

**Committee III**  
Nationalism And World Unity: How  
To Educate for the 21st Century

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**MEETING THE VARIOUS ETHNIC, CULTURAL, AND NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS  
IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION: STATE POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION  
IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION, PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION IN  
THE PAST AND AT PRESENT**

by

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**V. Shadrikov**

1. Conflicting and cooperating policies in Education

The policies in education reflect essential interests of various social groups, ethnic or other communities as well as those of the whole state. Considering that those interests do not always coincide, the policies in Education can be described as implicitly conflicting. On the other hand, those policies can also be described as cooperating, considering that they are realized in the humanitarian sphere and are consequently based on humanistic principles. The basic task of reaching public consensus in the sphere of education is to transform the contradictions that underlie the various policies in education and representing sources of confrontation into the dynamic force of development.

The analysis of modern and contemporary history of education reveals the constant desire to guarantee equality of opportunities in education despite the differences in race, nationalities, sex, language, religions, political and other convictions, social and economic status and origin as important factors in the transformation of educational policies.

This found its juridical expression in Convention on the Fight against Discrimination in Education adopted by the II General Assembly of UNESCO (Paris, 14 December, 1960).

These new realities of the contemporary world, most graphically manifesting themselves in the integrational processes especially in Western Europe breed new contradictions in the policies for education. This is a problem of the correlation, interaction and sometimes even confrontation between the levelling--global and the originally national dimensions of education.

2. Meeting the ethnic and cultural requirements for education as a problem of state policy: Soviet experience.

To say that the problem of meeting the ethnic and cultural requirements in the sphere of education has not only surpassed the present-day scope of theoretical analysis, the subject-matter of philosophy, culturology, ethnophysiology, the school routine, but also the limits of educational reform practices is by no means an overstatement. It penetrates into big policy, the internal and interstate relations, for it represents one of the most important aspects of the dramatic historical processes which determines not only the structure and the cultural architecture of the future civilization, but also the very survival of mankind.

And finally, beyond any doubt, this problem is the "apple of discord", for it encapsulates the so far unresolved and even not fully comprehended **contradiction between the universal humanistic mission of education** and its no less inherent function of a mechanism,

responsible for the **continuity of the unique ethnic and cultural heritage and the preservation of national identity.**

In the context of the above mentioned problem the Soviet experience, and above all, the actual practice of the ethnic and cultural requirements in education become of specific interest. All the more so, because for the Soviet Union it is a much more vital problem than for the absolute majority found in other countries. There are two groups of reasons for that. The first is the extraordinary ethnic and cultural diversity of the country. Suffice it to say, depending on the method used, the population of the Soviet Union includes from 104 up to 190 ethnic units numbering from 300 up to 130 million representatives, belonging to twelve groups of the four largest linguistic families. But still, that is not all the unique ethnic demography of the country. A very significant proportion of the population lives beyond the boundaries of their national and cultural formations or does not have one at all. Over 24 million Russians live in 14 constituent republics outside the RSFSR, 15 million representatives of other nationalities live beyond their national territories, 7 million do not have their national or autonomous formations at all.

The second group of reasons is the long domination of the uniform educational system characterized by the minimum respect for specific ethnic and cultural requirements. This resulted in a certain erosion and simplification of ethnic and cultural identity, heritage and its canonization and reproduction in the stylistics of folk music. However the reality is that long decades did not extinguish the unsatisfied ethnic and cultural aspirations for education. They aggregated into a "critical mass" that now is causing a "chain reaction" of changes, that today is blowing up the traditional educational structures.

I could even go on to say that the specific situation in the Soviet Union to a large extent models the world's trends and developments. Starting from the epoch of the Enlightenment, education was seen as only one, single cultural and historical type of educational training and school structure, the type that was born in Europe and oriented to the classical sciences, knowledge and, subsequently, to professional and vocational training. Other types of education, formed in Asia, Africa and in America before Columbus with their wealth of history and historical experience were not considered as such.

