

Committee: Action Paper II

Issue: Education in undemocratic regimes

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Introduction

Whether children are provided with sufficient education in an undemocratic regime is a controversial topic. In most cases, the education that is provided is nonexistent or insufficient. By its nature, an undemocratic regime does not want an educated population and one of the first steps it takes when it comes to power is to change all the teachers and tear the educational system apart. It wants to achieve obedience from the young in order for them to become loyal supporters of the regime. Although there are many cases, Hitler's Germany is a prime example of this, where the kids even spied on their parents if they were non-sympathizers of the regime.

Every undemocratic regime has chosen that path, because if people are well educated they will develop a critical mind and will not believe everything the regime tells them. It does not want to risk rebellious acts, which aim to topple the regime from power. If the people are uneducated, they cannot think about the true purposes of the acts of the regime like the creation of camps for young people in Germany, the ultimate aim of which was to prepare them for war. That is why the regime censors the press and dismisses many teachers, who are not supporters of the ruling party, and publishes propagandistic texts to serve its own interests and create a certain unified mentality.

One common tactic of propaganda is to find a scapegoat to bear the blame for all the problems the population is facing like the Jews in Germany under Hitler or the communists in Spain under Franco.

The problem is that it is hard to break the barrier of propaganda especially in an undemocratic regime, where no one can protest because

the government controls the judicial system and can execute all its adversaries. This problem is not an easy one to solve, because it is hard to initiate bilateral talks with an undemocratic regime, while sometimes the international community does not consider it a major problem even though it should. Only by concrete and measured steps and a common action plan a solution for this problem can be found and certainly not with rash decisions.

Definition of Key Terms:

Regime:¹

In politics, a regime is the form of governing or the set of rules, cultural or social norms, etc. that regulates the operation of a government or institution and its interactions with society. More often than not, the use of the word regime implies that the system is lacking democratic principles.

Undemocratic:²

A system, process, or decision that is undemocratic is one that is controlled or made by one person or a small number of people, rather than by all the persons involved and doesn't comply with the democratic ideals such as the freedom of speech and press.

Dictatorship³

¹ "Regime." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 12 July 2018. Web. 24 July 2018.

² "Undemocratic Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary." Complacent Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2018.

A dictatorship is an authoritarian form of government, characterized by a single leader or group of leaders with either no party or a weak party, little mass mobilization, and limited political pluralism. With the advent of the 19th and 20th centuries, dictatorships and constitutional democracies emerged as the world's two major forms of government, gradually eliminating monarchies, one of the traditional widespread form of government of the time. Typically, in a dictatorial regime, the leader of the country is in essence a dictator. A common aspect that characterizes dictators is that they take advantage of their strong personality, usually by suppressing freedom of thought and speech of the masses, in order to maintain political and social supremacy and stability.

Background Information



Education in Germany under Hitler:

Hitler was elected in 1933 and after a short period, he established a dictatorship, which ended in the loss of the Second World War. Adolf Hitler considered education to be a very important factor in Nazi Germany. The quote “whoever has the youth has

the future” is included in his book “Mein Kampf”, which he wrote while serving a prison sentence at Landsberg.

³ "Undemocratic Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary." Complacent Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2018.

During his time as dictator, one of his main goals was to build an army of loyal supporters consisting of young people. He wanted boys ready for war, and tough to act like soldiers. That is why he organized excursions to camps as part of the educational system for the young students in order to teach them how to shoot with a gun and generally how to behave during a war. Such camps also existed for girls who were taught how to support their future husband and how important it was to give birth to children. He replaced all teachers with sympathizers of his regime. Furthermore, he established a new ministry, the Ministry of Propaganda, which was also responsible for the distribution of books.

The first book a child in Nazi Germany came across after kindergarten was "Primer". On the front cover was a caricature of a Jew with this caption: "Trust no fox on the green heath and no Jew on his oath." Hitler required schools to push national pride and race issues in the lessons taught regardless of the age of the pupils. History became historicism — the study of history for political purposes. Biology was used as a vehicle to promote race ideas, while Physical Education was used to develop a child's physical well-being.

Education in Italy under Mussolini:

Italy's
undemocratic
regime
led by the
dictator
Benito
Mussolini,
who allied
with



Germany in

World War II, had an approach similar to the German educational system. The purpose was to build a nation of soldiers, which would recognize him as the one and only leader. Boys needed to learn how to fight as this was seen as a natural part of man's life. That is why the motto "War is to the male what childbearing is to the ⁴female" existed.

They were encouraged to attend after school organizations, which promoted solidarity and the values the regime wanted young people to learn. There were three organizations, the first was named Sons of the She Wolf and was for the ages 4 to 8, the second one was named Balilla and was for the ages 8 to 14 and the third one had the name Avanguardista and was for the ages 14 to 18. Furthermore, boys took part in semi-military exercises, where they marched and used imitation guns. On the other hand, girls were taught that their purpose was to give birth to a lot of children and take care of them while their husbands were away fighting.

