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MORE ON SOVIET EDUCATION

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RUSSIA'S LAGGING SCHOOL SYSTEM

By George L. Kline

It is ironic that less than a year after the orbiting of Sputnik I, which threw American educators into a trauma of agonized self-searching, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev should have launched a sweeping reform of the entire Soviet educational system. Khrushchev justifies his drastic measures by reference to widespread public and Communist party dissatisfaction with the existing system. Such dissatisfaction doubtless exists, although it is probably centered upon aspects of the Soviet school system which will be reinforced rather than removed by the impending reforms.

Dissatisfaction springs partly from double shifts, inferior textbooks and instruction, and lack of teaching aids. A recent report to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic by methods-inspector P.A. Larichev finds 25 per cent of fifth- to seventh-grade mathematics teachers unqualified. Many mathematics teachers fail to encourage gifted pupils; failures in mathematics are largely responsible for holdbacks; fifth- and sixth-graders are deficient in their knowledge of frac-

tions and decimals, sixth- to eighth-graders weak in geometry, and ninth-graders very poor in solid geometry. Larichev complains that a geometry textbook printed in a huge edition in 1956 was unsatisfactory, that there are still few visual aids in mathematics, that no school-type slide rules are available for seventh-grade algebra classes. He urges the immediate production of surveyor's instruments and slide rules and the manufacture and even importation from abroad of assorted visual aids.

Similar, though less outspoken, criticisms have appeared intermittently in the Soviet educational press for some years. They must be taken in the context of their function--urging teachers and pupils to better performance. More serious is the statistical fact, only recently established, that 95 per cent of all Soviet schools have fewer than 80 pupils. The "big red schoolhouse" of which so much has been written turns out to be a network of very small red schoolhouses, in which teachers, equipment and conditions of instruction all lag seriously behind the metropolitan standards of the larger schools in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev.

The reform was first promulgated by Khrushchev in a long "note" in Pravda on September 21, 1958, announced as having been approved by the Party Presidium. Parts of it had been foreshadowed in Khrushchev's speech to the Komsomol Congress in April, 1958. The proposal was reworked into 40 "theses," which were approved at a plenum of the Central Committee on November 12 and published in Pravda on November 16. With minor changes, these were enacted into law by the Supreme Soviet on December 24 and printed on the front page of Pravda the following day. Khrushchev defended the new law in his opening address to the 21st Party Congress on January 27, 1959, as did Minister of Higher Education V.P. Elyutin a few days later (his speech appears in Pravda for February 4, 1959). The reform is to begin with the school year, 1959-60, and to be completed within three to five years--in other words, before the end of the current Seven-Year Plan.

Khrushchev's dissatisfaction focuses upon a fact, an attitude and a statistic. The fact is what he calls the "isolation" of Soviet schools from life, i.e., from economic production. Both Khrushchev's "note" and the 40 theses speak of "tightening the bond" between "school and life." But Khrushchev in his speech to the Party Congress made clear what this really meant: "It is necessary above all," he declared, "that education should be organically connected with life, with production." No attempt is being made to bring the educational system into closer relation to the personal needs and aspirations of students--to satisfy their thirst for a rounded liberal education. Quite the contrary, as we shall see.

The present 10-year school, Khrushchev complains, borrows too heavily from the pre-Revolutionary gymnasium, which purveyed only abstract academic subjects. The 10-year school prepares students not for life (i.e., production) but for higher education. And this fact has generated an attitude: Students and their parents look upon graduation from 10-year school as conveying a "natural right" to higher education and a white-collar or profes-



sional job. They scorn manual labor.

But--and here is the crucial statistic--10-year schools are graduating nearly 1.5 million students annually, and 800,000 (53 per cent) of these graduates will find no openings at the university level. Khrushchev has estimated the backlog of 10-year school graduates unable to enter institutions of higher education, as of 1957, at 2.5 million, which, extrapolated to mid-1959--when the reforms are to begin--would amount to at least 4 million, and perhaps as many as 4.5 million!