Their real role in the establishment of the scientific and technological civilization of the 20th century turned out to be insignificant. Up until recently they remained on the periphery of the historical process, and were seen as manifestations of backwardness, provinciality and conservatism. **Eurocentrism** triumphed not only in politics, the economy, the sciences, but also in education, medicine and culture.

It is by no means accidental that the problem of meeting the ethnic and cultural needs of education was understood as such only after, and to a large extent due to the **formation of world civilization and mankind's self awareness as one integral entity**. This problem today poses another vital question, whether a diversity of policies is possible in our increasingly integrated, uniform and interconnected world, and what has to be done to transform the conflicting policies into cooperative and moreover, into mutually beneficial ones.

I'd like to stress that this question is not asked by separate groups of people, nor by political regimes or fundamentalist organizations. It is history itself that is asking this

question, history that is coming to understand the ongoing leveling and uniformity as an omen of an imminent decline.

Thus the historical imperative: unity can exist only in diversity, and diversity can be based only upon unity. But so far we have not been able to find a way, or an instrument to implement this imperative, to realize it in the content, methods and organization of education. It is probable that even countries known for a unique blend or original and universal features could boast of having discovered the "golden mean", having resolved areas of tension and reached the long sought harmony.

The first energetic attempt to meet the ethnic and cultural needs of education was undertaken in the USSR in the 1920s and 30s. It was completely based on the Eurocentric cultural and educational model. The universal content of education was isolated within that model, a content that included the absorption of the basics of the sciences seen as capable of giving a sufficiently complete and realistic picture of the world. The ethnic and cultural needs were understood as exclusively pragmatic and included (1) language study, and (2) conservation of the historical memory, i.e. the study of the history and traditions of the people.

As for the schools, the organizers of education did not object to a uniform structure, which according to them could be adapted to any ethnic and cultural community. We have to admit that this simple strategy yielded impressive results within a compressed space of time.

It took us 15 years to create national alphabets, sets of text-books and a net-work of schools

for 50 nationalities and ethnic groups. By the end of the 1930s, we managed to practically eliminate illiteracy among the nations which previously had no alphabet at all, and to introduce incomplete (7 years at school) secondary education on the nationwide scale. I would like to stress that this was done in a country where 73% of the population were illiterate, and, some ethnic groups were completely illiterate. (At present there are about 980 million illiterate people in the world and their number is growing.)

But this success which opened up the way for accelerated industrial development, contained seeds of future difficulties and problems.

Within two or three decades after the establishment of a network of ethnic and republican educational institutions, there developed the tendency for their elimination.

It is important to point out that the decline of ethnic schools was not only a by-product of Eurocentric model of education and accelerated industrialization and urbanization of the country. Another important reason for that was the distorted interpretation of the ethnic dimension in education within the framework of the official policy for culture and education. In other words, the imperative was to create a school doctrine national in form and international in content.

The above mentioned doctrine had an exclusively dogmatic scientific foundation reduced to a vulgarized interpretation of Hegelian and Marxian dialectics. But in the background there was a definite ideology that saw culture in simplistic sociopolitical and pragmatic terms. In brief, alongside theoretical knowledge, culture was supposed to incorporate mainly

social ideals and the ethical and aesthetic norms and rules they implied. This was known as socialist realism in art and communist morality in ethics. All the rest, including individuals' aspirations in life and ethnic and cultural features, was not regarded as part of culture.

Thus it follows, that such a doctrine treated the national content of education merely as a set of abstract notions. A nation's mentality, its customs and moral values were simply excluded. Anything different from socialist culture was proclaimed either as harmful legacy of the past or, on the contrary, as "museum pieces", which meant that they had to be ousted from the present and from the future.

In other words, the ideological fundamentalism amplified the negative tendencies and formalism, inherent to the Eurocentrist model of education.

