

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
COMPARED TO THE RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

One of the problems of all schools is the organization of a program of instruction. Today the sciences of human behavior are also able to provide much reliable information about schools and education. However, before the twentieth century philosophy often provided the only intellectual basis for designing good programs. Educators did not have sufficient factual information about how people learn or what they should learn. As a result, men relied wholly on intuition, reason, and personal experiences to provide the guidelines. Men depended on various personal philosophies of education. This early thinking has ". . . set a precedent for the type of educational theory used in recent times to undergird practices in such areas as curriculum, administration, supervision, and methodology."¹ Today education is greatly influenced by the early philosophies of education.

The traditional educational philosophy in the United States developed from the ideas of men such as Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, Augustine, and Aquinas, to mention a few.² Much literature explains the first principles these men set forth which influence the modern philosophy of education. However, the literature contains conflicting

¹Robert Burns and Charles J. Brauner (ed.), Philosophy of Education: Essays and Commentaries (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1962), p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 27.

viewpoints about the Russian philosophy of education and the possible influence that Plato might have had on it. Since Plato is one of the men who has had a significant influence on the educational philosophy in America, his philosophy will be compared with the philosophy of education in the U.S.S.R. Therefore, the prospective study will attempt to determine whether the philosophy of education in Russia demonstrates any signs of being influenced by Plato, one of the early philosophers.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. This study will be devoted to a comparative analysis of two philosophies of education—that of Plato to the Russian. More specifically the objective of this study is to describe, compare, and contrast Plato's philosophy of education with the Russian philosophy of education.

Questions. In order to satisfy this objective, the writer proposes to treat the following questions: (1) What common link, if any, exists between the philosophical foundations of Platonic and Soviet education in their theories of knowledge, the nature of man, and the relationship of the individual to the state? and (2) What similarities might exist between the basic organization, curriculum, and administration of these two educational systems?

Limitations. This paper will deal only with dialectical materialism, since it is the only philosophy the Soviet government

allows.³ According to Katkoff the Soviet problem of scientific and technological training has been surrounded by a high wall of emotion.⁴ The information presented in the study will be treated in the most objective manner possible, but this emotional bias is a limiting factor which is difficult to control. One of the inherent risks of writing about any aspect of Soviet life, that is frequently noted, is the possibility that before the study is completed the information may be obsolete.⁵ Therefore, this study will attempt to account for the latest organization and administration of Soviet education as possible within this limitation. The contents of this paper will also be limited to the literature available in the Kansas State University library and the literature obtained through interlibrary loans in Nebraska. One other significant limitation is the difficulty involved in comparing the complex philosophy of an entire nation with the philosophy of one man. With these limitations in mind, the study will attempt to make some comparisons.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Epistemology. This is one of the three categories into which philosophic subject matter might be divided. In this category the

³N. O. Lossky, History of Russian Philosophy (New York: International Press, 1951), p. 408.

⁴Vladimir Katkoff, Soviet Economy 1940-1965 (Baltimore, Md.: Dangary Publishing Company, 1961), p. 398.

⁵Herbert C. Rudman, The School and State in the U.S.S.R. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 195.

philosopher is concerned with a theory of knowledge. In other words, this category is based on an explanation of what is meant by "knowledge" and "truth." There are three aspects to the problem of knowledge according to Burns and Brauner. The first aspect deals with a theory of reality in which the question, "What do we know?" is to be answered. "How do we know?" is the question suggested by the second aspect.⁶ Epistemology deals with the human processes such as perception and reason. The final aspect deals with propositions about the process and product of knowledge. Burns and Brauner explain that what people claim is known can only be expressed in the form of assertions or propositions. Therefore, that which can be known is partially determined by the language used to express the knowledge.⁷

Dialectical Materialism. This is the only philosophy permitted by the government in the U.S.S.R.⁸ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels adapted this philosophy from the method of logic used by Hegel. In essence, this philosophy now asserts ". . . that matter is the basic reality, that matter evolved according to the dialectic, and that this is most obviously manifested in the economic determination of socio-political change."⁹ Since this philosophy is the official doctrine of Communism, it will be discussed in further detail in the second chapter.

⁶ Burns and Brauner, op. cit., p. 115.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Lossky, op. cit., p. 408.

⁹ Burns and Brauner, op. cit., p. 93.

Rationalism. This is a theory of philosophy that argues that the reason or intellect is the true source of knowledge. Burns and Brauner explain that according to this theory a human can know because he is a rational being. They explain that this ability to reason is an inherent part of human nature.¹⁰

Empiricism. This is another theory of philosophy, which holds that the only source of knowledge is experience. It agrees that humans reason, but argues that people must base their reasoning upon experience. For the empiricist knowledge of the world is known through shared and tested experiences.¹¹

Dualism and Monism. Dualism refers to "twoness." This is ". . . any theory which reduces reality to two kinds. . . ."¹² These two kinds are usually the physical and the spiritual. On the other hand, some philosophers claim that all things that exist can ultimately be reduced to one kind of world-stuff. Their position is called monism. Some of them believe that reality is eventually spiritual, while others argue that it is nothing but physical.¹³

Plato's Dialectics. According to Lamprecht, dialectics was Plato's word for the highest intellectual pursuits. This was a determined intellectual effort to search for the absolute truth. In other

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 93.

¹³ Ibid., p. 74.

words, it was an attempt to systematically consider all that is relevant to a complete understanding of any problem or subject.¹⁴

Collective. This is a social organization which is a distinct mark of the Soviet society. The members of a collective are expected to be aware of common tasks, to be devoted to common purposes, and to direct all strength and work toward the general good of the state.¹⁵

Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, the bourgeoisie is the social class between the aristocracy or wealthy class and the working class. In Marxism the proletariat is especially the industrial working class.¹⁶

Intelligentsia. This is the collective group of people in Russia who are regarded as the educated or enlightened class.¹⁷

III. DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

After reading about the methods of comparative education, the writer has concluded that the comparative problems approach is the study of certain similar educational problems and concepts dealt with in

¹⁴ Sterling P. Lamprecht, Our Philosophical Traditions (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. 48.

¹⁵ George S. Counts and Nucia P. Lodge, "I Want to be Like Stalin" (New York: The John Day Company, 1947), p. 84.

¹⁶ Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 172, 1165.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 760.

various cultures. Consequently, the topics in this paper have basically followed the pattern established for that type of comparison. Through the use of that method, the scope of this paper will be as comprehensive as possible.

To accomplish this study, a review of selected literature contained in the library of Kansas State University was conducted. Much literature was also obtained from numerous libraries in Nebraska by means of interlibrary loans. The sources selected for use in this study were identified primarily through the card catalogue, various prepared bibliographies, cross references, and available indexes to educational journals.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written in the literature regarding Plato's philosophy of education. The Republic, perhaps, contains the most pertinent concepts about his plans for an ideal community, the philosophers, and the right kind of education. Although not as much has been written about the Russian philosophy of education sufficient materials are available to present the extensive review of literature that will be given here.

I. BRIEF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Historical Background of Plato's Philosophy. Actually very little had been done in terms of education until Plato's time. Plato's beloved friend and the first great teacher, Socrates, who lived during the fifth century before Christ, was the first teacher adequately recorded in history. Even the accounts of his ideas are seen primarily through the eyes of his student, Plato.¹⁸ The schools of Greece were primarily centered around the elementary school where only the boys studied a curriculum consisting of literature, music, and gymnastics.¹⁹ Gradually an interest in further school work developed; consequently,

¹⁸ Luella Cole, A History of Education (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1950), p. 8.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

privata secondary schools were established. These schools were temporary because teachers wandered from place to place teaching only subjects which interested them the most. Mathematics, rhetoric, composition, and oratory are some of the subjects usually taught by these itinerants. In fact, these men had an important influence upon the nature and tone of secondary and higher education, since they taught many subjects and disseminated cultura.²⁰ At the age of eighteen a boy was required to receive two years of military training which was controlled by the stata. Therefore, it can be said that Greek education had many elements fused together to produce the educated man of Athens.²¹

Platonic philosophy grew out of this historical background. Many details with regard to Plato's life must be deleted from this paper; however, it is desirable to relate certain facts which are central to an understanding of his thought.²²

Plato was born about 427 B.C. as the son of a prominent family involved in politics which brought him close to the problems of stata government. He received a traditional education in "music" and gymnastics. Levinson explains that he supposedly distinguished himself in wrestling and verse-making which may explain the balance of gymnastics and "music" in his own educational program. Plato grew to manhood in an intense and often bitter political atmosphere due to the war with

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

²² G. C. Field, The Philosophy of Plato (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 7.

