



9-29-1958

## Soviet Education: A Means Towards World Domination

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8810-62

Report to Richmond Public School Board  
on Visit to Soviet Union

(July 23 - August 5, 1958)

*Pat - we  
can use  
printed copy  
of this*

The American Bar Association delegation, of which I was a member, recently spent two weeks in the Soviet Union studying the legal system there and conferring with lawyers and judges. In view of the widespread interest in the Soviet educational system, and our own special concern here in Richmond that our public education remains "competitive" with the best available in the world, I also made a number of inquiries as to Soviet education while on this trip. It seems appropriate that I should report the results of these inquiries to the Richmond School Board and administration.

No detailed study was made by me,\* as our primary concern was with the Soviet legal system. My inquiries were largely confined to the following sources: (i) a full conference with the official in charge of public education in Leningrad; (ii) discussions of Soviet education with personnel of the American Embassy in Moscow and with representatives of the American press who have lived many years in the Soviet Union; (iii) discussions with our guides, all of whom were graduates of the ten year schools and of universities, such as Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev; (iv) discussions with lawyers and judges as to legal education; (v) a conference with the manager of a large

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\* An official delegation on behalf of the United States Office of Education has been studying Soviet Education this summer, and no doubt will make an exhaustive report. They were in Leningrad some two weeks before we were there.

industrial plant in which we reviewed "adult education" programs for Soviet workers; (vi) an illuminating interview with a young person who had attended six years of public schools in Russia and then spent four years in an American school in New England; and (vii) an inspection of a secondary school in Kiev.

### The Extraordinary Emphasis on Education

We have all read a great deal, particularly since the first Sputnik went aloft, about the emphasis being placed on education by the Soviet Union. But one must visit Russia to appreciate fully the scope and intensity of this emphasis.

The Soviet people are now largely Atheists and therefore have no God.\* As human beings must have some sort of philosophy of life, the Russians have substituted what they call "Soviet realism" for religion. While this "realism" embraces many things, including Marxism as a political and economic philosophy, it most definitely includes education as affording an "answer" to most Soviet aspirations. In any event, the State has thrown the full weight of its regimented regime behind an unprecedented program for total education.

This is not the place to summarize the impressive achievements of the Soviet educational program measured in terms of (1) the numbers of schools, institutes and universities; (ii) the millions

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\* We attended the largest active church in Kiev (Greek Orthodox) for the Sunday service. Of the 300/400 people in attendance, nearly all were quite elderly persons - mostly women.

of students and adults attending these institutions; or (iii) the vast amounts of money being spent on building programs and expansion plans for education.\* Suffice it to say that the magnitude of effort in all of these respects is deeply impressive, and fortifies the belief that Khrushchev was making no idle boast when he asserted that the Soviet Union would conquer the rest of the world "in the class room".

But wholly aside from these physical and statistical manifestations of progress in education, the thing which most attracted my attention on our trip was the public attitude toward education. This is an attitude almost approaching a religious belief in intensity of feeling and conviction that through education the Soviet Union can lead the world.

From the individual's point of view, education is also the highway to assured personal success and privilege. If one completes the ten year school program and can pass the stiff university entrance exams, he is excused from military service and from factory or farm labor. If he completes the five year university course, he is established as an "intellectual" and his future is relatively assured. This assumes of course that the individual is either a member of the Communist Party or willing to accept the Communist regime - and the latter category apparently embraces the overwhelming majority of the population and certainly includes most of those

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\* This has been done elsewhere. See: William Benton's thought provoking book - "THIS IS THE CHALLENGE" (1958), which should be required reading for every American legislator (National, State and local) and every person responsible for any aspect of American education. See also the 1957 Report of the United States Office of Education, and the studies of Dr. Nicholas DeWitt of Harvard.

who have experienced the State controlled discipline and political indoctrination of the educational system.

### The Leningrad Ten Year Schools

Passing from generalizations to specifics, it may be of interest to report in some detail on information given me personally by the head of the Department of Education of the City of Leningrad. The public school system of that city embraces 440 schools, 20,000 teachers and 370,000 pupils. Pursuant to appointment, this school official received Mr. Ross L. Malone (President-Elect of the American Bar Association) and me in his office on a Saturday afternoon and talked (through an interpreter, who herself had been a school teacher) quite freely for about two hours. He described the Leningrad ten year public schools in summary as follows:

Duration of Attendance. All children are required to enter at age seven and must remain in school for seven years. If they pass the prescribed examinations given at the end of the seventh year, they normally continue for three more years. In Leningrad, it was said that about 85% of the pupils complete the full ten years. (We were told that an even higher percentage accomplish this in the Kiev schools.)\*

During the first four grades, children are required to attend school from September 1st to June 1st, and after the fourth grade the school year is extended to June 20th. For the first four grades, classes last for four hours per day, and thereafter the school day moves up to six full hours. All children remain in school six days per week, with Sunday being the only day off. There are two holiday periods of ten days each - one at the beginning of

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\* Information previously available (e.g. Dr. DeWitt's studies) indicates that a considerably lower percentage of pupils complete the 10 year program.

January and the other in March.

Curriculum. The curriculum is identical for all pupils and all subjects are obligatory. The only exception to this rule of enforced uniformity, without any electives whatever, is that at the end of the fourth year each child must choose a foreign language (English, French or German) and thereafter must concentrate on that language for six years.\*

The following tabulation summarizes certain aspects of the Leningrad curriculum:

| <u>Subject:</u>   | <u>Number of years required:</u> | <u>Number of hours taught per week:</u> |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Arithmetic  | 5                                | 6                                       |
| Advanced Mathematics<br>(Algebra, Geometry<br>and Trigonometry) | 5                                | 5-6                                     |
| Physics   | 4 **                             | 4                                       |
| Chemistry   | 4                                | 2-3                                     |
| Biology   | 5                                | 2-3                                     |
| Astronomy   | 1                                | 1                                       |
| Foreign Language  | 6                                | 3-4                                     |
| World History   | 1 (10th grade)                   | 3-4                                     |
| Russian Language and<br>Literature                              | 10                               | 5-6                                     |

In discussing the content of the World History course, we were told that the one year is concentrated on the history of the

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\* English is by far the language usually chosen.

\*\* In Moscow and Kiev we were told that the requirement for Physics is 5 years. Each of the 15 Republics in the U.S.S.R. has the right (in theory and within certain limits) to operate its own schools.

twentieth century, but that there are four prior years of history which deal with the Middle Ages, European and Russian history.

We were also assured that art and music are not neglected, although it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which these are formally taught as courses in the regular ten year schools. Specifically, it appears that all children are subjected to sufficient art and music during the first four years to enable the authorities to select the children really talented in these areas.

Special Schools. Such talented children are then removed from the regular public schools and placed in special schools which continue the general education but devote the major emphasis to developing the particular talent. For example, there is such a special school for students with artistic talent and another special school for those with demonstrated musical abilities.

"Circles". It was pointed out that music, singing, athletics and other similar or special interests of students are also developed after the normal school day through "Circles". There are also science Circles, foreign language Circles and the like. Participation in these Circles is said not to be compulsory. They do afford opportunities for students to pursue particular interests in an organized and supervised manner, and no doubt there is considerable "positive guidance" to assure participation.

Hand Crafts. We were also told that a major change in policy about three years ago has resulted in greater emphasis on "hand crafts". These are now being taught to some extent during the first four grades, and commencing with the fifth grade pupils are required to spend two extra hours each week (after normal classes) on some specific hand craft, such as mechanics, electricity, sewing, etc. During the last

three grades, the hand craft work is related directly to the branch of industry which is most important in the particular school district. For example, if a school district embraces an automobile factory, the pupils in the last three grades will be taught automobile mechanics; or if there should be an electrical equipment factory located nearby, they will receive elementary instruction in electricity. This hand craft program does not replace any of the standard required subjects, but seems to be in addition.