The above-mentioned doctrine was carried out in a comparatively mild and tolerant form except for the short reign of Proletkult maximalism. For example, starting from the 1930s Soviet schools had paid a great deal of attention to the study of history and literature, including those of the ethnic groups involved. However, the vulgarized sociological presentation of these subjects reduced their aesthetic and general cultural value to a minimum. The tendency was to close down ethnic schools which had indeed become ethnic in name only. In this situation more and more people preferred Russian-language schools with improved courses of pragmatic subjects, but utterly devoid of any ethnic content. The turn to the national-ethnic content of education now being implemented in the USSR, presents the imperative of adequate interpretation of the ethnic and national processes of



the recent years. These processes should seek a new political, economic and cultural consensus. Many of the problems have proved to be explosive.

For decades totalitarianism forced them deep inside, but now they have come to the surface. The processes are getting worse due to the so-called "ethnic paradox" which is a feature of the contemporary world: **the internationalization of culture amplifies the level of ethnic-national self-awareness.**

The ethnic paradox is a burning issue for the Soviet Union today where the boundaries of the 53 administrative-territorial units coincide with the areas of settlement of indigenous ethnic groups with a status ranging from Constituent Republics down to National areas.

So, the "ethnic-national" orientation in the policy of local governments and authorities often turns into ethnic discrimination. One can not give priority to all nations living on a given territory. Priority for just a single of them will inevitably violate the rights of others. This is what is actually happening now and often results in violent opposition.

While stressing the ethnic (national) component in the content of education, we must strike a careful balance with world culture, and try to see the evolution of the national culture itself. The nation and its culture is not something static. Today, we are witnessing a most interesting process in cultural evolution. Whether we like it or not, a world culture is being formed, the culture that is becoming traditional both for mankind as a whole and many individual nations.

Yet, if we consider the ethnic component only as the cultural features formed a century ago, it will mean stagnation, not development, which is a permanent process when certain innovations developed by the ethnic group, or borrowed, become traditions, while certain old traditions die. This process is especially painful now when "traditional" culture is increasingly being forced out by standardized forms and ethnic-national identity is leaving the cultural and spiritual dimension. Ethnic groups (nations) now face a difficult problem: how to decide on their place in the world without being dissolved in among the other nations, and at the same time to avoid isolation. This problem, and people's emotions connected with it, are played upon by political demagogues trying to excite egocentric sentiments in their own ethnic communities.

The methodology of separating ethnic groups, the state and the economy, and giving each its due place, requires a suitable approach to the problem of regulating inter-ethnic relations in the field of education.

The interference of state in ethnic development should be at the lowest possible level. It should manifest itself mainly through drafting legislation that would preclude either legal or actual national inequality or advancing "ethnic priorities" by authorities at all levels. This principle should not run counter to specific national or ethnic rights that are defined by international conventions but at the present period are not yet recorded in the national legislature. This does not apply to aboriginal peoples. But even in their case the point at issue is not an attempt to try and preserve "for posterity" their specific culture as an end in itself, rather what is meant is the need to **preserve the spiritual, environmental and economic conditions peculiar to their way of life** and to ward off the destructive impact of

technological civilization on their fragile social and cultural structures.

I would not like, however, to project these processes solely onto the specific situation of the Soviet Union. I shall venture to argue that all societies influenced by the technological revolution are confronted by this to some extent, with expressly manifest signs that show more and more people belonging to the marginal strata of society. Even whole ethnic groups are becoming increasingly uncivilized. We all face the same threat: that of losing our humanness. Undoubtedly, a major adverse role in turn is played by the crisis of culture, the culture of the Eurocentric type.

In this dramatic situation, we stand in need of a new definition of culture, a new understanding of ethnic and cultural needs, and a new concept of education. Efforts of the mind and of the heart are needed. We require a highly rational, reasonable, and at the same time emotionally human, spiritual and moral refurbishing of our life, which has become so impoverished. This is a key point in reviving modern society.