Sparta and the internal party strife. This must have produced within him a strong interest in politics.²³

When his great friend, Socrates, was executed by the leaders of a democracy in 399 B.C.; Plato suddenly realized that he could help the diseased state only by advancing and executing a new form of politics which involved moral education. He never again attempted to participate directly in Athenian politics. After the death of his teacher, he traveled extensively and write philosophical works. His association with mathematicians, scientists, and politicians had an important influence upon his philosophical thought.²⁴

In about 386 B.C. his Academy was established. He presided over this school or collage until his death some forty years later. The primary purpose of this institution was the training of potential statesmen to whom Plato hoped the people of the Greek cities would turn for leadership. The basic training they received was in scientific and philosophical studies. Since evidence shows that many of his former pupils played a leading role in numerous cities of Greece, Plato can be considered successful in attaining his goal. During his teaching career he made two unsuccessful trips to Syracuse in an attempt to convert Dionysus to the true philosophical principles of government as

²³Ronald B. Levinson, In Defense of Plato (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 42.

²⁴A. E. Taylor, Plato, the Man and His Works (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1961), pp. 1-9.

Plato saw them. In 347 B.C. he died at the age of eighty.²⁵

Historical Background of Russian Philosophy. After a brief review of education during Plato's time, and a sketchy view of his life, the historical development of Russian philosophy will be summarized.

Although it is known that many secular princes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries played a significant role in directing education, Lossky states that many of the Russian Tsars were afraid of this movement. As a rule, the Tsars left the masses in ignorance where most of them remained until about 1917. "Russian philosophy began to develop only in the nineteenth century, when the Russian state was a thousand years old."²⁶ Through the efforts of Peter the Great, the Russian society was introduced to the Western-European culture on a wide scale. This western influence immediately effected the attitude toward the Church. Even though free-thinking became widespread among the nobility, there was also a search for greater understanding of the true meaning of Christianity.²⁷

As Brickman explains, many people in Russia defended the new socialism at the beginning with endless scriptural arguments despite the fact that it had been developed by professed atheists. Even before Marx and Engels were born, many Christian churchmen advocated the

²⁵Field, op. cit., pp. 8-10.

²⁶Lossky, op. cit., p. 9.

²⁷Ibid., p. 10.

Communist dictum; a person who will not work, will not eat. Much earlier, during the Middle Ages, the medieval Christian monasteries were highly successful economic collectives.²⁸

In his book on Soviet education Shore describes the subsequent development in Russia following the Revolution in 1917. He explains that Russia had not expended economically during this time as had the western nations. Consequently, the middle class had little economic strength to assume responsibility for government or to oppose Communism when the monarchs were turned out of the Soviet Union. The Communists easily took power and at once controlled the economy as they desired. Already in the nineteenth century, Marx and Engels had projected certain Communist educational principles in order to reconstruct society. Following the Revolution these principles became major characteristics of educational trends. In general, these educational aspirations were:

1. Universal education.
2. Education begins as soon as the child can leave the mother.
3. Education administered in national institutions at national expense.
4. Combination of education with industrial labor.²⁹

Another point to remember is that the Communist government unseated Orthodoxy in Russia. This disintegration secularized Russian education because of the thoroughly materialistic philosophy of the

²⁸William W. Brickman (ed.), Teaching About Soviet Education (New York: New York University, 1958), p. 5.

²⁹Maurice J. Shore, Soviet Education, Its Psychology and Philosophy (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1947), p. 56.

Communist government which directed it. A citizen of the Soviet Union must choose the naturalistic view of the universe if he aspires to any position in the government, because believers cannot be Communists and Communists occupy the governmental positions.³⁰

II. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS

Any philosophy of education should be founded on a set of basic criteria. In this paper the following criteria will be used for this section: the theory of the meaning of truth and knowledge, the theory of the nature of man, and the theory of the relationship of the individual to the state. In order to use these criteria as a basis for critical comparison, it is first of all necessary to understand each theory as it is explained by Plato or the Russians. Following an explanation of these theories will be a section devoted to a discussion of the objectives resulting from each philosophy of education. Finally, it should be possible to analyze these philosophies from the standpoints of theory and objective.

Plato's Theory of Knowledge. Plato's dialogues are devoted almost exclusively to his theory of ideas. Here is where it is possible to ascertain his ideas about Epistemology or the study of what is truth or knowledge. Burns and Brauner state that Plato's theory of truth or knowledge relies on the distinction between appearance and

³⁰Brickman, op. cit., p. 8.

reality. Plato claimed that the world known through the senses is not the real world but only a smudged, carbon copy. The world that is experienced is a changing world rather than being stable. The real world, reasoned Plato is the world of ideas which remain stable or unchanging. He believed the real world to be one known by reason rather than by experience.³¹

He believed that these truths exist in a world over and beyond the present existence. The soul has beheld all things in this world and the next. Therefore, it has acquired a knowledge of everything; however, this knowledge is all forgotten at birth. Plato claimed that there is an underlying principle in the world. Man should try to discover the nature of this purpose, or ultimate and permanent truth. This ultimate truth was considered the only sure guide to action.³² For Plato, truth was everywhere the same. This seems logical when it is recalled that Plato believed that the soul resides in the world of ideas before and after death. To him the world of ideas was the world of perfection.³³

The next step leading to an understanding of Plato's theory of truth and knowledge is an explanation of "how" he believed that truth could be known. According to Bluck, Plato believed that men can arrive

³¹Burns and Brauner, op. cit., pp. 75-79.

³²R. S. Bluck, Plato's Life and Thought (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949), p. 31.

³³Burns and Brauner, op. cit., pp. 138-40.

at truth only through intuitive reasoning. Since Plato explained that all knowledge is forgotten at birth, learning, to him, became a process of recollection which happened only through an effort. In the Meno, Plato concluded that virtue is a sort of wisdom or knowledge; but it is not teachable, because it is different from technical knowledge since it can come only from personal recollection or intuitive reasoning.³⁴

In one of his earlier dialogues Plato reasoned that virtue and knowledge were the same. Therefore, he concluded that a knowledgeable man would be a good man and, conversely, that a good man would be a knowledgeable man. Thus, Plato believed that a man obtaining true knowledge was moral whether this knowledge agreed with the social consensus of good or not. In other words, Plato joined epistemology and ethics; he believed they were one and the same. Since Plato wanted to promote the good life, he sought to do this through education, which to him became the means to the end of a good life.³⁵

Dialectic was the final stage in the pursuit of truth. At his Academy students attempted intellectual argumentation ". . . to obtain some comprehension of the principle underlying the scheme of things. . . ." ³⁶ At this final stage man was supposed to be able to discover the truth for himself through the question-answer form of dialectics. The following partial dialogue from the Republic summarizes his opinion about the final ascent of the soul to the good or truth:

³⁴ Bluck, loc. cit.

³⁵ Burns and Brauner, op. cit., p. 138.

³⁶ Bluck, loc. cit.

. . . my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.³⁷

Russian Theory of Knowledge. In the U.S.S.R. the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels is the philosophy the state compulsorily upholds.³⁸ They adapted the method of logic introduced by Hegel. What exactly is meant by the term "materialism"? Lenin claimed that for the materialist matter, nature, or physical being is primary; the spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical is secondary. These men affirmed that ". . . matter is all that exists, being from its very nature is a material category."³⁹

The Dialectic process consists of three principles: the law of the transition of quantity into quality, and vice versa; the law of the unity of opposites; and the law of the negation of the negation.⁴⁰ For purposes of clarification each principle will be discussed separately.

The first principle can simply be explained as a change in quantity which causes a change in quality. An example of this principle is the three states of water. As one form ceases to exist the other comes

³⁷ Plato, The Republic (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 277.

³⁸ Lossky, op. cit., p. 347. ³⁹ Ibid., p. 349.