It was never made entirely clear to us how all of the foregoing can be accomplished within the time available. It was pointed out, however, that classes run for 45 minutes with no free or study periods for anyone. Moreover, except in the case of a few of the major subjects during certain years, a majority of subjects involve only two to four hours per week. Then, too, there are no electives and less emphasis on social studies, home economics and similar courses than in American schools. Apparently these features of the system, together with the six day week and the longer school year, enable the presentation of an educational program in ten years which certainly exceeds in intensity and probably also exceeds the number of hours of class room work in the American twelve year program.

Homework Emphasized. Homework is also greatly emphasized by the Soviets. In Leningrad the "official" requirement for homework commencing with the seventh grade is a minimum of two and one-half hours per day. The head of the Department of Education stated that actually he believed most children worked more than two and one-half hours per day at home. He stated that one of the problems, with



which the professional educators were attempting to deal, was the disposition of each teacher to assign homework without regard to assignments by other teachers, with the result that some children were being overloaded and subjected to undue strain.

"Gifted" Children. One of the most interesting points discussed was what the Soviets do with the "gifted" child. We were informed that there is no special plan for advancing gifted or talented children within the regular ten year schools. Apparently they are required to remain in the appropriate class for their age unless they are so gifted or talented in some area as to justify transferring them to one of the special schools. Nor are classes within an age group divided according to the "I.Q." of the students. It appeared from discussions with various other people that what actually happens is that the teachers do concentrate on the brighter pupils, and give them markedly more attention than the average or slow pupils. In addition, the brighter pupils are encouraged to participate in "Circles" in subjects in which they show special aptitude, such as science, mathematics, or a foreign language. This is done after normal school hours.

Salaries. Teachers' salaries apparently vary depending upon the amount of work performed, and to a less extent upon the nature of their work. We were told that in Leningrad most teachers work only three hours per day or a total of 18 hours per week, and for this are paid a salary ranging from 800 to 1000 rubles per month.\*

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\* On the basis of the official rate of exchange, one ruble is worth approximately 25¢, so that the salary level above mentioned would be from \$200 to \$250 per month.

A teacher who teaches more than three hours per day is paid a correspondingly higher salary. Consideration is likewise given to how much time a teacher would normally be expected to work at home in preparation for his classroom presentation. Thus, we were told that a teacher of mathematics or foreign languages, for example, would receive "slightly more compensation" than teachers of easier subjects such as "drawing".

#### A Comparison of Soviet and American Secondary School Education

One of the most illuminating experiences on our entire trip was the opportunity to talk to a person who, since World War II, has been educated in both Soviet and American schools. He spent his first six years of education in a regular ten year Soviet public school. After finishing the sixth grade, and at about 12 years of age, he came to America and attended a preparatory school for four years. After these ten years of schooling, he was qualified to enter any university in America. Although he attended an American private rather than public school, many of his classmates had been in the public schools and therefore he felt generally familiar with them.

It will be noted that after only six years of training in the Soviet public schools, this individual was able to graduate from an American preparatory school in four years. He stated that when he entered the American school he was, in educational achievement, at least two years ahead of American students his age. He was even further advanced in mathematics and science, having already had two years of algebra, two years of geometry, one year of chemistry, one year of physics, one year of biology and one year of botany.

The Soviet school attended by this individual had a relatively high pupil-teacher ratio, with about 40 pupils per teacher in the first five grades and thereafter 25 to 30 pupils per teacher. Outside activities, such as clubs, athletics and social affairs were considered unimportant, and did not add to the pupil's prestige. Although there was no segregation of talented pupils, the teachers quite obviously devoted more attention to such pupils and often neglected the "slow learners". By the time a child reached the fifth grade, it was necessary for him to do at least three hours of homework - all of which was actually done after school hours as there were no study periods.

Soviet Educational Weaknesses. In comparing education in the Soviet Union with that in America, this highly intelligent young person pointed out the following "weaknesses" in the Soviet system: It is a rigid, inflexible system enforced upon all pupils, regardless of tastes or aptitudes; it emphasizes memory work which tends to minimize creative or original thinking; although direct political propoganda is not particularly evident, the entire educational system is planned and operated with the purpose of thoroughly indoctrinating every child with Marxism; the theme that the Marxist always triumphs is an ever present one, and the inevitability and "justness" of the "class struggle" is taught both directly and indirectly; although world literature is well taught with a minimum of propoganda, history is grossly distorted, and especially American history, economics and politics; no occasion is lost to convince the children that "race prejudice" and "discrimination" are universally practiced in America.

Over-Emphasis on Grades - a Weakness. In addition, a fundamental weakness in the Soviet system is its undue emphasis on "good

grades". As a person's entire career may depend upon how well he does in school and in a university, the temptation to cheat becomes significant and there is said to be a considerable amount of this throughout Soviet educational institutions. The compelling necessity, as most pupils view it, to make good grades also causes the "memorizing" of lessons and the giving to teachers of only the answers which they are believed to desire.

Speaking of teachers, we were told that there is seldom the intimacy between pupils and teachers in the Soviet Union that exists so generally in America. The atmosphere of the Soviet classroom is formal, and discipline is strict. Teachers there maintain an aloof attitude, and do not concern themselves with the pupils as individuals.

Soviet "Strength"\* - On the other hand, our consultant thought the Soviet system has many "strong points", including the following: It emphasizes education as a major element of life and as the surest road to material success and distinction; it enforces a strict mental discipline upon students which, despite the rigidities above mentioned, trains their minds extremely well; it emphasizes the "hard" subjects which train the mind and develop intellectual capacity; students are taught to work diligently and hard from the very earliest grades, and they develop a capacity for such work; the training in mathematics and science is appreciably superior to that in America; the teaching of foreign languages is also superior; curiously enough, and somewhat paradoxically, this person also thought that the teaching of literature was superior, as he thinks the average Soviet student has a broader knowledge of the great literature of the World than the American student of comparable age,

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\* The views summarized in this paragraph represent the opinions of our consultant who had recently attended both Soviet and American schools. There is, of course, room for considerable difference of honest opinion on many of these views.

and an appreciably greater interest in pursuing such literature outside of school.

The Extraordinary Emphasis on "Culture". In discussing further this Soviet success in the "humanities", several of those with whom we conferred pointed out that the great official emphasis on "culture" in the Soviet Union creates an atmosphere conducive to interest in literature, the theatre, art and music. There is a National Minister of Culture, who is in charge of book publishing, theatres, the museums, moving picture production, television and other cultural media. All of this is not only controlled but emphasized to a degree that must be seen to be believed. Television, for example, is not used for advertising purposes, soap operas or other "non-educational" purposes. It is used primarily to present carefully selected drama, opera, ballet, good music and, of course, massive propaganda.

Books. On a brief trip such as ours, we were enormously impressed by the number of book stores, libraries, and by the countless thousands of people who walk the streets, stand in "queues" and ride the subways reading a book or having one under their arm.\*

Not only do the Soviets attach great importance to culture, but through the schools and all available media of public information they ridicule and belittle American culture. Our country is portrayed as one which prefers barrooms, juke boxes, "jive dancing" (incidentally

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\* Soviet newspapers are small in size (four pages usually), devoid of comics and features, and forbidding in appearance. The leading papers profess to have enormous circulations, but we saw relatively few people reading papers in public places. There are also numerous Soviet weekly and monthly magazines - which are often printed in English, French, German and Chinese.

also seen in Russia), gangsters and Hollywood movies to good literature, the legitimate theatre, art and classical music. Nevertheless, we were told and also observed from our own conversations with many Soviet students, that there is a genuine interest in and curiosity about America, and although there is a deep-seated distrust of and hostility to our government, there appears to be little or no feeling against American people.