In order to become instrumental and workable notions, the general ideas that have been expressed need further continued substantiation and analytical interpretation. Yet, without being drowned in the available facts the following idea could be advanced. Namely:

**Education should be transformed from a means of instructing the individual to a mechanism for developing culture forming a picture of the world with man in it.**

Within the framework of such an approach one may readily resolve the dilemma of the

universal civilization, on the one hand, and the indigenous ethnic and cultural aspects on the other. It also helps combine them in school activities and pedagogical practice.

The education reform now underway in the USSR is increasingly taking these general conclusions into account. In particular it has certain features that distinguish the present day education policy from that of the 1930s and the early 1980s. These features are as follows:

### **1. Revisions of educational goals.**

The present period witnessed a sharp increase in the culture-generating role of education and school as a momentous social and cultural institution. School is called upon to ensure the social maturity of the rising generations, the individual's cultural self-determination and the molding on its bases of his or her life attitudes.

These goals can be achieved only if school education has a culture-forming character, which should present an integrated and harmonious system of material and spiritual cultural values, the culture of economy and of labor, of politics and law, a communicative culture of family relationships, etc.

The foundation of general culture is laid by the basic component--a nucleus of the contents of education. Its level and nature change with technological and social progress. This component comprises a required set of ideas, knowledge, value perceptions, universal ways of gaining knowledge, thinking and practical activity. Unless these are mastered understanding and interaction among people are impossible. Nor is it possible to achieve

harmony between man and nature, man and society, or promote creative, social activity. The polytechnical nature of the basic educational component enables the teachers to familiarize students with the fundamentals of modern production and the use of it in up-to-date achievements of science and technology. In practical terms, polytechnical schooling enables the students to master labor methods and operations, develop labor skills, acquire the experience of individual and collective creative effort.

Culture is the fruit of man's work, and it is impossible to master it without work. This is why school is based on students' creative work; cognitive, spiritual, aesthetic, moral physical, social and productive activity.

It is important that students' work should include social aid, protection of nature and cultural monuments, participation in the activities of different agencies and public organizations. This increases the cultural content of students' work, consolidates school's ties with life and helps students to get a better understanding of social relations.

The culture of self-determination in life is an integral part of man's attitude to the family, society, nature, intellectual and physical world to man's own health, work and leisure and to his needs. It is the harmonic relationship between man and his own self that should form the background for his civil, professional and moral self-determination.

The molding of the young citizen, a true humanist of the late 20th and 21st centuries can only be the result of moral quest and discoveries as he or she becomes aware of the vital problems facing mankind and the need to actively participate in resolving them.

School is an integral part of society's cultural practices, it is an indicator of the state of its culture. As a link of social experience, school provides for the integrity and continuity of cultural tradition, its development and enrichment.

The national self-determination of the school is a prerequisite for its development. School is inseparable from national soil, from the native tongue, laying the foundation of national identity. It is a major factor for satisfying the ethnic cultural needs, enriching them with a universal and international content. Soviet school is based on the dialectic principle of the unity of three basic features: ethnic, national, universal. This enables the individual to feel that he or she belongs to his or her native people, and at the same time is a citizen of the country, and a subject of the world civilization.

## **2. Revising the contents of education**

The cultural and historic traditions of the people, their dialectical unity with the universal human culture serve as a source for developing the contents of education and promoting academic activities in the field of education and instruction. This promise should be adequately reflected in the school curriculum. What are the distinctive features of the new basic curriculum in Soviet school? First of all, depending on the levels of education management, there are three components of the education contents: union and republican, republican and academic.

The union republican component is determined jointly by the USSR State Committee for

Education and the republican education ministries on the basis of an expressly manifested consensus. The aim of this component is to provide an equivalent level of education (and related documentation) in different parts of the country, as well as its equivalence to that in developed countries.

The union-republican component ensures continuity between different stages of the continuous education system, allows the students to appreciate the fact that the Soviet people have a common socio-political, economic and cultural and historical heritage, helps promote their internationalist education and understanding and communication between the peoples of the country.

