

THE NEW EDUCATION IN THE SOVIET REPUBLIC

By

ALBERT P. PINKEVITCH

*President of the Second State
University of Moscow*

*Translated under the auspices of the Inter-
national Institute, Teachers College,
Columbia University by*

NUCIA PERLMUTTER

*Research Assistant in the
International Institute*

Edited by

GEORGE S. COUNTS

*Associate Director of the International
Institute and Professor of Edu-
cation in Teachers College*

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

WHEN Professor Counts suggested that I prepare an American edition of my work on pedagogy I gladly consented to do so. Even though foreign students of education may not accept our fundamental positions, they cannot fail to be interested in the unique character and original quality of our soviet education. I was consequently very happy to coöperate in acquainting American readers with what we are doing. In consenting to the translation of this book, however, I am fully aware of its limitations. Our efforts to develop a scientific system of education are of very recent origin. In fact our work in this direction is not more than seven or eight years old. Any presentation of our system of education therefore must of necessity be incomplete. The reader should also bear in mind that the present work was designed primarily as a source book for university students and is the product of a course of lectures which for a number of years I have given at the Second Moscow University. In preparing it for translation I have found it necessary, on the one hand, to add certain materials which do not appear in the Russian edition and, on the other hand, to reduce the book in those parts which are without special interest to the American student of pedagogy. An effort has been made to include only those materials which are characteristic of the soviet system of pedagogy. I wish to make it perfectly clear, however, that the system expounded in the present book is not the generally accepted system, nor is it the official system. Although the basic principles upon which soviet educators are striving to build a system of Marxian pedagogy are everywhere the same, there may be wide differences in details and in the handling of individual questions. Moreover, the development of a uniform theory of education is neither possible nor desirable. In the present case it is sufficient to note that my position on fundamental issues is *typical* of the great majority of soviet educators.

I should like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Counts for his assistance in making provision for the translation and publication of the present work. It is particularly gratifying to have

my book appear in the country which together with Germany was responsible for the development of the science of education in Russia. Separated from America first by the War and later by the blockade we, and particularly the author, were unfortunately unable to keep abreast of many of the more recent developments in education in the United States. However, the mere enumeration of the names of Hall, Dewey, Russell, Monroe, Judd, Thorndike, Kilpatrick, and many others, known to every educator in our country, is a sufficient reminder of the tremendous influence which American education has exerted upon us. In spite of the undoubted differences in ideology which divide soviet from western educational leaders, mutual understanding and recognition of scientific attainments are indispensable. Even in order to condemn one must understand. We have found in the works of American pedagogues and pedologists a rich source of materials. Let us but recall the Dalton Plan, the project method, standard tests, and measurements. All of these innovations have been introduced into our country, even though in their fundamental assumptions they may not be acceptable to us. We, however, do not resort to wholesale condemnation. On the contrary, we study carefully and transplant upon our soil whatever of value we may find elsewhere. And to-day, I wish to repeat, the most valuable source of such materials is found in the writings of American scientists.

The translation itself has been well done. For this I wish to thank Miss Perlmutter. I have read the English manuscript and find that throughout she has faithfully and clearly conveyed to the American reader both the thought and the spirit of the original Russian edition.

I trust that this book will serve as a means of promoting a better understanding between the educational workers of the United States and the Soviet Union.

A. P. PINKEVITCH.

*Moscow,
Second State University,
May, 1929.*

INTRODUCTION

EVERY American student of education knows that in 1917 there occurred in Russia one of the great revolutions of history; he also knows that this revolution, like all revolutions in the more advanced societies, was followed by important changes in educational theory and practice. Beyond these simple and self-evident propositions he is commonly either uninformed or confused in his thinking. This is due in part to the radical nature of the revolution and the violence of the conflicting emotions which it aroused throughout the world. Because of this emotional upset few of us have been able to view with unclouded vision what has been going on in Russia. We have either been so alarmed or so hopeful with regard to the revolution that we have been unable to adopt the scientific attitude of mind.

A second reason for the prevailing absence of accurate knowledge concerning education in Russia is found in the rupture of political, economic and cultural relations following the revolution. To be sure, this rupture is slowly healing, but even to-day, twelve years after the overthrow of the old order, the relations are far from normal. Moreover, the language difficulty is not the least of the many obstacles to understanding. Very few Americans indeed have any knowledge of the Russian language. The direct contacts between the two people are consequently utterly inadequate to insure an adequate exchange of ideas. There have, of course, been numerous newspaper dispatches and some magazine articles of a fairly substantial character dealing with education in the Soviet Union. There have also appeared several brief accounts in book form of the educational program of revolutionary Russia. Practically all of these reports, however, introduce us to soviet education at second hand. For the most part they have been written by propagandists or by foreign observers who were strangers to the country lying beyond the Vistula. Moreover, most of these outsiders spent but a few weeks or a few months in Russia. As a consequence the accounts of soviet education available for the American reader are on the whole impressionistic in

tone, fragmentary in scope, biased in emphasis, and untrustworthy in content.

