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HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION: THE UNITY AND OPPOSITION OF VARIOUS MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. *In the paper the development model of Russian and American education on the example of elite schools' formation is analyzed. The differences connected with national historical traditions, mentality, economic and political structures of these countries, mobilization or innovative types of development are considered. A special attention is paid to the fact that, although the models of Russian and American education were initially opposed, similar problems are observed there which showed the most severe crisis of national educational systems. The conclusion and the author's suggestions are made about the state policy of Russia in the field of elite education.*

Key words: *High quality education, elite education, innovative education, elite, society, genesis, information society, system of education.*

ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ВЫСОКОГО КАЧЕСТВА: ЕДИНСТВО И ПРОТИВОПОЛОЖНОСТЬ РАЗЛИЧНЫХ МОДЕЛЕЙ РАЗВИТИЯ

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Аннотация. *В данной работе анализируются модели развития образования высокого качества на примере становления элитных школ России и США. Рассмотрены различия, связанные с национальными историческими традициями, менталитетом, экономической и политической структурой этих стран, мобилизационным или инновационным типами развития. Обращается внимание на то, что хотя рассматриваемые модели образования высокого качества изначально были противоположны, в них наблюдаются схожие проблемы, которые свидетельствуют о жесточайшем кризисе национальных систем образования. Сделан вывод о том, какой должна быть государственная политика России в области образования.*

Ключевые слова: *образование высокого качества, элитное образование, элитарное образование, инновационное образование, элита, социум, генезис, информационное общество, система образования*

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Universal technologization and standardization of education creates problems for non-standard educational requirements and needs irrespective of what motivated this irregularity: the interests of pupils, the needs of specific social requirements or philosophical attitudes. As a compensation for the deficiencies in the mass humanitarian and technological education, the elite and elitist pedagogy appear that solve specific problems by specific means but at the same time it is not a technology.

Regarding the concept of «elite education», it is interpreted in modern literature from different positions. First of all, elite education means high quality education which includes not only the availability of good basic encyclopedic knowledge but also the ability to use this knowledge efficiently, to construct logical arguments and to make educated conclusions starting from a minimum of basic knowledge and receiving new and sometimes non-obvious results as well as the ability to further self-development throughout life depending on the changing needs of society [1].

The term of «elite education» can also be understood as a closed system of schools, colleges, etc. where people from wealthy families (elite of wealth), and children of noble people and senior government officials (elite of blood), that have the ability to pay for expensive tutoring including those from elite schools, are trained, at the same time individual talents of the personality are overshadowed. From our point of view such approach will fully correspond to not elite (high-quality) education but «elite education», i.e., education for the elite that means a closed system of education for a narrow circle of people.

The first educational institutions appeared as elite institutions because getting education itself meant rising of an individual who had acquired special knowledge among the other members of the society; i.e., it was a process of elevation above them. Education was a value and while introducing the student to the elite of the society it gave him the opportunity to hold high positions in the social structure. Historically elite education appeared and developed as a part of the elitist one, because only certain stratum could get access to education in general [2].

In the present time, elite and elitist education are developing against the background of the egalitarian one, which is based on the principle introduced by J. A. Komensky: «To teach everyone, to teach everything, and to teach about everything». Elite education which is an integral part of the overall education system is more adaptive and less inert than the mass education and it plays a role of a sensitive indicator of the processes that happen in the society. It is necessary to emphasize again that the development of general education is a necessary basis for the development of elite education. The higher the basic level of training is, the more successfully and more intensively the high quality specialist is developed and shaped in the system of elite education.

While comparing educational systems of Russia and the United States primarily from the aspect of elite education development, there we can see deep

differences between these systems which are connected to different historical traditions, mentality, economic and political structures of these countries, and finally with mobilization or innovative types of development.

American educational system has always been based on the type of pluralist development, within which different models competed, where the programs developed by the civil society organizations played an important role alongside with the public educational programs, and federal programs were more consultative than prescriptive (which is natural when there are private educational institutions), where state and local authorities had large influence on the education. It is a system with a high degree of decentralization.