Education in the USSR under Stalin:

The goal of this regime was to boost industrial production and build a strong community, in which the children were indoctrinated with communist beliefs. Education was strictly controlled by the state. In 1932, a rigid program of discipline and education was introduced. Exams, banned under Lenin, were reintroduced. The way subjects were taught was laid down by the government —especially History in which

⁴ Young people in a parade praising their leader Benito Mussolini

Source: "Life in Fascist Italy." History Learning Site. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2018.

Stalin's part in the 1917 Revolution and his relationship to Lenin was overplayed.

Books were strictly censored by the state and Stalin ordered the writing of a new book called "A short history of the USSR" which had to be used in schools. Outside of school, children were expected to join youth organizations such as the Octobrists for 8 to 10 year olds and the Pioneers for the 10 to 16 year olds. At the age of 19 to 23 young people were expected to join the Komsomol. Children were taught how to be good communists, while emphasis was put on outdoor activities and clean living.

Education in China under Mao Zedong:

Mao Zedong, commonly known as Chairman Mao, was a Chinese communist revolutionary who became the founding father of the People's Republic of China, which he ruled as the Chairman of the Communist Party of China from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976. On October 1, 1949, Mao proclaimed the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a single-party state, which was undemocratic.

Mao's main goal through the educational system was to promote communist beliefs. He created the "Four Olds": old culture, old thoughts, old customs and old habits and these values were promoted through the educational system. He replaced the former teachers and bracketed them with the intellectuals as enemies of the Cultural Revolution that he started.

Furthermore, he removed from the educational system all the ideas based on the teachings of Confucius, a famous Chinese philosopher. This was because he thought that with them still in place it was not possible to achieve social equality. Mao's regime aimed for the curriculum to be related to everyday life. He thought children would benefit more if they were working rather than being in classrooms and that is why he reduced the duration of the education period.

However, even though the majority of the population agreed with the reforms, not all the Chinese population supported the abuse and violence as means of change.

Education in Libya under Muammar al-Gaddafi:

⁵Muammar Gaddafi became the leader of Libya on September 1, 1969 after leading a group of young Libyan military officers against King Idris I in a bloodless

coup d'état. After the king had fled the country, the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) headed by Gaddafi



abolished the monarchy and the old constitution and established the Libyan Arab Republic, with the motto "freedom, socialism and unity".

Education was compulsory but also at the same time free of charge. As always, there were some drawbacks, for example the system became centralized and children learned geography and symbols that did not match with international standards.

While, the attendance of children in schools showed an increase from 25% to 87%, this is undermined by accusations that Gadhafi used the system to disseminate his views and strengthen his hold over the country.

North Korea:

⁵ Girls in a Libyan classroom

Source: "Protecting Children's Rights." UNICEF. N.p., 19 May 2014. Web. 24 July 2018.

⁶Formally, North Korea is a democratic republic, but in reality, the situation is very different. In essence, North Korea is a dictatorial regime. It is known that in North Korea, the basic human rights of the citizens are violated and that one of them is education. Although all children have access to education, that does not mean that they learn the truth about the news and the situation in their country. North Korea's education system is very important for all Korean citizens because it is infused with the core of the Korean teachings.

Students in North Korea are taught the communist ideology as well as everything that pertains to the lives of their former



leaders Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung. The subjects taught are also directed towards science and technology in order to enable students to be the future technicians, scientists, and workers that the government can rely on to achieve its goals.

The country's education system is made up of three kinds of schools. The main one is the general school system. The other two schools are schools for continuing education and schools for special purposes. The system focuses a lot on the proliferation of the communist beliefs and on the children's recognition of their leader as the most important person in the world. Children are supposed to learn phrases like "Long live Great Leader Generalissimo Kim Il Sung" before "Hello, how are

⁶ Children in North Korea in school

Source: "Education in North Korea: Exploring School Systems." The Borgen Project. N.p., 31 Oct. 2017. Web. 24 July 2018.

you.”⁷ The purpose of the educational system is not to create creative individuals but followers of the regime.

Every home, every office, every classroom and even every train car features portraits of the first two leaders whose pictures must be cleaned with a special cloth every day. Furthermore, North Korea although it has ratified the ICCPR, it tried to withdraw its signature from the convention.

Countries and Organisations involved

China:

China is the biggest communist state. China is popularly known for blocking world's websites like Google, Facebook, Twitter and many others. As a result, people in China do not have access to the news and to what is happening around the world. Therefore, they are forced to believe what they have been told. Freedom of expression is non-existent in China. If, for example, a “secret” is sent over the internet, it is considered a criminal offence and the person is jailed for two to four years.

Equatorial Guinea:

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo is an Equatoguinean politician who has been President of Equatorial Guinea since 1979. He ousted his uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema, in an August 1979 military coup and has overseen Equatorial Guinea's emergence as an important oil producer, beginning in the 1990s.