⁴⁰ Burns and Brauner, op. cit., p. 91.

into existence simultaneously.⁴¹

The second law of the unity of opposites is based on the assumption that reality although essentially contradictory is also reconcilable. In fact, the world as a whole is a unity of such opposites. An illustration of the unity of opposites is the following: for every action there is a counteraction; in other words, for every origination there is a destruction.⁴²

The third law is the negation of the negation. Every kind of change—i.e., motion—occurs when it ceases to be what it was and becomes something else. To the dialectical materialist negation is "lifting." This "lifting" occurs when something ends but is preserved at a new level. An illustration of this is how food is digested by an organism and converted into energy. Therefore, the transformation of energy results in the preservation of energy.⁴³

Marx maintained that consciousness (all mental processes) does not determine existence. Instead, existence determines consciousness. He claimed that economic relations are the real basis of social life. Religion, art, philosophy, etc. are merely superimposed over this basis and depend on it. In other words, the reason or will of individuals is merely a product or reflection of the conditions of life; therefore, knowledge is determined by reality.⁴⁴ Dialectics, as a theory of knowledge, assumes that the development of science leads eventually to

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 350.

⁴² Losky, op. cit., p. 351.

⁴⁴ Shore, op. cit., p. 14.

absolute truth. This is the theory of knowledge worked out by Lenin:

Human reason in its nature is capable of yielding and does yield the absolute truth which is composed of the sum total of relative truths. Each step in the development of science adds new fragments of truth, and from this the absolute truth is constituted, but the limits of truth of each scientific statement are relative, now expanding, now shrinking with the growth of science.⁴⁵

Recognizing that absolute truth arrives through discoveries about reality or nature, man must have some means of arriving at this truth. Lenin claimed that we arrive at true knowledge through our sensations, which are exact copies of reality. Man attains knowledge through two means: (1) personal experience—all of the information acquired through his senses, (2) reason—the means of connecting and interrelating the established facts. Thought comes only from the external world. Even though it may be subjective, it must copy external reality.⁴⁶

There is a strange paradox about this philosophy which claims that subjective mental states are a reflection of reality. To demonstrate this paradox, it is necessary to consider an example given by Lenin. He said that the sensation of red reflects about 450 trillion ether vibrations per second. The sensation which a person receives depends on the number of ether vibrations which strike the eye. However, these vibrations are only images on the mind. There is no way of proving that this image can determine the exact properties of the external reality.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Lossky, *op. cit.*, p. 365.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

Plato's Concept of the Nature of Man. In order to fully understand how Plato regarded man, it is helpful to point out some of his fundamental ideas about religion. To him the soul was the divine force which worked throughout the universe; God was conceived of as the soul of the universe. Plato emphasized that man is a useful instrument in furthering an active and divine purpose which is being worked out throughout the whole universe.⁴⁸

In the Laws, Plato explained that man is a small, insignificant part of the universe. Man must do his share to work out the purpose of the whole.⁴⁹ However, he said that all of life relies on the right manipulation of three needs, which are for food, drink, and sex. Humanity must direct these "diseases" toward good in the highest form. The ". . . forces of fear, law, and expounded truth . . ." check their growth toward pleasure and direct them toward truth.⁵⁰

Because of this religious doctrine, Plato regarded man as much more than a highly trained animal. Through the existence of the soul his mind had a spiritual quality. For Plato, the ideal man was one who would be brave enough to suffer a cruel death for his right principles (at least as he believed them to be); a man who would not harm his enemy; a man who would suffer rather than do wrong.⁵¹ In other words, a

⁴⁸Field, op. cit., pp. 145-54.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 160.

⁵⁰John Gould, The Development of Plato's Ethics (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955), p. 122.

⁵¹Paul Shorey, Platonism Ancient and Modern (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1938), p. 79.

man who would strive for the highest ideal would strive to become as nearly perfect as possible.

In order to accomplish this ideal, the intellect was considered all important. Plato claimed that earthly needs and lusts are the cause of all misery; and that only in death can the soul detach itself from the body and achieve its original purity and knowledge of the truth.⁵² To him, the body was a mere vehicle of the soul and was an obstacle to the free development of the soul. Bluck explains that Plato felt that ". . . the one thing essential to the right-ordering of the soul is knowledge,"⁵³ Plato firmly believed that reason was essential to the soul. His low estimation of earthly life was basically not typical of Greek belief. For example, when he introduced gymnastics into the Academy, he did so with the intention of increasing the body's power of resistance against the passions of the senses.

As Plato described the selection of the "guardians" for the community, he emphasized that selection was to be based on merit alone. Nevertheless, he believed that certain innate qualities are inherited so that many of the future rulers would come from the ruling families.⁵⁴ Field further explains this idea in the following passage:

The point here is that the intelligence, or the capacity for knowing and understanding, is something given to us, in fixed quantity, by nature, and cannot itself be increased or strengthened by training, as we can strengthen a muscle by exercise. All we can do by training is to turn the powers

⁵²Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-66.

⁵³Bluck, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁵⁴Field, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

in the right direction, just as we cannot normally strengthen our eyesight by more use of it, but can be trained to look for this or that object, or in this or that direction. The corollary of that is, of course, that if we have not got the natural ability to grasp the highest or most difficult truths, we cannot be taught to do so, and had better learn to turn the abilities that we have in a direction appropriate to them.⁵⁵

All of this material helps to summarize Plato's concept of the nature of man as a part of the universe.

Russian Concept of the Nature of Man. Since dialectical materialism is the compulsory philosophy in the U.S.S.R., there seem to be several principle differences about the Russian beliefs when compared to the ideas of Plato. The following will be a discussion of the Russian conceptions.

The materialistic philosophy is directly connected with atheism. Loseky declares that this philosophical theory has the potential to destroy Christian ideas and feelings. In their conduct, the materialists are convinced that anything can be permitted in order to achieve their aim. Atheism is just the theory that permits them to do as they wish.⁵⁶ Therefore, the materialists do not recognize a God, only the workings of inevitable forces. As a result, human life presumably has little or no sacred worth.

They feel, however, that at birth a child is born with undeveloped talents of differing degrees, but these talents are not inherited.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 178.

⁵⁶ Loseky, op. cit., pp. 574-75.

They must be developed through education.⁵⁷ In Marxist discourse, education of the "whole man" is visualized as the ideal. It is to be accomplished through intellectual, physical, and polytechnical education.

Dewitt fully explains the Marxian theory of education of the individual in the following way:

. . . Marxist educational philosophy founded upon a utopian conception of human nature and the future communist society. Marx envisaged that the individual under communism would enjoy the opportunity to achieve the all-sided development of his capabilities—a condition which, Marx claimed, was unattainable under capitalism because of the division of labor. In the communist society, distinctions between different forms of labor would vanish, the unification of mental and physical labor would be realized, and education would give every individual uniform, integrated training in both the theory and the practice of all branches of production. It is this concept of integrated training which is the basis of polytechnism.⁵⁸

Marx stated that the production of the material needs of life is the basic element of all social existence. He believed that the primary concern of man is to make a living and satisfy his material needs.

However, Marx concluded that what man is coincides with what he does. Of course, the method of production is determined by the actual means available. "The nature of individuals thus depends on the

⁵⁷C. Scott Fletcher, "Continuing Education for National Survival," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCXXV (September, 1959), 104-15; and Vladimir Katkoff, Soviet Economy 1940-1965 (Baltimore: Dangary Publishing Company, 1961), p. 400.

⁵⁸Nicholas DeWitt, Education and Professional Employment in the U.S.S.R. (Washington: National Science Foundation, 1961), p. 79.

material conditions determining their production."⁵⁹ Physical labor to increase productivity has been a major impetus in building the communist community. Nikita S. Khrushchev has actually stated that ". . . the uninterrupted increase of the productivity of labor is, in the last analysis, the main condition for the successful building of Communism."⁶⁰ Since the rounded development of the individual is considered a paramount task of the communist society, it is beneficial to understand, as Korolev explains, that man must be molded to perform physical and mental work, must develop both physically and spiritually (active participation in public affairs, in sports, art, and scientific research, etc.) and be active in community affairs.⁶¹

Individual to the State (Plato). In Plato's theory of the state he explained that the function of the community is to satisfy individual needs.⁶² He believed that the only way to improve the state was to execute a moral regeneration. He was concerned primarily with the ethical aspect of an ideal state instead of the political.

The ideal state, as Plato saw it, should be founded not on a

⁵⁹Fletcher, loc. cit.

⁶⁰Nikita S. Khrushchev, "Educating Active and Conscious Builders of a Communist Society," School and Society, LXXXVII (February 14, 1959), 65-67.

⁶¹Fred Ablin (ed.), Education in the U.S.S.R.: A Collection of Readings from Soviet Journals (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1963), p. 12.