Because of these facts, which no informed person would care to challenge, the International Institute felt that it would render a genuine service to the cause of education in particular and the cause of international understanding in general by permitting the new Russia to speak for herself through the medium of one of her leading educators. With this end in view the present volume was selected for translation. The reader should bear in mind, however, that it was not written in the first instance for an American audience. It was written for use in Russian universities in the training of teachers. It is consequently in some ways a more illuminating document than a volume written solely for foreign consumption. In a genuine sense it takes one into the very heart of the Russian experiment—into the ideals, purposes, and strategy of the revolution.

While this volume, as the author says in his own preface, is not official in any formal sense and while there are various schools of educational thought in Russia, as in other countries, it is true to the spirit of the revolution and is in essential harmony with the social and political forces which are shaping the policies of the Soviet Union. Doctor Pinkevitch himself, a student of education under the old régime, has been identified with the revolutionary movement for twenty-five years and is now president of the Second State University of Moscow, which contains the largest pedagogical faculty or school of education in Russia. He is also the author of numerous works on education and has been a real factor in the construction of the educational program of Soviet Russia. His book, therefore, while reflecting the personality of the author, may be accepted as a comprehensive, balanced, and trustworthy account of the theory and practice of Russian education.

There are many reasons why American educators should become familiar with the educational program of the Soviet Union. Not the least of these is the magnitude of the country. Today it embraces one-sixth of the land surface of the globe and is almost three times the area of continental United States. Its natural resources are almost boundless and of the greatest variety. Inhabiting this vast territory and possessing its great resources are 150,000,000 people of excellent and diverse racial stock. The Soviet Union and what occurs in the Soviet Union cannot be ignored.

The magnitude of the Union, however, is not the only argument

for studying Russian education. The Soviet educational experiment merits study on its own account. Though part and parcel of a gigantic effort to build a particular type of society which would be opposed by educational thinkers in many countries, it should be examined by students of education from all over the world. While no one could accept the educational program of the Communists in all of its details and departments without accepting at the same time their entire philosophy, there are many things which defenders of other social theories may learn from Russia.

If the present experiment in Russia is allowed to work itself out naturally, it seems entirely probable that the power of formal education will be tested as it has never before been tested in human history. A favorite subject of speculation on the part of philosophers for ages has been the question of the possibility of directing the course of social evolution through control of educational agencies. Soviet Russia may provide an answer to this question. On the one hand, we see an educational program organized from top to bottom for the purpose of achieving a fairly definite objective—the building of a collectivistic social order; and, on the other, we see an educational program of extraordinary scope. The system of public instruction of Russia today consists not only of a system of schools for the coming generation, but also of a system of schools for adults, of the press and the library, of the theater and the moving picture, of art galleries and museums, of young peoples clubs and Communist societies and practically all of the organized educational agencies of society except the home and the church. The struggle going on in contemporary Russia between this far-reaching educational system and the informal educational influences of social life is a truly magnificent spectacle.

Within the narrower domain of pedagogy Russia is also the scene of many interesting experiments which may prove of value to the rest of the world. Russian educators have literally canvassed the world for educational ideas which they may fit into their scheme and make to serve their purposes. Because of their administrative arrangements they may carry on experimentation on an unusually large scale and according to a carefully worked out plan. Among the more interesting aspects of their school program are the wide extension of freedom to the pupil, the development of what they call the complex method of teaching, the organization of the curriculum about nature, labor, and society, and the large emphasis on socially

useful labor. In fact, if the Russian schools were doing nothing of interest beyond developing their program of socially useful labor, they would merit extensive and sympathetic study by visitors from other countries.

Perhaps the greatest value, however, of the Russian educational experiment as reported by Doctor Pinkevitch is the intellectual challenge which it throws out to the American educator. With the passing of the old agrarian order and the coming of industrial civilization we will be forced eventually to turn our attention to a number of very fundamental questions which today we are inclined to ignore. In constructing their educational program the Russian leaders have given much thought to these questions. No one can read the present work without coming to a very keen realization of this fact. They have, for example, faced very squarely such questions as the purpose of education, the relation of education to society, the rôle of science in the study of education, the place of the school among the educational agencies, and the function of education in the evolution of culture. We may not accept the answers which they have given to these questions, but we cannot refuse to give some of our best thought to doing for our society what Russian educators have done and are doing for theirs.

In preparing Doctor Pinkevitch's work for the American audience there has been a certain amount of condensation. Thus two whole chapters which appear in the Russian edition have been omitted altogether. These chapters deal with Physical Education and the Education of Exceptional Children. Moreover, in nearly every chapter certain sections have been eliminated. The principle of selection in every case was that of interest to the American reader. Where the treatment was not unlike that to be found in an American book dealing with the same subject and where the exclusion would not appreciably impair the balance of the system of thought, materials have been excluded.

