

The following text was originally published in *PROSPECTS: the quarterly review of comparative education* (Paris, UNESCO: International Bureau of Education), vol. XXIV, no. 3/4, June 1994, p. 647–60.

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LEO TOLSTOY¹

(1828-1910)

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For over a century, Leo Tolstoy has been one of the most famous and most widely read authors in the whole world. His name is always among the most popular in UNESCO's *Index translationum*. Tolstoy, as Lenin wrote in 1910, 'succeeded in raising so many great problems and succeeded in rising to such heights of artistic power that his works rank among the greatest in world literature.'³

The fame of Tolstoy the novelist has to some extent obscured his writings on education, which were based on first-hand experience. Tolstoy's ideas on education caused considerable controversy, which continues to rage to this day. Some of his contemporaries, in their capacity as official educators, even cast doubt on his competence in educational matters, considering the work done in the school he opened little more than the amusement of an idle Russian aristocrat. However, the history of education in recent times gives a different view. Just as Tolstoy's literary creations marked a step forward in the cultural development of mankind, so his educational doctrine made a unique contribution to teaching. Despite the views of the literary world, Tolstoy himself thought more highly of his educational than of his literary works, and he stressed their importance time and time again. To decide who is correct, the writer himself or his commentators, we must examine the place occupied by education and its problems in Tolstoy's life and activities, the new approaches he brought to this field and the influence of his views on the subsequent development of education and educational thinking.

The path to education

Leo Tolstoy strove from an early age to play a practical part in the education of the people. The idea behind his first book, *The four periods of development*, is deeply symbolic. His intention was to describe in it the process by which the human character is formed, from very earliest childhood, when the life of the spirit first begins to stir, to youth, when it has adopted its final shape.

Between 1852 and 1857, a series of autobiographical stories appeared, entitled *Childhood*, *Boyhood* and *Youth*, in which the spiritual universe of the child, the adolescent and the young person are studied, together with their feelings, the process of learning in which they are engaged and their moral development. These works also examine development induced by goal-oriented instruction. Through all the stories there runs the idea of the need for a respectful attitude towards the child's personality. This idea became the cornerstone of Tolstoy's educational work.

It cannot be said that the fourth and final story, *Young manhood*, remained unwritten, since it is covered in other works by the young Tolstoy, for example in the story of *The Cossacks* and in *A landlord's morning*. The hero of this story, which is also to a large extent autobiographical, leaves university before completing his undergraduate course. He feels that his views of the world and of the meaning of life are quite clear and he has already decided on the course his life is to take. He has arrived at the conviction that the most important thing in life is to do good to those among

whom one's lot has been cast. Personal happiness is inseparable from the well-being of others. So long as the majority of the nation—the peasants—are sunk in poverty and ignorance, social well-being and, consequently, one's own personal well-being, is impossible.

To be able to influence this simple, impressionable, unspoiled class of people, to save them from poverty, to give them some satisfaction and hand on to them the education which I, by good fortune, enjoy, to remedy faults born of ignorance and superstition, to develop their moral qualities and to make them love what is good - what a magnificent, what a happy future!⁴

Like the hero of his story, Tolstoy, at the age of 21, having opened a school on his ancestral estate at Yasnaya Polyana, made an attempt to begin teaching peasant children. This first attempt did not endure long because school-teaching became a burden to him. This may have been because he realized he lacked professional knowledge or it may have been brought on by his desire to move on to new fields of activity. From the spring of 1851, Tolstoy served in the army, first in the Caucasus and then as one of the defenders of Sebastopol. Soon after the end of the Crimean War (1853-56), he retired from the army and returned to Yasnaya Polyana where he once more took up teaching, this time, with a large number of peasant children. It is interesting that in justification of this, which was for him a new activity, he wrote to the poet Afanasy Fet: 'It is not we who need to study, but we need to teach Marfutka and Taraska [peasant children] at least some of what we know.'⁵

The observations of Tolstoy the writer on the behaviour of children, adolescents and young people and the experiences in school of Tolstoy the teacher suggested to him that teaching was no simple or easy matter and that successful teaching must be based on professional knowledge. He turned to the specialist literature, made contact with educational workers and began to take an interest in the experience of other countries. In 1857, Tolstoy made his first journey to Western Europe, visiting Germany, France and Switzerland. Coming into direct contact with European culture, he also studied the educational practice of schools in those countries and on his return to Russia increased the scale of his educational activity. This was particularly intense in the years 1859 to 1862. In Tolstoy's own words, this was the period of his 'three-year passion for this business'.

