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EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGY AND PROFESSIONAL MIDDLE CLASS IN SOVIET ESTONIA IN THE 1950s–1980s

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Since the mid-20th century university-educated intellectual workers have ceased to be just a small part of the population, forming instead quite an eminent layer of society – a mass intelligentsia. The phenomenon has been sparking research interest all over Europe. The aim of the present article is to elucidate certain aspects of the development of Estonian intelligentsia during the Soviet period, as in their time, the definition of intelligentsia and the related concepts, the efficiency of intelligentsia, and a comparison of the relevant situation in Estonia with that of other countries – all those used to be issues evaded or blurred rather than discussed objectively.

Labour has a vital role in national economic growth and progress. Other factors such as capital, natural resources, geographic location etc. are also obviously important. And yet the motor of social development is man with his will to work, his daring and resolution, his knowledge, skills and education. Since the mid-20th century all industrial countries have been developing certain common traits, which can be attributed to the technological and scientific progress. One of them is an unprecedented spread of secondary and tertiary education, while intelligentsia has become a salient part of labour resources not only in the functional sense, but also in quantitative terms.

IDEOLOGY AND EFFICIENCY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

Earlier many economists and educators would regard education (particularly on secondary and tertiary levels) as belonging to the sphere of consumption. Later, however, especially as educational system took shape and public education became current (i.e. in the 19th and first half of the 20th century) education came to be regarded as investment.[1] For Soviet ideology this was an alien term. Throughout

[1] **Firestone, O. J.** Industry and Education. A Century of Canadian Development. (Social Science Studies, 5.) University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 1969, 93, 96–97, 147.

the tsarist period education had been seen mainly as a personal (or family) matter, and thus even primary general education had not been made compulsory. In Estonia compulsory school attendance was enforced in September 1919 by the Constituent Assembly, applying to the age group 9–14. In Russia educational ideology changed after the Bolshevist coup, when the educational sphere was nationalized for both political and economic reasons. The principle that it was workers and poor peasants and other such "trustworthy" people whose offspring should primarily benefit from Soviet higher education, refers to an obsolete paradigm according to which education was a status or class privilege. Until the schoolyear 1956/57 high school and university charged for tuition in the Soviet Union. The propaganda emphasized that a Soviet intellectual would always remain in debt to the people (nation). This, too, intimates that education was viewed on a political scale and from a personality point of view. Education was funded using the so-called residual method, which hardly matched the concept of education as a motor of the future, or of education financing as investment. The Soviet communists cherished a voluntaristic principle according to which the Communist Party was "the mind, honour and conscience" of their era, showing the people science-based ways to progress, awakening their energy and guiding them. The leaders of the closed Soviet society could and would consider education only as an issue of domestic policy or a means of propaganda, whereas in the West education had long before become an international challenge involving extensive exchange of students and professors. The aim set by the CPSU was to develop the social structure of the nation by a gradual merger of industrial workers, collective farmers and intellectuals "into a unified workers' collective of communist society".[2] Soviet educational ideology was school-central, overemphasizing the importance of studying at institutions subjected to firm control, or rather, ruling out all other options. Out-of-school learning was not positively valued: true, the eight-class and high-school certificates could be acquired extra-murally, but not the diplomas of vocational schools or universities.[3] Soviet educational ideology rested on the Marxist understanding of man as a tool in the hands of the laws of human development.

In the post-war Western world schooling came to be regarded as another branch of economy – education industry, regulated by the law of supply and demand. In the 1960s it was emphasized that managers were the most important profession making economy innovative and sustainable. It was understood that a mere expansion of the productive capacity of the labour force will not lead to economic growth per se. It is also necessary to create sufficient effective demand to make efficient use of the expanding labour force equipped with greater knowledge and skills resulting from more and better education and training.[4]

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[2] Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei programm (vastu võetud NLKP XXII kongressi poolt). Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1968, 105, 121.

[3] Eesti nõukogude entsüklopeedia (ENE), 2. Valgus, Tallinn, 1987, 498.

[4] **Firestone, O. J.** Industry and Education, 143.

A great deal of effort was put into getting a better understanding of the relationship between education and economic growth. Many countries, including the Soviet Union, seemed to forget that educated people would need good (incl. economic) conditions for self-realization. Educational policy should, after all, be aimed at a situation where education (diploma) guarantees a young person a prosperity higher than those without higher education are entitled to, at the same time burdening the young specialist with a higher load of social responsibility. Soviet educational policy ignored the former aspect, although well emphasizing the latter.

The promotion of education in the Soviet Union was made ineffective by a relatively slow economic growth. Educating the youth means a potential possibility to increase the gross domestic product. A real growth of the GDP requires a skilful application of that potential. That is where the Soviet system failed.

From 1980–1988 the GDP of the Estonian SSR increased by 25% (true, the statistics of the time could easily have been exaggerated), which makes the annual average 2.8%. During the same period, however, the number of employees with tertiary education increased from 79,100 to 106,000, i.e. by 34%. The number of people with a secondary special education rose from 108,300 thousand to 134,000 thousand, i.e. by 24%.[5] The previous decade (1970–1980) had brought a 72% increase (from 46,000 to 79,100) of employees with tertiary education, while the GDP grew by 66%.[6]Analogous indices can be presented for various economic sectors. In 1980, for example, the agriculture and forestry of the Estonian SSR employed 24,900 specialists with tertiary or special secondary education, whereas in 1987 their number amounted to 36,200 (an increase by 145%). The value of agricultural output, however (in prices comparable to those of 1983), was 1718.1 million roubles in 1980, and 1847.1 million in 1987 – an increase by 108%.[7] In civil engineering the accumulation rate of qualifications exceeded the growth of working efficiency probably because full implementation of the capabilities of the highly educated employees was impeded by administrative barriers and particular interests.[8] According to Firestone the educational sphere in Canada is also "...an industry whose rate of growth exceeds the rate of expansion of most sectors of the Canadian economy".[9] Yet economic growth was rapid in Canada. In 1976–1989 the Gross Domestic Product increased 3.3 times, while in 1983–1987 its growth (4.4% per year) was the highest among the G7 countries.[10] In most cases dangerous widening of a split between the educational level of labour and productivity signals of some flaws in economic and social policy.