The Soviet system of education was opposite to the previously described model: the state policy of dictation, unification, indoctrination of the training process, the dominance of egalitarian approach to the organization of the educational system. In the post-Soviet period, the educational system of Russia is rapidly moving towards its de-ideologization; the total governmental control is over; the process of educational programs and educational institutions diversification is taking place; and the increase of responsiveness to individual's and group's needs of the population is observed. In other words, this movement is apparently a process towards a pluralistic model of education. Thus, we can state a convergence of educational systems in Russia and in the United States within the paradigm of a pluralistic educational system. Russia moves away from etatism, political monism to political system's pluralism, which certainly conciliates it to the political system of the United States. Russian models of elite recruiting also change from the nomenclature to a pluralistic system, i.e., to a more open system that brings it together with the system of American elites recruiting [3].

Despite the fact that the models of Russian and American education development (which, as we noted above, are the basis for high quality education development) were initially opposite, similar problems are observed there, which showed the most severe crisis of the national educational systems. According to the daily newspaper «Daily news», the issue of May 17, 2009, 65–75 % of the U.S. students graduating from the fourth grade can not read and write; among the eighth graders 77% failed the state exam in mathematics; two-thirds of the U.S. school students of the eighth grade did not pass the exam in reading and writing, i.e., more than a half of the students aged 14–15 cannot read and write properly. An important problem is that the public (free) schools are overcrowded. In each class, 35–40 students study at the same time. It is despite the fact that the maximum allowable load indicator of each class (according to the U.S. standards) should not exceed 25 pupils. Fifth part of the schools is in poor condition and requires urgent repairs. As we noted above, private schools in the U.S. are paid schools. Many people cannot afford to give education to their children during 8–12 years while paying tuition of 5–15 thousand dollars per year (up to 180 thousand in 12 years during which the child is in school), and in addition the

level of teaching in some private schools can be disastrous: teachers do not have any qualifications (they are still learning to become teachers). Such nonsense has become widespread because the owners of the schools pay a school teacher without a diploma much less than to a certified teacher [4].

In the Russian system of education the educational quality decline is also observed. Thus, according to the results of research that was carried out in the Novosibirsk State Agrarian University, 64 % of the students have full knowledge of the basic nine-year education, 47 %, of the students is familiar with the knowledge of the eleven years of education, 22 % of the students have knowledge in the extent of so-called not complete high school education. In the Novosibirsk State University annually total dictation writing is conducted which welcomes all visitors. According to the 2010 data, in the NSU 235 people from 13 to 73 years old participated in the total dictation writing. 6 persons scored «5» (“A”) (2,5 %), 26 people got «4» (B), (11 %), 166 people were evaluated «2» (the worse point), (70 %) [5]. In addition the major problems are repair and schools equipment, particularly outside major cities.

A distinctive feature of any society’s development is the growth of investments into education. This is so in the world in general and especially in the most dynamically developing countries. There is a direct correlation between the size of education financing by various countries and the pace of their socio-economic development, i.e. investments into education are the most effective in terms of socio-economic progress.

Unfortunately, Russian policy contrasts with this global tendency and it has sharply decreased allotments into the field of education. In 1950 the USSR spent 10% of national income vs. 4 % in the U.S. on education and research; in 1988 7 % was spent in the USSR and 12 % was spent in the U.S.; in 1992 this figure in Russia was below 4 %. In the mid 1990-s Russia spent 0.52 % of GDP to the needs of science, whereas in Israel 3.5 % was spent, in Japan 3.05 %, and in the U.S. 2.75 % [6]. In 2006 the expenditure on education in the consolidated budget of Russia (to GDP) amounted to 3,7 %; in 2008, 4,1%; and by 2011 it is planned by the state to raise this rate to 4,4 %. According to the size of the teachers’ salaries Russia is an apparent outsider: Hungary’s position on this indicator that holds the last position among the countries which are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is far ahead of Russian rates (\$ 16 thousand per year). The average high school teacher, for instance, in St. Petersburg, has a salary about \$ 7 thousand per year, and their beginning colleague has a salary three times less. According to the Committee on Education and Science of St. Petersburg Government in 2007 the Head of Chair, PhD on average earned approximately \$ 12 thousand, while in Germany, Korea and Switzerland they earn more than \$ 51 thousand per year, and in the leading Luxembourg above \$ 88 thousand. The only sphere where we

still can compete with the West and the East is the cost of tuition fees that reflects the real costs of training the qualified specialist. Even in the leading universities of the country that were recognized by the industry leaders (Moscow State University, Moscow State Institute, Moscow State Technical University n.a. N.E. Bauman etc.) a year of tuition is \$ 10–12 thousand. As a rule the foreign universities' tuition price is 2–3 times higher [5].