⁷ Source: "Education in North Korea: Exploring School Systems." The Borgen Project. N.p., 31 Oct. 2017. Web. 24 July 2018.

⁸The undemocratic regime of Guinea has failed over the least 39 years to bring about any meaningful improvements to its educational system. It



would appear that the regime is not interested in raising the educational level for fear that this would upset the existing social order and create a potential challenge to its considerable

powerbase. Numerous have taken place over the past few years but have had negligible influence on the situation.

UNICEF:

One of the main goals of UNICEF is to ensure that all children have access to education. It has made significant progress in the percentage of school attendance especially in Africa, where the infrastructure is, in most cases, poor. UNICEF wants to promote child friendly and safe school-environment. To reach the most vulnerable children in the most challenging situations around the world, UNICEF fosters innovative solutions tailored to local contexts, and supports countries in building robust and resilient education systems. Furthermore, UNICEF has helped girls around the world have access to education.

It helps countries build stronger education systems that deliver quality education to boys and girls. This includes removing gender stereotypes from learning materials, teaching teachers about gender, helping schools and governments use learning assessment data, and providing

⁸ Classroom in Equatorial Guinea

Source: [Www.facebook.com/pragyavash14](https://www.facebook.com/pragyavash14). "Top 12 Non Democratic Countries in the World." ListSurge. ListSurge, 17 Mar. 2016. Web. 24 July 2018.

communities with key data so as they can hold education systems accountable.

Making sure that national education plans and policies consider gender is key to ensuring that girls and boys enter and succeed at school. UNICEF in general has contributed a lot to ensure children education.

To sum up, while totalitarian regimes often appear to have introduced a sense of order and consistency to the educational systems, this is usually a sense of order as they see it and clearly not focused on the well-being of the majority of their citizens. The common characteristic they share is a curriculum heavily biased in favour of the government's political opinions aimed at indoctrinating the recipients, so they end up sharing these opinions and/ or creating a smokescreen to leave them ignorant of the actions and intentions of their leaders. There is a clear link here between what dictators of the past, such as Hitler in Germany and Mao in China did and what today's dictators, like Kim Jong-un, continue to do. Of course, in the modern age, with more advanced technology at their disposal there is a huge, not to say alarming, potential to elevate the levels of brainwashing, a fact the UN and other responsible bodies must be cognisant of in their attempts to combat this phenomenon.

Timeline of events

Date	Description of event
1966	The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was established.
1966	The First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights was adopted.

1966	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) was adopted.
1976	ICCPR came into force.
1976	The first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights entered into force
1976 1989 1990	ICESCR came into force. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was established CRC came into force.
2009	The Committee of the Right to Education was established.
2009	Right to Education Act (RTE) was established.
2010	Right to Education Act (RTE) came into force.

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 and entered into force on March 23, 1976 in accordance with Article 49. It also focuses on the right of education of all people and accordingly on the right of education of children, something that in most cases is suppressed by the undemocratic regimes.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 and entered into force on January 3, 1976 in accordance with article 27. It focuses again on the right of education of all people.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 and entered into force on September 2, 1990 in accordance with article 49. It focuses on the rights of children and one of them is the right to education.

Previous Attempts to solve the issue:

The international community has been slow in recognizing this issue as a major problem, so there is a notable lack of tangible measures taken. Only organizations, such as UNICEF, have helped, but in undemocratic regimes, where their access might also be refused, it has proven difficult to come up with workable solutions. Most countries try to solve other problems, such as denuclearization, and this problem, although it is a very important one, has not sufficiently stirred the international community.

Possible Solutions:

As is known, education is one of the most important and basic human rights and no one has the right to violate it or deprive the children of it. Therefore, education is an issue which should be addressed at a global level in order for governments and other non-profit organisations to find solutions and overcome the problems our nowadays' world is facing.

First of all, it is really important for governments to respect and implement any existing conventions they have ratified on the access of all children to education. Furthermore, it is of high importance to protect the human rights not only of the children and teenagers but also of people in general. Governments, which continue to violate the human rights of the children, especially their right to education and to knowing the truth should be punished for their actions of course under the stipulation that the Security Council orders so.

Moreover, another matter that should be noted is the eventual teaching of children either by their parents or by other people, who are aware of the situation and the truth, in order for the pupils not to be influenced from the brainwashing in schools.

Needless to highlight that the creation of special schools with teachers from other countries or from the UN is recommended, in order for native pupils to gain trustworthy information and education and learn the truth about the situation both in their country and generally around the world. It should be noted that for safety reasons these teachers should be funded and protected by the UN.

Another matter that needs to be examined is the role and the impact of international and regional intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, regional authorities, as well as civilians and corporations.

Last but not least, another effective way to address these problems are negotiations either for the re-evaluation of existing agreements or for the creation of new ones. This is vital, considering the factors and the weaknesses of the past agreements that kept past actions fruitless.

To sum up, as was mentioned earlier, this issue is of high importance and therefore governments should take immediate action in order to tackle it and offer their citizens a better life.

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