⁶²Field, op. cit., p. 70.

lust for power; but rather for the purpose of educating its citizens so that they could be led to the good. In the Republic, Glaucon argues that he does not believe any such state could possibly exist; he receives this significant reply:

In heaven there is laid up a pattern of it, me thinks, which he who desires may behold, and beholding, may set his own house in order. But whether such an one exists, or ever will exist in fact, is no matter; for he (the wise man) will live after the manner of the city, having nothing to do with an other.⁶³

But, just what is the nature of man's relationship to this state: the citizen body in Plato's state was actually divided into three parts—the educated rulers or the intellectual part, the warrior class or the courageous part, and the peasants and merchants or the sensual part. Plato said that all men must work together for the good of the whole state in the following quotation from the Republic:

You have again forgotten, my friend, I said, the intention of the legislator, who did not aim at making any one class in the State happy above the rest; the happiness was to be in the whole State, and he held the citizens together by persuasion and necessity, making them benefactors of the State, and therefore benefactors of one another.⁶⁴

Plato felt that the fundamental requirement of a good state was that each citizen should perform the task for which he was best fitted. All of this was to be done with an eye for the welfare of the whole. The state would deteriorate if one part seeks its own interests at the expense of the rest.⁶⁵

⁶³Plato, op. cit., p. 386.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 280.

⁶⁵Field, op. cit., p. 77.

Plato's state was essentially aristocratic--intellectually aristocratic. The "guardians" were to be selected from the army purely on the basis of merit. Some of the natural qualities which Plato demanded were: courage, self-control, firmness of purpose, quickness of learning, and retentiveness. All of these qualities were to be developed through the right education. Those selected were to live in barracks and could not own any private property nor enjoy any private family life.

These leaders or philosophers had to be willing to return to the world from which they came after they had acquired a more perfect form of education. They were to serve the inhabitants of it in an effort to raise them out of the hole into which they had fallen. Although the descent may not be altogether desirable for a person completely involved in these noble aspirations, a human endowed with such knowledge and ability was expected to realize that serving the community is of utmost importance. "And thus our State will be a reality, and not a dream only, and will be administered in a spirit unlike that of other States," where men fight among themselves and struggle for power, which is good to them.⁶⁶

Plato demanded that the armed forces in the community be left to those who were not only good fighters but also men who possessed high moral and intellectual qualities. These men were also to receive an excellent education since from their ranks the rulers were to be

⁶⁶ Plato, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

selected.⁶⁷

The idea that humans should do what they were best suited for applied not only to the rulers but also to the farmers, craftsmen, traders, etc. Although Plato mentioned little about the producers, he instructed the rulers to think of them as fellow citizens who provide the material necessities. During his time, Plato was thinking of the small farmers, independent craftsmen, and traders rather than a modern industrial society.⁶⁸

In summary, Plato took human beings as they are and concluded that they are born with different capacities, temperaments, and degrees of intelligence. Then he attempted to find the best possible community organization which was the ". . . ideal organization of actual people."⁶⁹ He strove to develop human resources to the utmost by a perfect education and organization.

Individual to the State (Russian). The collective is the distinct mark of the Soviet society. All of the members of a collective must be aware of common tasks; they must be devoted to common purposes; mutual interests must be shared; all strength and work must be directed toward the general good. The organization of the collective is quite unusual since guiding and executive organs are present to insure good management and subordination, and to distribute obligations and

⁶⁷ Field, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-82.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

responsibilities. In other words, the Russians have a totalitarian society in which the primary goal is dominance of the state over the individual.⁷⁰

Men in Russia are members of a Soviet society; consequently, they have a definite responsibility for the welfare of the state. Because of this fact, they must develop their talents and increase their efficiency in order to be able to respond to the demands made on them by the state. The Soviets feel that every man is destined to perform a specific task in society. Every citizen is expected to contribute his best efforts to the society so that the state will be able to advance. In order to fully develop their capabilities they are to become specialized. The future of the state is a matter of supreme importance.⁷¹

All Soviet citizens are expected to carry out orders to the best of their ability. They are expected to do only that which is necessary and useful no matter how unpleasant or difficult. A Soviet person is to refrain from doing anything harmful to society regardless of the pleasure it may give him. High regard for other citizens is expected, even though it may mean a sacrifice to themselves and their families.⁷² The Soviets educate the citizens to be disciplined in this manner, as the following paragraph by DeWitt indicates:

⁷⁰Counts and Lodge, loc. cit.

⁷¹Ibid.; and DeWitt, op. cit., pp. 225-26.

⁷²Deana Levin, Soviet Education Today (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963), pp. 78-79.

The educational system is designed to serve, not the individual, but the collectivist state which, by identifying itself with the common good, subordinates the individual—his rights, privileges, choices, and his entire physical and mental training—to its own needs. It is only within the confines of choice determined by the state that the individual may develop his personal abilities.⁷³

Marxian materialism, described previously, is concerned with action. This theory tells the Marxist how to change the world. According to this theory, for each means of production there is an entire social organization that follows. Any social changes are supposed to depend upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. In short, the way people make a living must first be changed in order to change human nature.⁷⁴

The communist view for future evolution is the entirely classless state. Marx, in his opening statements in the Manifesto, declares that the history of all existing society has been the class struggle between the two great classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. To close this gap he goes on to say that "the economic determinant will create also, as it has done in Russia, the proletariat state . . . which is in a sense classless."⁷⁵

III. OBJECTIVES OF EACH PHILOSOPHY

Purposes of Education. "Montesquieu in his Spirits of Law

⁷³ DeWitt, op. cit., p. 5.

⁷⁴ Burns and Brauner, op. cit., p. 93; and Shore, op. cit., p. 15.

⁷⁵ Shore, op. cit., p. 21.

observed that 'the laws of education ought to be in relation to the principles of government.'⁷⁶ The purposes for both educational systems seem to be directly related to the form of government influencing them. In the Republic Plato spends a great deal of time emphasizing the close tie between education and the rulers who are the leaders of the state. In Russia, education is considered the means of undertaking socio-economic advances. DeWitt has summarized the relationship between education and government in the following sentence:

As stated at the outset, the purposes of education in any country are shaped by the nature of the particular society, by its cultural heritage and its political, economic and social institutions, and—to a greater or lesser extent—by the "world outlook" upon which the society is based.⁷⁷

Plato's purpose for education was relatively simple to discern after examining his philosophical thoughts and ideas. Since his philosophy was built around a search for the truth which for him meant the ultimate knowledge man can achieve, it is not surprising to learn that his primary purpose of education was intellectual activity for disciplining the mind and making it effective in reasoning. He regarded true knowledge of right and wrong as the aim of education.⁷⁸

In the Laws Plato explained that the primary function of education is to shape the inner life of the people so that they will be well-suited to the organization of society. In other words, Plato's system

⁷⁶ Educational Forum, XXIII (March, 1959), 261-69.

⁷⁷ DeWitt, op. cit., p. 5.

⁷⁸ Field, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

of education as explained in the Republic, was also to be practical and vocational. It was to prepare people so they might work efficiently in the community. The students training for the higher functions must begin to value knowledge for its own sake if the desired result was to be obtained.⁷⁹

He felt that education should not be compulsory since "knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind."⁸⁰ He envisioned education for the general mass of citizens as the method by which law and education were to direct their lives toward virtue (ἀρετή).⁸¹ Plato placed great emphasis upon the fact that a person is able to advance in his ability to understand. His famous allegory of the prisoners in the Republic developed this idea. To him a person is capable of being instead of merely becoming; he is able to achieve pure intellect above and beyond mere opinion. Man is able to come out from the shadows to understanding, from illusion to truth through education.⁸²

In Book VII, Plato declared that the soul with the capacity for learning should be turned in the right direction. Undoubtedly this means that he believed that students must be guided to see things themselves. But Fields also points out that Plato was emphasizing that a person can only turn his powers of intelligence in the right direction.

⁷⁹Gould, op. cit., p. 111; and Field, op. cit., p. 176.

⁸⁰Plato, op. cit., p. 306.

⁸¹Gould, op. cit., p. 110.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 168-69.

These powers cannot be increased. Only those people with natural ability can grasp the highest knowledge or truths.⁸³

According to Marxian theory the state, which is an instrument of a given class, attempts to provide the type of education necessary to keep that class in control. Marx further stressed that future education should be one which combined productive labor, instruction, and physical development in order to increase social production and also to produce well-rounded members of the communist society.⁸⁴

In 1920 Lenin addressed a group of Soviet youth and warned that knowledge about communism obtained from brochures and other writings is worthless without labor and struggle. This bolstered the idea already advocated by Marx that pupils should perform socially useful labor. This labor was to provide meaning to the school work since words and books alone could not develop a generation of communists.⁸⁵

Therefore, it is possible to summarize the main goal of Soviet education in this way: to produce physically strong people imbued with the spirit of communist morality and prepared to participate actively in achieving communism.⁸⁶ The entire system is designed to train the right number of workers in the various skills needed by the economy and to

⁸³Field, op. cit., p. 178.

