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ANTANAS PAPLAUSKAS-KRAMŪNAS

KĘSTUTIS PEČKUS

Last year marked the twentieth anniversary of the death of a distinguished professor of the University of Ottawa, Dr. Antanas Paplauskas-Ramunas. On this occasion, many of the professor's colleagues and past students recalled one of the most important expatriate scholars of pedagogy. His achievements have been reported in eighteen encyclopedias and biographical dictionaries worldwide, and he has been a member, an honorary member and leader of numerous international scholarly organizations. Fluent in twelve languages, Paplauskas-Ramunas lectured at many universities throughout the world, especially on comparative education and the history of education. He was one of the first to introduce many distinguished Lithuanian scholars, philosophers and authors to the world, among them Salkauskas, Vydūnas, Pečkauskas-Šatrijos Ragana and others.

Paplauskas was born on December 31, 1910, in the village of Akmene, which is located in the district of Liubava, in the county of Marijampole. His mother was Magdalena Iboškaitė and his father — Juozapas Paplauskas. In 1930, when he was graduated from Marijampole Marian High School, he entered the University of Vytautas the Great in Kaunas, where he studied linguistics and education. After completing his studies at the university, he went on to teach Lithuanian, Latin, German, French, Russian, psychology, logic and political science, at various high schools throughout Lithuania, including in Ukmerge, Klaipeda, Vilkaviskis and Kaunas. In 1944, he defended his doctoral dissertation, "The Essence and Trends of Education," at the University of Vienna. His lifelong thirst for knowledge led him to continue his studies in education and psychology. He took courses at various universities throughout Europe, including Tuebingen, Munich, and Heidelberg, as well as at the London Institute of Education. From 1949, he lived with his family in Canada, teaching at the University of Montreal and later at the University of Ottawa. "Dr. Ramunas was very highly regarded by the university; it deemed him Europe's foremost educator of cultural tradition," recalls Dr. Marija Makauskaitė-Paplauskienė, the professor's widow.

"He was among those of our scholars who most successfully broke out onto the international scene," reported an obituary in "Aidai" (1974). The obituary also accurately described significant stages in the professor's life: "In Lithuania he was still known as A. Paplauskas, and only outside his homeland was Dr. A. Ramunas born." The pseudonym describes the particularly intense essence of his work in education and defines his way of life. In an anthology of statements by Lithuanian emigre intellectuals, "Mano Pasaulėžiūra" (My Philosophy of Life) (Chicago 1958) he wrote: "My philosophy of life can be expressed in one sentence: to find the wellsprings of a full, divine passion for life and to lead others to this spectacular find (...) to be more peaceful and to spread peace, in other words — to be *RamunasV* (which in Lithuanian means "the peaceful one")."

Throughout his academic career and in his community activities, the professor constantly stressed the fact that he was a Lithuanian: he contributed to the Lithuanian emigre press, he helped to put together several volumes of the *Lithuanian Encyclopedia* (Boston), was active in the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Sciences (Rome), and he wrote poetry that was filled with love for Lithuania.

In the preface to his book, "Is Sutemų Į Aušrą" (From Twilight Toward Dawn), published in 1967 in Toronto, Paplauskas-Ramunas characterized his scientific research: "...The path of Lithuanian education leads us to Europe, to the world, and to the still unexplored, enigmatic future of humanity." In the abundance of scholarly works he left behind (twelve monographs and over 200 articles published in journals worldwide), the works that readily stand apart from the rest have to do with the problems in educational history. Paplauskas-Ramunas analyzed in detail the various ideas pertaining to Lithuanian education, schools and development. His keen sense and profound, generalized observations impress even today's scholars and educators. For example, through his research of Lithuanian religious educators such as professors Blabiejus Cesnys, Stasys Yla, Rev. Dr. Jonas Gutauskas, Rev. Kazimieras Zitkus and others, he draws some important

and unexpected conclusions: "From a methodological standpoint, we can proudly compare ourselves to the West when it comes to the area of religious education."

Woven into the rich tapestry of the various European and international education methodologies, Paplauskas-Ramunas' description of Lithuanian educational history, through his vibrantly poetic writings, sheds new light on the subject. Using comparative methodology, he realized that "Lithuanian education, through the European perspective, can be viewed as one of the most interesting, not only throughout the history of European education, but globally as well." In his study "Lietuviu Pe-dagogika Kryzkeleje" (Lithuanian Education at the Crossroads) (1974) the professor predicted and recognized the path of the history of the Lithuanian educational system — "Whoever wants to learn about Lithuanian education, must first study, know and understand European education from its very foundations."

His biggest influence and educational authority was F.W. Foerster (1869-1966), whom he described as "The mythical Atlas, carrying the world of twentieth century education on his shoulders." In independent Lithuania, this progressive German educator's ideas were especially popular. However, it was not until 1956 that he addressed a Lithuanian audience through an interview with Paplauskas-Ramunas, published in "Aidai." Along with Marija Pečkauskaitė - Šatrijos Ragana, Stasys Šalkauskis, Antanas Maceina and others, he was very interested in Foerster's views on social and ethical problems in education that were based upon a deep humanism, a strong Christian ethic and psychology.

His ideas about the principles and philosophy of childrearing, and the impact of religion on an individual's growth are influenced by Salkauskis. His original and complete analysis of the dimensions of Lithuanian education would not have been possible without the historical perspectives on national education developed by Salkauskis and Maceina.

Paplauskas was not a practical person, and the material world did not entice him. "He did not know how to relax, he never took vacations and he didn't have any hobbies other than poetry, which he could recite for hours in the many languages he had command of," his widow writes.

The legacy of Antanas Paplauskas-Ramunas helps us to better understand universal truths about education, the sources for and the uniqueness of Lithuanian education, and also to better comprehend the role of education in general, in the nation's history as well as in its future.