The republican component deals with the education content that is directly related to ethnic, religious and local, social and cultural factors (such as Mother tongue and literature, a foreign language, the republic's history and geography, music and fine arts, labor, physical and military instruction, etc.). Singling it out will help school students to absorb their ethnic culture in a dialectical unity with the common culture of mankind.

When determining the union-republican and republican components, the final word belongs to the republic. The republican component of the basic curriculum is defined by the educational ministries of the union republics along with the proper autonomous public structure and local government bodies. This is done on the basis of a consensus.

Such an interpretation of the union-republican and republican components of education effectively eliminates the old approach based on centralized uniform and rigidly determined



curriculum and teaching methods. Study process depends for its successful organization on an organic combination of the two components.

Identification of the academic component is aimed at the maximum possible adaptation of educational contents to the peculiarities of the region and school social infrastructure and labor market, school personnel and material, as well as the technological framework, specific features of its staff, etc.

The obligatory part of the educational academic component consists of study courses that are freely chosen by students and profile-oriented forms of education for senior students.

Study courses chosen by students help expand the range of subjects studied at school, stimulate the search for new fields of activity at a time when the teenager's individuality is going through a process of intensive self-determination. Study courses are aimed at promoting the formation of stable interests in children, increasing their self-reliance and creativity. They also help students to make a conscious choice of the educational profile and their future profession.

In order to make the curriculum more specific we conducted comparative and typological investigations into the contents of education. Comparative historical research was concerned with the volume of education and subjects taught at schools in the ancient period, the time of Greek and Roman antiquity, in the middle ages and modern times, while typological research dealt with the content of modern general education in the USSR, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and partially, in the Chinese People's Republic.



Comparisons were based on a **uniform unit of comparison, consisting of a term and the concept or idea it denoted**. For instance, triangle, historical personality, event, the categories of grammar or lexies, dance steps, terms of physical culture, etc.

It turned out that in all period a **20-year educational cycle includes** an approximately similar number of units **up to 20,000 terms**, while the terms contents were improved through their exhaustion and increased accuracy on the basis of new knowledge and by applying systemic methods (in fact systemic analysis methods were used), while the number of concepts and terms remained the same. This enabled us to apply the methods of information to define the content of education when policies are conflicting with one another.

A thesaurus of the world component system of education containing 10 thousand terms has been compiled to reflect the history of development of general education and its main aspects, i.e. physical training, philological sciences, mathematics, fine arts (dancing, music, painting and sculpture), practical skills (house-keeping, law, medical first aid at home, pentathlon and general technical terms), natural sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Biology) humanities (Geography, History, Sociology), ethics (morals, ethical conceptions and theories).

Systemization of the terms and content of notions allow to add any ethnic or professional knowledge in a particular school without the risk of overlapping. This principle of adding additional knowledge is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Correlation of the World, Nationalities- and Profession-Oriented**  
**Components of Education**

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Ethnic orientation in Teaching school subjects</b>	<b>Professional orientation in teaching school subjects</b>
1. Physical training	Popular sports and games	Different sports and physical training
2. Philology	Languages: classic, native, foreign and literary	Proofreading, literature, office work, stenography and typewriting
3. Mathematics		Study of different branches of Mathematics
4. Information science		Programming
5. Dancing	Popular, folk dances	Training in choreography
6. Music	Folk songs, playing popular musical instruments	Special education in music
7. Fine arts	Study of folk arts	Education in applied arts
8. House-keeping	Family structure and educational traditions of different nations	All kinds of skilled manual labor
9. Physics		Profound study of different branches of Physics
10. Chemistry		Work in the laboratory and profound study of different branches of Chemistry
11. Biology	Popular ecology	Practical skills in making collections, carrying out observations, selection work and ecol. surveys
12. Geography	Thorough study of the native land	Thorough study of one of the branches of Geography
13. History	Systematic study of the history of one's nation	Study of History as a science and of textology, ethnography, sphragistics, biographies, numismatics, epigraphy and relics and monuments of the past
14. Social science	Study of the national culture Profound study of the folklore and religious ethics of a nation	Concrete sociological research Profound study of the theory of ethics and professional ethics

The results of the research show that nationality- and profession-oriented components of education can be allotted about 10,000 terms, or half the content of education.