⁸⁴Shore, op. cit., pp. 22, 52; and Ablin, op. cit., p. 11.

⁸⁵George S. Counts, Khrushchev and the Central Committee Speak on Education (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1959), p. 7.

⁸⁶A First Hand Report on Soviet Schools, National Education Association (Washington, D. C., 1960), 58.

build an unwavering loyalty to the state.⁸⁷ As a result the Soviets have had to be sure the proper number of qualified students are guided into various areas of specialization. Consequently, students abilities and preferences can be exercised only when they conform to the preferences of the society.⁸⁸

Education in the Soviet Union then is essentially social in purpose. "The cultivation of the spirit of Soviet patriotism in the younger generation is the most important task of moral education on our country."⁸⁹ Just exactly what does it mean to educate a person in the Soviet Union? From "I Want To Be Like Stalin," which historians value as a primary source for understanding Russia, is found a specific answer to the question.

To educate a member of our Soviet society means to educate a person who understands the interests of this society and who has no personal interests opposed to the collective interests. With us there are no contradictions between individuality and society. But while we are desirous of cultivating in pupils the spirit of collectivism, we pay due attention to the personal tendencies, needs, and interests of each child. The education of the individual pupil proceeds through the collective, and the collective grows and becomes stronger through the education of each of its members.⁹⁰

A few years ago Nikita S. Khrushchev declared that the Soviet schools must educate many people who will know the sciences well and who will be capable of systematic work. The young people must become useful to society in order to increase production and thus the values which

⁸⁷ Katkoff, op. cit., p. 398.

⁸⁸ DeWitt, op. cit., p. 8.

⁸⁹ Counts and Lodge, op. cit., p. 36.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

are indispensable for society, he claimed.⁹¹ This partially explains the reason for the current change or reorganization of the Russian educational system. The whole nation is continuously involved in improving itself by education; however, now study must always be combined with labor. For this reason students have been required to engage in a greater amount of "socially useful labor."⁹² The Soviets have attempted to increase each person's efficiency so that he will be able to respond to the demands made upon him.

As Hechinger states in The Big Red Schoolhouse, there has never been a change in the purpose of the Soviet school. The structure and content of the schools change as the demands of the political leaders change. A New Soviet Man is often being created, and this has always been their purpose.⁹³

Organization of Plato's Education. After having dealt as completely as possible with the essential points predominant in both educational philosophies, the basic educational systems which grew out of these theories and purposes will be discussed. Two aspects of education are evident in Plato's plan—one for the general mass of people and one ". . . for the selected band of students from whom the rulers

⁹¹ Khrushchev, op. cit., pp. 65-67.

⁹² Atlantic Monthly, CCIV (October, 1959), 74-76.

⁹³ Fred M. Hechinger, The Big Red Schoolhouse (New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 194.

of the state are to emerge by natural and competitive selection."⁹⁴ He apparently made this distinction because he believed that a man was not fit to rule unless he had many years of scientific study and years of practical experience in seeking the Ideas of Good beyond that needed by the producing class.

The first aspect to be reviewed is Plato's system of education for the general mass of people. There is not a great deal of information about this system in the Republic. Nevertheless, it is apparent that this education was adapted to the anticipated needs and abilities of the people who performed the functional duties. The people who were called upon to make shoes or pots, or statues received a visual-training. Frequently the young learned an occupation by observing and learning-by-doing under an apprentice-like relationship. The students selected for military positions received a musico-gymnastic education which was supposed to train them to defend the state and insure peace. Plato seemed to be assured that each individual worker would be assigned to the trade or craft best suited to him.⁹⁵ At about the age of six, students entered the elementary school where they were required to take such things as music, literature, and gymnastics. However, since Plato believed there should be no compulsory education, he advocated amusing education for the young.⁹⁶ For this reason early education was devoted primarily to the necessary music and gymnastics.

⁹⁴Shorey, op. cit., p. 254.

⁹⁵Levinson, op. cit., p. 254.

⁹⁶Plato, op. cit., p. 306.

Since Book VII of the Republic sums up the profound educational ideas of Plato, it has been studied carefully to determine his system of education for the students selected to become rulers of the state. As previously mentioned, Plato believed that a primary function of the rulers was to establish and preserve the right system of education. Therefore, he devoted much time to the original selection, education and organization of these first guardians.⁹⁷

Whereas in Sparta much of the land, houses, and even the lowly persons were exploited by the rulers; Plato's guardians were to own nothing individually.⁹⁸ As a result, he proposed that the ruling class surrender not only its private property but also its family life. "For unless the private property and personal life of the individual is properly regulated, one may look in vain for any strength in the foundations of public law."⁹⁹ Until these children were about twenty, they were brought up communally in state establishments so that they would not be affected by the habits of their parents. There they were to be trained in the habits and laws deemed good by the rulers. During these years they received a conventional Greek education. Then they would undergo military and physical training for two or three years.¹⁰⁰

Between the ages of twenty and thirty, those still selected as

⁹⁷Field, op. cit., p. 306.

⁹⁸Levinson, op. cit., p. 512.

⁹⁹Gould, op. cit., p. 112.

¹⁰⁰Plato, op. cit., pp. 307-12; and Bluck, op. cit., p. 108; and Field, op. cit., p. 76.

possible candidates for rulers received an advanced form of education; which consisted of the study of mathematics, astronomy, and harmony. Mathematics acted as an intermediary between the sensual and purely mental world. The students were taught to see the natural relationships between the various sciences. Plato considered the study in mathematics to be valuable in preparation for dialectical thinking. Finally, at the age of thirty, students were chosen out of the select class to an even higher honor. These men were then introduced to dialectics. The entire period of intellectual search for the absolute truth would last five years. Practice took place for fifteen years involving actual practical application of their learning in the army or administration. They were not entrusted with problems of government until they were fifty when they were given supreme authority. At this age they were also free to pursue their own philosophical interests. Plato stated that what was proposed applied to women also. As a result, even the girls underwent equal participation in gymnastics and schooling.¹⁰¹

Organization of Russian Education. The system which exists in Russia is a product of socio-economic adjustments and experimentation. In 1964-65 the Soviet school system, including kindergartens through

¹⁰¹Plato, op. cit., pp. 307-12; and Bluck, op. cit., pp. 108-9; and Levinson, op. cit., p. 544.

post-graduate level, trained and drilled over 53½ million persons.¹⁰² Apparently, the Soviets have seriously attempted to train and educate many of the people. In Russia children of workers go to school so that they can rise to the top ranks in their class. This is because of an attempt to make all labor equally important.¹⁰³ Although every student does not receive a college education, the Soviets train everybody as much as possible for efficient production in terms of his ability and the needs of society. Since 1958 they have shifted to a greater emphasis on vocational training.¹⁰⁴

The concept of this educational combination is fundamental to Marxian theory. In 1866 Marx described the following daily program of work in the factories: ages nine to twelve, two hours; thirteen to fifteen, four hours; sixteen to eighteen, six hours. The school itself was to include intellectual, physical, and technical education.¹⁰⁵ The present school organization in the Soviet Union closely reflects Marxian educational theory.

Education currently begins when the child is seven years old. However, nurseries and kindergartens have become an integral part of the

¹⁰² Nicolai Alexandrov, "U.S.S.R.: Educational Developments in 1964-1965," International Yearbook of Education, Publication No. 286 (Geneva: International Bureau of Education, 1965), pp. 367-68.

¹⁰³ George S. Counts, The Challenge of Soviet Education (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 63.

¹⁰⁴ ibid., pp. 66-71.

¹⁰⁵ Shore, op. cit., p. 53; and Counts, The Truth About Soviet Education, op. cit., p. 13.

system since millions of mothers work. These institutions have been instigated primarily to render child-care.

Therefore, the first consideration of education in the Soviet Union should begin with the primary-secondary levels. Under present regulations the child is required to remain in the eight-year school through grade eight. After this required schooling they are allowed to enroll in a "tekhnikum" for the next three years. The student would then graduate at eighteen or nineteen. For some with special ability the university would offer higher education.

Although military academies are seldom mentioned in the available literature, references do indicate that certain boys are selected to attend these institutions after completion of elementary school. More about these academies will be included in a discussion of their curriculums.

