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THE HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM*

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It is essential that tomorrow's educators think critically and creatively about education. An understanding of education in contemporary society will serve as a basis to formulate the education system of the future. The history of education and educational thought mirrors contemporary education and provides insight into the educational process and framework of tomorrow.

What kind of education, throughout the history of education and educational thought, gives rise to the radical educational thought of students, and gives them a paradigm on which to construct tomorrow's learning? They must acquire the basis of tomorrow's parents' educational intents.

First we must clarify the relationship between education and society in each age; how the authority of the nation-state has intervened in education and society; how the masses have participated in this adjustment; how societal modes of thought and behavior and human relationships have been reflected in the school; and what kind of educational process has been produced in the school, and how has it changed.

The teaching of the history of education begins with the study of the philosophers of education; not a mere overview of names, but a study that enters into the spirit of the thinker, empathizing and sharing his or her thoughts, and reliving the thinker's struggle with truth. The core or central logic can thus be brought to the fore, its essence recomposed and the pleasure and pain of the thinker to be shared.

Let us consider research on the educational thinker, N.K. Krupskaya.

I would like to sketch the happiness and sorrow of Krupskaya's life. In order to paint a picture of her moving struggle, while elucidating the lives and hopes of the masses, women, children and significant people in her life, we must also analyze her letters, and the memories, testimonies and memos of her friends.

Revealing the reality in which her educational thought is grounded, we can grasp a bit of her anguished expression and share Krupskaya's spirit. The relationship between educational doctrine or theory and reality must then be examined. How did Krupskaya interpret the actual lives of the suppressed—children, laborers and farmers, and women—and what educational theory did she consequently construct? Does the educational doctrine based on her thought represent an accurate understanding of social reality under specific conditions. In offering this critique of her theory, I would like to probe the very depths of her ideas. In other words, while attempting to understand the impulse of her doctrine, I want to examine why her ideas were not fully realized in U.S.S.R..

We can do this by; 1) investigating the innermost and profound essence of her educational ideas, and 2) by studying the objective relationship between reality and the educational theory founded on educational thought. The objective reality can be viewed below.

(a) Guaranteeing the right to learn and respecting the personality of the learner as the starting point of education
(b) The level of industrial development
(c) The human relationships and control systems related to the system of production
(d) Human relationships as expressed in culture (The aspect of the human relationships which expresses a relation between the suppresser and suppressed)
   (1) the political culture of centralized power and local autonomy
   (2) the school culture expressed in the following relationships
       a. teacher-pupil, b. pupil-pupil, c. teacher-teacher
   (3) the family culture expressed in the following
       a. parental perceptions of education, b. husband and wife relations
   (4) male and female relations
(e) The ideal program and operation of educational activities incorporating (a), (b), (c) and (d) above. There is also the issue of whether education should be under the control and supervision of the state or the public.

Point (a) implies that humanism is at the root of the educating process, that education is intended to develop and liberate the personality of the learner or child. This is exactly Krupskaya's stance.

In a capitalist society, school education distinguishes and discriminates pupils through the structure of learning and the process of teaching, while ensuring that education serves to perpetuate class inequality and other social inequities. In this manner, schools serve function of selecting and nurturing the requisite human resources determined by the level of productivity and economic development. In this sense, education is determined by the level of productive capacity as well as scientific and technological development.

However, in order to have growth in productivity contribute to the existence and well-being of man, or in other words, to transform the working class into subjects for a totally new order at a stage of multiple modes of production and to prompt all youth into taking charge of their lives in production and life, it is essential that we scientifically understand the course of productivity growth and have the capability and knowledge to control productive capacity. This is (b).

Human resource training and selection, or cultivation of men that take charge of their life and production, are not necessarily unrelated to the production control system. The extent to which this sense of being a responsible subject of society can be instilled in youth varies according to society's system of production control. Factors outside the school influence the educational system. This is (c).

