

**EDUCATION FOR  
the  
SOVIET YOUNG**

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Since the Revolution of 1917 the Communist Party has used the educational program of the Soviet Union to meet party goals. Upon seizing power in the U.S.S.R. the Bolsheviks, wishing to completely break away from the past, adopted a brand of progressiveness in education never heard of in the western world. With Young Pioneer groups ruling the schools the influence and authority of the educator was non-existent. This chaotic condition existed until Lenin assumed the role of power in the Soviet Union.

Lenin realized that it was only within the framework of the school that the future of communism and a communist state could be assured. He ordered a complete reorganization of the whole educational process. Believing it necessary to have one central authority to whom all agencies of education would be responsible, he created the office of Ministry of Education. He ordered this ministry to draw up a program of education to fit the needs of the communist party. This program would be used in every school in the U.S.S.R. so that the basic content for each grade would be the same for every young Soviet student. This program planned by Lenin has with some variations been the basic educational program ever since. The result of this planning was one of the most gigantic and highly centralized educational programs ever undertaken.

The chief goal of this new educational program was and still is to help build and strengthen the Communist Party by helping create a new pattern of society. The

schools were told exactly the type of citizen expected in the "New Soviet Man."

Since the early years of a child's life are crucial ones in patterning the outlook on life, the role of the primary school is most important in training the child and developing a sense of the collective. While the indoctrination process starts in kindergarten, when he enters first grade he is given the twenty rules which govern the exact pattern of conduct expected of a young citizen of the Soviet Union. Both parents and teachers are held responsible for the execution of these rules.

Since every citizen must render service to the state each must receive the type of academic education that will enable him to contribute in the way most needed to help the Party meet its economic goals. The academic<sup>part</sup> of the educational program in the primary grades of the Soviet Union is a carefully organized sequence of events intended to provide a good foundation for future education. The recently revised educational program calls for a work-study program which will give the child the skills so desperately needed by the state to meet its economic goals, teach the child respect for useful labor and wipe out the growing cleavage between the educated and the workers.

Among the positive factors in Soviet education worthy of mention is, first, the very important place given education and the educator in the Soviet Union. The second is the success in changing a sixty-five per cent illiterate

population to one of the most literate in the world. The enthusiasm of the students toward learning is also commendable.

While the Soviet people are proud of their educational system they are also very critical of certain things in it. The largest number of complaints are about the child being overburdened with too much homework and the high percentage of repeaters especially in the primary grades. Soviet educational publications have carried articles recently criticizing the teacher for using inefficient methods of teaching. To these negative criticisms an American educator would add the single curriculum for every equivalent grade regardless of the ability or background of the student.

The frequent reorganizations of the educational program to fit changing needs of the party must cause considerable confusion in the educational program. The fear of censure by the local party committees keeps the pupil from enriching his knowledge of a subject by seeking outside information either from reference books or by discussion with his teacher. It binds the teacher to the formalistic rote type of teaching. It results in prohibiting the child from expressing himself creatively about any subject. Lack of suitable school buildings and the shortage of textbooks are other factors that prevent the efficient operation of the school system.

Hoping to completely erase the last traces of the folkways of their ancestors and the last traces of a religious heritage, Khrushchev has ordered the establishment

of boarding schools throughout the Soviet Union for children of primary school age. Here the child will be removed from the influence of his parents and be completely under the influence of a house mother and teachers who will be carefully selected by the local Party leaders.

As the needs of the Party demand, the Soviet primary school will be reorganized along with other areas of education for Soviet leadership sees a direct relationship between education and the success of the Communist enterprise.