The matter of education was at that time attracting the attention not just of Tolstoy but of all the democratically minded intelligentsia of Russia, where educational reform was being actively prepared. Ministerial plans were hotly debated by a public that was mistrustful of the educational policy of the Tsar's government. Tolstoy, in particular, felt that the civil servants would not be able to make education respond to the interests of the whole nation: 'For national education to work, it must be handed over to an association.'⁶ He took practical steps in this direction and planned the organization of an association whose aim would be 'to educate the people; to publish a teaching journal; to set up schools where there are none and where the need for them is felt; to decide on the content of education; to train teachers; to provide schools with equipment; to contribute to the democratic management of education, etc.' All his efforts to obtain permission to establish a public body of this kind were in vain. This did not stop Tolstoy, however. 'I shall put everything I can and all my energies into this programme. [. . .] Whether they let me or not, and although I am alone, I shall still set up a secret association for the education of the people.'⁷

In 1859, he opened a school for peasant children and, in 1860, undertook a second European journey, visiting Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and England. He attended a lecture by Dickens on education, had several talks with Proudhon, met the revolutionary historian and educationist Lelewel, and discussed important matters of social development with the Russian revolutionary, writer and philosopher Herzen, who had emigrated to England from Tsarist Russia. In looking at the experience of European countries, Tolstoy was seeking ways of tackling the problems of national education in Russia.

In the 1870s, he was working on the compilation of school textbooks. Tolstoy continued his educational work right up to the end of his life, even during his most intense periods of literary creation. As he did so, his views on the education of the people took shape and the basic principles of his concept of education crystallized.

The ideals of humanistic education

Leo Tolstoy sometimes expressed his views in a form that made it possible to interpret them in a variety of ways. His opponents took advantage of this, claiming, for example, that what the writer had said about a child's innocence was paedocentrism, and that allowing children to decide for themselves whether to attend lessons or not was anarchy. However, there can be no doubt about what Tolstoy really meant if what he said is set in the general context of his concept of education, the basis of which is that humanism, democracy and freedom in education must start with the people.

When Tolstoy appeared on the educational scene the foundations for the democratic enlightenment of Russia had been laid long ago by Mikhail Lomonosov, although its origins were to be found in world educational culture. In the mid-nineteenth century, however, the majority of the population of the country, the peasants, were still not only uneducated but illiterate. Tolstoy was deeply conscious of the chasm in the society of his time between the cultural achievements and education for the privileged classes and the educational deprivation of the majority of the population. In this tragic division, he saw the source of many social antagonisms and troubles. He felt that education should be available to everyone. If it was made available in equal measure to all sections of the population, it could eliminate despotism and violence, superstition and injustice. 'The most pressing need of the Russian people is for education.' In these few words Tolstoy summed up a central, and abiding, conviction. He spoke out as the uncompromising defender of the interests of the whole nation, and particularly of the peasants, in the field of education. In considering all the other aspects of education, he was guided by the principle of the needs of the people, using it as a yardstick by which to judge the achievements or shortcomings of education in school, the quality of education, the usefulness of scientific discoveries, and so on. It was Tolstoy's conviction that science should unite people in the interests of the whole of society and of its material and spiritual welfare.

Tolstoy's educational activity coincided with industrial development in Russia, which was particularly rapid after the abolition of serfdom in 1861. In his view, capitalist development was subordinating scientific and technical knowledge to its own aims, taking no account of the common good and only creating new social antagonisms. Tolstoy began to focus his critical writings on those scientific and technical discoveries and their practical applications that were being used solely in the interest of the ruling class or of individual sections of society.