In addition to the general education program the Soviet Union has two primary youth organizations which are closely linked with the schools. These are the Pioneers for children between the ages of nine and fourteen and the Komsomol for pupils over fourteen years of age. In addition to providing "collective" training which is to be closely associated with school activities, these clubs also provide various leisure-time activities.¹⁰⁶

At this point it might be pointed out that the Soviet Union

¹⁰⁶ Levin, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-60.

divides education into three distinctly separate educational levels:¹⁰⁷

1. The first or lower level.
This includes all trade schools where youngsters and adults are trained in skills. These schools seek to provide qualified workers for industry, transportation, and agriculture.
2. The second or middle level.
The prerequisites and requirements are more advanced since these schools are considered semiprofessional. They provide helpers for specialists graduated from higher educational institutions.
3. The third or higher level.
Universities and institutes of higher learning are included. This is where highly specialized personnel are educated and trained.

The third level should be examined more carefully since it appears to have some correspondence to Plato's education for the select students. Students accepted to these institutions feel a sense of real accomplishment since selection is based on the premise that their abilities and talents are needed for the country. The intellectual elite graduated from Russian institutions are not outside or above the society. They are considered a vital part of the whole society. These programs range from four to six years. After graduation students are assigned jobs for three years. Following this period they are free to seek other occupations. Only the best students are selected for research work or graduate work. Women in this system are also educated according to the nature of their abilities.

The educational system for training the specialists in Russia

¹⁰⁷ Katkoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-8.

developed as a result of the cultural revolution. This higher school has become a very important factor in the realization of the great tasks which face the state.

The most talented children are given special advantages to develop their brainpower in order to help achieve the Soviet's ambition—the mobilization of power.¹⁰⁸ At advanced levels the students attend a higher institute of learning for two or two and one-half years. After this time they are sent to do practical production work before they can return to complete their final period of study.

Plato's Curriculum. Any system of education relies primarily upon a basic curriculum to finally accomplish its educational aims or purposes. In Book VII of the Republic there is very little mention of the education of any classes except the guardians. However, it is obvious that those showing aptitudes for crafts would receive early technical instruction along with the basic education which was probably common to all classes.

Gymnastics and music were counterparts in training the soldiers and the guardians; however, Plato said that these areas were not the sort of knowledge which would draw a person from merely becoming to being. He carefully established a system of training for the soldiers and rulers. In general, they followed a conventional Greek system of education. Their physical training was strenuous but not too

¹⁰⁸Marguerite Higgins, "Russia's New Look," National Parent Teachers Magazine, LIV (October, 1959), 8-10.

specialized. In addition, they studied current literature portraying the gods and heroes only in an admirable fashion. He proposed to censor all literature which represented these models as behaving undesirably.¹⁰⁹

Plato explained to Glaucon that music is important if man is to be rightly trained. Man will then have a sharp eye for the beautiful and will delight in it. This will lead to a love of the beautiful. Then Plato turned to the physical counterpart of education, gymnastics. Both were considered good for the soul. "A good body will not make a soul good, but a good soul will make its body as good as it may be."¹¹⁰

Boys and girls living in barracks under the eyes of their teachers studied the gods, learned to ride, and played the lyre. They were held to their studies through organized games. In order to make learning enjoyable mathematics was first introduced in the form of games and puzzles. Learning was introduced in this manner because Plato disliked compulsion in learning.¹¹¹

Most of the other writings about the curriculum in these schools concerned subjects established for the purpose of educating the guardians or leaders. While he discussed the validity of different subjects, Plato said that this new kind of knowledge must have something of

¹⁰⁹Field, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-77, 74.

¹¹⁰I. A. Richards, *The Republic of Plato* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1942), pp. 64-66.

¹¹¹Levinson, *op. cit.*, p. 543; and Field, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

"universal application." He said that it must be something ". . . which all arts and sciences and intelligences use in common."¹¹²

After this early training mathematics was required as a foundation for other advanced studies. Number or calculation—the ability to know about one, two, and three—seems to be the distinguishing value in each area which aids the person to achieve the best in existence. As a result, since arithmetic was concerned with number, it was to lead the mind toward truth. Even though mathematics was to help the mind attain pure truth, an arithmetical training would also be advantageous in enabling a man of slower wit to have quicker comprehension or rational understanding. Geometry was the second branch which the youth should study. It was aimed at obtaining knowledge of the eternal and would develop within any student a quicker comprehension than one who did not study it. The third area, solid geometry, which was concerned with cubes and three dimensions, was to be studied next. Apparently no one was capable of teaching it at that time so Plato advocated that the state should direct the studies. Astronomy was placed fourth in rank since it compelled the soul to look upwards, to focus its attention on even higher goals.¹¹³ Emphasis here was placed on problems to astronomy in order to approach the subject in the way that was considered right. Plato believed that a scientific syllabus had three main advantages:¹¹⁴

¹¹²Plato, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 283-96.

¹¹⁴Bluck, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

1. It encouraged the study of factual truth.
2. Scientific subjects were indications of the ultimate truth that governs the universe.
3. The knowledge obtained would form the starting point for Dialectic.

The final stage in the pursuit of truth was to be carried out by the intellect alone. This process Plato called Dialectic. Through intellectual argumentation man was supposed to obtain some comprehension of the principles underlying the scheme of things. All of this could be finally realized through the study and pursuit of the arts previously described, but the power of the dialectic alone could reveal ultimate Good. Plato believed that at this point everything on earth would come to have meaning and would be seen in its proper perspective.¹¹⁵

In making an overall review of Plato's curriculum, it should be remembered that searching in any of the pursuits had to be conducted with the basic desire for the good and the beautiful. If any aspect was pursued for any other reason, the search would become selfish and futile.¹¹⁶

Russian Curriculum. Into their curriculum the Soviets incorporate five components of general education.

1. Physical education, aimed at developing health and physical strength through curricular instruction and/or extra-curricular participation in sports.
2. Aesthetic education, aimed at developing appreciation of "artistic realism" among all students and/or mastery of

¹¹⁵Plato, op. cit., pp. 299-302.

¹¹⁶Gluck, op. cit., p. 31.

a "performing arts skill" by those who are particularly gifted.

3. Mental education, aimed at the mastery of all subjects of instruction; the development of a conscious scientific and materialistic outlook; mastery of the dialectical method; and orderly and systematic study and thought habits.

4. Polytechnical education, aimed at developing a specific manual skill; detailed familiarity with methods and techniques of production of a given type; and a general knowledge of production techniques and the organization of socialist industry.

5. Moral education, aimed at creating a "conscious communist morality," the elements of which are: conscious discipline; Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism; dedication to the goals of the community, the state, and the Communist Party; dedication to socialist labor; and acceptance of approved common rules of conduct and etiquette.¹¹⁷

Counts further explains that technology is the application of scientific findings and methods to the ways of life. Since this challenge has directly affected the curriculum of the Russian schools, it is necessary to examine this process which is a way of working, a way of attacking problems. The following five points explain technology making it possible to better understand its influence upon Soviet education: (1) emphasis on precision, (2) experimental in nature, (3) practical, concerned with application of knowledge to the ways of life rather than with the cultivation of knowledge for its own sake, (4) rational coordination of materials and energies in the light of its purpose, (5) it is dynamic, ever striving to push forward the boundaries of understanding and control.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ DeWitt, op. cit., p. 78.

¹¹⁸ George S. Counts, "Education and the Technological Revolution," Teachers College Record, LIX (March, 1958), 309-18.

Because of the nature of technology, Premier Khrushchev declared in 1958 that "the chief defect, marking both our secondary schools and higher schools, is their isolation from life."¹¹⁹ Until a few years ago, the children of the privileged, intellectual class avoided manual labor through education. For this reason Party leaders backed this declaration in order to be assured that the students would all be more likely to remain loyal to communist ideals.

The moral aspect of Russian education is essential to cultivate the right attitude toward the state. Discipline is one of the basic conditions for the development of the communist attitude toward labor. Children's first labor is studying.¹²⁰ For this reason, firm discipline is maintained in the Soviet schools; classes are conducted in a rigid, authoritarian manner. According to Stalin, education in communist morality calls for a knowledge of the requirements determined by the state. He states that "this knowledge is acquired in the study of the foundations of science."¹²¹ There is a word nauchnost which literally means "scienceness." Science is thus the characteristic of the entire educational program and all policies of the Party. Russians consider science as the means of achieving a utopia on earth.¹²²

The following will be a discussion of the more important subjects and their responsibility in the development of the communist world view:

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 40.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 40.