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[5] Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1988. aastal. Statistika aastaraamat. Olion, Tallinn, 1989, 29, 219.

[6] Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1983. aastal. Statistika aastaraamat. Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1984, 16, 151.

[7] Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1988. aastal, 27, 220.

[8] **Karjahärm, T., Sirk, V.** Kohanemine ja vastupanu. Argo, Tallinn, 2007, 387.

[9] **Firestone, O. J.** Industry and Education, 170.

[10] The Canadian Trade and Investment Guide, 1989. The Financial Post, Toronto, 1989, 3.

In countries with a developed market economy it was believed that the contribution of the school system to the productive sector would counterbalance educational expenditure. As education proved to be profitable it began to receive considerably more funding, modern infomation technology and mental effort. Many eminent social scientists were guided by the principle that education is a major impetus behind social change. Investments to education are a key to economic and social progress.[11] Those ideas were particularly influential in capitalist countries in the prosperous 1960s. The depression of the 1970s, however, brought a somewhat less optimistic ideology.[12] This had direct repercussions on the educational expenditure of several countries with market economy: in Switzerland, for example, the expenditure went on increasing in the 1970s and 1980s, too, but at a lower rate than in the "golden sixties".[13] I fully agree with Swedish sociologist Gunnar Adler-Karlsson in that both the optimism of the 1950s–1960s and the pessimism of the 1970s–1980s were exaggerated.[14] In the so-called socialist countries, however, the efficiency of the educational system proved to be low, despite being carefully regulated. In any case, extensive employment of educated labour was not accompanied by a similarly rapid economic growth.[15]

In the Soviet Union pedagogy, as well as studies of social and economic problems related to the educational system, were not well funded. The effects of financial shortage (a problem often discussed by Western educationalists, too) were aggravated by some other impediments characteristic of the Soviet empire, such as, for example, a fear to come up with new ideas. It prevailed up to the mid-1950s, causing social paralysis. Later the situation improved, but some spheres, such as for example, studies of applied didactics lacked full academic freedom right until the end of the Soviet Union.[16]

It is complicated to measure the contribution of educational progress to economic growth. And yet, schooling expenditure remains one of the most important investments to human development. The influence of intellectuals on economic growth is mediated by the economic policy of the ruling regime. In the Soviet Union decisions – not only general political ones, but often also those applying to practical work – would be made on rather high level. Such practice would inhibit the creative ability and responsibility of the intellectuals, forcing them into the category of underlings, shared by industrial and farm workers.

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[11] **Tartu, Ü.** Ühiskond ja haridus. – Haridus, 1990, 1, 8.

[12] See **Collins, R.** The Credential Society. An Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification. Academic Press, New York, 1979.

[13] Bildungsmosaik Sweiz. Bundesamt für Statistik. Bern, 1992, 26.

[14] **Adler-Karlsson, G.** Koulu – püsäköimispaikka terpeettomille vai tie sisäiseen avartumiseen? Tammi, Helsinki, 1983, 52.

[15] **Sirk, V.** Hariduskriis Nõukogude Eestis. – Acta Historica Tallinnensia, 2005, **9**, 235–256.

[16] **Nagel, V.** Hariduspoliitika ja üldhariduskorraldus Eestis aastatel 1940–1991. (Tallinna Ülikooli sotsiaalteaduste dissertatsioonid, 22.) TLÜ Kirjastus, Tallinn, 2006, 73, 76.

INTELLIGENTSIA AS THE PROFESSIONAL MIDDLE CLASS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Many sociologists place intelligentsia in the middle class and define it more precisely as "the professional middle class", thus making a clear difference from workers as well as from businessmen. That class played an important role in the mollification or abolition of autoritarian regimes, and in the emergence and stabilization of liberal democracies.[17] Soviet intelligentsia is usually not referred to as "professional middle class". This seems an aftermath of Soviet social studies, ardently opposing the definition of intellectuals as a class. In the first phase of communism (the so-called socialist society) intelligentsia was meant to exist as an intermediate stratum alongside workers and collective farmers. Intellectuals were not supposed to have interests of their own or aims different from those of workers and collective farmers, while everyone had to align themselves with "the working class as the leading force of the society". In the higher phase of the communist society, however, all classes were to disappear, together with the intermediate layer.[18] Speculating on that utopian vision of the future, we may guess that the intellectuals were to lose a lot, including an opportunity to devote themselves entirely to congenial work. Creative intellectuals were expected to commit themselves to the so-called productive labour, while creative efforts were obviously meant to acquire a hobby status. According to Karl Marx: "Modern industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of to-day..., by the fully developed individual, fit for variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers."[19] At the same place he refers to a 17th-century author John Bellers, according to whom "Bodily labour, it's a primitive institution of God". Eastern Marxist literature sometimes refers to the possible emergence of a nationwide intelligentsia: "*Je mehr sich jedoch die menschliche Gesellschaft ihrer Vollendung im Kommunismus nähert je größer der Anteil der Intelligenz an der Bevölkerung, desto näher sind Wir dem großen Ziel einer das ganze Volk umfassenden sich voll entwickelnden Intelligenz*."[20] The idea was not only utopian, but also paradoxical, as several capitalist countries of the time were closer to that ultimate social goal than the Soviet Union, let alone most of its satellites.

Nowadays many non-Marxist scholars favour a more liberal definition of a social class: a social group with a similar social-economic status, whose members

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[17] **Zakaria, F.** The Future of Freedom. Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2003, 72.

[18] Filosoofia leksikon. Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1965, 447.

[19] **Marx, K.** Capital; **Marx, K., Engels, F.** Manifesto of the Gommunist Party. (Great Books of the Western World, 50.) William Benton, Publisher, Encyclopaedia Britannica INC., Chicago, 1952, 240–241.

[20] **Kuczynski, J.** Die Intelligenz. Studien zur Soziologie und Geschichte ihrer Groβen. Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1987, 324.

share certain attributes or interests.[21] Classes are regarded neither as bricks in the wall nor as hostile legions lined up for battle. Class is rather understood as a set of people possessing capital in similar quantities and combinations. Notably, this capital need not be merely economic, but it may well be "cultural capital" in Bourdieu's terms (education, prestige, etc.).[22] Consequently, class membership is also defined by way of life and particularly (in my opinion) by behaviour.[23] This enables the people who are engaged in complicated mental work and sell their knowledge or mental production, to be described collectively as a class. Modern sociology acknowledges – despite controversies over the theory of class – at least three major classes: upper, working (or lower) and middle.[24] The main difference between the Soviet intellectuals and the traditional middle class was pecuniary: the living standard of most of the intellectuals did not differ much from that of workers and collective farmers, while the income of certain privileged worker categories and wealthy collective farmers considerably exceeded that of an ordinary intellectual.