Not only does this knowledge not satisfy the main criterion for the essence of science, which is to serve the good of the people, but it pursues a diametrically opposed and quite deliberate aim, namely to keep the majority of people in thrall to the minority, resorting to all kinds of sophistry, misinterpretation, deception and cheating to do so.⁸

To counter this, he called for the democratization and humanization of science and education. Scientific and technical achievements represented genuine progress only when they were harnessed to serve the whole of society and the whole of the nation.

Freedom in school and in education was an idea that occupied an important place in Tolstoy's conception of education. He called freedom 'the one and only criterion of education'. As a result, he was compared with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and to the much later representatives of the 'Free Education' and the 'New Education' movements, etc. Indeed, like Rousseau, Tolstoy said that a child is by nature a perfect and innocent creature whose free development should not be hindered. However, freedom in education as Tolstoy understood it had very little in common with the doctrine of Rousseau and less still with the paedocentric approach to education which made an absolute of the idea of freedom and took it to absurd lengths. (Its most enthusiastic devotees in Russia, for example, demanded that the child should be free to choose its own parents.)

According to Tolstoy's doctrine, the development of children was a process by which their qualities developed spontaneously and in which the influence of the teacher had to be minimal, like that of a guide, who was not entitled to intervene 'by force' in the formation of the views of those in his/her charge. Nevertheless, Tolstoy frequently departed from theory in his educational practice. One has only to turn to the reminiscences of one of his sons, Ilya Levovich Tolstoy, who wrote: 'We grew up surrounded on all sides by a stone wall of English women, governors and teachers, and in these circumstances, it was easy for our parents to follow every step we took and to direct our lives in their way, all the more so because they themselves had identical views on our education.'⁹

There are quite a few such contradictions in Tolstoy's educational views and in his work as a whole, but this in no way diminishes their value from the point of view of mankind and the world at large. 'The contradictions in Tolstoy's views', wrote Lenin in 1910, 'are not contradictions inherent in his personal views alone, but are a reflection of the extremely complex, contradictory conditions, social influences and historical traditions which determined the psychology of various classes and various sections of Russian society.'¹⁰

In Tolstoy's view, freedom in education was a gnoseological and moral principle that had to be put into practice; it was the antithesis of authoritarian teaching, and essential for a humane attitude to the pupil and respect for his or her dignity as a human being. Freedom in education was a principle that stemmed from the internal laws of cognitive activity. Cognition could not be other than free. In the absence of that condition, activity, initiative, consistency, system and all the other tenets of traditional, classical education were of no use, lacking meaning and purpose. The more firmly education was based on that law, the more successful and fruitful it was. Knowledge that had been assimilated could not simply be transmitted and could certainly not be thrust on pupils if they did not want it. Pupils had to apply their own efforts and engage in independent cognitive activity. This they could do best of all by not being forced by a teacher but guided by their own free will.

A no less important aspect of the principle of freedom in education concerned its social organization. Tolstoy placed community activity in the field of national education in opposition to red tape and bureaucracy. His efforts were a reflection of a trend that grew in strength throughout the nineteenth century in Russia and one of those distinguishing traits was precisely Tolstoy's idea of freedom in education. It also involved the requirements that the people should be allowed to establish schools for their children in accordance with the wishes of parents and the community, that is, schools where the people themselves would have sole responsibility for deciding on the content of the activities. As long as the powers-that-be continued to lay down the content and methods of education, it would make no contribution to the development of a genuine culture among the people. In this Tolstoy's views coincided absolutely with the stipulation made somewhat later by another outstanding Russian educationist, a contemporary of Tolstoy, Konstantin D. Ushinsky: 'No one familiar with the history of Russia would hesitate for a moment to hand the education of the people over to the people themselves.'¹¹