### **3. Revision of the structure of educational institutions and of style and methods of teaching.**

The Soviet School is becoming not only more versatile and independent but also more humane as it has completely abandoned authoritarian methods of teaching and **placed above all the personality of the pupil**. Its major aim is now to meet his needs, enhance his virtues and develop his personal abilities and talents.

This is the aim, perhaps, most difficult to attain in the course of the educational reform in the USSR as it calls not only for changes in management and methods of teaching, but, primarily, for shaping new social, pedagogical and cultural thinking in teachers and radical improvement of relations between teachers and pupils.

The above-mentioned reforms and other changes were stipulated in a number of conceptual documents, most notable being the concepts of the universal secondary and continuous education. These ideas have been implemented in structural changes and a new system of management of educational institutions which now enjoy a greater degree of autonomy, have more leeway in decision-making and acquire public features. It should also be emphasized that the process of reforms draws support from an influential movement of the public and teachers.

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### **3. The role of education in promoting understanding among nations and respect for human rights**

The ideas stated above make it possible to sum up what we in the USSR read into the words "national education". We apply them to primarily those aspects of educational policy, to the content and methods of teaching and education and structure of educational institutions, including the system of their management, that guarantee ethnic and cultural identity of both ethnic communities and individuals.

It stands to reason that at regional and national levels the idea of national education as part of the national policy is interpreted in different ways. Thus, regionally it should be regarded as a matter of immediate practical concern while nationally greater attention should be paid to the creation of legal and economic conditions for its implementation and prevention of ethnic discrimination. The national educational policy is therefore called upon to promote **understanding among nations** instead of mutual isolation.

It is noteworthy that understanding among nations was one of the constitutional elements of the educational policy based on orthodox marxism. In the opinion of official ideologists this understanding could be promoted by reaching primary educational objective of cultivating internationalism in people. The idea of internationalism, notorious for its sociological interpretation was, however, more or less openly and in contradiction to authentic marxism which opposed common human values which were given a naturalistic

interpretation.

This approach resulted in neglect of individual features and natural identity of man and too much emphasis on social priorities, the consequences being both negative and positive.

On the one hand, a dogmatic view of man as a purely social being and a product of circumstances gave rise to a Utopian theory of an absolute susceptibility of any individual to education, which had since the middle of the 1930s led to neglect of individual abilities and talents, curtailment of psychological and pedagogical research in this field and triumph of consistent egalitarianism in the official educational policy.

However, this egalitarian policy had also resulted in unparalleled efforts of the Soviet State to ensure equal rights to education and, as part of this laudable endeavour, ten- (or eleven) year secondary education was declared universal and compulsory. Besides, the State took control of enrollment to higher educational institutions to make their social and ethnic composition comply with that of the population of the country. To this end, special preparatory departments were attached to higher educational institutions to help young workers and peasants prepare for continuing their education at institutes and universities. Much was also done to attract young people of ethnic minorities, from remote geographical areas and disadvantaged social groups to universities and other higher educational institutions.

On the other hand, this rigid egalitarianism could not fail to bring about unification of education with the ensuing infringement of the rights of members of various confessional

and socio-professional communities. Moreover, it led to neglect of individual abilities and talents, cultural and educational needs of talented youth and reduction of all to the same level. Coupled with the authoritarian regime egalitarianism in the educational policy enhanced authoritarian pedagogy.

These infringements of human rights authorized by the official ideology were aggravated by a secret and unlawful selection of applicants for universities, practiced at different periods of the Soviet history and aimed at limiting admission to universities of religious believers, disloyal people and some nationalities those same people that were initially evicted from their native land in the 1940s.