A person's lifestyle and life choices spring from human (and group) relationships and man's relationship to nature. Human relationships which are relatively independent of relationships determined by the mode of production can serve as the basis of an active or passive critique of labor relations. This, too, is included in the study of the history of education. This meaning is included in (d).

Point (a) is the groundwork for the formation of "independent way of living in soci-
ety.” To foster the main characters in production and life, namely, to promote societal self-actualization of character, (b) and (c) should move toward (a) to liberate and advance the entire personality. In consideration of (b) and (c), forming a real “self-reliant way of living in society” becomes an issue for the first time. The extent to which this is accomplished is determined by the circumstances of (e) filtered by (d).

What I would like to attempt by studying the history of educational thought is consider first what was the actual condition of (a) above; what idea was Krupskaya’s basis with respect to the actual conditions of (a) and what educational theory did she counter with. Furthermore, did her educational theory include the curriculum that was most appropriate to (b) and (c) for the purpose of forming a society’s subjects in production and life? Viewed from the actual situation of (d), did her theory exist in the range of social acceptance, or was it possible, at one point, to have it accepted? Bearing this in mind, what was the relationship of this theory to the authority of the state? Did she comprehend the educational intents of the masses? Was there any incongruity with the public’s actual thoughts about education and their child-nursing customs? If there was, we must examine whether or not she managed to propose a way of solving this gap.

Through such analysis as this, I want to look at why this educational theory founded on such an agreeable idea never caught on in Soviet society, while considering what concepts were woven into her educational idea. In doing so, we find the clues as to why the authority of Stalin’s regime was so pervasive as a result.

The objectives of educational perestroika in 1988 were humanization and democratization of education. This is just what Krupskaya asserted. At the outset of perestroika, humanization of technological environment and human development became a contemporary issue. The policy of hastening growth, which is only a strategic means to an end, suggested that overall development of humanity and actualization of a basic human character was the purpose of perestroika. When you consider the arguments that have been made by Zaslafskaya, one of the leading figures in perestroika, from an educational point of view, it is clear that the economic development of society creates special demands upon the educational system. Advantageous conditions for realizing polytechnical education that would promote overall development were beginning to emerge. In addition, if there really is the desire to make a society with subjects of production at the time of transition to a free enterprise system and introduction of a market economy, economic education is exigent. Economic education, that which is mainly comprised of planning and management, is already included in Krupskaya’s ideas about polytechnical education. Thus it is not necessarily so that are no objective terms for the revival of Krupskaya’s educational ideology. Renowned Ajuleskaya also pointed out the contemporaneity of Krupskaya’s thought and theory.

Now is precisely the time that we should carefully scrutinize the inner depths of her ideas. In addition, the time has arrived to rigorously examine the internal factors that induced failure and the parts of the theory that can be resurrected and those that were premature.

Second, by the method of the study of comparative social history of education, the points in the above educational thought and the thesis (integration of micro and macro levels of analysis of educational thought) that Durkheim successfully raises in his L’évolution
pédagogique en France can be answered.

While looking at educational reforms, I would like to compare the attempts of each country toward the same thesis and analyze movements beyond country borders. Then, of course, study the points (a) through (e) above. It is not enough to only compare the history of policy and regimes. It is very important to examine the social context in which a given educational system is situated. What taste for life does social change arouse; how is it reflected in educational curriculum and activities? Furthermore, what curriculum, method of teaching and evaluation system would result, and how would society's human relationships be reflected inside the school? These are things to consider. The working environment as well as lifestyle and cultural activities of the parents at each class level are also points to be reckoned with.

It is to depict educational reform as a drama of the mutterings, conflicts, in-fighting and cooperation among teachers, parents and students, the community at large and the community of political administrators who are involved in education. It is also to probe hidden pitfalls and the unexpected developments that may arise thereby.