Defending and developing the ideals of humanistic education, Tolstoy also pointed to the need for a scientific basis for educational work. Each science has a domain and research methods which belong to it alone. In the case of education, it is the child and the endless diversity of natural manifestations of individuality. Unlike psychology and the child sciences that emerged later, Tolstoy's view was that a study of the child was indissociable from the practical tasks of education. Here lay the main distinguishing feature of his methodological approach. The methods of studying children put forward and used by him were also substantially different from those of psychology.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, psychologists began to make more frequent use of experiment in their research. Their method was to pick out one of the psychological functions and obtain objective results regarding it. Tolstoy did not deny the importance for the teacher of awareness of the child's mental characteristics. He himself made use of experiments, comparing the effectiveness of various methods of teaching reading and writing. However, in his practical activity,

a teacher is dealing not with one isolated function but with a personality in the process of formation - a pupil. What is needed is for the teacher and educator to have a holistic view of the pupil.

For this reason, the chief method for Tolstoy was that of many-sided analysis, covering sociological and psychological aspects and leading both to a logical conclusion and, no less valuable for the educator, to a general view expressed as an image. This is one of the outstanding features of Tolstoy's study of the child as the subject of education. Reading Tolstoy's educational writings, one has an almost physical perception of a living child, presented not in a frozen photographic pose but in the manifestation and development of its individual characteristics, the unfolding of its personality and in mental states which fluctuate in accordance with the many and varied influences to which he or she is subject.

Tolstoy's educational work demonstrated that a child thinks more in pictures, colours and sounds, and that, in the first stages of education, pictorial thinking takes precedence in cognitive activity over logical thought. For a child in the early stage of education, an image used by the teacher can convey a much greater volume of information than the expression of a logical conclusion. Pictorial thinking has its place in the subsequent stages of education and also in research, since, unlike logical thinking, it reveals not one or even several sides of a phenomenon but a comprehensive view.

In tackling the question of the subject and methods of education, Tolstoy described his own understanding of many of its general concepts, such as literacy, education and civics, which make up the conceptual apparatus of the relatively independent form of scientific knowledge which is the science of education. In Tolstoy's view, literacy was the ability to read and write and education was knowledge of the surrounding world, including social relationships and the ties of reality:

Literacy is the art of forming words from conventional signs and pronouncing them, and from those same signs of composing words and representing them. What then do literacy and education have in common? Literacy is an art while education is a knowledge of facts and their relationships.¹²

This led on to the logical conclusion that literacy was of significant value only if it served as a means of attaining education.

That the ideals of humanistic education and the principles of choice by the people, democracy and freedom in education did not, for Tolstoy, remain just a declaration or some kind of abstraction, is borne out by the methodological solutions put forward by him to the problems of education and by his practical activity as a teacher, an organizer of schools, the publisher of an educational journal and the author of textbooks for schools for the people.

Yasnaya Polyana: the school and the journal

In addition to the schools coming under the Ministry of Education, there were schools in Russia that owed their existence to community or individual initiative. Of these, the most widely known became the school at Yasnaya Polyana, opened by Tolstoy on his ancestral estate near Tula. At first, Tolstoy's intention of organizing a free school in his own home was met by disbelief and suspicion by the peasants. On the first day, only twenty-two children in all timidly crossed the doorstep of the school at Yasnaya Polyana. After five or six weeks, however, the number of pupils had increased more than three-fold. The education there was organized in a very different way from that at ordinary schools but, nevertheless, the number of pupils, boys and girls from 7 to 13, continued to grow.

Lessons began between 8 and 9 o'clock in the morning. At noon, there was a break for lunch and a rest. Lessons then continued another three to four hours. Every teacher gave five to six lessons every day. According to their age, readiness and progress, the children were divided into three groups: junior, middle and senior. Pupils did not have places strictly allotted to them. They sat

where they liked. No homework was given. The commonest form of educational activity was not the lesson in the usual sense of the word but a free conversation with the pupils during which the children learned reading, writing and arithmetic, their catechism, the rules of grammar, and facts adapted to their age about history, geography and nature study. They also learned to draw and sing.