And yet the term "professional middle class" is not empty of content. On the contrary, it distinguishes the mass of wage earning intelligentsia (teachers, physicians, engineers etc.) from the highly educated members of the powerful elite (top nomenclatura). It may also cover a wider stratum of creative intellectuals (scientists, scholars, university lecturers, writers etc.), excluding perhaps some artists particularly favoured by the potentates, and the mediatory top scientists. Soviet nomenclatura was not without highly educated people, and their numbers increased as the collapse of the empire drew nearer. Like M. Djilas, Western sovietologist M. Voslenski describes the Soviet ruling stratum as a new class of "declassed" people.[25] The term "middle class" gives quite an apt description of the position of intelligentsia in the community – its more active members rising to the elite (economic as well as political), the less able ones slipping down to join less qualified workers. On status groups level (defined by job prestige and cultural requirements), the intellectuals should in turn be distinguished from the working or lower class as well as from the less educated middle class (small producers, small proprietors etc.).[26]

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[21] **Cathal, J. N.** The Longman Quide to World Affairs. Institute of International Relations University of British Columbia, Longman Publishers, USA, 1995, 64.

[22] **Adamson, W. L.** Marxism and historical thought. – In: A Companion to Western Historical Thought. Eds L. Kramer, S. Maza. Blackwell Publishers, Malden, Mass., 2000, 218.

[23] Modern scientists declare that "the upper-middle class historically has been the responsible backbone of the community because of its civic participation and its support of cultural affairs": **Bensman, J., Vidich, A.** The new class system and its life-styles. – In: The New Middle Classes. Life-Styles, Status Claims and Political Orientations. Ed. A. Vidich. New York University Press, New York, 1995, 267.

[24] The New Encyclopædia Britannica, 10. Micropædia. Ready Reference. Founded 1768. 15th Edition. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, 1998, 919.

[25] **Восленский М.** Номенклатура. – Новый мир, 1990, 6, 230.

[26] About distribution of the middle class to the new middle class (managers, salaried professionals etc.) and the old middle class (farmers, businessmen, free professionals): **Mills, C. W.** The new middle class, I. – In: The New Middle Classes, 189–202.

Soviet intelligentsia was a middle class also by its mental characteristics. The authorities were aware that intellectuals cannot be controlled using exactly the same methods as with workers and collective farmers: in KGB there was a special department to keep an eye on the intellectuals and to "work" them personally. Therefore, an intellectual had to tread even more carefully than a worker, practising double morals and cultivating bihevioural bilinguism.[27] More than a worker he had to consider the consequences of his or her word or deed in a totalitarian country. All this cultivated restraint, precaution and deliberation, all so typical of Estonian intellectuals. Moreover, those traits were characteristic of the Estonian people in general, while it was, after all, the intellectuals who formed its firm backbone after the Estonian state and civic structures had been wiped out in the 1940s. The authorities were not able to regulate social and national-cultural functioning of the intelligentia quite to the same extent as its activity in the administrative and economic spheres. In the Estonian SSR, like in the rest of small Soviet republics that lacked the opportunities to develop political life while its administrative and economic spheres were firmly subordinated to Moscow, the cultural sphere acquired a special place as the last pillar of national identity. The local political as well as economic elites being rather inefficient, people's respect and interest belonged first and foremost to cultural figures (writers, musicians, scholars, artists, actors etc.). Most of the ethnic Estonians living in the Estonian SSR (in 1989 963,281 people, 61.5% of the population) may be regarded as a national community with its own specific aims, of which the central one was a vernacular school prizing national culture.[28] This was the educational ideology supported by most parents, as well as teachers and – within possible limits – even some representatives of the top nomenclatura, such as Ferdinand Eisen, minister of education of the Estonian SSR from 1960–1980.

The official aim and public task of the Soviet school was communist education as "the formation of such members of the socialist and communist society who are politically aware, free from relics of the past, and developed in every way".[29] However, "communist education" remained an abstract notion never really explained in detail by top ideologists. According to Peeter Kreitzberg the aim of teaching and educating young people was one of the least elaborated problems in

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[27] **Boobbyer, P.** Truthtelling, conscience and dissent in late Soviet Russia: evidence from oral histories. – European History, 2000, **30**, 4, 553.

[28] "In Estonia in the sixties /.../ and in the seventies there emerged a specific subculture, something which utilizing the terminology of Elemer Hanskiss can be called a "second society". The "first society" – the official frame installed by Moscow – and the "second society" (which formally did not exist) built two different organizational principles in the state-socialist society. The second society was a specific sphere to maintain opposition.": **Ruutsoo, R.** Civil society and nation building in Estonia and the Baltic States. Impact of traditions on mobilization and transition 1986–2000 – historical and sociological study. (Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis, 49.) Rovaniemi, 2002, 162–163.

[29] Filosoofia leksikon, 207.

Soviet pedagogy.[30] Ideological confusion on the highest level and the deficiency of pedagogical research enabled Estonian schoolteachers and university professors to educate the would-be intellectuals of Estonia a little more according to their own principles. So, with utmost caution and under cover some national and anti-totalitarian spirit could be passed on to the students.

In the Soviet Union all social wealth was controlled and distributed by top-level party bureaucrats. This was easier with material products. The mental wealth created by intellectuals was, however, more universal, not subject to ownership, and its relations with the authorities were less distinct. It was also more difficult to gauge, in particular since the mid-1950s when the Stalinist Procrustean bed came to be used less often for the works of writers, artists and scholars. All this gave Soviet intelligentsia a special status to be reckoned with by the post-Stalinist policy.[31] Yet this did not mean a surrender of the ideology deliberately belittling the role of intelligentsia in the community.

Some social studies signalled an alarming fact – as a rule, the intellectuals did not particularly care to assume leadership.[32] They just avoided shouldering responsibility in a situation where the rights of a leader were really quite limited. In a sound society the young members of the professional middle class are expected to feel a strong urge to rise socially. Paradoxically, many Soviet people with higher education preferred working class jobs, often for higher wages.