Khrushchev notes that Soviet institutions of higher education can take only 450,000 new students each year, and this figure is not being increased. Only half of these students are in full-time residence, the rest being enrolled in evening or correspondence courses. The gap between this fixed figure and the number of 10-year-school graduates is constantly increasing. Thus a crisis has been developing over the past four or five years, precipitated by the explosive tension between the wishes and aspirations of several million Soviet young people (and their parents) for higher education, and the Government's refusal to expand higher educational facilities to accommodate them.

Khrushchev's reform proposes, negatively, to abandon the goals set by the 19th Party Congress in 1952 and the 20th Party Congress in 1956. The former had reaffirmed the eventual goal of making the 10-year school universal; the latter had modified this to 10 years of schooling, to be achieved by 1960 (the end of the discontinued Five-Year Plan). Khrushchev substitutes a universal eight-year school. Positively, the reform embodies the requirement that every Soviet school-child upon completion of the eight-year school (at age 15), shall take a full-time job, continuing his formal education, if at all, only by part-time evening or correspondence courses.

Such a proposal, though drastic, is not wholly new. Thumb-ing through the Soviet equivalent of a "syntopicon," the authors of the 40 theses are able to enlist the support not only of Marx, Engels and Lenin, but of Campanella, Fourier, Owen and Chernyshevski for the combining of study with work in production! But of course the decisive authority is that of Lenin, as quoted by Khrushchev: "It is impossible," Lenin asserted in the 1890s, "to picture the ideal of future society apart from a combination of study with productive work by the young generation...."

In any case, the new law is clear: Every Soviet student must go to work upon finishing the compulsory eight years of schooling. (Khrushchev, in his original "note," put the terminal grade at either seventh or eighth, but the "theses" as enacted into law stipulate the latter.) This, too, has been partly anticipated by recent Soviet educational history. The interruption of formal education by a period (usually two years) of full-time work between secondary school and university has been in force for the past two or three years. In many universities and engineering schools during the academic year 1957-58 the quota of entering students with such job experience was set at 75 or 80 per cent. Only 20 or 25 per cent were to be admitted directly from the 10-year schools.

The eight-year school will be divided into two stages: grades

1-4, "elementary"; and grades 5-8, the "first stage" of secondary education. It is essentially an extension of the present seven-year school, rather than a condensed version of the 10-year school. The additional year will probably be fully taken up with such non-academic subjects as home economics, workshop and "production practice."

Beyond the eighth grade, five educational channels appear to be open, the first two of which are obvious academic dead-ends:

1. The labor reserve schools (including both "factory-plant instruction" and trade schools), which are academically inferior and often a thinly disguised exploitation of child-labor. Their courses range from six months to two years, although the new law envisages a possible extension to three years in urban schools. Their general educational role has been negligible in the past, but under the new system they will take on increased importance.

2. The technical trade schools, created in 1954 to accommodate a part (some 100,000 students per year) of the growing surplus of 10-year-school graduates. Their courses, which are strictly vocational, take from six months to a year. (It is conceivable that these courses will be expanded somewhat for graduates of the new eight-year school.)

(The next three educational channels will, for a small minority of their students--presumably those with outstanding records, Party connections, family influence or some combination of these advantages--lead on to higher education.)

3. "Schools of Working and Rural Youth," organized in 1943 as an emergency wartime measure for students who work full-time in a factory or on a farm. They offer three-year evening and correspondence courses, which allegedly cover the materials of grades 8-10 of the present 10-year school. In fact, their graduates are markedly inferior to 10-year-school graduates. These schools have no physical plant of their own, but make after-hours use of the facilities of other schools. Under conditions not yet specified, some students (probably those with the best grades) may be released from their jobs to study for two or three days a week. These schools will assume a major role under the new plan. There was a rush to enter them after Khrushchev's speech to the Komsomol Congress in April. Soviet students were quick to sense which way the educational wind was blowing.

