

## Interview: Yuri Gromyko



# The link between education and Russia's development

*Mr. Gromyko is the president of the Moscow Education Academy and rector of the Methodological University. The following interview was conducted on May 21, at the State Duma in Moscow, by Anno Hellenbroich. The interview was conducted in English.*

**EIR:** Mr. Gromyko, you as president of the Moscow Education Academy, were one of the main speakers at the Duma session dealing with education, and especially education and national security as an important subject matter. What were your main theses?

**Gromyko:** For us it was very important to begin to discuss education, as a problem, not of the very specific education department, according to their methods, data, and ideas—how many teachers we have in the schools, what kind of salaries the teachers have—but from a much broader standpoint: how exactly education is connected with national security and national goals. Because our main idea is that, without these goals, without a clear idea of the economy, it is impossible to discuss education.

And so, it was necessary for us to have two years of discussions with different people, to organize these hearings. Because at first, of course, the government didn't want to speak about such things at all. They said: We have a program for educational development, and the Ministry of Education is trying to implement this program, and it is not necessary to discuss these ideas further.

But for us, it's clear that if we don't have goals and direction—what exactly will be the main goals for Russia, where Russia must go, and is now going—it is impossible to have any policy at all, in education, in economics and other spheres. And so, our main idea was that it's necessary to begin with discussions about what concept of society Russia must have, because without a structure for society, it's impossible to discuss education, or what the main role of the intelligentsia, of Russian intellectuals, must be in society, and how it's possible to connect education and the economy.

One very important idea which was implemented in all these ideas of reform, was that it is not necessary to connect knowledge and economy at all, that the economy is something "hidden," without knowledge, without able people imple-

menting a plan, and education is a very different domain. It's necessary to put money into this area, since we have kids to educate, but it is impossible to demonstrate that through knowledge, through able people, you develop industry; it's impossible to change things in Russia. And this split is very dangerous for our society.

And so, our main idea was to organize the hearings in such a way as to show, that it is impossible to tell people that education is very clearly connected with the problem of security; impossible to solve these problems of education—the health of kids in the educational system, salaries, and so forth—without much deeper and much clearer ideas about what is exactly the concept of society, the concept of government, the concept of statecraft, that we must have to develop our lives.

**EIR:** I heard some of these contributions, among others from people who are working in the health field, and also representatives of the military. From these various speeches, could you see a certain contour, a first approximation of the concept of the future society, especially now, given the great transformation process of the last five years?

**Gromyko:** You see, our main idea, also in this problem of the doctrine of education, development, and security, is connected first of all with sound ideas of economy and education. And the weakest point, from this point of view, is the problem of professional education. Because, you see, before, we had a huge number of specialized professional schools, which trained a huge number of people—

**EIR:** Do you mean vocational schools?

**Gromyko:** Exactly, vocational education. Not at the highest level, but primary vocational education. It was very important, because it was the channel for socialization of a huge number of people, who could thus find sound employment. But now, all these people have no sound jobs at all, and so, they have no salaries, they do not have a stable situation, and so, in my opinion, we have this huge criminalization. For me, this criminalization is a hidden civil war.

This is very important. You have to understand that just now, we have a very dangerous fragmentation of society. This

street criminality is not mere criminality; for me it is a hidden kind of civil war. And this is the most dangerous thing, because it's clear, that if a huge number of people are split and cut off from their professions, through which they could have had a decent salary, to live in our society, for them it's impossible to comprehend their future. That is the first thing.

The second thing is, of course, we have a lack of financial assistance in education. But from this point of view, we must understand education as very important infrastructure for our society. Because exactly in this area of education, different spheres are interconnected, e.g., health. We have a huge death rate now, a huge rate of abortion, a huge rate of psychiatric diseases—awful. You heard, and I personally also know, about these women, who discussed that, for example, the so-called “new Russians,” their kids, are also at risk, and there are quite a few psychotics and neurotics among them. Because of the stress of trying to make their situation stable, we turn the kids into neurotics. It's a disaster.

Yet it is clear that it is impossible to suck money out just for the sake of education. It is necessary to change the whole climate of discussion. So, you see, we have two or three steps before us. When we said that it was necessary to discuss such things as the general doctrine of education and the role of education in our society, all these people—usually the Ministry of Education first of all—said that it is not necessary to discuss such questions, they are too global; it's only necessary to discuss salaries.

But today, it was possible to demonstrate that the problem of salaries and blockades—really, blockades in government—is connected with the general concept of our reforms. And so, for me, we can also destroy the possibility of reforms, with general rhetoric that lacks any sound, real goals for these reforms.

**EIR:** Can you then identify for us, at least some of the elements, in terms of content, that you would stress?

**Gromyko:** Yes. First of all, for me, education and its role in society are connected with the possibility of developing a new program for the economic development of Russia, and the transformation of labor, according to scientific approaches. Because we have also, in military complexes, quite a few plants which need to be modernized, with new technology brought in, high technology. But for this, it is necessary to have a sound education.

The second problem concerns the necessary modernization of the former Soviet Army. For example, if you try to change military relations in a global world, when you have not only troops, but at the same time industrial complexes, mass media, and such things, environmental issues, it is necessary to have a very different way of thinking about military structures, but at the same time, a very different way of training the people who must serve in this Army.

And so, it's necessary to have very different concepts. Some generals came to me, eager to discuss a new type of

education for our army, in such a way that there could be conversion, also, of military personnel: people who can work in the Army, but at the same time, also in civilian departments, in our civilian economy.