Put another way, it is to find the misalignment that is bound to occur where the “ultimate purpose,” the “purpose” and the “goal” are supposed to coincide. It is to illuminate the process wherein this deviation takes place between the intentions and the results of educational planning. To discover how the concept of an “ultimate purpose” is translated into a “purpose,” and how that “purpose” is further translated into a “goal,” which is to say, an “accurate, concrete term which can generally be expressed in numbers and dates,” (Lê Thành Khôi, 1981). Then, perhaps, we can find out why this misalignment occurs.

In summary, it is to distinguish, compare and analyze the working and living environments and the cultural milieu of the people who are involved in education. To understand the thinking of people from various social classes whose perception of education is, after all, affected by these factors. Only then can we appreciate the resulting actions which have been taken in the name of education. Finally, it is to stand back and see a given phase in the history of education as one comprehensive image; a tapestry woven of all these elements.

The factors which are directly involved in this deviation and which should be analyzed first, are as follows: The differences between men and women, the differences among races and classes and the differences among regional communities. How do these differences come to be? To what degree are they accepted or resisted? How might the mechanisms, which create such differences in the first place, be corrected and reinforced or reduced and weakened? It is our assignment to answer these questions.

Let us, for now, put the focus of this drama on the problems of contemporary history. We can make use of the current issues in education—the relationships among humanization, diversification and individualization of education—as an identifiable theme to work with. We could make a comparative study of educational reforms in different countries such as Japan, the USA and Russia. I would like to add a little comment on the whereabouts of the actual problem.

The successful launching of Sputnik by the Soviets, triggered an overhaul of the American education system. Education was modernized and streamlined to place more emphasis on academics. There was an energetic drive to raise the quality of education and to be more scientific in approach. It was not the aim, nor was it the result of this reform, to
improve education for the masses, but rather to develop an elite group of superior academics.

Eventually, against the background of human rights activism and the peace movement protesting the Vietnam war, the suppression of individualism in education came to be regarded as a problem. There was a surge of interest in the humanization of education, which put the importance on individual humanity. Supporters of the movement criticized conventional education which stressed intensive cramming for ever higher achievements. They called for increases in the number of elective subjects so that students could develop their unique, individual, human qualities.

About 10 years later, however, it was apparent that lower academic standards and greater leniency had become the problem. Once again, in the 80s and 90s, educational reforms were taken up under a new banner; “the pursuit of excellence.” The idea now was to assure that the working public should master basic academic skills at least to a certain minimum level. The populace would be better able to adapt themselves to technological progress.

Attempts were made to improve schools from the bottom up so that the kind of graduates who satisfied these requirements could be output from the system each year. In the early stages of this reform, the focus was on shifting the balance of the composition of the interrelated academic subjects. What was now desired was the sort of effectiveness in education which could be measured precisely and expressed in numbers. A certain reactionary mistrust had developed in the idealistic notion that children are the center of the universe.

Then, toward the end of the 1980s yet another twist occurred in the line of current educational thought. New emphasis was placed on the sort of qualitative results which cannot be converted to numerical values; the refinement of critical thought processes, for example, deductive reasoning and so forth. It was widely perceived that these were just the qualities a person needed to reach the top positions in society.

Thus, if we look at the evolution of education policy and research in the USA, we find that its recent history begins with modernization, moves on to humanization, and most recently, the pursuit of excellence. Ultimately, however, these measures have failed to solve the essential problem faced by that forgotten half of the population who can only find transient work or very poor paying jobs at the bottom of the economic scale. Those, in other words, who do not get a college education (Norihiro Nishio, 1989).

To the contrary; there is a perception by those forgotten souls at home, mirrored internationally by the Third World poor, that only a part of the population (for example, the middle classes) can ever hope to enjoy an improved lifestyle. The criticism against these educational reforms is that they are advantageous only to those who are able to attend centers of higher learning and who are, therefore, already academically privileged (Saburo Sato, 1989). The view that these reforms represent a willingness to sacrifice those who, through poverty or lack of social privilege, have little or no education, has become even more convincing (Saburo Sato, 1989).