4. Schools with the unlikely title of "Secondary General-Educational Labor Polytechnical Schools with Production Training." They offer a three-year course which combines study with factory or farm apprenticeship.

5. The specialized secondary school (tekhnikum), which now offers a four-year course for seven-year-school graduates, and an accelerated two or two-and-a-half-year course for a smaller number of 10-year-school graduates. Under existing regulations only the top five per cent of tekhnikum graduates can apply for higher education. It is possible that this quota will be increased, but nothing has been said about such an increase as yet.



There is little specific reference in the new law to higher education, except that it is to be more closely related to "production." Once the current reorganization is accomplished, there will be few, if any, beginning university students without two or three years of work experience. The law also specifies that during the first two years of the five-year university or engineering school course, all but a handful of students (those in highly theoretical disciplines: mathematics, theoretical physics and the like) will hold full-time jobs, completing their studies by correspondence or in the evening. During the last three years, day students will be in normal residence. (If the present proportion is maintained, at least half of all university students will complete their entire program by evening or correspondence courses.)

Soviet boarding schools, introduced by Khrushchev in 1956, deserve a special word. Khrushchev told the Party Congress that their enrollment would increase to at least 2.5 million by 1965. (According to Pravda of November 18, 1958, present enrollment is 180,000.) Thesis 16 notes that Soviet boarding schools are "called upon to be models of a truly effective combination of study with productive labor." The "theses," but not the law as enacted, hint that boarding schools may charge tuition, thus making them institutions for the socio-economically privileged, as well as the gifted.

Eventually, according to Khrushchev, boarding schools will become universal, replacing all other schools. This will make possible a total "Communist upbringing" for Soviet youngsters as well as releasing millions of mothers for work in field or factory. (This statement drew applause from Khrushchev's predominantly male audience!) Expansion of kindergarten enrollment (which embraces ages three to six) from the present 2.28 million to 4.2 million in 1965, expansion of the network of public eating places, and "communal home services" (laundry, mending, cleaning) will release many more women from household chores and the care of children.

Khrushchev does not say so, but this is a literal repetition of the program advocated in the early 1920s by Alexandra Kollontai, together with A. V. Lunacharski, Leon Trotsky, Nikolai Bukharin and other leading Bolshevik intellectuals. However, Alexandra Kollontai went further, linking this program to the "withering away" of marriage and the family and to the complete emancipation of women in matters of sex.

The decade of the 1920s was a period marked by the advocacy, and prediction, of "withering away" in many areas--law, the state, the family, monogamous marriage, and even formal education. The "withering away of the school" was outspokenly advocated by V. N. Shulgin, a leading educational theorist, in 1925. "In my opinion," Shulgin wrote, "there will be no schools in the future Communist society." Instead, children will begin with socially-useful tasks, go on to factory work and then turn to libraries to pursue subjects which interest them. And he added: "We are coming closer and closer to this state of things."

In the 1920s this was hardly more than a pious hope; the development of the Soviet school system in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s washed it under. But there seems to be more than a hint in Khrushchev's reform of an eventual "withering away" of formal education for the great majority of Soviet young people, coupled with an intensified pursuit of formal education for a tiny and highly-gifted élite.

Since April 1958, Khrushchev has repeatedly attacked the scornful and "aristocratic" attitude of Soviet students and their parents toward manual labor. Minister of Higher Education Elyutin goes on to score the "blustering conceit" of "a certain part of the student youth," and spells out bluntly the meaning of "tightening the bond between higher educational institutions and life": "The student youth," he declares, "must be taught to do not only vista-filled scientific work, but also rank-and-file work, willingly, lovingly, with complete responsibility for the result of what is entrusted to them." And, driving home the point: "The higher school should send forth modest toilers (truzheniki), ready and willing to carry out the simplest rank-and-file task, in the realization that any useful labor is honorable and necessary in a socialist society." Article 36 of the new law declares: "Graduates of the Soviet higher school should be exemplary in the discharging of obligations to state and society."