The content of the education given, like its external organization, was not immutable but changed in accordance with the children's development, the capacities of the school and the teachers, and the wishes of the parents. Tolstoy himself taught mathematics, physics, history and other subjects to the senior group. Most frequently, he told stories in order to teach the fundamentals of science. The children were punished neither for their behaviour nor for poor progress. The requirement that the personality of pupils should be treated with respect presupposed that, without punishment or coercion on the part of the adults, they would move towards a recognition of the need to submit to the order on which success at school depended. 'Schoolchildren', said Tolstoy, 'are people, even though they are small. They are people with the same needs as ourselves, who think in the same way as we do. They all want to learn; that is why they go to school and that is why they will have no trouble in understanding that they must submit to certain conditions in order to learn.'¹³

Leo Tolstoy and the teachers at his school encouraged the pupils' independence, developed their creative abilities and succeeded in getting the children to assimilate knowledge consciously and actively. With this aim in view, they frequently set compositions, particularly on topics of the pupil's own choice which the children liked very much. In this, Tolstoy's school saw one way of cultivating a creative personality, able subsequently to establish new forms of social relationship worthy of a civilized person. What most distinguished the school at Yasnaya Polyana was its attitude to the knowledge, abilities and skills that the children picked up outside school. Not only was the educational importance of these not denied, as was the case in most other schools, but, on the contrary, they were considered a necessary prerequisite for success at school. In the surrounding world there are an untold number of sources of information, but children are far from always interpreting this information correctly. The task of the school is thus to raise the information picked up by the schoolchildren from their surroundings on to a conscious plane. (A similar principle was later adopted in the system of the American philosopher and educationist, John Dewey.)

The duties of a teacher at Yasnaya Polyana were much more complex than at a school with a strict timetable, coercive discipline, a range of set methods of encouragement and punishment, and a strictly limited volume of knowledge to be studied. Here, the teachers' moral and intellectual faculties were constantly being stretched. They were required at all times to take into consideration the situation and abilities of each of their charges. In fact, what is known as educational creativity was demanded of the teacher. But the results achieved at the school at Yasnaya Polyana were also different from those at other schools. As a former teacher at Yasnaya Polyana, Yevgeni Markov, said: 'We were able to observe the extraordinary progress of Tolstoy's pupils, among whom were some bright little boys who had been taken straight from harrowing or looking after the sheep and after just a few months were able to write quite literate compositions.'¹⁴

The educational activity and influence of Tolstoy were not confined within the walls of the school at Yasnaya Polyana. Established on his initiative and with his direct participation, no less than twenty people's schools were functioning in the Krapivensk region of Tula province. His experiments, which for those times were quite unusual, made him the object of public attention, at home and abroad, and made a contribution to the development of elementary education. Teachers from many Russian towns and from abroad came to Yasnaya Polyana, interested to see humanistic ideas applied in educational practice. Frequent visits of course interrupted the normal flow of the educational process, but Tolstoy, although he realized this, did not turn visitors away, since by talking to them he could verify the correctness of his ideas and understand their relationship to all the other known methods of education.

It was with this aim in mind that Leo Tolstoy began to publish an educational journal entitled *Yasnaya Polyana*. Among other things, it set out to describe: (a) new educational methods; (b) new principles of administration for people's education; (c) new ways of organizing the learning process; (d) experiments with out-of-school education involving the circulation of books among the people; (e) monographs describing schools which had come into being spontaneously, with an examination of their achievements and shortcomings; etc. Tolstoy saw the journal's most important task as studying spontaneous educational activity, throwing light on the underlying links in the process of education, a knowledge of which would be of inestimable value for education as a science and for the teacher as a practitioner. He sought a wide range of contributors to the journal, stipulating only that they must be teachers who looked on their work not only as a means of existence or even as a duty to children, but as a field of experiment to advance the science of education.¹⁵

Tolstoy himself published such seminal articles in the journal as 'People's education', 'Methods of teaching how to read and write', 'A draft general plan for the organization of people's schools', 'Who should be taught to write and by whom, and 'Progress and the definition of education'. In these, the defects of the old education system were expounded, ways of developing the creative powers of children were examined, and much else as well.

