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Any prevalent philosophy influences and colours society as has pragmatism in America or Communism in the Soviet Union. The latter, however, is more than a philosophy: it is a way of life. To preserve, transmit and perpetuate this way of life, education is considered the best and most effective means. For this reason education has a central place in the USSR. Because, for its adherents, Communism is the only way of life and because for the non-Communist world it has revolutionary implications, the Soviets would like to disseminate it internationally. How is Communism trying to accomplish this? First of all by means of education.

In Communist countries the functions of education depend on the past history, strategy of leadership and the economic growth of these countries. Common to both China and Russia is the great value placed on education for all; and again common to both is the education of both young and old towards a Communist society.

> "Upbringing must inculcate in the school children a love of knowledge and of work, and respect for people who work; it must shape the Communist world outlook of the pupils and rear them in the spirit of Communist morality and of boundless loyalty to the country and the people and in the spirit of proletarian internationalism."
>
> (Policy Statement, 1958.)

First priority in this effort is developing the country's technology so that it may take its place side by side with the capitalistic countries and even excel them. Secondly, the people must be enlightened about the "evils" of capitalism. In the Soviet Union the chief aim of compulsory, free education is knowledge, because "Without knowledge there is no Communism" (Lenin). The second aim is to produce the skilled manpower necessary to raise what was mainly an agricultural country to a highly industrial one. The Soviet Union has achieved both aims to a remarkable degree by:

1. widespread campaigns for the liquidation of illiteracy;
2. establishing a large number of nurseries and kindergartens to free mothers for work and to acquaint even small children with the value of labour;
3. establishing general and secondary polytechnical schools with and without training in production at industrial enterprises and in agriculture;
4. establishing universities, polytechnical institutes and special institutes;
5. establishing teachers' training colleges.

Output and efficiency are the chief criteria. All educational institutions are exactingly controlled by the central authorities and the degree of uniformity enforced in principle and practice throughout the Soviet Union is amazing. The teaching of political attitudes is seen as an essential part of the task of Communist education.

In their technological advancement, there is no doubt that the Soviet Union is second to the USA. To achieve this development the state did not hesitate to allocate the necessary funds to education. In 1962 15% of the total state budget was allocated to education, whereas, by comparison, in South Africa, 4% only.

In China education has not reached the same high standard as in the Soviet Union. The reasons may be found not only in the shortage of trained teachers and the large number of pupils, but perhaps even more in the frequent disruptions of school life by revolutionary movements. China is much more revolutionary-minded than the Soviet Union. The importance of the children in the "class-struggle" is never for an instant overlooked. In order to keep the revolutionary spirit alive, political indoctrination is intense and no sacrifice can ever be too great. In spite of all this, China has made a tremendous effort to catch up with the industrial progress in other parts of the world. Again, this has been due to their educational policy of education for

all. Although such problems as the shortage of teachers, buildings and equipment have not yet been overcome, there is a continuous improvement in all three. In most cities, universal primary education is established. Although practically all children of school-going age go to a school, only a relatively small number graduate from the various schools. As we have noticed, this is largely due to the frequent interruptions of school life.

To bring about and to ensure a continuous advancement of industrialisation and agricultural programmes, "half-work, half-study" secondary schools have been established, as well as part-time universities. Technical and specialist institutes replaced the comprehensive universities. Because of their stress on work and political activities rather than study, they were not always successful in training scientists, engineers or teachers. Apart from this, their limited success in the educational sphere is to a great extent due to a lack of funds. The pupils of most of the "half-work, half-study" schools pay for their education from the money received for their work.

Although Chinese education is not on a par with Soviet education, the Chinese people now have reached a standard of living which they had not previously reached.

What is there that South Africa could learn from these countries?

We all know that there is a great need for skilled manpower in the economy of South Africa. If South Africa continues to rely solely on the white population, the economic growth rate must drop. Compulsory, free education for **all** seems to be the answer to this problem. Universal education will not only give us the skilled labour, but also knowledgeable people to follow economic trends and cope with changes in life. Through adequate education resulting in skill and knowledge, the country can only benefit. Given this opportunity the non-whites will have a fairer chance in raising their standard of living and having a share in the political, economic and social life of the country.

Perhaps the situation in South Africa is not as straight forward as, say, in China. Nevertheless thought should be given to their methods of solving their problems.



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