### Special Schools

In addition to the regular ten year schools, there are various types of special schools in the large cities such as Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. A few of these are special language schools where, for example, the entire curriculum is taught in English. As noted above, there are other schools for talented students in music and the arts.

A recent innovation is the Soviet "boarding school", where some "tuition" is charged according to capacity to pay. We obtained little information on these schools, although Gunther ("Inside Russia Today") says there are some 70,000 children in these new boarding schools which are being used to train an "elite" and carefully selected student body.

( We were told by members of the coaching staff of the American track team (in Moscow when we were there) that there are also special schools for talented athletes, where the major emphasis is to develop and train young men and women who will successfully represent the Soviet Union in international competitions and also provide entertain-

ment for the public in the form of athletic events.\*

In short, there is a marked tendency throughout the Soviet system to provide highly specialized training for those deemed best suited to benefit from it. The emphasis, quite frankly, is to create a nation of highly trained specialists - with little or no concern for broadly educating well rounded persons.

#### Education Beyond the Secondary Level

As our Board also has some responsibility for adult education, it is of interest that the Soviet Union does not neglect this large field of educational opportunity.

Through a system of schools called "tekhnikums" (technical schools) the Soviet Union devotes an enormous effort to vocational education - chiefly for individuals whose education has been limited to seven years or at most the ten year school program. Gunther states that there are some 3500 of these vocational schools, which conduct all manner of courses from full time attendance to elaborate correspondence courses.

Many of the technical schools are run in connection with major industrial plants. Under the Ministry of Education, these schools will be located at or near an industrial plant and operated in such a manner as to enable selected employees to attend the school without discontinuing their work at the plant.

We found an example of this at the large "Leningrad Works", which we visited in the outskirts of Leningrad, and which for more

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\* It was suggested that the talented male and female athletes are encouraged to intermarry, with the hope no doubt of bigger, faster and better athletes in the years to come.

than 100 years has been a manufacturer of steamboilers, turbines, compressors and the like. This plant employs some 6,000 workers, and has various appurtenant facilities such as a fairly well equipped hospital, and a technical school to train its workers to become "engineers".\* The plant manager told us that it is quite desirable for workers to attend the technical school and become classified as "engineers", as this results in substantially increased compensation and other privileges. Accordingly, there is usually a backlog of applicants who are admitted to the school only upon examination. Of the 6,000 workers in this plant, we were informed that approximately 300 are enrolled in the school at a given time. These enrollees are worked quite hard, being required to attend school four hours per day (four days per week) in addition to working eight hours in the plant on their normal shift. They are given time off to prepare for examinations, and are given special vacation privileges.

We learned from our discussions with lawyers and judges that in the legal profession a great deal of attention is devoted to "continuing legal education" programs, with seminars, institutes and even correspondence courses. Similar adult or "in service" education is understood to be afforded in various other professions and lines of endeavor.

All of this is, of course, in addition to the universities and the institutes.\*\* The latter appear to be somewhat like our colleges, except they usually specialize in some rather narrow area of learning.

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\* In this connection, it must be remembered that the Soviet people use the term "engineers" much more broadly than we. Anyone who is specially trained to the point, for example, where he becomes the job supervisor of skilled technical workers may be called an "engineer".

\*\* Benton, supra, states that the Soviet Union already surpasses America both in the number and percentage of students enrolled in institutions above the secondary level - with more than 3,800,000 such students in 1955 as compared with U. S. enrollment of 2,700,000.



Although this report will not deal with so-called higher education, it is of interest (as bearing upon the extent to which education is emphasized and encouraged) to mention that all Soviet students (not just the star athletes) in the universities and institutes are in fact paid by the State. They receive a "stipend" sufficient to cover their tuition, room and board and provide a small amount for incidental expense.\* As they progress with their education, this stipend is increased. It requires five years to complete a university course, for which no degree is awarded. Another three years, at a minimum, is required for a doctorate degree, which also involves some original work of high quality. The so-called institutes apparently absorb the demand for a higher education which the universities themselves are not able to accommodate. An institute will confine itself to a specific field, such as law, medicine, architecture, drama, physics, pedagogy, etc.

We were told that only fifteen to twenty percent of the graduates of the ten year schools are able to pass the stiff entrance examinations to the universities or institutes. Those who do pass may proceed directly with their advanced education. The others must enter the military service or go to work, but two years later they are given a second opportunity to pass the entrance exams of an institution of higher learning.

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\* This stipend commences at 300 Rubles (\$75) per month, and increases appreciably as the student advances. Tuition, board and rent are controlled at very low figures.

## Summary

It would be dangerous to formulate final judgments on the basis of the obviously limited observations which we were able to make on a two weeks trip. We did, however, have the immensely helpful background of the study released last Fall by the United States Office of Education and various other publications and statements that have been made by students of Russian education. In light of all of this, my own general conclusions at this time may be summarized as follows:

1. The obvious goal of the Soviet leadership is to establish the U.S.S.R. as the dominant power in the world, already strong enough to force a "military economy" on the United States and to influence materially all international decisions, and eventually expected to be capable of communizing and controlling the entire world. They fully appreciate that this dominance cannot be accomplished by a nation of illiterate workers and peasants. They know it must be backed by a mighty industrial nation, and this of course requires an educated and skilled people. They also understood, earlier and more clearly than we did, that mankind has entered a new era of unprecedented potential - an era in which science is the key to power and opportunity.

The Soviet regime has therefore committed itself to the most intensive and extensive educational program ever attempted by any government or people, and with an incredible emphasis on science.

2. There is no doubt as to the "quantity" of the Soviet educational effort. There may well be grounds for doubt in certain areas as to the "quality" of this effort. Soviet education does not

produce well-rounded educated people, as information on the history, politics and economics of the outside world is grossly distorted and perverted. This in itself endangers the free world. Some of the other deficiencies have been mentioned above. But surely America would delude itself in the most disastrous way if we continue to be complacent about what the Soviet Union has and will achieve through its educational system.

3. In the vital areas of mathematics and science, where political ideology plays no significant part, the truth seems inescapable that Soviet education at the secondary level is today considerably superior to that generally provided in America.\* At the university level, while I have made no thorough study of this, the apprehension also seems fully justified that the Soviet Union will surpass us in a relatively short period of time unless we materially broaden and intensify our higher education in both the applied and pure sciences.\*\*

4. The public and official importance and prestige of education in the U.S.S.R. is in sharp contrast with that which

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\* The U.S. Office of Education's Report (supra, at p. 67) states: "The emphasis on science in Soviet schools contrasts sharply with the situation in the United States. Whereas the Soviet students graduating from secondary schools in June 1955 had taken courses in physics for 5 years, astronomy for 1 year, chemistry for 4 years, biology for 5 years and mathematics including arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry for 10 years, less than a third of the American high schools graduates had taken a year of chemistry, about a fourth had had a year of physics, and less than a seventh had taken advanced mathematics."

\*\* It is reported that some 13,000 (65%) of the 17,000 students at Moscow University are taking one of the science courses! This University, the greater part of which is housed in the tallest and most imposing building in the entire U.S.S.R. (built since the War at a reported cost of \$750,000,000), has some 1900 laboratories and emphasizes pure science and research during the 5 year courses in physics, chemistry, biology, geology and what they call geography. The applied sciences are largely taught in the institutes and technical schools rather than the universities.

often has existed in America. As an instrument of government policy, Soviet education is obviously receiving a much higher priority than the shocking needs of the people for consumer goods of all kinds. The Soviet government is reported to spend a substantially larger percentage of its national income on education than we do in America. A professor in a Soviet university is a member of the new "Aristocracy" which dominates the scene in the U.S.S.R.,\* which includes Communist Party officials, Communist Party members, scientists, educators and other intellectuals, successful plant managers, and cultural leaders who consist of the authors, playwrights, leading actors, ballerinas and musicians.