FORMATION OF MASS INTELLIGENTSIA

By the final third of the 20th century illiteracy had been practically abolished in Europe (incl. the Soviet Union). From that time on literacy rates have ceased to be an appropriate measure to compare the level of culture and modernization of different countries. This is why high level schooling, i.e. the spread and accessibility of tertiary education has become one of the most important indicators of the educational level of a society.

Thus, the following discussion of mass intelligentsia is based on this feature as it is objective and can be measured relatively easily.

In the 19th century the number of university-educated people in Estonia was so small that in the general structure of the society they could be considered a marginal group. According to the all-Russian census of 1897 the number of people with a university background was merely 2853 (2794 male and 59 female).

[30] **Kreitzberg, P.** (author-comp.). Õppe-kasvatustöö eesmärkide klassifitseerimise ja konkretiseerimise psühholoogilis-metoodilised lähtekohad. Metoodiline materjal õpetajatele. Eesti NSV Haridusministeerium, Tallinn, 1987, 19.

[31] For more detail see **Sirk, V.** Edasi, selg ees! Stalini-järgsete aastate haritlaspoliitika kahest tahust. – Tuna, 2004, 4, 49–50.

[32] **Metsa, A.** Aus karjäär vajab eeldusi, tingimusi ja hoobi. – Põllumajandus, 1990, 4, 28.

The total made up 0.4% of the population older than 10 years (0.8% of males, 0.0% of females).[33] The importance of that small group was naturally much bigger, in some spheres, indeed, indispensable. However, there were other massive spheres having practically no contact with the highly educated (handicraft, most of agriculture, petty trade, part of transport and building).

The freshly independent Estonia (1918) stood in great need of intellectuals to man its state organs. According to the census of 1922 the number of people with some experience of higher education was 9857, which makes 1.2% of the population over ten years old. Of those, 4178 were university graduates, while 395 had higher special education.[34] According to the second census (1934) of the Estonian Republic, 7437 of its inhabitants (5988 male and 1449 female) had a higher education certificate. As for the more than 10 years old population, 0.8% had passed a full course, while 1.1% had partial higher education.[35] The percentage of the highly educated showed that Estonia was still a long way from the world's leading countries. In the USA, for example, 4.6% of the people aged over 25 had graduated at least from a four-year college by 1940.[36] Nevertheless, independent Estonia had good prospects for making educational progress. This is proved by the relatively high number of Estonian university students at the time, surpassing the corresponding indicator of several civilized countries, including its neighbouring Finland.[37]

Second World War, bringing about the invasion and annexation by two totalitarian states (the Soviet Union and Nazi-Germany), had catastrophic consequences for the Estonian people, while the highest toll was taken from the local elite and intellectuals. After the battles of WW II on the Estonian territory were over (autumn 1944), a mere couple of thousand people with higher education were estimated to have remained in their native country.[38] The post-war years were not favourable for the development of intelligentsia either. Only after the death of Stalin (1953), Estonia was relieved of mass repression, the CPSU cultural and intellectuals policy grew more flexible, the cultural life brisked up and the number of Estonian intellectuals began to increase. According to the all-Union census of 1959 there were 25,183 people with higher education in the Estonian SSR.[39] The census of 1970 yielded a count of 54,776 people with higher education, while by 1979 their number had grown to 92,630 and in 1989

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[33] Rahva demograafiline koosseis ja korteriolud Eestis. 1922. a. üldrahvalugemise andmeid, I. Eesti Riikline Statistika, Tallinn, 1924, 46.

[34] Rahva demograafiline koosseis ja korteriolud Eestis, 43, 46, 89.

[35] **Karjahärm, T., Sirk, V.** Vaim ja võim. Eesti haritlaskond 1917–1940. Argo, Tallinn, 2001, 21.

[36] Social Change in America. The Historical Handbook 2006. Bernan Press, Lanham, MD, 221.

[37] **Karjahärm, T., Sirk, V.** Vaim ja võim, 48, 50.

[38] **Helemäe, J. et al.** Kas haridusse tasus investeerida? Hariduse selekteerivast ja stratifitseerivast rollist kahe põlvkonna kogemuste alusel. Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, Tallinn, 2000, 193.

[39] Итоги всесоюзной переписи населения 1959 года. Эстонская ССР. Госстатиздат ЦСУ СССР, Москва, 1962, 22.

to 142,286, which was 5.7 times more than 30 years earlier.[40] In the Estonia of 1934 only one of every 128 people (aged ten or over) had higher education, while by 1959 the rate was one to 40, increasing to one to 21 by 1970, one to 13 by 1979 and one to 9 by 1989. During 55 years (1934–1989) the population of the highly educated increased 19 times. Due to the war and the atrocities committed by the foreign rule in Estonia, as well as in the other two Baltic countries, the growth vector acquired the form of a reversed arch.

The entwinement of science and technology, the fusion of research and development into a powerful productive force, an extremely fast expansion of post-industrial production with high requirements of research information caused an explosive growth of the number of intellectuals all over the world. So the intelligentsia became a salient layer besides the working class also in quantitative terms. Thus, in 1988 the number of workers among the productive personnel of the Estonian industry was 187,100,[41] which exceeded the number of the highly educated by a mere 45,000. As for the collective farmers their number was more than two times less than that of the highly educated. Those numbers reveal that the official version of the intelligentsia being an "intermediate layer" at the side of workers and collective farmers was absurd. The intelligentsia growing comparable to the major classes in numbers might serve as another argument to justify the term "professional middle class".

Sometimes the intelligentsia having recently leaped in numbers is called "mass intelligentsia". However, having found no quantitative specification of the term, the author of the present paper has attempted to suggest one.[42] Actually there seem to be two feasible criteria: either one highly educated person per ten adults, or one highly educated person per ten employees. According to the first criterion the Estonian intelligentsia reached a mass stage at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. From the employees' point of view there was one highly educated person per 28 employees in Estonia in 1959, one per 14 in 1970, one per nine in 1979, and one per seven in 1989. Thus the second criterion would shift the critical point to the 1970s, which is but a couple of years earlier. In the Soviet Union there were 11 employees per one with a higher education at the end of the 1970s, and eight per one in 1987.[43]

Yet why the rate 1 : 10? It is because 5–10 people have been considered an optimal number of people to be controlled effectively by one person. Subdivisions of ten have been found useful in group management and passing on information since a very distant past (cf. Latin *decanus*, Est. *kümnik,* defined as "older foreman of ten or so workers").[44] In the Estonian SSR the smallest unit of a production

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[40] Eesti rahvastik rahvaloenduste andmetel, I. Eesti Statistikaamet, Tallinn, 1995, 176–177.