Khrushchev has revealed the role of "influence" and "pull" in admissions to institutions of higher education. In his "note" of September 21, he uses a pungent Soviet phrase to describe the situation. After the competition of the examination papers, he writes, comes the "competition of the parents." Khrushchev adds that some parents try to influence 10-year-school teachers in the awarding of the coveted gold and silver medals. But short of a major change in human nature, there seems to be little in the reforms which would remedy this situation. Indeed, the educational reorganization will almost certainly increase the pressures which have driven parents to such measures.

Elyutin speaks with pride of the increase in Soviet output of scientific and technical specialists under the new Seven-Year Plan. But the projected figure, 2.3 million for 1959-65, is actually not much of an increase over the 1.7 million of 1952-58, especially when Soviet population growth is taken into account. The average population for the seven-year period just ended was about 198 million; that for the seven-year period now beginning will be about 220 million. The percentage of specialists to average population in the two periods is to be increased from .86 to 1.05. Thus, although the planned absolute increase in trained specialists is 35 per cent, the planned increase relative to total population is only eight per cent. And even this modest figure may not be achieved.

Similarly, Elyutin cites figures which show an increase from 94,000 graduate Soviet engineers in 1958 to a projected 100,000 in 1964. The United States figures which he quotes are 31,000 (1957) and 43,000 (1964). Thus, he acknowledges that the U.S. output of engineers will increase 39 per cent in eight years, while that of the Soviet Union will increase



only .6 per cent in seven years--though, of course, the absolute Soviet figure in each case is between two and three times that of the U.S.

More importantly, Khrushchev makes it clear that the increase in output of specialists will be concentrated in technical and engineering fields directly related to the "production of material goods." Thus, it seems likely that, relative to total population, and perhaps even in absolute numbers, the number of graduates in the social sciences and humanities will decrease.

This probability emerges most clearly from Elyutin's speech to the Party Congress. His entire 2,000-word address, which repeatedly emphasizes the training of "cadres" of natural scientists and technicians, makes only one fleeting reference (in two short sentences) to the social sciences, and none whatever to the humanities. Even these two sentences are permeated with partiinost: Elyutin urges "philosophers, economists and historians" to pay more attention to the "most urgent problems of the day in Marxist-Leninist theory, as elucidated in the report of Comrade N. S. Khrushchev." Khrushchev himself had exhorted social scientists to fight for the purity of Marxist-Leninist theory.

Thesis 18 notes that "humanistic education" must not be neglected, since it is essential to the "formation of a Communist world-view in the students". In general, the reforms appear to shrink still further the tiny place allotted to liberal education in the Soviet system of secondary and higher education.

Khrushchev indignantly repudiates the charge, made by "foreign critics," that his educational reform is primarily an attempt to meet an incipient labor shortage. This disclaimer is probably justified. The wartime drop in birthrate will be reflected in the reduced ranks of young people entering the labor force (aged 16) between 1958 and 1962, whereas the effect of the reforms will not be fully felt until 1962 or 1964. The transfer to the new universal eight-year school is to begin in 1959-60, but students now in grades 8-10 will be permitted to complete the 10-year school--with an increased dose of vocational training.

Still, the primary motivation of the reform--as Khrushchev implicitly admits--is economic rather than educational. The new system will make available a labor force of several million young people, ages 15-20, drawing heavily upon hitherto untapped manpower resources. Soviet authorities seem to feel that two, or at most three, students will be able to do the work of one adult factory worker or collective farmer.

This raises legal problems. Present Soviet labor law places the minimum age for full-time work at 16; most students will finish eight grade when they are 15. It thus seems likely that the minimum age will be revised downward in the near future. Child labor, in any case, will certainly increase with the accelerated march toward Communism.