The third aspect, is the problem of Russians who are now abroad. Because we have no policy at all for them.

The fourth point, is, of course, the problem of how it is possible to provide health care, education against drugs, against premature sex, against alcohol. Because now, we are simply a nation in seduction, through American advertisements on TV, and such things.

This is also a very important factor of concern: the connection of education and TV. We have to have some regulation of TV, because through TV, it is possible to destroy the very idea of consciousness in our kids.

A very important issue for me, is that it is necessary to discuss, in a very different way, the problem of security. Because the usual concept of security currently is: We have enemies, and we have interests. But if we look at education, we have no prepared interests at all, because education is the program which is connected with the future of Russia. And so, it is necessary to discuss security in this context, looking to the future. It is necessary to discuss the content of this future, what kind of country we want to have: Must we be a raw material appendage of international financial institutions, or shall we have a sound industry, in different efforts? That's the most important point.

But also, there will be more professional, much more specialized issues. For example, what are, exactly, the Russian schools, Tartar schools, the so-called national schools in Russia? We have, as you may know, a huge problem with the Russian language. Because the Russian language that we had before, in the nineteenth century, is now totally destroyed. Destroyed through language which was introduced from Gulags, because rather many intellectuals were in Gulags, and so, after this, they began to use the Gulag language.

We also destroyed our language, because there was a very astute, very sophisticated policy of Stalin, when the Russian language was used as a language of international communication. Because of this, we have now a very superficial, very shallow language, not a deep one. And so, we must have a very deep program.

At this point, for me, it is impossible to restore the Russian language without traditional education. Including the study of so-called dead languages, because we had, before the Revolution, a very strong tradition to study Classical philology. And so, Classical philology is the most important thing to restore the Russian language. Because, maybe you know that, through the Orthodox Church, the Russian language was constructed from old Greek. And so, old Greek is particularly important for the Russian language. And that's also a key issue.

**EIR:** You mention the Russian Orthodox Church. I heard

the representative of the Moscow patriarch, addressing the problem of education. How are you dealing with the ideologies of the past—the traditional Marxist-Leninist courses?

**Gromyko:** This issue, in my opinion, is very controversial, because from one side it's clear for me, that we have an ideological vacuum in our society. And some reformers said, that it's very good to have this vacuum, with no ideology at all. But at the same time, this empty space is filled with much nastier doctrines and ideologies, New Age and different things, and also different sects, very dangerous sects. For example, this Japanese Aum sect, which is very popular in Moscow.

And so, from this point of view, you see, we have something like a "market" of ideologies, and the Orthodox Church is trying to find her own niche in this market. But I disagree with the idea that it's necessary to introduce only Orthodox Church ideology. Because I have in my report—I didn't have enough time to discuss this, but for me it's clear—that we must have a special concept of what ideology, not according to Marxism-Leninism, but what kind of sound, reasonable ideology we must have for our society. And I guess it's impossible to use only Orthodox Church ideas to fill this empty space.

It is the responsibility, first of all, of the Russian intellectuals, to develop such an ideology. But you see, it is also very important for me, to distinguish between American and Russian society. Because Russian society, through all its periods, lived with different kinds of ideology. This ideology doesn't mean, that it's necessary to have something like a *Short Course of the Communist Party of the Bolsheviks*. What is much more important for Russians, is to have an understanding of the goals, and the construction of Russian society. I don't mean an ideology for indoctrination in school; what I mean is, that there must be a public discussion about this.

But it is clear now, that if the Russians as a nation, also in school, don't discuss their future, then it is impossible to live here. In very rich countries, it is possible to live without an understanding of the future. I disagree with this, but it is possible; but in Russia, it's physically impossible to live without this, because we are not rich at all, from this point of view. We are very wealthy in raw materials and such things, but without understanding our position in the global economy, in the world at large, without understanding our predestination, we Russians simply cannot live.

**EIR:** Coming back to the parliamentary meeting, what is your evaluation? Was the response what you had hoped for, and what do you think this parliamentary process will lead to?

**Gromyko:** The first, very important thing, I guess, is that there will be a new internal struggle after these hearings, because it is only the first step; it is possible to abort all these hearings and to simply construct a new kind of program which will be used for the Ministry of Education or the government.

But for me, it's much more important to organize a coalition

between military, generals and directors of military and other plants from industry, and also including financial people, and different committees of the Duma, of course, to organize a coalition that can discuss what kind of document we must prepare, and through this to raise much deeper questions, because that's usually how it's possible to organize such things.

But it's clear now, it's being stated, that such a document, a doctrine of education, will be prepared. That is very important. During the communist period, we had a compartmentalized society: We had education, which was isolated from all other spheres; we had industry, which was isolated from all other spheres; and we had only one connection between the different spheres—through the Communist Party. The Communist Party leaders went from education to, I don't know what: horse breeding, reindeer farming, agriculture, industry, etc. And now, we have the same mentality of a compartmentalized society. So, it is a very important thing to organize a coalition, where people from different fields can see that the situation on a global scale is the same, for example, in education, in the military sphere, and also in industry. And only in this way, is it possible for me to put some questions: Why is it organized in such a way, why don't we have any financial assistance for such very important things as infrastructure? . . .



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<http://www.clark.net/larouche/welcome.html>

**TO REACH** the campaign by electronic mail:

[larouche@clark.net](mailto:larouche@clark.net)

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