Lessons for School Authorities  
At the Local Level

Aside from the alarming implications of the long range threat to our national existence of the Soviet educational program, what are the immediate lessons for school boards and authorities at the local level? This is a question which our Board and Administration in Richmond, with the aid of faculty committees, have been studying for many months. In general no significant new light was shed on the answers to this question by my trip. We were already generally aware of the strength, as well as the weaknesses, of Soviet elementary and secondary education, and we have taken a good many steps (and have others under consideration) for strengthening and improving the quality of our own system. Much of the improvement

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\* Professors' salaries are reported to range from \$10,000 to \$60,000 per year. On this the income tax is limited to 13%!

contemplated is the natural evolution of American educational concepts and standards without regard to what is being done elsewhere.

But the trip to Russia did heighten my apprehension as to whether American school authorities, and the public upon whom we depend for support, are reacting with sufficient vigor to the manifest need for improved education. One has to visit Russia to feel personally the full impact of what is happening there, especially in the field of education. All that we have been attempting here in Richmond has therefore become more significant and important in my thinking, and I strongly recommend to the Board, Administration and our Faculty that we press forward vigorously with the programs for improvement and reform which we have had under consideration.

This includes, among other things, the following: (i) reinforce and increase the emphasis on the fundamental courses, such as mathematics, science, English, foreign languages and history; (ii) reduce the number of "electives" which permit students to choose a disproportionate number of low priority courses; (iii) increase substantially, and as rapidly as personnel and financial resources permit, the number and quality of courses offered in mathematics and the sciences, and take appropriate steps to assure that at least the qualified students take advance courses in these subjects; (iv) inaugurate the study of the Russian language on a credit basis, and as promptly as possible do the same with the Chinese language; (v) modernize, both in terms of content of text material and in technique of presentation, the methods of teaching various subjects, particularly mathematics, science and foreign languages; (vi) improve and enlarge our program for identifying the brighter or more talented students and the enabling of such students to advance more rapidly than the average or at least to be given more

advanced work than the average; (vii) continue the critical review of our entire curriculum (which was begun some months ago) with the view to eliminating unnecessary or marginal courses, especially those which may dilute our emphasis on the basic essentials of a sound education; (viii) take appropriate steps to assure, in a careful and orderly manner, the elevation of standards generally, including wherever it may be deemed necessary (a) assuring a consistent and satisfactory level of "homework" for all grades, (b) increasing the amount of required outside reading and perhaps channeling this reading somewhat more specifically, and (c) reviewing periodically our standards of grading and promotion; and (ix) recognizing that in final analysis the individual teacher is the single most important element in an educational system, we should continue to emphasize teacher selection, and provide and encourage "in service training" and postgraduate teacher training.

In my opinion, we should also consider seriously whether the school week and year should not be increased. The field of human knowledge has become so vast that there simply is not enough time, within schedules devised for the "horse and buggy" days, to deal with the fundamentals alone - and certainly not enough for the broad curriculum now common to all schools.

While we certainly would not wish to adopt the Soviet system in whole or in major part, we would be foolish indeed not to recognize that it has many strong features and that, whether we like it or not, we must compete with it. In any event, we most certainly have the desire and duty to establish and maintain the quality of public education in Richmond on a level that will afford every student (from the "slow learner" to the most gifted) a maximum opportunity

for an education appropriate to the new era which confronts civilization. This obviously must include the total educational program, as the humanities are surely as important as the physical sciences. All of this has been the objective of our Board and our dedicated Administration and Faculty, and we may justly take pride in the progress which has already earned national recognition for the Richmond Public school system.

But I am convinced that what we have accomplished, and perhaps even what we have planned for the future, is not nearly enough - especially in light of the world situation, the nature of Soviet challenge and the manifest responsibility of America. We must in my opinion make a substantially greater and more determined effort to improve appreciably the over-all quality and opportunities of education at all levels, and especially for our abler children.

#### The Test of Democracy

In the Soviet Union decisions as to the educational system are made by the Communist dictators without regard to the will of the people. They have assigned an extraordinarily high priority to education - a priority second only to that assigned to industrializing and militarizing their nation. In view of these priorities on the manpower and resources of the Soviet Union, the people are forced to accept a standard of living which we would not tolerate. There are almost no well-dressed people in the U.S.S.R. Clothes and shoes are in short supply and the cost is many times higher than comparable merchandise in America. Home appliances, as we know them, are available only for the privileged few. This is likewise true of automobiles, where most of those seen on the streets are owned by

the State. Even housing, for which a major effort has been made, is still in critically short supply.

The Soviet dictators have decided that education and industrialization are more important to the long range welfare of their Country than personal automobiles, labor-saving and convenient home appliances, attractive clothes, and comfortable housing. The public has no opportunity to review this decision. It is imposed upon them, and then sought to be popularized (or at least tolerated) by the most intensive propaganda ever devised.

In America, fortunately, we have an entirely different system. Decisions here are made by the elected representatives of the people, and they must be acceptable to the people who are privileged to exercise judgments independently and free of propaganda in the Soviet sense. While this freedom is one of our greatest blessings, it can also ultimately undermine the strength of our Nation unless it is exercised with wisdom and restraint.

The challenge now confronting America in education is a major case in point. Everyone seems to agree that we should have the finest education in the World. But many vocal supporters of this essential objective tend to melt away or make excuses whenever the subject of increased taxes for educational needs is raised. The question which all of this inevitably suggests is whether the people in a free democracy are willing to develop the informed judgments and then make the sacrifices (in terms of personal effort, tax burdens and fewer luxuries) which will probably be necessary to meet successfully this Soviet challenge?

This indeed will be a major test of our democracy - a test which we cannot afford to fail, and one which merits and



must receive thoughtful attention of all American citizens.

Lewis F. Powell, Jr., Chairman,  
Richmond Public School Board

August 22, 1958

**SOVIET EDUCATION--  
A Means Towards  
World Domination**

**Report on Trip  
to  
Soviet Union  
(July-August 1958)**

**Lewis F. Powell, Jr., Chairman  
Richmond Public School Board**

The School Board of the  
City of Richmond, Virginia

Lewis F. Powell, Jr., *Chairman*  
Mrs. Kenneth F. Lee, *Vice-Chairman*  
Booker T. Bradshaw  
Frank S. Calkins  
Dr. Edward C. Peple  
Dr. H. I. Willett, *Superintendent*

**PREFATORY NOTE:**

This pamphlet contains a reprint of a Report made in August 1958 to the School Board of the City of Richmond by the Chairman, Mr. Powell, after his trip to the Soviet Union as a member of an official delegation of the American Bar Association. Although Mr. Powell's primary mission was to study the Soviet legal system in operation, he also spent considerable time investigating Soviet education especially at the primary and secondary levels.

In view of the intensive effort being made by the Richmond School Board, Administration and Faculty to improve the over-all quality of education, including particularly the areas related directly to national security, the Board has authorized this reprint in the hope that its wider distribution will awaken a greater realization of the deadly challenge which confronts the Free World.

On September 21, 1958, Khrushchev announced drastic changes in Soviet education, especially at the secondary level. He criticized the present 10 year schools as failing to prepare youngsters for "useful physical work", and proposed that the compulsory public schools be reduced to a 7 or 8 year program, except for talented students in science and the arts. He complained that the secondary schools were training *all* pupils "for further study" when the institutes and universities can accommodate only one-fourth of the graduates.

