will contribute to the initiation of children's instincts of true sociality and developing their high and lofty ideal of social life» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 29).

K. Venttsel considered History as one of the most difficult subjects to study, so he advised teachers to first prepare a psychological foundation by having pupils to write a short sketch of their lives, as well as publishing a journal that would « ... prepare the way for correct understanding and for a proper study of history»(Venttsel, 1910, p. 29). Further, the pedagogue saw adults' memories about historical events, stories about the past and its characteristics based on teachers' own memories as the natural starting point. K. Venttsel's interesting idea, which also made it possible to study History, was to keep a calendar in which children could record historical events that corresponded to it every day. The pedagogue understood that in order to better study and understand such complex subject, it is necessary to take into account age of the child, so he recommended to introduce the youngest children to history in the form of fiction stories, legends of different ages and peoples.

Another characteristic feature of the concept of the «House of the Free Child» in terms of education was K. Venttsel's rejection of systematic order in the arrangement of subjects, since, according to the teacher, this state of things precluded individual approach to each child. In addition, K. Venttsel expressed the attitude: «... that which from an external, logical point of view will be an exemplary order, then from an internal, psychological point of view, can sometimes mean a huge mess, great confusion and mess in the sphere of spiritual life processes» (Venttsel, 1908, p. 34). Emphasizing on individual qualities of a child, the pedagogue believed that each had his own objective order of knowledge acquiring, the shortest path to which K. Venttsel saw in «... directing their process of mastering knowledge with the line of greatest spiritual interest»(Venttsel, 1908, p. 35). The scholar was well aware that the information that had been received at the time of deep spiritual interest would remain permanently in memory. This position of the pedagogue has transformed the process of acquiring knowledge from coercion into facilitating the acquisition of knowledge the pupils need at some point in their lives.

Student self-government was an integral part of the «House of the Free Child» organization. K. Venttsel considered it one of the necessary conditions for the effective functioning and development of an institution based on freedom. Essential features of self-government were the following: meeting the child's need to organize his life independently, refusal of the institution of the nature of clearly planned by adult activities, giving students the functions of a higher governing body during the organization of general meetings of the school, etc.

An example of active student involvement in school activities is to schedule classes. The children participated in the process of its formation, thus the teacher sought to make it «... so that its embodiment would be for them a conscious realization of their purpose, the embodiment of a plan they themselves developed, not a plan imposed on them by adults» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 17). K. Venttsel understood that this would not only encourage children to learn, but also help them to develop responsibility, determination, commitment and so on.

The scholar tried not only during the preparation of the schedule, but also in teaching methods to organize the whole process so that it had the character of achieving the goals set by the child. Criticizing the methods that existed in the school at the time, K. Venttsel explained his categorically negative attitude saying that children do not achieve their goals, but those set by the teacher, which, according to the teacher, cannot produce a positive result. Instead, he saw the way out in the following: teachers, together with pupils develop a curriculum that would result from their collective work, «... and then its realization and embodiment will become not only the embodiment of the teacher's will, but also the embodiment of the pupils' will» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 33).

K. Venttsel understood that only by appealing to the wishes of the child high results can be achieved in the learning process. The pedagogue was also aware that at first the desires of the children would not be clearly defined, so the scholar did not rule out some chaos when the student would get from one activity to another during the first days or months of school. However, the scholar assured that it is not necessary to be afraid of this, because «... the more directions in which he can throw himself are, the more stable, planned and systematic form his activity will eventually become» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 45).

In an effort to awaken the spirit of search in the child, K. Venttsel tried to bring as much visual material into the learning process as possible. However, it should be noted that the essence of clarity in the views of the scholar was slightly different from the traditional understanding and consisted in «... preserving for the child in this process of complete spiritual independence, in maintaining its continuous independence, in the tireless awakening of the spirit of creativity» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 37). In the «school of the future» children independently produced visual materials: atlases, maps, figures, etc. This, according to K. Venttsel, significantly influenced the process of acquiring knowledge by children, because it facilitated the release of their creative powers.

4. Social education in the «House of the Free Child»

Trying to form a person who will be able to merge into all other society, K. Vnettsel considered social education to be a necessary element of educational process. In addition, the school itself, with all its structure, was to become the model of an ideal society with ideal citizens, favourable in this sense, according to K. Venttsel, could be productive labor. The pedagogue also considered joint meeting of adults and children, that will teach the young tolerant attitude to the thoughts around them to be an important and positive factor: «Joint (public) meetings will form a habit of listening others quietly and treating expressed by others thoughts with respect, form the ability to come to certain common decisions by common brainwork» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 42). Being aware of the role of individual qualities of a child in the discussion process, K. Venttsel thought it advisable that the question to be raised at the meeting should be announced to children beforehand so that they could have time to think and sometimes even write down their thoughts. Thus, the teacher tried to involve passive children in active participation in the public life of the school.

Last but not least issue the scholar considers in his concept of the «House of the Free Child» is whether there should be punishment at school. Remaining a representative of humanistic pedagogy, K. Venttsel felt that it was more expedient on the part of teachers not to punish, but «... to prevent such acts on the part of children who violate the rights of other children or adults ...» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 57). The scholar advised to avoid bad deeds, to make life of pupils so full and meaningful, rich in creative activities, that there is no place or desire for bad deeds. Of course, the pedagogue did not exclude cases where a child's behavior exceeds the limits of the allowed. Then he advised to make him take a hit of those unauthorized acts and their consequences that he had once done against others, so «... it is necessary to try to let the child to feel all the abnormality of his behavior ...» (Venttsel, 1910, p. 59).

Conclusions. Summarizing the concept of organization and activity of the «House of the Free Child» developed by K. Venttsel, we can distinguish the main aspects which the pedagogue sought to put into practice in the school:

- school is created with the participation of children themselves;
- all children learn together, regardless of sex, age and their parents' social status;
- replacing systems and curricula with a «life plan»;
- children's freedom at school should not be restricted by anyone and anything, as long as it does not harm others;
- schooling is related to the child's life, his natural abilities, needs and desires;
- school forms the ability of children to acquire knowledge independently in the most rational way, promotes development and strengthening of love for knowledge, the ability to apply them in life on the basis of gaining practical experience;
- school activity is based on the principles of self-government;
- the basis of the educational process is free production work, which is closely connected with the system of aspirations and ideas of the child;
- all school activity is aimed at development of conscious, creative individuality in every child;
- parents and children are active participants of the educational process;
- the inadmissibility of any violence, compulsion and punishment.

However, as O. Horbunova-Posadova wrote later, «the conditions for such a practical free school at that time were too difficult. It had too few faithful friends at that time and too little power to run the school» (Kistyakovskaya, 1923, p. 42).

The experience of the activity of the «House of the Free Child» has shown that in practice the system of free education is much more complicated than education based on violence, compulsion and dictatorship. Along with the many difficulties that K. Venttsel's concept encountered, a number of fundamental principles that were implemented in the school's activities and which may be of interest to modern school are worth noting:

- development of a creative personality of each child through the involvement in active participation in organization of the school and educational process;
- family nature of the «House of the Free Child» (forming strong bonds between children and parents through the inclusion of the latter in school life);
- self-government, empowering children to make important decisions at the level with adults;
- connection of studying with the life and needs of the child.

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