¹²² Ina Schlesinger, "Developments in Soviet Education," School and Society, LXXXVIII (October 22, 1960), 378.

Mathematics develops the method of "dialectical thinking in pupils," reflects in "concepts and formulas the dialectic of phenomena in the real world," and "at each step confronts the pupil with the manifestation of such laws as the conversion of quantity into quality and the unity of opposites." Physics "acquaints the pupils with the basic properties and laws of matter and energy," teaches them "that the material world exists objectively, outside and independently of our consciousness," provides a "materialistic explanation of such complex phenomena as radio activity and atomic energy," demonstrates that "matter and energy are eternal and that one form of energy can be transformed into another," and reveals the "operation of the general laws of dialectics in manifold physical phenomena." Consequently, "physics has tremendous significance in the formation of a dialectical-materialistic world outlook." Chemistry in its revelation of the "unity of the structure of the material world," of the "laws of the conservation of matter," and of the nature of "chemical transformations" also contributes to the "formation of a dialectical-materialistic world outlook." Geology answers questions regarding the "creation of the universe" and acquaints pupils with "the evolution of the earth and life." Paleontology in particular "has tremendous significance in the formation of the pupil's world outlook." Astronomy, by acquainting pupils "with the structure of the universe, the structure, movement and evolution of celestial bodies," also "aids in the formation of a materialistic outlook." Biology gives to pupils "a genuinely scientific materialistic interpretation of the natural development of the organic world."¹²³

All of the other subjects in the curriculum are categorized as sciences about society. The study of the Russian language is important because it contains the literary and scientific riches of the Soviet people. It also helps to bring them together into one national brotherhood composing the U.S.S.R. Likewise, foreign languages help strengthen international bonds of all workers. Art and music are also to serve political purposes, but receive little emphasis in the schools.

¹²³ Counts, The Challenge to Soviet Education, op. cit., p. 93.

Geography provides the student with systematic knowledge of physical resources in the U.S.S.R. and develops a love for the motherland.

History is the subject which becomes a mighty weapon for the communist society. One of its main aims is to help the students better understand the significance of the social revolution. Along with many other communist teachings pupils are imbued with a great love for the leaders of the revolution. Another important aspect of the political education is the study of the constitution of the U.S.S.R. In addition, a minimum of two days a week is devoted to work experiences. These assignments are possible since the government owns and operates the plants and farms.¹²⁴

Upon completion of the elementary school boys are recruited for the military and naval academies. Although the schools are reputed to be quite severe, the boys study the same subjects pursued in the middle school. In addition they study military science at an elementary level and learn basic military skills. These boys are taught to feel that they are the select of their generation. Many of them are relatives of the revolution, officers, and/or party members.¹²⁵

Although the theories of Marx assume that society under this system of government would eventually become classless, the Soviet Union has a national intelligentsia which corresponds to Plato's guardians. Selection for this higher level of study is based on successive examinations. There is an examination after the eighth grade and after the

¹²⁴ ibid., pp. 93-95.

¹²⁵ ibid., p. 295.

eleventh grade. Students who do poorly in these examinations are sent into trade schools.¹²⁶ However, even students with high scholastic achievements are not permitted to attend institutions of higher learning unless they are recommended by the Komsomol (Communist Youth League) and unions in industrial enterprises or from the collective farm. These students probably will not become philosophers seeking unknown values as they were in Plato's administration. The values and goals have already been defined and set forth by communist leaders. Within these established values the students are challenged to build a better communist society.¹²⁷

An examination of the philosophy courses of university students reveals that philosophical doctrines in the past were treated as abstract theories not connected to concrete experiences. Most students seemed confident that science would provide all the meaningful answers. They received a one-sided emphasis which consisted of only dialectical materialism. Only rarely did an individual express a difference of opinion and as a result he did not last long at the university.¹²⁸

The education which they received is intended to make them a part of the total economic and cultural structure of the country. Even the future scientists, economists, philosophers, and lawyers are expected to

¹²⁶"The Truth About Soviet Education," U.S. News and World Report, XLIX (July 14, 1960), 66-71.

¹²⁷Katkov, op. cit., p. 399.

¹²⁸George L. Kline, Soviet Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 64-77.

engage in some practical field of production while in school. Upon graduation jobs are assigned by the Central Authority. Leaders are selected for their ability to condition the attitudes and behavior of others according to communist morality. This Central Authority is the Communist Party which is "the sole master of the minds, the voice of the thoughts and hopes, the leader and the organizer of the people in their struggle for Communism."¹²⁹

Administration of Platonic Education. Any system of education must have an administration, some group to plan and organize. Ordinary administrative duties like those in any community were left to the rulers. However, Plato firmly believed that the most important function of the rulers was to establish and preserve the right system of education. These rulers were responsible for setting the moral standards of the community. Since the Guardians possessed real knowledge, they were to be able to communicate true opinion to the people, thus leaving them better men than they found them.¹³⁰

As stated earlier, these men were first selected from the members of the army. However, Plato demanded that these men have high moral and intellectual qualities. At every stage selection was to be based purely on merit. Talent or the possibility of it was to be recognized early if the students, both men and women, were to develop properly. Of course, all of the natural qualities such as quick understanding, retentiveness,

¹²⁹Schlesinger, loc. cit.

¹³⁰Field, op. cit., p. 72.

courage, and self-control were useless unless they were directed in the right direction through the right education previously described.¹³¹ Although these men had to live wholly for the service of the community without any selfish interest, one interest was supposed to appeal to them more than the work of ruling. That was the pursuit of truth for its own sake by philosophical thinking. If they had a choice, that was what they should rather devote their lives to than anything else. Thus it can be concluded that Plato believed that the people entrusted with absolute power should know a better kind of life which they would rather pursue.¹³²

Administration of Russian Education. Education in the U.S.S.R. is controlled and dominated by the state. Levin sets forth a clear explanation of the Soviet administration. He explains that the Communist Party establishes the principles of all Soviet education through directives which are given by the Central Committee. The Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers make all the general laws and decrees on education.

Higher education is controlled by the Ministry of Higher Education, which does such things as: establish the curriculum, organize studies, appoint heads of universities, confer degrees, etc. Some of the institutes also come under a special ministry, e.g., the pedagogical

¹³¹ ibid., pp. 72-74.

¹³² ibid., pp. 75-77.

institutes are also under the Ministries of Education.¹³³

Each republic has its own Ministry of Education, which is responsible for working with the Soviet of Nationalities, one of the houses in the Supreme Soviet. This ministry is responsible for elementary, secondary, and higher education within each republic.¹³⁴ Under each of these ministries are regional, town, and rural authorities. All textbooks and educational materials are made available to the schools through the publishing house and factories of the Ministry of Education.

In the Soviet Union there are three categories of inspection. The district inspector has the duty of checking the operation of each individual school. The regional and city inspectors work with such areas as the budget, examination commissions and the development of schools. The final category includes the inspector who carries out educational surveys throughout a territory consisting of many regions.¹³⁵

¹³³ Levin, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-28.

¹³⁴ Herbert C. Rudman, The School and State in the U.S.S.R. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 11.

¹³⁵ Levin, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

I. ANALYSIS

After an examination of the problem stated in the introduction, certain tentative conclusions may be formulated. Emphasis should again be placed upon the fact that it is difficult to compare the complex philosophy of an entire nation with the philosophy of one man. With this limitation in mind, it is possible to make some type of comparison. There has been no attempt to compare the histories of the two philosophies. The section on history was included in an attempt to place both philosophies in their proper perspective.

At this point it is possible to make an analysis of the two philosophies by using as the first criterion the theory of the meaning of truth and knowledge. Apparently, each philosophy provides a different interpretation of the world. Plato held that the real world was one of ideas which remains unchanging while the world known through the senses is only a smudged copy which changes. He believed that truths existed in a world beyond the present one. However, the dialectical materialists maintain that all being can be reduced to matter. Physical existence determines consciousness according to them. They do not recognize the spiritual or real world which prevails according to Plato. Therefore, a basic difference exists in the way in which the world is interpreted. Plato, because of his conception of truth, interpreted the world as dualistic; dialectical materialists maintain a monistic

interpretation.