Khrushchev's remedy is to require all young people at about 15 years of age (except the specially talented ones) to discontinue day school and go to work in factories and on farms. They will continue their education at night schools (usually coordinated with some major industry) and by correspondence courses. After two or more years of physical labor those who qualify may then enter an institute or university.

Curriculum changes for the secondary schools are also proposed. The emphasis on science will continue, but apparently the "liberal" subjects (languages, literature and history) will be de-emphasized in favor of handicrafts and preparation for skilled labor.

It will be some time—possibly years—before the full import of these changes in Soviet education can be evaluated. They are no doubt prompted, in major part, by the need for increased manpower to carry forward Russia's gigantic industrialization program. The reorientation of the curriculum likewise reflects the need for skilled labor, but it also may well indicate that the Soviet dictators have begun to fear the enlightenment which will result from the present 10 year schools. There is no reason to believe that the Soviet policy of emphasizing education (discussed in my Report above) has been abandoned. There has, however, been a major shift in emphasis, with even greater concentration on a "mechanized" type of education at the expense of a liberal one. There is certainly nothing hopeful for the free world in this new development.

L. F. P., Jr.

September 29, 1958.

*Printing Department  
Richmond Public Schools*

## SOVIET EDUCATION-- A Means Towards World Domination

in the U.S.S.R. Clothes and shoes are in short supply and the cost is many times higher than comparable merchandise in America. Home appliances, as we know them, are available only for the privileged few. This is likewise true of automobiles, where most of those seen on the streets are owned by the State. Even housing, for which a major effort has been made, is still in critically short supply.

The Soviet dictators have decided that education and industrialization are more important to the long range welfare of their Country than personal automobiles, labor-saving and convenient home appliances, attractive clothes, and comfortable housing. The public has no opportunity to review this decision. It is imposed upon them, and then sought to be popularized (or at least tolerated) by the most intensive propaganda ever devised.

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The challenge now confronting America in education is a major case in point. Everyone seems to agree that we should have the finest education in the World. But many vocal supporters of this essential objective tend to melt away or make excuses whenever the subject of increased taxes for educational needs is raised. The question which all of this inevitably suggests is whether the people in a free democracy are willing to develop the informed judgments and then make the sacrifices (in terms of personal effort, tax burdens and fewer luxuries) which will probably be necessary to meet successfully this Soviet challenge?

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single most important element in an educational system, we should continue to emphasize teacher selection, and provide and encourage "in service training" and postgraduate teacher training.

In my opinion, we should also consider seriously whether the school week and year should not be increased. The field of human knowledge has become so vast that there simply is not enough time, within schedules devised for the "horse and buggy" days, to deal with the fundamentals alone—and certainly not enough for the broad curriculum now common to all schools.

While we certainly would not wish to adopt the Soviet system in whole or in major part, we would be foolish indeed not to recognize that it has many strong features and that, whether we like it or not, we must compete with it. In any event, we most certainly have the desire and duty to establish and maintain the quality of public education in Richmond on a level that will afford every student (from the "slow learner" to the most gifted) a maximum opportunity for an education appropriate to the new era which confronts civilization. This obviously must include the total educational program, as the humanities are surely as important as the physical sciences. All of this has been the objective of our Board and our dedicated Administration and Faculty, and we may justly take pride in the progress which has already earned national recognition for the Richmond Public School System.

But I am convinced that what we have accomplished, and perhaps even what we have planned for the future, is not nearly enough—especially in light of the world situation, the nature of Soviet challenge and the manifest responsibility of America. We must in my opinion make a substantially greater and more determined effort to improve appreciably the over-all quality and opportunities of education at all levels, and especially for our abler children.

#### A TEST OF DEMOCRACY

In the Soviet Union decisions as to the educational system are made by the Communist dictators without regard to the will of the people. They have assigned an extraordinarily high priority to education—a priority second only to that assigned to industrializing and militarizing their nation. In view of these priorities on the manpower and resources of the Soviet Union, the people are forced to accept a standard of living which we would not tolerate. There are almost no well-dressed people

## SOVIET EDUCATION — A MEANS TOWARDS WORLD DOMINATION

### Report on Trip to Soviet Union

(July-August, 1958)

The American Bar Association delegation, of which I was a member, spent two weeks in the Soviet Union studying the legal system there and conferring with lawyers and judges. In view of the widespread interest in the Soviet educational system, and our own special concern here in Richmond that our public education remains "competitive" with the best available in the world, I also made some investigation of Soviet education while on this trip. It seems appropriate that I should report the results of these inquiries to the Richmond School Board and Administration.

No detailed study could be made on a two-weeks trip.<sup>1</sup> But, as a member of a professional delegation, I did have unusual opportunities to ascertain the truth about Soviet education. My principal sources were: (i) a full conference with the official in charge of public education in Leningrad; (ii) discussions of Soviet education with personnel of the American Embassy in Moscow and with representatives of the American press who have lived many years in the Soviet Union; (iii) discussions with our guides, all of whom were graduates of the ten year schools and of universities, such as Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev; (iv) discussions with lawyers and judges as to legal education; (v) a conference with the manager of a large industrial plant in which we reviewed "adult education" programs for Soviet workers; (vi) an illuminating interview with a young person who had attended six years of public schools in Russia and then spent four years in an American school in New England; and (vii) an inspection of a secondary school in Kiev.

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<sup>1</sup> An official delegation on behalf of the United States Office of Education has been studying Soviet Education this summer and no doubt will make an exhaustive report. They were in Leningrad some two weeks before we were there.

## THE EXTRAORDINARY EMPHASIS OF EDUCATION

We have all read a great deal, particularly since the first Sputnik went aloft, about the emphasis being placed on education by the Soviet Union. But one must visit Russia to appreciate fully the scope and intensity of this emphasis.

The Soviet people are now largely Atheists and profess to believe in no God.<sup>2</sup> As human beings must have some philosophy of life, the Russians have substituted what they call "Soviet realism" for religion. While this "realism" embraces many things, including Marxism as a political and economic philosophy, it most definitely includes education as affording an "answer" to most Soviet aspirations. In any event, the State has thrown the full weight of its regimented regime behind an unprecedented program for total education.

This is not the place to summarize the impressive achievements of the Soviet educational program measured in terms of (i) the numbers of schools, institutes and universities; (ii) the millions of students and adults attending these institutions; or (iii) the vast amounts of money being spent on building programs and expansion plans for education.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say that the magnitude of effort in all of these respects is deeply impressive, and fortifies the belief that Khrushchev was making no idle boast when he asserted that the Soviet Union would conquer the rest of the world "in the class room".

But wholly aside from these physical and statistical manifestations of progress in education, the thing which most attracted my attention on our trip was the public attitude toward education. This is an attitude almost approaching a religious belief in intensity of feeling and conviction that through education the Soviet Union can lead the world.

From the individual's point of view, education is also the highway to assured personal success and privilege. If one completes the ten year school pro-

<sup>2</sup> We attended the largest active church in Kiev (Greek Orthodox) for the Sunday service. Of the 300/400 people in attendance, nearly all were quite elderly persons—mostly women.

<sup>3</sup> This has been done elsewhere. See: William Benton's thought provoking book—"THIS IS THE CHALLENGE" (1958), which should be required reading for every American legislator (National, State and local) and every person responsible for any aspect of American education. See also the 1957 Report of the United States Office of Education, and the studies of Dr. Nicholas DeWitt of Harvard.