[41] Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1988. aastal, 86.

[42] **Sirk, V.** Massiharitlaskonnast ja haritlaspoliitikast 1970.–1980. aastate Eestis. – Tuna, 2006, 2, 37–41.

[43] Население СССР 1987. Статистический сборник. Финансы и статистика, Москва, 1988, 97.

[44] **Saareste, A.** Eesti keele mõisteline sõnaraamat, I. Vaba Eesti, Stockholm, 1958, 139.

organization was a brigade. In 1988 a brigade in industry consisted of 13.5 workers on average, while in civil engineering the number was 11.2 and in housing and communal economy 9.4.[45]

By the 1970s Estonia had reached a situation where practically the whole population (even those working in the field or stables of a collective or state farm, in a kindergarden, a small village school, or a village centre) had some direct contacts with people having higher education. Estonian families were small: in 1959 the average number of family members living together was merely 3.1.[46] The rate 1 : 10 between the highly educated and the population aged at least ten meant that almost every family must have had a close relative with higher education. In a community that had reached the stage of mass intelligentsia, a university graduate would separate him/herself less from people without an academic background than before. Due to that the personality traits of an intellectual grew even more influential, in particular their interests, opinions, attitudes and value orientations developed in an academic environment. Thus the intelligentsia pervaded all spheres of life, exercising an ever growing influence on such mass phenomena as public opinion, mentality, etc. The whole community was aware of the example set by intellectuals, their way of thinking and acting.[47]

In parallel with the formation of mass intelligentsia it is interesting to follow how the proportion of people with higher education changed in such job groups as managers and top specialists. In 1985 the number of filled managerial positions in Estonia was 66, 900. Although there were enough people with higher education to fill most of those positions, their actual proportion was 44.5% (29,800).[48] The percentage showed no rise towards the end of the century either, being 43% in 1999. The transition from command economy to market economy was even accompanied by a slight drop in the average manager educational level, which was probably due to the mass emergence of small companies.[49] In addition, the educational level of the managers was influenced by the peculiarities of the old and new economic systems, the requirements of the economic situation, and politics. A more adequate reflection of the tendencies of intellectuals' development can be observed in top specialists, in which job group the percentage of the highly educated was 57% in 1989 and 68% in 1999. As the Estonian SSR approached the stage of mass intelligentsia the percentage of people with higher education

[45] Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1988. aastal, 69.

[46] Итоги всесоюзной переписи населения 1959 года, 100–101.

[47] Possibly, university as an institution not even a thousand years old need not develop the innate nonverbal aspect (primitive empathy, synchrony etc.) of a person's social intelligence. See **Goleman, D.** Sotsiaalne intelligentsus. Tarkus suhetes. – Väike Vanker, 2007, 426–429. Yet it has been proved by cognitive psychology that the social cognition and knowledge acquired on higher levels of education have an immense role in social communication.

[48] **Roots, H., Vöörmann, M.** Eesti NSV juhtiva kaadri arengusuundi. Eesti NSV Ühing Teadus, Tallinn, 1987, 10–11.

[49] Eesti inimarengu aruanne 2001. Tallinna Pedagoogikaülikool, Rahvusvaheliste ja Sotsiaaluuringute Instituut, Tallinn, 2001, 54–55.

among top leaders and top specialists exceeded 50%. In Estonian industry, for example, more than half of the directors could boast higher education by the 1970s, while the same had applied to the chief engineers since the 1960s.[50]

The Soviet system was conducive to the formation of an intelligentsia with a homogeneous educational level. A graduate received a diploma proving competence in a speciality, but not a scientific or scholarly degree. There were two of the latter: candidate's and doctoral, both to be confirmed in Moscow. Relatively few were considered eligible for a degree, as gradation of intellectuals was not regarded favourably. In 1990 there were 333 doctors (4.7% of all researchers) in Estonia.[51] This was not many, considering the fact that from 1919–1938 156 doctoral diplomas had been awarded by the University of Tartu alone.[52] Yet from 1950–1990 the number of researchers increased from 1221 to 7150 (5.9 times) in Estonia.[53] In 1990 the number of candidates in Estonia was 2467 (35% of all researchers). Too many university graduates never developed their scholarly ability as there was little active stimulation on the part of the government, considering its research and staff policies.

SOME COMPARATIVE DATA

The massive flight to the West in the autumn of 1944 and the post-war Stalinist atrocities discontinued the development of the Estonian, as well as Latvian and Lithuanian intelligentsia. The resulting gap was filled by numerous intellectuals from Russia, who had either received a special job or who arrived in the hope of better living conditions. The latter included some descendants of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian expatriates who had emigrated from the Baltics in tsarist times. Their background included Soviet schooling and intimidation by the Great Terror of the 1930s. Now they were used as tools for a quick and brutal Sovietization to be carried out in the Baltic republics.

In post-war years many graduates of Estonian higher educational establishments were despatched to work in Russia. In 1959 the proportion of ethnic Estonians among the local intelligentsia was 63.9%, but 74.6% of the total population. Since the Khrushchev Thaw, sending of graduates from Estonian higher schools to Russia decreased considerably. Russian immigrants, however, continued flooding in, including numerous intellectuals. In 1989 the percentage of Estonians in local intelligentsia was 57.0%, which was less than their proportion (61.5%) in total population. Thus the average educational level of the Russians living in Estonia had become higher than that of Estonians.[54] This may seem like classical colonialism

[50] **Graf, M.** (comp.). Tallinna Polütehniline Instituut 1936–1986. Valgus, Tallinn, 1986, 126.

[51] Eesti entsüklopeedia (EE), 11. Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, Tallinn, 2002, 483.

[52] **Lepp, A.** Tartu Ülikool 1938. a. – Eesti Statistika, 1939, 217 (7), 398.

