
Summary

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Alternative theories of socialist and bourgeois education
– Social images of child-centered ideologies –

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The 19th century reform, or as it was later called the alternative education movements, was indeed the manifestation of the anti-capitalist, anarchist, socialist, feminists and other civic radical movements in the field of education. In this respect, these educational theories and movements were akin to those lifestyle experiments, natural cults and avantgarde arts which sought to heal the wounds of the human soul and the nature caused by the bourgeois society, and the capitalism.

In this concept, the naturalistic portrayal of the children which has been exempt from social influences ran contrary to the hierarchical school order and the cult of rationality, deriving from the enlightenment period which provided legitimacy to the existing civic structure. The way to social justice would go not through exertion, selective science based school knowledge and competition but through the conflict-free development of abilities obtained from the nature. The concept of abilities of biologic origin could be smoothly integrated into the utopistic way of thinking which anticipated a better and more righteous future.

The fate of the reform pedagogical movement was different in the states which preserved a liberal parliamentary democracy throughout the 20th century from that in the countries which turned away from parliamentary democracy after World War II, and tried to get back to it following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Where liberal democratic conditions prevailed, the representatives of the reform movements could not occupy positions in the decision-making power structure which would have meant for them control over the state policy. However, the situation was different in countries, for example, Germany and Italy where the civic society was gradually replaced with a newly-built society following World War I. The creation of a new human being in the society replacing capitalism was for a while expected from, among others, the reform pedagogical movement by Hitler and Mussolini. In countries with fervent nationalism and strong right-wing movements like Hungary, the naturalistic conception of the children fitted into the development of eugenetics, social Darwinism and racism. The development of the concept of

of human anthropology, which went along with the abolishment of capitalism, for example free trade of goods and private properties, was appealing to the left wing movement. In the Soviet Union, the state schools which aimed at creating the totality of personality (body, soul and work) and abandoned scientific school materials were supported by Trocki (psychoanalysis) and Buharin (pedagogy). By the mid-1930s, however, the rationality of the state bureaucracy and its pragmatism swept away these pedagogic movements and their representatives in all three countries (Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union).

After World War II, the left wing branch of the reform pedagogic movement claimed victory and for a few years the illusions of the pre-1914 era gained significance. In Western Europe, even though the civic parliamentary democracy was under constant criticism with various degrees of force, the basic structure of the society was never challenged.

At the end of the 1940s, the reform pedagogic approaches were discredited in the countries under Soviet rule. However, after Stalin's death they could survive as the officially tolerated left wing opposition of the dominant pedagogic concept. The state socialist structure provided the basis for the belief that the creation of schools, tracing their origins in the 19th century Marxism and advocating the superiority of abilities was imperfect but mendable.

These attempts became increasingly popular but their unsuccessful realization was thought to have been due to the nature of the unprofessional bureaucratic structure. Thus advocates of this movement considered themselves as representatives of an alternative method running against the dominant pedagogical tenet of the one-party system.