But the trip to Russia did heighten my apprehension as to whether American school authorities, and the public upon whom we depend for support, are reacting with sufficient vigor to the manifest need for improved education. One has to visit Russia to feel personally the full impact of what is happening there, especially in the related fields of education and science. All that we have been attempting here in Richmond has therefore become more significant and important in my thinking, and I strongly recommend to the Board, Administration and our Faculty that we press forward vigorously with the programs for improvement and reform which we have had under consideration.

This includes, among other things, the following: (i) reinforce and increase the emphasis on the fundamental courses, such as mathematics, science, English, foreign languages and history; (ii) reduce the number of "electives" which permit students to choose a disproportionate number of low priority courses; (iii) increase substantially, and as rapidly as personnel and financial resources permit, the number and quality of courses offered in mathematics and the sciences, and take appropriate steps to assure that at least the qualified students take advance courses in these subjects; (iv) inaugurate the study of the Russian language on a credit basis, and as promptly as possible do the same with the Chinese language; (v) modernize, both in terms of content of text material and in technique of presentation, the methods of teaching various subjects, particularly mathematics, science and foreign languages; (vi) improve and enlarge our program for identifying the brighter or more talented students and the enabling of such students to advance more rapidly than the average or at least to be given more advanced work than the average; (vii) continue the critical review of our entire curriculum (which was begun some months ago) with the view to eliminating unnecessary or marginal courses, especially those which may dilute our emphasis on the basic essentials of a sound education; (viii) take appropriate steps to assure, in a careful and orderly manner, the elevation of standards generally, including wherever it may be deemed necessary (a) assuring a consistent and satisfactory level of "homework" for all grades, (b) increasing the amount of required outside reading and perhaps channeling this reading somewhat more specifically, and (c) reviewing periodically our standards of grading and promotion; and (ix) recognizing that in final analysis the individual teacher is the

materially broaden and intensify our higher education in both the applied and pure sciences.<sup>15</sup>

4. The public and official importance and prestige of education in the U.S.S.R. is in sharp contrast with that which often has existed in America. As an instrument of government policy, Soviet education is obviously receiving a much higher priority than the shocking needs of the people for consumer goods of all kinds. The Soviet government is reported to spend a substantially larger percentage of its national income on education than we do in America. A professor in a Soviet university is a member of the new "Aristocracy" which dominates the scene in the U.S.S.R.,<sup>16</sup> which includes Communist Party officials, Communist Party members, scientists, educators and other intellectuals, successful plant managers, and cultural leaders who consist of the authors, playwrights, leading actors, ballerinas and musicians.

#### LESSONS FOR SCHOOL AUTHORITIES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Aside from the alarming implications of the long range threat to our national existence of the Soviet educational program, what are the immediate lessons for school boards and authorities at the local level? This is a question which our Board and Administration in Richmond, with the aid of faculty committees, have been studying for many months. In general no significant new light was shed on the answers to this question by my trip. We were already generally aware of the strength, as well as the weaknesses, of Soviet elementary and secondary education, and we have taken a good many steps (and have others under consideration) for strengthening and improving the quality of our own system. Much of the improvement contemplated is the natural evolution of American educational concepts and standards without regard to what is being done elsewhere.

<sup>15</sup> It is reported that some 13,000 (65%) of the 17,000 students at Moscow University are taking one of the science courses! This University, the greater part of which is housed in the tallest and most imposing building in the entire U.S.S.R. (built since the War at a reported cost of \$750,000,000), has some 1900 laboratories and emphasizes pure science and research during the 5 year courses in physics, chemistry, biology, geology and what they call geography. The applied sciences are largely taught in the institutes and technical schools rather than the universities.

<sup>16</sup> Professors' salaries are reported to range from \$10,000 to \$60,000 per year. On this the income tax is limited to 13%!

gram and can pass the stiff university entrance exams, he is excused from military service and from factory or farm labor. If he completes the five year university course, he is established as an "intellectual" and his future is relatively assured. This assumes of course that the individual is either a member of the Communist Party or willing to accept the Communist regime—and the latter category apparently embraces the overwhelming majority of the population and certainly includes most of those who have experienced the State controlled discipline and political indoctrination of the education system.

#### THE LENINGRAD TEN YEAR SCHOOLS

Passing from generalizations to specifics, it may be of interest to report in some detail on information given me personally by the head of the Department of Education of the City of Leningrad. The public school system of that city embraces 440 schools, 20,000 teachers and 370,000 pupils. Pursuant to appointment, this school official received Ross L. Malone (now President of the American Bar Association) and me in his office on a Saturday afternoon and talked (through an interpreter, who herself had been a school teacher) quite freely for about two hours. He described the Leningrad ten year public schools in summary as follows:

*Duration of Attendance.* All children are required to enter at age seven and must remain in school for seven years. If they pass the prescribed examinations given at the end of the seventh year, they normally continue for three more years. In Leningrad, it was said that about 85% of the pupils complete the full ten years. (We were told that an even higher percentage accomplish this in the Kiev schools.)<sup>4</sup>

During the first four grades, children are required to attend school from September 1st to June 1st, and after the fourth grade the school year is extended to June 20th. For the first four grades, classes last for four hours per day, and thereafter the school day moves up to six full hours. All children remain in school six days per week, with Sunday being the only day off. There are two holiday periods of ten days each—one at the beginning of January and the other in March.

<sup>4</sup> Information previously available (e.g. Dr. DeWitt's studies) indicates that a considerably lower percentage of pupils complete the 10 year program.



*Curriculum.* The curriculum is identical for all pupils and all subjects are obligatory. The only exception to this rule of enforced uniformity, without any electives whatever, is that at the end of the fourth year each child must choose a foreign language (English, French or German) and thereafter must concentrate on that language for six years.<sup>5</sup>

The following tabulation summarizes certain aspects of the Leningrad curriculum:

| Subject  | Number of years required: | Number of hours taught per week: |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Arithmetic .....   | 5                         | 6                                |
| Advanced Mathematics<br>(Algebra, Geometry<br>and Trigonometry) .. | 5                         | 5-6                              |
| Physics .....  | 4 <sup>6</sup>            | 4                                |
| Chemistry .....  | 4                         | 2-3                              |
| Biology .....  | 5                         | 2-3                              |
| Astronomy .....  | 1                         | 1                                |
| Foreign Language .....   | 6                         | 3-4                              |
| World History .....  | 1 (10th grade)            | 3-4                              |
| Russian Language and<br>Literature .....                           | 10                        | 5-6                              |

In discussing the content of the World History course, we were told that the one year is concentrated on the history of the twentieth century, but that there are four prior years of history which deal with the Middle Ages, European and Russian history.

We were also assured that art and music are not neglected, although it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which these are formally taught as courses in the regular ten year schools. Specifically, it appears that all children are subjected to sufficient art and music during the first four years to enable the authorities to select the children really talented in these areas.

*Special Schools.* Such talented children are then removed from the regular public schools and placed in special schools which continue the general education but devote the major emphasis to developing the particular talent. For example there is

<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that 70% choose English.

<sup>6</sup> In Moscow and Kiev we were told that the requirement for Physics is 5 years. Each of the 15 Republics in the U.S.S.R. has the right (in theory and within certain limits) to operate its own schools.

the United States and to influence drastically all international decisions. But the Soviet leaders fully appreciate that the communizing and controlling of the entire world can not be accomplished by a nation of illiterate workers and peasants. They know that their ambitions must be backed by a mighty industrial nation, and this of course requires an educated and skilled people. They also understood earlier and more clearly than we did, that mankind has entered a new era of unprecedented potential—an era in which science is the key to power and opportunity.

The Soviet regime has therefore committed itself to the most intensive and extensive educational program ever attempted by any government or people, and with an incredible emphasis on science.