Tolstoy's educational activities were a success, and they brought him satisfaction, but they aroused the suspicion of the Tsarist authorities. Tolstoy was prosecuted, the line taken by the journal *Yasnaya Polyana* was considered as 'subverting the fundamental tenets of religion and morality' and its twelfth issue, which came out in December 1863, was the last.

From that time, Leo Tolstoy began working on his epic *War and peace*, but he continued to think over his educational experiments. He came to the conclusion that there was something in them which was lacking in the contemporary science of education. 'I still think a great deal about education and am preparing to write down everything I know about it and which nobody else knows - or with which no one else is in agreement.'¹⁶ At the beginning of the 1870s, he reopened the school at Yasnaya Polyana and began once more to help with the organization of schools in the whole district, striving 'to save the Pushkins, Ostrogradskys, Filaretofs and Lomonosovs who are teeming in every school from drowning'.¹⁷ It was for them, the 'little mujiks', as he called the peasant children, that Tolstoy created *The Primer*, on which he worked with enthusiasm in 1871 and 1872, and *The New Primer*, for which, in 1875, he interrupted work on *Anna Karenina*.

'The primer' and 'The new primer'

Tolstoy ruminated over his project for a textbook for the very young, *The primer*, for a long time. It had to be different from other textbooks. Its overall plan, content and logical structure were worked out over a prolonged period. He often spoke with excitement about his work, saying, 'What will come out of it I do not know, but I have put my whole heart into it.'¹⁸ Tolstoy had great ambitions for *The primer*, estimating that several generations of Russian children, from peasant children right up to those of the Tsar, would learn through it and receive their first impressions of poetry from it. He even said, 'Now I have written *The primer*, I can die in peace.'¹⁹

The primer of Count L.N. Tolstoy was published at the end of 1872 and it was indeed a landmark for schools and for education. To a significant extent it justified the hopes of its author, embodying as it did his humanistic educational principles. Yet many people felt that this concern with the problems of children's elementary education was unworthy of the talent of the great Russian writer who had begun to be known throughout the world. The innovatory nature of this new work on education was not immediately appreciated by his contemporaries. Tolstoy found neither understanding nor sympathy, even among those close to him, including his wife. He nevertheless remained convinced that it was elementary education that largely determined a child's

subsequent intellectual and moral development and, possibly, the happiness or unhappiness of the individual's whole life.

Whether children would find pleasure in study, whether there would develop in them a disinterested love of learning and whether they would subsequently place spiritual values higher than material well-being, all to a great extent depended on the circumstances in which their first steps in the world of knowledge had been taken.

'When I go into a school', said Tolstoy, 'and see that crowd of thin, dirty, ragged children with their shining eyes and, so very often, angelic expressions, I am overcome by the kind of alarm and fear one would feel at the sight of people drowning. . . . What is drowning there is something precious above all else - precisely that spiritual awareness which is so patently obvious in those children.'²⁰

The spiritual elements of which the younger generation must be the repository can scarcely be developed without school. This is its priority, more than teaching pupils a particular sum of knowledge. To tackle this task was what Tolstoy strove to do from *The primer* onwards, that is, from the moment the child started school.

The primer of Count L.N. Tolstoy consisted of a set of teaching materials in four volumes: (a) the alphabet proper; (b) texts for elementary study; (c) Slavonic texts; and (d) material for learning arithmetic. In this series, the alphabet proper was treated as an elementary but necessary means of acquiring knowledge and moral ideas. In actual fact, it was a kind of encyclopedia for very small children that explained their immediate environment to them. It provided an explanation of the basic concepts of physics, chemistry, botany and zoology in the form of an artistic synopsis, describing the life of plants, the external senses of human beings and animals, the phenomena of magnetism and electricity and much else besides.