[53] **Martinson, K.** Teadlane ja teaduslik publikatsioon Eesti NSV-s. Eesti NSV Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn, 1973, 5; EE, 11, 483.

[54] **Karjahärm, T., Sirk, V.** Kohanemine ja vastupanu, 34–37.

where, as a rule, the colonists are more educated than the aborigines. One should not forget, however, that with Russian colonialism the situation could have been different in the Western areas – the Baltic Germans as the most educated minority in Russia and the almost total literacy of Estonians in the early 20th century. The 1970 all-Union census, too, reveals that in the Russian SFSR the number of people (aged 10 or over) with higher education was 44 per one thousand, while in Estonia the number was 47 (42 in the Soviet Union on average). As to different union republics the relevant numbers differed considerably, being, for example, 73 in Georgia, 46 in Latvia, 35 in Lithuania, and 29 in Moldavia.[55] True, the whole official statistics of the Soviet Union should be taken with a grain of salt. The readers are especially warned of the relevant publications of different republics having been compiled on different principles, which makes the data tricky to compare.[56] This may seem paradoxical, considering the general trend for centralization and unification so typical of the Soviet Union.

In the first half of the 1970s nearly 70–90% of the soviet school leavers wished to continue their education at a higher eductional establishment, but actually only one in three could make it.[57] Admission was kept down deliberately, although the educational level of the working population (10 years of schooling on average) lagged behind what was considered adequate for developed countries (12–14 years). The trouble was that too many workers were still doing unskilled manual work, which limited purposeful employment of the highly educated. In countries with a more stable history the increase of intelligentsia was smoother than in Estonia, lacking catastrophic drops and being in better harmony with the gradual rise of the mental requirements of work. As was mentioned above, by 1940 4.6% of the US adult population had experienced at least 4 years of college. Since then the percentage of the highly educated has kept growing in the USA: 6.2% in 1950; 8.9% in 1962; 9.8% in 1966; 11.0% in 1970; 13.9% in 1975; 17.0% in 1980; 21.3% in 1990.[58] The United States reached the stage of mass intelligentsia in 1967, when the above index equalled 10.1%. Estonian economist Juhan Teder revealed some interesting comparative data about educational level in the USA (1987) and in Estonia (1989). In the 25–29 age group 22.0% had certified higher education in the USA and 17.4% in Estonia; in the 30–34 age group these indices were respectively 25.8 and 19.3, in the 35–44 age group 26.5 and 18.1; in the 45–54 age group 19.5 and 15.1.[59]

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[55] Итоги всесоюзной переписи населения 1970 года, III. Уровень образования населения СССР, союзных и автономных республик, краев и областей. Статистика, Москва, 1972, 6–7, 14–15, 18–21, 28–29.

[56] See NSV Liit. Teatmik. Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1993, 13.

[57] **Koop, A.** Kommunistliku kasvatuse teooria ja praktika probleeme. – Eesti Kommunist, 1974, 12, 18.

[58] Social Change in America, 221.

[59] **Teder, J.** Teel turumajandusse – kellega?, 2. – Tehnika ja Tootmine, 1990, 11.

In Finland in 1981 there was one person with higher education per 12.63 adults, in 1991 per 9.84 adults (aged 15 or over).[60] An exceptionally high educational level characterized Sweden in the 1990s: "According to 1991 statistics, nearly one fourth of the Swedish labor force aged 25–64 had some form of higher education, while about three fourths had completed at least upper secondary school. International comparisons are difficult, but on the whole, Sweden appears to be above the OECD average in terms of educational level. /…/ During the 1994/95 academic year, nearly 300,000 students were enrolled at Swedish institutions of higher education, which are almost all state-owned. This represents a major increase as in 1989 the number was only slightly above 200,000. Of these students, 60% are women, but among graduate students the proportion is only 35%."[61] In quantitative terms Swedish mass intelligentsia was ahead of Estonia, where the percentage of people with higher education among the 813,900 employed in national economy was 13.0% (106, 000).[62] In Austria in 1991 there lived 6,438,980 inhabitants (aged 15 or over). The number of tertiary level (*Hochschule*) graduates was 258,486, while 73,286 people had education comparable with high school (*Hochschulverwandte Ausbildung*). The total being 331,772 we get one highly educated person per 19.4 inhabitants. Consequently, according to our criteria Austria, however developed and wealthy an industrial country, had not developed a mass intelligentsia by that time.

While studying the percentage of people with academic background one should keep in mind that Soviet higher schools typically featured a high rate of in-time graduates. In Switzerland, however, only slightly more than half of a hundred students who had started attending higher school in 1979 acquired an academic degree by 1990, while about ten percent got a non-academic degree and over 30% were dismissed without graduation.[63] As Switzerland is particularly specific in its definition of academic education one should be particularly cautious attempting comparison with the Soviet Union (incl. the Estonian SSR). In the community university non-graduates make up a group who have experienced academic atmosphere, but do not qualify as top intellectuals, or even intellectuals. And yet they have their role in the formation of the social atmosphere. In addition, their studies, however short-lived, must still contribute something to the general accumulation of educational capital of the community.

Considering the young peoples' thirst for education, their economic situation, and the general need of a rapid growth of material as well as intellectual wealth, the advanced capitalist countries put in a lot of effort to develop their systems of tertiary education in the 1960s and 1970s. The socialist countries could not or

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[60] Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja 1993. Tilastokeskus, Helsinki, 1993, 424; Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja, 1983. Tilastokeskus, Helsinki, 1984, 14–15.

[61] **Johnsson, H.-I.** Spotlight on Sweden. The Country and Its People. Swedish Institute, Värnamo, 1995, 188–190.

[62] Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1988. aastal, 213, 219.