2. There is no doubt as to the "quantity" of the Soviet educational effort. There are certainly grounds for doubt in certain areas as to the "quality" of this effort. Soviet education does not produce well-rounded educated people, as information on the culture, history, politics and economics of the outside world is grossly distorted and perverted. This in itself endangers the free world. Some of the other deficiencies have been mentioned above. But surely America would delude itself in the most disastrous way if we continue to be complacent about what the Soviet Union has achieved and will achieve in the future through its educational system.

3. In the vital areas of mathematics and science, where political ideology plays no significant part, the truth seems inescapable that Soviet education at the secondary level is today considerably superior to that generally provided in America.<sup>14</sup>

At the University level, while I have made no thorough study of this, the apprehension also seems fully justified that the Soviet Union will surpass us in a relatively short period of time unless we

<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Office of Education's Report (*supra*, at p. 67) states: "The emphasis on science in Soviet schools contrasts sharply with the situation in the United States. Whereas the Soviet students graduating from secondary schools in June 1955 had taken courses in physics for 5 years, astronomy for 1 year, chemistry for 4 years, biology for 5 years and mathematics including arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry for 10 years, less than a third of the American high schools graduates had taken a year of chemistry, about a fourth had had a year of physics, and less than a seventh had taken advanced mathematics."

to be somewhat like our colleges, except they usually specialize in some rather narrow area of learning.

Although this report will not deal with so-called higher education, it is of interest (as bearing upon the extent to which education is emphasized and encouraged) to mention that all Soviet students (not just the star athletes) in the universities and institutes are in fact paid by the State. They receive a "stipend" sufficient to cover their tuition, room and board and provide a small amount for incidental expense.<sup>13</sup> As they progress with their education, this stipend is increased. It requires five years to complete a university course, for which no degree is awarded. Another three years, at a minimum, is required for a doctorate degree, which also involves some original work of high quality. The so-called institutes apparently absorb the demand for a higher education which the universities themselves are not able to accommodate.

We were told that only fifteen to twenty percent of the graduates of the ten year schools are able to pass the stiff entrance examinations to the universities or institutes. Those who do pass may proceed directly with their advanced education. The others must enter the military service or go to work, but two years later they are given a second opportunity to pass the entrance exams of an institution of higher learning.

#### EVALUATIONS OF SOVIET EDUCATION

Prior to my trip to the U.S.S.R., I had reviewed a good deal of the published material on Soviet education, including the study released last Fall by the United States Office of Education, some of the studies of Dr. Nicholas DeWitt of the Harvard Russian Research Center and various other publications and statements, especially those dealing with comparisons in the fields of science, mathematics and foreign languages. This afforded immensely helpful background for our investigations on this trip. In light of all of this, the following general evaluations seem justified:

1. The obvious goal of the Soviet leaders is to establish the U.S.S.R. as the dominant power in the world. This ruthless nation is already strong enough to threaten the physical and economic security of

such a special school for students with artistic talent and another special school for those with demonstrated musical abilities.

"Circles". It was pointed out that music, singing, athletics and other similar or special interests of students are developed after the normal school day through "Circles". There are also science Circles, foreign language Circles and the like. Participation in these Circles is said not to be compulsory. They do afford opportunities for students to pursue particular interests in an organized and supervised manner, and no doubt there is considerable "positive guidance" to assure participation.

*Hand Crafts.* We were also told that a major change in policy about three years ago has resulted in greater emphasis on "handcrafts". These are now being taught to some extent during the first four grades, and commencing with the fifth grade pupils are required to spend two extra hours each week (after normal classes) on some specific hand craft, such as mechanics, electricity, sewing, etc. During the last three grades, the hand craft work is related directly to the branch of industry which is most important in the particular school district. For example, if a school district embraces an automobile factory, the pupils in the last three grades will be taught automobile mechanics; or if there should be an electrical equipment factory located nearby, they will receive elementary instruction in electricity. This hand craft program does not replace any of the standard required subjects, but seems to be in addition.

It was never made entirely clear to us how all of the foregoing can be accomplished within the time available. It was pointed out, however, that classes run for 45 minutes with no free or study periods for anyone. Moreover, except in the case of a few of the major subjects during certain years, a majority of subjects involve only two to four hours per week. Then, too, there are no electives and less emphasis on social studies, home economics and similar courses than in American schools. Apparently these features of the system, together with the six day week and the longer school year, enable the presentation of an educational program in ten years which exceeds the American twelve year program in intensity and total hours of classroom work.

*Homework Emphasized.* Homework is also greatly emphasized by the Soviets. In Leningrad the

<sup>13</sup>This stipend commences at 300 Rubles (\$75) per month, and increases appreciably as the student advances. Tuition, board and rent are controlled at very low figures.

“official” requirement for homework commencing with the seventh grade is a minimum of two and one-half hours per day. The head of the Department of Education stated that actually he believed most children worked more than two and one-half hours per day at home. He stated that one of the problems, with which the professional educators were attempting to deal, was the disposition of each teacher to assign homework without regard to assignments by other teachers, with the result that some children were being overloaded and subjected to undue strain.

*“Gifted” Children.* One of the most interesting points discussed was what the Soviets do with the “gifted” child. We were informed that there is no special plan for advancing gifted or talented children within the regular ten year schools. Apparently they are required to remain in the appropriate class for their age unless they are so gifted or talented in some area as to justify transferring them to one of the special schools. Nor are classes within an age group divided according to the “I.Q.” of the students. It appeared from discussions with various other people that what actually happens is that the teachers do concentrate on the brighter pupils, and give them markedly more attention than the average or slow pupils. In addition, the brighter pupils are encouraged to participate in “Circles” in subjects in which they show special aptitude, such as science, mathematics, or a foreign language. This is done after normal school hours.

*Salaries.* Teachers’ salaries apparently vary depending upon the amount of work performed, and to a less extent upon the nature of their work. We were told that in Leningrad most teachers work only three hours per day or a total of 18 hours per week, and for this are paid a salary ranging from 800 to 1000 rubles per month.<sup>7</sup> A teacher who teaches more than three hours per day is paid a correspondingly higher salary. Consideration is likewise given to how much time a teacher would normally be expected to work at home in preparation for his class room presentation. Thus, we were told that a teacher of mathematics or foreign languages, for example, would receive “slightly more compensation” than teachers of easier subjects such as “drawing”.

<sup>7</sup> On the basis of the official rate of exchange one ruble is worth approximately 25¢, so that the salary level above mentioned would be from \$200 to \$250 per month.

program. Gunther states that there are some 3500 of these vocational schools, which conduct all manner of courses from full time attendance to elaborate correspondence courses.

Many of the technical schools are run in connection with major industrial plants. Under the Ministry of Education, these schools will be located at or near an industrial plant and operated in such a manner as to enable selected employees to attend the school without discontinuing their work at the plant.

We found an example of this at the large “Lenin Works”, which we visited in the outskirts of Leningrad, and which for more than 100 years has been a manufacturer of steamboilers, turbines, compressors and the like. This plant employs some 6,000 workers, and has various appurtenant facilities such as a fairly well equipped hospital, and a technical school to train its workers to become “engineers”.<sup>11</sup> The plant manager told us that it is quite desirable for workers to attend the technical school and become classified as “engineers”, as this results in substantially increased compensation and other privileges. Accordingly, there is usually a backlog of applicants who are admitted to the school only upon examination. Of the 6,000 workers in this plant, we were informed that approximately 300 are enrolled in the school at a given time. These enrollees are worked quite hard, being required to attend school four hours per day (four days per week) *in addition* to working eight hours in the plant on their normal shift. They are given time off to prepare for examinations, and are given special vacation privileges.