It may be tempting to shift the blame for human rights violations on to marxism and its proponents. But, as a matter of fact, authentic marxism was one of the first theories that sought to discover causes of human rights violations inherent in industrial society and committed itself to the maxim: Free development of every person is a sine qua non for the free development of all people. Adherence to this maxim in the educational policy (in the egalitarian and simplified form) enabled the Soviet State to ensure some of the fundamental human rights: namely, to do away with illiteracy, guarantee free access to basic educational stages, including higher education and promote millions of people from the lower strata of society to a new, more suitable socio-cultural and professional space through education and teaching.

This however, does not negate the fact that marxism brought influence to bear on the emergence of the unitarian ideology which is intrinsically bent on levelling off and even

seeks to eliminate those in opposition.

It has to be admitted, nevertheless, that the unitarian ideology is rooted deeply in traditional culture and the communal consciousness which is peculiar to it, rather than in any theory. This consciousness was far from having been shared by people in the Soviet Union, rather the country entered the period of industrial development. Again, this is not only peculiar to the Soviet Union. Similar ideological diseases, sometimes in even worse form, plagued many nations of Europe and at the present period, affect significantly countries of Africa and Latin America. In short, the cultural heritage, social and economic conditions, the character and habits of peoples in different parts of the world are apt, because of their nature, to put a heavy burden on emerging democracy. That is why democracy often results in establishing equality which stifles one freedom after another.

In the light of the foregoing it is clear that the unitarian ideology is incompatible with a rational humanistic educational policy aimed at social accord, observance of human rights and international understanding. The latter calls for a different non-doctrinal mentality. It should be based on universal ethical standards, those that enhance the dignity of man and, at the same time, recognize the pluralism of culture, world outlooks, life styles and ways of thinking. International understanding takes us, as it were, beyond ideological boundaries and abstract theoretical provisions and ushers in the multi-dimensional space of human relations, solidarity and development.

We have acknowledged the priority of common humanist values, human rights and freedoms for the educational policy as well as for other aspects of life. But there is often a long



distance between acknowledgement and implementation. The Soviet system of education, decision-making bodies and academic community will have to go a long way towards ensuring rights and freedoms to all. Furthermore, democratic changes and strengthening of the sovereignty of the USSR nations will encounter many problems brought about by the novelty of these changes for the USSR and the immature social consciousness of the people. Against this background meaningful and balanced national policy, continuity and reasonable persistence in carrying out the program of reforms assume ever greater importance.

A big job awaits us. There are over 250,000 training and educational institutions in the USSR where 100 million people are taught in 44 languages. They are now enjoying a real cultural autonomy which offers new opportunities to teachers and students.

We have a great deal of work to do that will require time and effort and it should be emphasized once again that this effort will go to turn our Soviet school from an educational institution to a real cultural center called upon to shape well-rounded personalities, to a school of dialogue, not monologue, of cultures and thus a school of dialogue of free people.

Pedagogical science and practice will have to take in the very idea of culture, overcome a one-sided view of it as a collection of different aspects of knowledge and instead regard it as a living organism with major emphasis laid not on subjects and our knowledge of them but on values and norms, ways of thinking and creative endeavour. We shall also have to think over and master the fundamental ideas of human rights and freedoms by cultivating respect for these rights and freedoms and ensuring them in practice in our daily school work, primarily in relations between teachers and students.



Our commitment to a diversity of cultures and their tolerant and mutually supplementary coexistence in no way lessens our awareness of the need to develop world culture and master its fundamental categories such as human rights and freedoms, the ethics of non-violent and mutually beneficial development, the idea of harmonious coexistence and progressive development of man, society and nature. In this respect social responsibility, i.e. responsibility of all of us for the future of our fragile world shall become the fundamental maxim of education and teaching.

In other words, what we call "world culture" is by no means a set of facts and ideals known only too well but something which is still to be created, thought over and left for the generations to come to insure a greater degree of stability, predictability, harmony, happiness and well-being in a world where every ethnic community and every nation will take their due pace.