[63] Bildungmosaik Schweiz. Bundesamt für Statistik. Bern, 1992, 49.

would compete.[64] Soviet ideologists argued that in the West the importance of educational investments were overestimated.[65] In Estonia there were 16,005 day-time students in 1981; by 1985 their number had dropped to 14,145.[66] East-German Marxist author Jürgen Kuczynski points out that the beginning of the 1950s brought about a gradual removal of the class barriers on the way to higher education, which was due to competition among the capitalist countries and their need to survive in running race with the socialist camp. His data concern young people aged 18–21 in the USA: in 1946 that age group included 22.1% of higher school students; in 1951 that percentage was 24.0%; in 1956 – 33.5%; in 1961 – 37.7%; in 1966 – 46.1%.[67] According to Kuczynski this proves that the ruling class privilege of higher education had collapsed. He adds that the difference between the USA and the Soviet Union lay in the fact that the latter experienced an analogous development much earlier, while its motives were socio-political, whereas the States was forced to follow the same course by an urgent need for scientists after World War II.[68] Actually, abolition of inequality in the Soviet way meant that a new and more rigorous inequality was established. This cannot have been unknown to Kuczynski, as the practice of closing university doors in the face of the descendants of "politically untrustworthy" parents (e.g. those with clergy connections) was familiar to East Germans.[69]

The 1970s and 1980s brought a period of stagnation for the Soviet Union, Estonia included. Thus in Estonia the student population for the academic year 1970/71 was 22,078 (12,215 of them in daytime departments), growing to 25,472 (15,871) by 1980/81, yet decreasing to 23,364 (14,242) by 1987/88.[70] The World Bank data reveal that in 1990 the tertiary enrolment rate (measures the proportion of the population in the 18–24 age group that is actually enrolled in the tertiary education institution) was in the United States 75.2%, in Finland 48.9%, in France 39.6%, in Germany 33.9%, in United Kingdom 30.2%, in Estonia 26.0%, in Hungary 14.0%.[71] By these data Soviet Estonian lagged well behind the USA but yet remained in the general picture of European education.

CONTRASTS OF THE 1990S

At the end of the 1980s the Soviet Union lost control over its East-European satellites and in 1991 the superpower collapsed. A new page was turned in the history of many a dependent country and of 15 nations even without a formal

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64 **Hobsbawm**, **E.** Äärmuste ajastu. Lühike 20. sajand 1914–1991. Varrak, Tallinn, 2002, 328.

65 Социология и современность, 1. Наука, Москва, 1977, 244.

66 **Rajangu, V.** Kõrgharidus. – In: EE, 11, 458.

67 **Kuczynski, J.** Die Intelligenz, 305.

68 Ibid., 304.

69 **Bedürftig, F.** Lexikon Deutschland nach 1945, 1. Auflage. Carlsen, Hamburg, 1996, 62.

70 Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1988. aastal, 319.

71 Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challanges for Tertiary Education. The World Bank, Washington, D. C., 2002, 47, 185.

independence. A new notion emerged – transition countries. That is where a new educational life emerged, free and independent of the Kremlin control.

In developing countries the final decades of the 20th century brought a considerable development of tertiary education, which is also true of several transition countries. On the worldwide scale, between 1970 and the end of the 1980s the enrolment rate in the 18–23 age group rose from 8.5 to 13.5 per cent, but these rates stood at 36.8 per cent in the developed countries against only 8.3 per cent in developing countries.[72] It turned out that the enrolment and distribution gap between the developed countries of the OECD on the one hand, and the developing ones, as well as those in the process of rerarranging their social life on the other, showed no considerable decrease. Supplying higher education *en masse* was no easy matter for wealthy countries either. In the final quarter of the 20th century some alarming tendencies appeared in the USA, notably, public high schools (especially in big cities) failed in competition with private schools. Neither did the standard of public universities (except for the best funded dozen) compare with the progress made by big private universities.[73] And yet the educational capital continued growing. In 1980 the tertiary enrolment rate in the United States was 55 per cent, whereas the average for developing countries was 5 per cent. In 1995 the rates were 81 for the United States and 9 per cent for developing countries.[74]

In Great Britain, too, higher education gradually advanced: in 1985 there were 1824 university students per 100, 000 inhabitants (21.7% of the relevant age group), while by 1995 the student rate had grown to 3126 (48.3%). Analogous rise was noticeable in Denmark, Spain and some other countries of Western Europe.[75]

As for the countries that had separated from the former Soviet Union, Estonia showed remarkable progress: the 1985 rate of 1625 university students per 100,000 inhabitants grew to 2670 by 1995 (from 24.2% to 38.1% of the relevant age group, respectively). The dynamics of the numbers of higher school students in Estonia was as follows: 1991 – 24,880; 1997 – 30,072; 2000 – 49,574; 2001 – 56,437.[76] The growing demand in education elicited extensive supply, which entailed some worrying problems as well: in 1999 5% (2% in 1989) of the unqualified workers and 6% of the jobless had higher education.[77] A slight rise in student numbers was observed in Latvia, whereas Lithuania suffered a backlash: within ten years the 2713 per 100,000 inhabitants rate of 1985 decreased to 2023. Georgia as an ancient Christian country was dominated by educational optimism, resulting in high percentages (36.7% in 1990, 42.0% in 1996) of university students of the relevant

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72 **Mayor, F.** Memory of the Future. Challenges Series. UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 1995, 30–31.

73 **Hodgson, G.** The American century. – In: The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture. Ed. C. Bigsby. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, 49.

74 Constructing Knowledge Societies, 46–47.

75 World Education Report 1998. Teachers and Teaching in a Changing World. UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 1998, 148–151.

76 EE, 11, 458.

77 Eesti inimarengu aruanne 2001, 55.

age group. The Islamic Azerbaijan, however, suffered a backlash, the respective rates being 24.2% and 14.4%.[78]

Enrolment rate had decreased slightly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The regional average marked very different trends. Rapid growth had occurred in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, where enrolment rates in the beginning of the 21st century were in the 20–30 per cent range, but the levels were stagnant or decreasing in such countries as Tajikistan (9 per cent) and Uzbekistan (5 per cent).[79]

CONCLUSION

The destiny of the Soviet Union demonstrated that the mere existence of a professional middle class was insufficient to guarantee innovation and success in economy. Appropriate political conditions would also have been necessary. The Soviet economy was characterized by a large proportion of simple physical work, a slow growth and, as a rule, low competitiveness of the product. Those flaws did not go unnoticed by the social studies of the time, being partly recognized even by the CPSU. At the same time the Party emphasized the extremely fast increase of the number of Soviet engineers, which was unprecedented in the whole world. The inability of the CPSU and the Soviet administration to use the numerous highly educated intelligentsia effectively was due to excessive centralization, planned (command) economy, and deep distrust of social self-regulation. As a result, the scientific and technological revolution was retarded. While the educational ideology of capitalist countries emphasized agreement between supply and demand, national planning was the primary tenet in the Soviet Union.