We learned from our discussions with lawyers and judges that in the legal profession a great deal of attention is devoted to “continuing legal education” programs with seminars, institutes and even correspondence courses. Similar adult or “in service” education is understood to be afforded in various other professions and lines of endeavor.

All of this is, of course, in addition to the universities and the institutes.<sup>12</sup> The latter appear

<sup>11</sup> In this connection, it must be remembered that the Soviet people use the term “engineers” much more broadly than we. Anyone who is specially trained to the point, for example, where he becomes the job supervisor of skilled technical workers may be called an “engineer”.

<sup>12</sup> Benton *supra*, states that the Soviet Union already surpasses America both in the number and percentage of students enrolled in institutions above the secondary level—with more than 3,800,000 such students in 1955 as compared with U. S. enrollment of 2,700,000.

appears to be little or no feeling against American people.

### SPECIAL SCHOOLS

In addition to the regular ten year schools, there are various types of special schools in the large cities such as Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. A few of these are special language schools where, for example, the entire curriculum is taught in English. As noted above, there are other schools for talented students in music and the arts.

A recent innovation is the Soviet "boarding school", where some "tuition" is charged according to capacity to pay. We obtained little information on these schools, although Gunther ("Inside Russia Today") says there are some 70,000 children in these new boarding schools which are being used to train an "elite" and carefully selected student body.

We were told by members of the coaching staff of the American track team (in Moscow when we were there) that there are also special schools for talented athletes, where the major emphasis is to develop and train young men and women who will successfully represent the Soviet Union in international competitions and also provide entertainment for the public in the form of athletic events.<sup>10</sup>

In short, there is a marked tendency throughout the Soviet system to provide highly specialized training for those deemed best suited to benefit from it. The emphasis, quite frankly, is to create a nation of highly trained specialists—with little or no concern for broadly educating well rounded persons.

### EDUCATION BEYOND THE SECONDARY LEVEL

As our Board also has some responsibility for adult education, it is of interest that the Soviet Union does not neglect this large field of educational opportunity.

Through a system of schools called "tekhnikums" (technical schools) the Soviet Union devotes an enormous effort to vocational education—chiefly for individuals whose education has been limited to seven years or at most the ten year school

<sup>10</sup> It was suggested that the talented male and female athletes are encouraged to intermarry, with the hope no doubt of bigger, faster and better athletes in the years to come.

### A COMPARISON OF SOVIET AND AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

One of the most illuminating experiences on our entire trip was the opportunity to talk to a person who, since World War II, has been educated in both Soviet and American schools. He spent his first six years of education in a regular ten year Soviet public school. After finishing the sixth grade, and at about 12 years of age, he came to America and attended a preparatory school for four years. After these ten years of schooling, he was qualified to enter any university in America. Although he attended an American private rather than public school, many of his classmates had been in the public schools and therefore he felt generally familiar with them.

It will be noted that after only six years of training in the Soviet public schools, this individual was able to graduate from an American preparatory school in four years. He stated that when he entered the American school he was, in educational achievement, at least two years ahead of American students his age. He was even further advanced in mathematics and science, having already had two years of algebra, two years of geometry, one year of chemistry, one year of physics, one year of biology and one year of botany.

The Soviet school attended by this individual had a relatively high pupil-teacher ratio, with about 40 pupils per teacher in the first five grades and thereafter 25 to 30 pupils per teacher. Outside activities, such as clubs, athletics and social affairs were considered unimportant, and did not add to the pupil's prestige. Although there was no segregation of talented pupils, the teachers quite obviously devoted more attention to such pupils and often neglected the "slow learners". By the time a child reached the fifth grade, it was necessary for him to do at least three hours of homework—all of which was actually done after school hours as there were no study periods.

*Soviet Educational Weaknesses.* In comparing education in the Soviet Union with that in America, this highly intelligent young person pointed out the following "weaknesses" in the Soviet system: It is a rigid, inflexible system enforced upon all pupils, regardless of tastes or aptitudes; it emphasizes memory work which tends to minimize creative or original thinking; although direct political propaganda is not particularly

evident, the entire educational system is planned and operated with the purpose of thoroughly indoctrinating every child with Marxism; the theme that the Marxist always triumphs is an ever present one, and the inevitability and "justness" of the "class struggle" is taught both directly and indirectly; although world literature is well taught with a minimum of propaganda, history is grossly distorted, and especially American history, economics and politics; no occasion is lost to convince the children that "race prejudice" and "discrimination" are universally practiced in America.

*Over-Emphasis on Grades—a Weakness.* In addition, a fundamental weakness in the Soviet system is its undue emphasis on "good grades". As a person's entire career may depend upon how well he does in school and in a university, the temptation to cheat becomes significant and there is said to be a considerable amount of this throughout Soviet educational institutions. The compelling necessity, as most pupils view it, to make good grades also causes the "memorizing" of lessons and the giving to teachers of only the answers which they are believed to desire.

Speaking of teachers, we were told that there is seldom the intimacy between pupils and teachers in the Soviet Union that exists so generally in America. The atmosphere of the Soviet class room is formal, and discipline is strict. Teachers there maintain an aloof attitude, and do not concern themselves with the pupils as individuals.

*Soviet "Strength".*<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, our consultant thought the Soviet system has many "strong points", including the following: It emphasizes education as a major element of life and as the surest road to material success and distinction; it enforces a strict mental discipline upon students which, despite the rigidities above mentioned, trains their minds extremely well; it emphasizes the "hard" subjects which require mental effort and develop intellectual capacity; students are taught to work diligently from the very earliest grades, and they develop a capacity for such work; the training in mathematics and science is appreciably superior to that in America; the teaching of foreign languages is also superior;

<sup>8</sup> The views summarized in this paragraph represent the opinions of our consultant who had recently attended both Soviet and American schools. There is, of course, room for considerable difference of honest opinion on many of these views.

curiously enough, and somewhat paradoxically, this person also thought that the teaching of literature was superior, as he thinks the average Soviet student has a broader knowledge of the great literature of the World than the American student of comparable age, and an appreciably greater interest in pursuing such literature outside of school.

*The Extraordinary Emphasis on "Culture".* In discussing further this Soviet success in the "humanities", several of those with whom we conferred pointed out that the great official emphasis on "culture" in the Soviet Union creates an atmosphere conducive to interest in literature, the theatre, art and music. There is a National Minister of Culture, who is in charge of book publishing, theatres, the museums, moving picture production, television and other cultural media. All of this is not only controlled but emphasized to a degree that must be seen to be believed. Television, for example, is not used for advertising purposes, soap operas or other "non-educational" purposes. It is used primarily to present carefully selected drama, opera, ballet, good music and, of course massive propaganda.

*Books.* On a brief trip such as ours, we were enormously impressed by the number of book stores, libraries, and by the countless thousands of people who walk the streets, stand in "queues" and ride the subways reading a book or having one under their arm.<sup>9</sup>

Not only do the Soviets attach great importance to culture, but through the schools and all available media of public information they ridicule and belittle American culture. Our country is portrayed as one which prefers barrooms, juke boxes, "jive dancing" (incidentally also seen in Russia), gangsters and Hollywood movies to good literature, the legitimate theatre, art and classical music. Nevertheless, we were told and also observed from our own conversations with many Soviet students, that there is a genuine interest in and curiosity about America, and although there is a deep-seated distrust of and hostility to our government, there

<sup>9</sup> Soviet newspapers are small in size (four pages usually), devoid of comics and features, and forbidding in appearance. The leading papers profess to have enormous circulations, but we saw relatively few people reading papers in public places. There are also numerous Soviet weekly and monthly magazines—which are often printed in English, French, German and Chinese.