In attaining truth or knowledge Plato concluded that since all knowledge is forgotten at birth learning finally must be a form of recollection or intuitive reasoning. For Plato knowledge was not so much reaching out to something external as a deepening down within the man. However, dialectical materialism recognizes only truth supposedly perceived through sense data concerning matter or intimate reality. According to Plato, the good or knowledge could finally be attained through intellectual argumentation; the Russians, on the other hand, claim that knowledge is determined by experience which is then coordinated by systematic reasoning. Philosophically speaking, Plato would be classified as a rationalist; the Soviets seem to be primarily empiricists.

Seldom can one doubt that Plato sincerely built his philosophy around a search for truth, which he believed to be the ultimate knowledge which man could finally achieve through a great deal of effort. Sources reveal that in Russia, dialectical materialism is not much concerned with this same quest for truth which underlies Plato's philosophy. Instead, philosophy serves as a convenient weapon for attaining political ends. Berdyaev, a philosopher, has said that the Russian intellectuals have no real love for seeking the truth. When they discuss an idea, they only ask if it will further socialistic theories.¹³⁶ They are simply concerned with practical needs.

¹³⁶ Lossky, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

An analysis of the theory of the nature of man, which is the second basic criterion, reveals some similarity in both societies, but the differences are more pronounced. Plato conceived of a soul or God working throughout the universe. He placed high value on the spiritual aspect of man's mind. Consequently, the intellect was thought to be more important than the body which was merely a vehicle for the mind. However, the materialist philosophy does not recognize a God, only the workings of inevitable forces.

The Soviets feel that at birth a child is born with undeveloped talents of different degrees. This idea agrees with Plato's idea of individual differences. However, Plato went one step further and claimed that these abilities are inherited. Plato believed that only in death can the soul of man achieve original truth. He believed that all misery was caused by earthly needs and desires; therefore, he would say that the development of the intellect or soul should be the primary concern of man. However, Marxists maintain that man coincides with what he does. In other words, they believe that the primary concern of man is to make a living and satisfy his material needs.

The third and final criterion to be used in the analysis of the two philosophies is the theory of the relationship of the individual to the state. It seems that each philosophy regards man and his relationship to the state in quite a different light.

Although both philosophies emphasize that each citizen should perform the task for which he is best suited and contribute his best efforts to the state so that it will not deteriorate, there is a

difference in the aims of the ideal states. Plato was primarily concerned with the ethical aspect of an ideal state. He believed that the state should be founded for the purpose of educating the citizens rather than for power. He attempted to find the best community organization of actual people. Through this organization and a perfect education he hoped to fully develop human resources.

The state in the Soviet Union is predominantly political. There the primary goal is dominance of the state over the citizen. The future of the state, not the future of the individual, is of utmost importance. In fact, for the future the communists propose an essentially classless society which is far removed from Plato's proposal to divide the citizen body into three parts.

A parallel can be drawn between the Soviet state and the Republic. Both place a common emphasis on the power of education. The people in each state are to receive an education suited to their functions in society. However, there is considerable difference in their respective purposes of education since the statement by DeWitt indicated a strong relationship between government and education might exist.

Plato's purpose for education was to discipline the mind, thus making it effective in reasoning. All people were to direct their lives toward the good or virtue. For the less capable, he desired an education which would be more practical or vocational in purpose. The Soviet purpose, on the other hand, is to produce a strong people thoroughly indoctrinated in communist morality and ready to participate in

achieving Communism. This purpose has recently been reemphasized since students are expected to engage in a greater amount of socially useful labor. Whenever any changes take place in Soviet education, they seem to be changes in the demands of the political leaders.

An analysis of the two systems of organization reveals that the Soviet system of education has moved in the direction of Plato's ideas; however, as Shore points out, it is reminiscent in a corrupted form.¹³⁷ The three distinct classes provided by the ancient philosopher seem to have corresponding classes in the Soviet Union, although the Soviets are supposedly working toward a classless society. A special system of education has been provided for each class in both societies. At the present time the Soviet Union provides an education for the mass of people, a military education for some, and a university education for the intellectually elite.

In both societies the mass of people are supposed to receive a practical or vocational type of education. Since Plato said little about education for this class of people a fair comparison of the two systems on this level is difficult to make. However, it is known that the Soviets put primary emphasis on a vocational system.

Further similarity is especially apparent in the basic procedures for education of the intellectually superior students. Talented students in both systems are to receive special educational advantages to develop their brainpower. Study on the university level requires

¹³⁷Shore, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 268.

approximately as much time as Plato's study of Dialectic. In Russia girls receive similar educational opportunities. Perhaps this idea of coeducational schools stems from Plato's theory.

Both systems require that the educated leaders return to society; but, the leaders have different purposes to accomplish upon their return. Plato wanted his philosophers to govern in such a way that the citizens would be led toward a better life. They were responsible for establishing a perfect education to accomplish this end. In Russia the university students must return periodically to do practical production work for the state.

The first parallel in the curriculums is the similar emphasis placed on physical education. However, their purposes differ since Plato believed that gymnastics was good for the mind; the Russians aim at developing a strong healthy body to further the good of the state. Plato explained that music education is important to train men to see the beautiful and good, but the Soviets use it only to serve political ends. In his concern that the young see only the good, Plato proposed to censor any literature that gave examples of evil. In Russia an even more severe censorship is used. Literature is studied rather incidentally through the Russian language. Only the literature which strengthens communist brotherhood is permitted.

A further comparison of the two curriculums reveals that each places primary importance upon scientifically related subjects. To Plato the sciences were a bridge to his Dialectics and a search for the Good, the principle underlying the scheme of things. However, the

Soviets consider the sciences important in developing the dialectical-materialistic world outlook which was explained in some detail in the section on philosophical foundations.

Although the Soviet Union has a system of education that corresponds to the education of the guardians, it does not seem to provide these students with the same opportunity to obtain real knowledge or truth as Plato's system does. The Soviet students are certainly not philosophers seeking unknown values. They study only the values and goals set forth by the Communists.

The final analysis concerns the administration of the two educational systems. Like the ancient philosophers the Central Committee designs and controls the education for all of the citizens. The men composing each group are supposed to be the best people of the society. The guardians were to serve the people of the community unselfishly; philosophy was to interest them even more than ruling. No similar requirement is made of the Russian rulers. Therefore, it might be said that Plato's statesmen were responsible for leading the mass of people towards the best possible life as Plato understood it. The intelligentsia in Russia simply appears to be a tool of the Communist Party which actually rules and governs quite rigidly the education of that society.

Since the Soviet Union has a more complex society its system of administration has numerous levels. The Central Committee delegates authority to such groups as the Ministries of Education and inspectors. Plato did not describe any such system of delegation; apparently all

administration was left to the philosophers.

II. CONCLUSIONS

After an analysis of the descriptions of Platonic education and Russian education it is possible to suggest answers to the questions raised in the introduction to this paper. Upon consideration of the material found in available literature it does not seem that at the present time any common link or parallel exists between the philosophical foundations of Platonic and Soviet education with regard to the three basic criteria chosen for the comparison.

However, certain superficial similarities can be found between the basic organization, curriculum, and administration of these two educational systems. The first similarity can be found in the common emphasis on the power of education. In addition, both societies provided a special system of education for the three classes into which the citizens are divided. Another similarity is found in the curriculum where scientific studies are stressed. Along with this stress on intellectual development through scientific studies is a similar stress on physical development. One final resemblance exists between the philosophers of the Republic and the men of the Central Committee, all of whom are responsible for administering education.

In conclusion, after a careful consideration of the questions asked in this paper, the writer concludes that integral parallels can be found to exist between the two philosophies of education. It seems that the only similarities that do exist are the ones between Plato's system of education and the Russian system of education.

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
COMPARED TO THE RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The objective of this study is to describe, compare, and contrast Plato's philosophy of education with the Russian philosophy of education. The following questions are treated: (1) What common link, if any, exists between the philosophical foundations of Platonic and Soviet education in their theories of knowledge, the nature of man, and the relationship of the individual to the state? and (2) What similarities might exist between the basic organization, curriculum, and administration of these two educational systems?

To accomplish this study, a review of selected literature contained in the library of Kansas State University and numerous libraries in Nebraska was conducted. The philosophical foundations were examined according to the following criteria: the theory of the meaning of truth and knowledge, the theory of the nature of man, and the theory of the relationship of the individual to the state. Finally, the objectives of each philosophy were analyzed according to the purposes of education, organization, curriculum, and administration.

After an analysis of the available literature, it has been concluded that no common link or parallel exists between the philosophical foundations of Platonic and Soviet education with regard to the three basic criteria. Only certain superficial similarities can be found to exist between the basic organization, curriculum, and administration of these two systems.