The primer led to heated controversy among methods specialists. At that time, the phonic method of teaching was predominant, that is, the pupil was given a sound and the letter corresponding to it as its symbol, after which the sounds with their letters were merged into syllables and words. The phonic method contrasted with the traditional method of putting letters together, that is, the presentation of a letter as the symbol of a sound and the merging of the letters representing sounds. Tolstoy questioned the correctness of setting these two methods in opposition to each other as mutually exclusive and demonstrated that the phonic method contains elements of the ABC method and that to deny this meant turning one's back on so many centuries of previous learning experience. An experimental verification of the method proposed by Tolstoy was organized, in connection with which he put forward a number of original ideas on the organization of educational experiments, several years before educationists in Russia and the West (Sikorsky, A. Lay, E. Meumann) began to make wide use of experiments to evaluate various forms and methods of learning.

The new primer was published in 1875 as a new collection of teaching materials. It was more comprehensive and had been improved as a result of disputes with Tolstoy's opponents. It was greeted with approval in the general and educational press and the Tsarist Ministry of Education even allowed it into people's schools. In Tolstoy's lifetime, it ran to over thirty editions and was printed in for what at that time were large runs. 'An example of ideal simplicity and living truth', 'the peak of perfection from the psychological and artistic point of view' - such were the opinions of authoritative educationists. One of them indeed, S.A. Rachinsky, a university professor, was attracted by the idea of serving people's education and abandoned his university chair in order to teach peasant children in a village school. His opinion was as categorical as it was brief: 'Every educated Russian should be acquainted with the children's books of Count L.N. Tolstoy.'²¹

With his tales specially written for *The primer*, Tolstoy in fact created a whole literature for children. Even today, Russians get to know the works of the author of *War and peace*, *Resurrection* and *Anna Karenina* in their infancy through his tales, such as 'The shark', 'Filippok',

'The lion and the dog', 'The leap', 'The three bears', 'The prisoner of the Caucasus' and others. Furthermore, the artistic principles enunciated for the tales in *The Primer*, namely that everything should be 'beautiful, brief, simple and, above all, clear', were a distinguishing feature of Tolstoy's style in later years.

Tolstoy's subsequent educational ventures were to a greater extent connected with his moral and ethical teaching and were expressed in articles, letters, conversations and notes such as 'Thoughts on education', 'Physical labour', 'Talks with children on moral matters', 'The Teacher's principal task', etc. He broke with ritual, official religion (Leo Tolstoy was excommunicated by the Church Synod), and developed the ideas of so-called true Christianity, not opposing evil by force, and laid stress on the unique role of education in improving human relationships and in achieving social well-being on the way.

In the latter years of Tolstoy's life, his educational ideas were adopted not only in Russia but also in other countries, where attitudes to them were also mixed. Some people considered his views on upbringing and education as impractical and far removed from the needs of the school, while others saw them in a positive light. Thus the Japanese teacher Sekizi Nyesiyama considered 'romantic insight in the approach to the child' as a new view in the science of education, and Tolstoy's methods of developing the child's creative abilities as 'a great educational discovery'.²² The great Japanese writer Nakazato Kaizan, the founder of the so-called 'literature for the people', even made his estate into a miniature Yasnaya Polyana, opened a Sunday school, taught peasant children, and read them Russian stories which he narrated himself.

The Spanish educationist Angel Bue turned to Tolstoy for advice as did the French writer Fernand Aubier, the British teacher Fanny Franks and the Argentine Clothilda Gonzalez. The American social activist Ernest Crosby, having studied the activity of the school at Yasnaya Polyana, wrote a book entitled *Tolstoy as a schoolmaster* when he returned to the United States from Russia. He frequently told his American colleagues about Tolstoy's school and about a characteristic episode he had witnessed at Yasnaya Polyana.

While playing with Tolstoy's small daughter, Sasha, a peasant boy had given her left hand a painful blow with a stick. With tears in her eyes, the girl had run to her father asking for protection and for the boy to be punished. Tolstoy had sat his daughter on his knee, calming her and talking to her, and had then, proposed that she go to the boy and treat him to some raspberry jam (it was a rare event for a country child to be treated to jam). The boy was expecting anything but that turn of events and was mightily astonished. After that, he was unlikely to offend again, concluded Crosby.