In Japan, meanwhile, selection for higher education is based entirely upon academic ability and this has become the very core of the diversification of education. This results in a stiff competition in which everyone tries to grasp a more advantageous position in an extremely one-dimensional order of values. Parents, due to the wide and deep penetration
throughout Japanese society of a uniform lifestyle with uniform values, are totally caught up in this competition. Here, the "deviation value" which is a scale of achievement that wears a mythical robe of scientific authority, rules all. The paradox in this, of course, is that many people end up believing in the deviation value, as if it were some primitive religion. Yet, precisely because it wears the badge of "scientific" authenticity, those who are discriminated against through its judgments, i.e., those with a "bad" deviation value, tend to experience a sense of resignation. The deviation value has all the force of unarguable natural law, it seems to them, leaving meek acceptance as the only possible response. Such a response, of course, appears to minimize social conflicts, but with this resignation comes bitterness and apathy among those who cannot thrive in the competitive environment.

Japanese people have long held this idea of "activation of education through competition." The idea is now attracting a lot of attention from overseas.

As examples from the US and Japan make clear, it is nearly impossible to ensure that both the development of individuality and a high quality education can be offered to every child.

In the former Soviet Union, the reality is that they will respond to the demands of the middle classes by catering to the prevailing middle class notions of what good education is. That is, a program that will improve the child's chances of becoming socially and economically independent through school education and ensure that the child will be able to find social self-realization under advantageous conditions. A program that will provide every child with training that will enable him to survive and thrive in a technologically progressive, information society. Eventually, the same problem now prominent in the USA, that of the "forgotten half of the population" who do not benefit from university education (Norihiro Nishio, 1989), will become prevalent in Russian society, too.

One wonders how it comes to exist, this paradox wherein new inequalities in education are created by simultaneously executing the principle of individuality while, at the same time, trying to assure a high-quality education.

B. Bernstein has offered a very effective conceptual device to deal with this question in relation to curriculum. I think it would be valid to adopt the concept of classification and frame suggested by him.

The quest for development of individuality in education may end up placing the children hierarchically via a given curriculum, its learning forms and evaluation methods. A curriculum which is characterized by "strong classification" is one in which educational content is divided into sets with clear boundaries between them so that each subject is clearly separated from all others. According to Bernstein, "Strong classification creates a strong sense of membership in a particular class," and in so doing, it creates a sort of special case of personal identity.

It defines, in other words, one sense of individuality in that one knows who one is by knowing where one fits in. The strong frame, moreover, reduces the authority of the students and increases that of the teachers in the teaching/learning relationship. If both classification and frame are strong, it will lead to a rigorous standard of evaluation with the students falling into clear hierarchically organized social relationships. Under these circumstances, students will have to acquire a facility for living within a ranked social order by identifying with their peer group. A message system featuring strong classification
and frame, therefore, makes it possible to develop individuality in this sense most effectively.

If we are to single-mindedly pursue the education system which most efficiently and effectively provides the highest academic accomplishments that can be attained, a curriculum dominated by collection codes and characterized by strong framing and classification would be ideal. In this case, importance would be on discipline and the sole object would be to receive the teachings and absorb the knowledge quickly (B. Bernstein, 1973).

"Knowledge under collection is private property with its own power structure and market situation," and the corollary, "children and pupils are early socialized into the concept of knowledge as private property" (B. Bernstein, 1973). This encourages a child to grow up with a strong desire to possess knowledge.

What is generally said about the relationship between the humanization and diversification of education is that the students' personal individuality develops through the individualization of the teaching/learning process. Thus, education needs to be diversified. However, we must bear in mind what Prof. Akihiro Yoshida pointed out in 1991. According to his view on individualism, for example, "ability grouping" still cannot be called individualization. Rather, it signifies a further reinforcement of uniformity and shared locus, since it is based upon very strong classification. It serves, finally, to give the student a heightened sense of identity in terms of his position in the hierarchical ladder of knowledge. Another words, it is quite possible to accomplish "uniformity through diversification" (Akihiro Yoshida, 1991). The Japanese education system is a prime example of this.