In recent decades the U.S. government has been paying more attention to educational problems. In 1991 George W. Bush in his speech on the overall education policy accentuated that parents should be free in the choice of schools for their children. In his inaugural speech in 1993 W. Clinton acknowledged the important national goal of giving every American the opportunity to receive education up to higher education. Candidates for the presidency in the year 2000 in their programs also stated the problem of education in the first place. Despite the assignation of \$ 5 billion to the literacy increase, G. Bush offered to increase the number of grants for higher education for another \$ 8 billion. In the U.S. Congress the problems of education in the country including the elite education problems are systematically discussed. At a hearing of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions in 1999, Senator Chuck Grassley (from Iowa) introduced a bill to increase the support for gifted pupils and students. Its goal is seen in the possibility of all pupils and students to get education that is appropriate to their talents regardless of their financial status: «The Senate offers grants to the gifted and talented students <...> who can use these funds for training, special programs, including distance learning (which is particularly important for rural areas)...» At the same meeting of the Committee on July 7, 1999, Senator Edward Kennedy noted: «Education is our national priority». At the committee meeting on September 14, 1999, a public figure B. Cohen said: «The competition (for global leadership) was transferred from the battlefields into classrooms <...> schools are in need of modernization <...> this money can be taken from the Pentagon assignations» [7].

An important step of the current U.S. president Barack Obama is a radical reform of the school educational system. In particular, Barack Obama plans to reintroduce the «No Child Left Behind» legislation [4].

Requirements of the Information Society determine the need for significant improvements, structural changes, shifting priorities in the social system. Such a trajectory of development is already represented not only in the education systems in North America and Western Europe but also in the countries of the Confucian and Buddhist cultures.

The world experience of the recent decades shows that in this area a flexible system of control (often direct and indirect in the form of influence) should be conducted where there is no rigid centralization and where the balance of governmental, regional and local education programs is necessary. Particularly

sensitive should be the attitude of the state towards elite educational institutions: it is necessary to take into account their specificity, to seek additional resources including financial in the form of various additional scholarships for the talented students, and grants to effectively develop the educational institutions etc. and at the same time maintain their maximum autonomy.

In some developed Western countries national programs include the monitoring of the academic level of education, of the level of management in education, teachers control (arts of teaching), professional control (taking into account the requirements of “consumers” towards university graduates), and the encouragement of the teaching methods diversity. The general objective of the education policy should focus on its contribution to social and economic prosperity of the society.

Since «... even the most particular and specific issues of pedagogy are raised at their last foundations to a purely philosophical problems», and «the struggle of various educational tendencies with each other is only a reflection of deep philosophical opposites» [8, pp. 20], the development of education is based on broad philosophical views on the ways of this sphere of social being development and is permeated with philosophical content, because philosophy as a manifestation of self-reflection of culture since its appearance and until present time has aimed not only to understand the existing system of education but also to formulate new values and ideals of the educational system of the future [9].

Based on the experience of the global elite education and based on the needs of socio-economic and political development in Russia, we make a conclusion about the character of the Russian state policy in the field of elite education. First of all, the course towards the steady increase of investments into education is necessary. Government should support the elite scientific and educational institutions. It is urgent to help gifted and talented young people through competitions: regional and nationwide; competitions awarding grants to the finalists and prize-winners for their further study at the leading universities of the country. This is particularly relevant in relation to the talented and gifted young children living in provincial towns and villages far from cultural centers. The development of high quality education allows to work «ahead» and to determine the ways for further development of the society. Only in these conditions may the development of Russia as a state effectively continue.

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PHILOSOPHY OF NAMING

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***Abstract.** The present article «Philosophy of Naming» attempts to describe the system that structures the choice criteria and personal names selection in various cultures and ethnic groups. In order to build up such structure it is necessary to refer to various language elements and conduct the analysis of its units and cultural signs – personal names, applying the methodology of such scientific areas as philosophy, semiotics, linguistics, culturology, etc. While working on the topic and with the material we were able to single out several groups based on the main naming principle: attribution to a particular ethnic group, relevance to the worldwide events, giving name to the outstanding objects, and the name change after death.*

***Key words:** Philosophy of naming, naming traditions, an epic, semiotics, culture.*

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