However, one American teacher retorted: 'In my opinion, the boy should have hit her on the other hand the next day.' It was now Crosby's turn to be astonished. Reflecting on his colleague's unexpected words, he came to the conclusion that there were two ways, the Russian and the American, of reacting to a manifestation of force and of goodwill. Crosby could not fail to acknowledge that behind the Russian approach lay a deep and unique truth and for that reasons he said: 'But if there is any truth in this Russian view of things, can we not apply this truth more often in our lives. [. . .] Teachers ought to give this matter a great deal of thought.'²³

Shortly after the death of Leo Tolstoy, Lenin, speaking of his contribution to the development of world culture, said that Tolstoy's heritage 'includes that which has not become a thing of the past, but belongs to the future'.²⁴

This is why, after the Russian Revolution, Tolstoy's educational as well as literacy legacy was adopted by the whole nation. His works have been published many times in enormous editions in all the languages used by the peoples of the former USSR. His literary works form part of the school curriculum and his educational writings are studied at special teacher-training establishments for nursery-school, primary-school and secondary and higher education. It is very appropriate that, in the jubilee year of 1987, the Association of Children's Writers and Artists, which comes under the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries, should have instituted the Leo Tolstoy International Gold Medal, to be awarded to outstanding humanists who

have given their hearts to children. Its first winners were Albert Sabin (a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science), Astrid Lindgren (a Swedish writer) and Antonina Khlebushkina (principal of children's Home no. 1, Tashkent, USSR).

Notes

1. This profile was first published in *Prospects*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1988.
2. Semion Filippovitch Yegorov (Russian Federation) : Ph.D. in educational sciences. Senior researcher at the Institute of Theoretical Education and International Educational Research at the Russian Academy of Education. Specialist in the history of education. Author of numerous publications of which the most important was *Educational theory in Russian education at the beginning of the twentieth century* (in Russian, 1987).
3. V.I. Lenin, *Collected works*, vol. 16, p. 323; see also *Leo Tolstoy as the mirror of the Russian revolution*, vol. 15, pp. 202-09.
4. L.N. Tolstoy, 'A landowner's morning,' *Collected works*, vol. 4, p. 165.
5. L.N. Tolstoy, *Complete works*, vol. 60, p. 325 (in Russian).
6. L.N. Tolstoy, *Educational writings*, p. 55, Moscow, 1951 (in Russian).
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.
8. Tolstoy, *Complete works*, op. cit. vol. 38, pp. 141-42.
9. L.N. Tolstoy, *My memoirs*, pp. 178-81, Moscow, 1914 (in Russian).
10. Lenin, *Collected works*, op. cit., p. 325.
11. K.D. Ushinsky, *Complete works*, vol. 3, p. 622; Moscow/Leningrad, 1948 (in Russian).
12. L.N. Tolstoy, *The teacher*, p. 88 (in Russian).
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58.
14. *Vestnik Evropy* [The messenger of Europe], vol. II, 1900, p. 582.
15. Tolstoy, *The teacher*, op. cit., p. 61.
16. N.N. Gusev, *A life of L. N. Tolstoy*, vol. 2, p. 129 (in Russian).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
18. Tolstoy, *Complete works*, op. cit., vol. 62, p. 130.
19. *Ibid.*, vol. 61, p. 269.
20. N.A. Constantinov et al., *A history of education*, Moscow, 1982, p. 237 (in Russian).
21. 'The primer' and 'the new primer', Moscow, 1978, p. 191 (in Russian).
22. See A.I. Shifman, *L. N. Tolstoy and the east*, Moscow, 1971, p. 268 (in Russian).
23. E. Crosby, *Tolstoy as a schoolmaster*, pp. 60 et seq., Moscow, 1906 (Russian translation).
24. Lenin, *Collected works*, op. cit., vol. 16, p. 327.