The translation has been done by Miss Nucia Perlmutter, a native of Russia, who came to America before the revolution and who has an unusually thorough command of both languages. The quality of the translation bears clear testimony to the excellence of the preparation which she brought to the task. The work has been ably executed.

In concluding this introduction I wish to express with Doctor Pinkevitch the hope that the present volume may contribute to the

reestablishment of cultural relations between the American and Russian peoples. No good can come from the perpetuation of ignorance. There is going on in the Soviet Union today a social and educational experiment of enormous magnitude. Whether the American student of education and society is to favor or condemn the purposes and methods of this experiment, he must first understand it. If anyone wishes to know the philosophy which dominates the efforts of the present government of Russia to mold the character of the coming generation in the Soviet Union, he can do no better than read the present volume.

GEORGE S. COUNTS.

New York City.

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PART ONE

General Theory and Pre-school Education

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Nature of Education

WITHIN the total process of education two divisions may be more or less clearly distinguished. The one embraces the growth and development of the native powers of the individual; the other is concerned with the shaping of attitudes, the molding of character, and the formulation of a philosophy of life. The first may be found in either plant or animal, while the second is probably peculiar to the human species. Unfortunately the English language fails to recognize this distinction and consequently contains no exact equivalents for the Russian words. Throughout the present work, however, in order to avoid clumsy forms of expression, we shall employ somewhat arbitrarily the terms *nurture* and *instruction* to designate these two phases of the educative process. In order that the appropriate content may be put into these words the definition of each will be briefly elaborated.

Nurture may be regarded as the prolonged action of one or more persons upon another for the purpose of developing his native biologically and socially useful qualities. According to this definition emphasis is placed on the purpose of the influence. Moreover, unless this influence reflects the existence of a certain system—complete or incomplete, conscious or unconscious—it should not be called nurture. Likewise unless it is prolonged, it should not be placed in this category. The influence of a chance meeting or a single conversation cannot be styled nurture.

Unless the process is directed towards a definite goal it can scarcely be called systematic. For the time being this aim may be briefly described as the development of those traits which are present at birth and which exist prior to the operation of all environmental influences. In the narrow sense of the word, they embrace man's physical nature and constitute his inborn equipment in the realms of instinct, sense, memory, and so on. They require development which is not only accidental and natural, but also systematic

and institutional. This is necessary because all qualities should not be developed but only those which are "biologically" useful to the individual or possess positive "social" significance. The latter criterion in particular applies to those manifestations which are derived from certain of the instincts. Man's native tendencies are not all useful and socially desirable. Indeed some of them should not only not be developed, but on the contrary should even be suppressed. With such undesirable forms of behavior, which fortunately are comparatively rare, the teacher must wage an unrelenting battle.

The development of the native qualities is but one-half of the educational task. To bring body and mind to a certain degree of perfection is not enough: the developed individual should understand the universe in which he lives; he should know the world of nature and the world of man; and he should be able to make his way in that world. In other words, he should understand and be capable of evaluating the phenomena that surround him; he should be able to create his own independent and complete outlook upon life; and he should be equipped to change his environment. Clearly in achieving this purpose the assistance of some directing influence is required; a "systematic" and "prolonged" program of action is necessary. This brings us to the definition of the second division of education. *Instruction* may be defined as the systematic and prolonged action of one or more persons upon another for the purpose of creating in him a complete and definite outlook upon the world and of making accessible to him the knowledge necessary for the selection and the practicing of an occupation. It is apparent that this definition embraces both general and vocational education.

In our reference to action we have in mind not only the direct influence of the teacher but more especially the influence of the *environment created by the teacher*. And by "teacher" we refer *not only to individual persons, but to institutions as well*. Manifold and diverse organizations, and even the state itself, in so far as they exercise educational functions must be regarded as teachers.

In the construction of these two definitions we have not indicated whether the individual undergoing the process of education is child, youth, or adult. The explanation of this omission is obviously found in the fact that education is not confined to the years of immaturity. While it is true that the period of growth and development in its more strictly biological aspects is confined largely to the earlier years of life, the educative influence can unquestion-

ably be extended to the adult in his efforts to arrive at a satisfying view of the world.