It is conceivable that in order to develop personal individuality we will require not only the individualization of teaching/learning, but also a curriculum that embraces diversity in combination with a variety of teaching methods. On the other hand, when diversification in the value system is desired, that is, when prevention of cultural reproduction is the driving factor, an education with weak frame and classification tends to be promoted. In these times, the only kind of diversification that can materialize is that which is interlocked with the individualization.

However, during the course of diversification, the outpourings of feelings and opinions which erupt to the surface from each class are merely temporary. Their demands stem from the frustration of unfulfilled desire for betterment.

When this eruption calms down, certain people do tend to benefit, becoming more independent socially and financially. This is the process that occurred in the industrialized societies, for example, when the middle classes came into being.

The USA and Japan have not been excepted, and now Russia is treading a similar path. In order to gain a politically and economically advantageous position in society—one which had previously been occupied by communist party bureaucrats—their middle class is now turning away from the conventional value system. They now demand diversification in education so that these aspirations can be realized. In such a case, diversification is equivalent to people selecting their own schools and careers. On the surface, it looks very democratic. In reality, however, when making this sort of choice, factors such as the financial strength and cultural capital of the family are directly reflected in the choices that are available.

When the issue of humanization and diversification of education is at a turning point of society, various opinions come forward from a cross-section of society. These are con-
considered publicly and passionately, and the process usually creates an optimism that the kind of diversification of education which can satisfy the wishes and hopes of all the people may be realized. In the end, however, it is simply placement of the learner into a hierarchical structure and the smooth functioning of the school as a center for the training and distribution of manpower.

Once again then, "As a result of the functioning of mechanisms which differentiate the various methods of teaching (courses, types of schools, teacher groupings), selections that are closely connected with the structure of social classes are reinforced." (Lê Thành Khôi, 1981).

What every child needs to be assured of is the maximum possible development of his personality, his individuality, his ability and a high quality education. This implies that the humanization and diversification of education be translated into a message system from the viewpoint of the learner. The key to realizing the kind of education that puts itself in every learner's shoes lies in the availability of another choice entirely; a legitimate choice of another way of life and another way of acquiring an education. It lies in planning and administering education so that it is a self-governing entity.

We will find another breakthrough below. We will discover "what is outside the frame of education" and unearth "the essential knowledge for developing cultural assistance device for individual human independence" (Toshio Nakauchi, 1990). Another way out would be to promote a movement for education through mutual agreement and cooperation, and to create a curriculum through the collaboration of teachers, parents, residents in the community and the students.

The history of educational reform will be understood in the following manner and will make up the contents of an educational history class. As already mentioned in this study, first (a) the actual situation of children in the system will be clarified, then, (b) the various stages of industrial development (c) human relationships involved in production and (d) culture (political culture, school culture, familial culture, gender) as human relationships will be revealed and analyzed as to how people arrive at their educational thought and how they act upon it through the filter of (d). In particular, the kind of curriculum that is created will be analyzed. That is, we look at the combinations of frames and classifications that are formed and what sort of effect they have (B. Bernstein, 1973). In the light of this, we discuss the structure and organization of national education (e). Depicting the history of education as a drama of the ideas, opinions and activities of the people involved in mainstream education, and in particular those moves and shakers who determine changes in the combinations of frame and classification, should lead to a greater understanding of those changes.

When educational history as a subject depicts the human drama of people under a given regime and then again after a change of regime, it becomes possible for the student to look at the changes themselves as something relative. From this, it should be possible to apprehend a more creative or even radical educational thought. At the same time, the student will gain an understanding of the overall structure of education and begin to understand both the potential and the problems involved with engendering the participation of the community at large. It should also provide the student with direction and perhaps the courage to meet the challenges he will face in trying to create a new education in collaboration with his fellow students, parents and community residents.
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