The influence of the intelligentsia on economic growth is not direct, but is mediated by social relations and national economic policy. Economics cannot give a precise measure of the efficiency of education. If, however, mass intelligentsia coexists with stagnating economy, it means that intellectuals cannot make full use of their creative abilities either in scientific research, or in technology or economy. And yet it would be wrong to say that Soviet intellectuals had no influence on the society whatsoever. It was manifested clearly in culture, educational system, the general impression of life. The ubiquitous mass intelligentsia complemented the basic common sense of the people with elements of theoretical thinking[80] and set a behavioural example.

The policy of intellectuals of the Communist Party was controversial, being both appreciative and restrictive. There was an extensive system of tertiary education and the intelligentsia reached a mass stage earlier than in many a wealthy capitalist country. However, the broad masses of the highly educated were not stimulated

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[78] World Education Report 2000. The Right to Education: Towards Education for all Throughout Life. UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 2000, 156–158.

[79] Constructing Knowledge Societies, 47.

[80] See in more detail **Tulviste, P.** Mõtlemise muutumisest ajaloos. Valgus, Tallinn, 1984, 53–77, 122.

materially. Even if the everyday life of an intellectual happened to look better than that of an average worker, this resulted, first and foremost, from the cultural level, reasonable lifestyle and behaviour of the former rather than from his income. It was forbidden to analyse the intelligentsia as a separate social force, while "professional middle class", which is a broader term than "job group", "profession" or "status group", was dismissed as unacceptable. Alarmingly, an important part of the middle class – the highly educated – were relatively little motivated to rise socially by becoming leaders. The opposite tendency to join the working class was relatively popular: in 1989 5.5% of the Estonian specialists with higher education had a working-class job. The inadequate response of the CPSU consisted in a certain limitation of access to higher education, while the communist China launched the "Cultural Revolution" bringing about an almost total extermination of higher education. Although the instrumental function of the intelligentsia (both in production and social relations) was subjected to strict control and guidance from above, its function as a culture carrier and its influence on mass conscience was less dependent. Its positive effect was manifested during the downfall of the Soviet empire, when the intelligentsia, having penetrated to every social structure, set its stamp upon the fate of the nations becoming independent, civilizing political processes and balancing sharp ethnic controversies while the empire was dismantled. As the ruling power weakened, words, symbols and information came in handy as weapons for intellectuals. Those weapons turned out to be particularly effective in the recently quite well educated society (with average schooling of 10 years or more). Thus the intelligentsia turned out to be a real professional middle class in terms of both numbers and social influence. Their treatment as an "intermediate layer" is a vivid example of how Soviet sociology, being ideologically biased, failed to adapt theory to new evidence and the changing reality.

In general, the educational system created and intellectual level achieved by the Soviet Union provided quite a good basis for progress. In the newly independent states, however, tertiary education developed in different ways, depending on tradition, the local cultural environment and vision of the future. Some Western republics, incl. Estonia, tried taking their example from developed capitalist countries. This meant respecting individual values and attending to the needs of the citizen of a modern small state, instead of continuing in the trammels of an imperial educational ideology. The new educational policy with its liberal pursuits (resulting, for example, in a brisk development of the network of private higher schools) was connected with ambitions towards liberal democracy. Russia, which had been the central republic of the Soviet Union, first experienced a downwards trend in tertiary education. But, according to a Russian author, the decline was surprisingly small considering the fact that in most spheres of life higher education did not mean any substantial material gain.[81] The same contradiction appeared

[81] **Nikandrov, N. D.** Russia: system of education. – In: The International Encyclopedia of Education. Second Edition, 9. Eds T. Husén, T. N. Postlethwaite. Pergamon, Oxford, 1994, 5098–5107.

in post-Soviet Estonia, where tertiary education came to be supplied on an unprecedented scale.

The example of Soviet Estonia proves the statement that the aims of education come from those of the society. In the Estonian-language school the aims and ideology of the supranational society (or, to be more exact, a Russian-language Soviet one) being built by the CPSU met with those of the Estonian national community. Most of the graduates of the school became intellectuals who identified themselves with Estonia rather than with the Soviet Union.

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HARIDUSIDEOLOOGIA JA HARITUD KESKKLASS NÕUKOGUDE EESTIS

Väino SIRK

On käsitletud Eesti nõukogudeaegse intelligentsi arenguloo mõningaid tahke, mida omaaegne teadus oli sunnitud vältima või ähmastama: haritlaskonna määratlus ja sellega seotud mõisted, intelligentsi mõju erinevates eluvaldkondades ning Eesti NSV võrdlus läänemaadega.

Turumajandusriikide haridusideoloogia tähtsustab kõrghariduse valdkonnas nõudluse ja pakkumise vastavust, NSV Liidus rõhutati riikliku planeerimise esmasust. NLKP ei käsitlenud haritlaskonda klassina, vaid vahekihina tööliste ja kolhoositalurahva kõrval. Ometi lähenes 1980. aastateks üksnes kõrgharidusega inimeste arv tööstustööliste arvule ja ületas kolhoosiliikmete arvu enam kui kahekordselt. Intelligentsist kui "vahekihist" kõnelemine oli seejuures ilmne anakronism. Artiklis on põhjendatud, miks haritud keskklassi mõiste kasutamine on ka Eesti puhul õigustatud ja otstarbekohane.

NSV Liidu käekäik näitas, et vaid arvuka haritlaskonna olemasolu ei taga majanduse edukust, vajalikud on ka vastavad poliitilised tingimused. NLKP ei suutnud haritlaskonna võimekust majanduse vallas efektiivselt rakendada. Ometi oleks täiesti väär öelda, et intelligentsil puudus ühiskondlik mõju. See avaldus selgelt kultuuris, hariduses ja kogu ühiskonna üldilmes. Haritud keskklassil on kogu maailmas olnud oluline osa autoritaarsete režiimide kõrvaldamisel ja liberaalse demokraatia juurutamisel. Nii oli see ka Eestis 1980.–1990. aastate vahetuse revolutsioonilistes sündmustes, mil haritlaskond tasakaalustas ja inimlikustas poliitilisi protsesse ning etnilisi vastuolusid.