Definition and Divisions of Pedagogy

In view of the foregoing discussion of the nature of education, pedagogy may best be defined as the *science of the nature, the laws, the organization, and the methods of the learning and teaching processes*. But this is not all. In order to discover the best procedures for the education of the human organism it is necessary to know that organism. The modern student of education therefore must first of all make the most careful possible study of man at the various stages of his development. Physiology, psychology, and anthropology provide materials for an understanding of the adult; and the same sciences in their applications to childhood and youth—pedology—furnish the basis for building a theory of education for the pre-school and school ages. Indeed the science which makes a study of the physical and mental development of child, adolescent, and youth is so closely bound up with the contemporary pedagogy that, if one is not to extend the latter to adults, it could be considered at present a part of pedagogical science. The development of out-of-school methods of work, however, has created a non-scholastic pedagogy and the time has arrived to incorporate into a single theoretical system all existing knowledge regarding the processes of education. The fact that for more than two thousand years pedagogy was developed as a science of child nurture should now be disregarded. If this be done, then pedology should of course be clearly dissociated from the field of pedagogy and be converted, together with the physiology, psychology, and anthropology of the adult, into one of the fundamental sciences upon which pedagogy rests. At the same time the status of pedology as a division of anthropology or even as an independent science should not be lost. In this definition of pedagogy it is perhaps unnecessary to point out the importance of the study of comparative education and of the history of pedagogy.

Pedagogy as a Science

Although the problems of education are as old as the world, yet pedagogy as a science did not begin to develop until comparatively recently—not more than one hundred and fifty years ago. In

fact a scientific pedagogical system is being created only in our own time. Small wonder then that even now many people do not consider pedagogy an independent science. In support of this view some point to its dependence on other disciplines and regard it as applied philosophy or even applied psychology; others refer to the vagueness of its accomplishments and the lack of specific methods; and still others, feeling that a scientific pedagogy is theoretically impossible, place it completely in the realm of art.

The question as to whether pedagogy is a science or not can scarcely be answered until the nature of science itself is made clear. In the final analysis disagreement here would seem but to reflect the fact that every one has his own conception of science. Let us accept the very simple definition that a science is a system of carefully verified knowledge. By knowledge we mean exact and authentic information regarding both the essential characteristics of phenomena and their various relations. Scientific work consists in the description, the classification, and the establishment of various relationships among phenomena. In other words, scientific work consists in the accumulation of scientific "knowledge."

From this point of view pedagogy is undoubtedly a science. Education is concerned essentially with a certain type of inter-relations among persons which are controlled by some aim or purpose. It is the function of pedagogy to describe and classify the methods of this inter-relationship and thus to move toward exact verified knowledge. Already various inter-relations have been established, some of which represent unquestionable achievements of science, while others are but working hypotheses awaiting confirmation or refutation. Pedagogy as a science, however, should not be confused with pedagogical practice. Just as in any practice, whether it be medical, chemical, or economic, there exists a certain element of art, so in the everyday work of the teacher art is necessary. But this fact should not lead to the conclusion which is sometimes made that pedagogy is art. It is, moreover, one of the practical normative disciplines. It has its own definite area of investigation—the field of education. No other science has any pretense to this field. These theses are quite incontestable, and they cannot be shaken by the consideration often expressed that pedagogy is based on many other sciences. The same may be said of all practical sciences, such as medicine, agronomy, and engineering.

Among the sciences by which pedagogy is supported let us point

first to pedology and psychology. The utilization and pedagogical evaluation of the facts of pedology provide the scientific basis for the work of every teacher who deals with children of pre-school and school age; physiology, general psychology, and social psychology are important for all who are engaged in education outside the school; medicine has a certain significance particularly for pathological pedagogy and the education of defective and backward children; and finally, in answering a whole series of questions including the most important question of all—that of the aim of education—the educator must draw upon philosophy and the social sciences.

Let us now consider the enumerated sciences somewhat more in detail. Our first reference was to pedology. This science is concerned with the psychological and physical development of the child from birth to maturity. It studies the biology and psychology of human growth. Pedagogy takes the findings of pedology and utilizes them in the organization of methods for promoting the desired physical and mental development of the child. In similar fashion medicine receives materials from anatomy, physiology, and psychology, analyzes pathological deviations, and derives methods of restoring the human organism to a normal healthful state.

Having said that pedagogy leans on pedology, we have also said by implication that pedagogy is based on the physiology and psychology of the childhood age. There is consequently no need of mentioning specifically these two sciences. We shall, however, speak of general physiology and psychology, because in the case of adults we must first of all utilize their data as well as the data of social psychology. The significance of medicine for pathological pedagogy is also quite obvious. But with regard to the relation of philosophy and sociology to the science of education the situation is altogether different. Since this question is for the most part treated erroneously, we shall examine it in detail.

Among the philosophic disciplines, dialectic and formal logic are unquestionably essential. In understanding the historic development of educational ideas and theories the study of the history of the scientific spirit is of tremendous significance. Such a subject of study is to be understood, not in the sense of the traditional history of philosophy, but rather as an outline of the fundamental steps or epochs in the development of science. The remaining branches of philosophy—ethics, esthetics, and metaphysics—since their positions are throughout *a priori* and relative, cannot at all aspire to the