Strong opposition to Khrushchev's school reform is coming, and will come, from at least three groups which have much at stake:

1. Teachers, especially those in grades 8-10 of the 10-year school, as well as university teachers. During the "discussion" period, between the publication of Khrushchev's "note" and the enactment of the school reform law, some educators voiced their opposition quite openly. For example, V. A. Sukhomlinski, a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, argued on medical grounds against part-time study in conjunction with full-time employment for 15-year-olds.

2. Factory managers. Under present law, youngsters--though they tend to be unskilled and undisciplined--must be paid an eight-hour wage for a six-hour day; they are subject to the draft; and many of them aspire to further education. As workers, they are, in the words of one Soviet manager, "not worth the trouble."

3. Students and their parents, for obvious reasons. In addition, there would seem to be some reluctance even among Party members. Elyutin's speech to the Party Congress was received with a singular lack of enthusiasm, compared to those of other Ministers and delegates. Pravda records that Minister of Defense Rodion Malinovski's missile-rattling tirade was interrupted by eight bursts of applause, two of them "stormy" and two "prolonged," and was followed by "prolonged" applause. In contrast, Elyutin's speech, of about the same length, was not interrupted at all, and drew only perfunctory applause at the end. It would seem at least possible that this unenthusiastic reception reflects mixed feelings about the school reform among the delegates. After all, the new system may put obstacles across the path to higher education even for their own children, and certainly for the children of many of their non-Party friends and acquaintances.

The élitist tendency of Khrushchev's reform is clear. The eventual outcome of his reorganization of Soviet schools may well be two separate educational systems: (1) A system for the gifted (and/or influential) minority, including special schools for the musically and artistically gifted as well as for those showing special promise in the natural sciences. (Such schools are mentioned in the theses, but omitted in present law.) (2) Another system, for the overwhelming majority, which will stress vocational training even in grades 1-8, and will limit formal education beyond the eight grade to evening and correspondence courses. It must be emphasized that the consistently poor quality of evening and correspondence instruction has drawn repeated criticism in the Soviet press. There is no reason to expect it to improve in the years ahead.

The new élitism is only an intensification of a trend long established but concealed by Soviet sources under a claim of 100 per cent completion of seven-year school and 65-70



per cent completion of 10-year school. Khrushchev has now made clear what Western specialists have long surmised--that the former percentage is actually 75-80 and the latter, 30-35.

In all modern societies the spread of formal education has been accompanied by an increasing pressure for white-collar and professional jobs. Such pressure has been clearly apparent in the Soviet Union for at least two decades. Khrushchev's school reform constitutes a deliberate and massive effort to reverse this natural and powerful tendency.

Underlying the present crisis in Soviet education is a basic conflict between the needs and requirements of the Soviet state and the aspirations and desires of Soviet citizens. In the case of education, this familiar opposition takes an especially acute form, having been unwittingly exacerbated by the Soviet authorities themselves. Since the 1930s, Soviet propaganda has extolled the value of "science," knowledge and education (especially higher education) in such a way as to make them seem ends in themselves. Soviet leaders, of course, have always been aware of their purely instrumental character. Education in science and technology has been and is a means for sustaining and expanding economic production and increasing political and military power.

But it is both humanly and historically understandable that Soviet young people and their parents should have come (1) to regard higher education as an intrinsic value, to be sought at all costs, and (2) to recognize it increasingly as the only avenue of upward social mobility in Soviet society, outside of the Party itself. In opposition to the view of parents, teachers and students--that education is both intrinsically valuable and a means to personal advancement--Khrushchev has brutally reasserted the Party's view that education is primarily a means for advancing the interests of the state, an instrumentality for furthering economic, political and military ends. Little wonder that his school reform is being received with suspicion, resentment and hostility.

In the article above, Mr. G.L. Kline (assistant professor of philosophy, Columbia University) deploys a number of weighty arguments tending to show that the Soviet school system is lagging. Many of them are the kind of criticism that could well be made of any educational network anywhere in the world. For example when told that in the USSR there are "no school-type slide-rules available for 7th grade algebra classes," the reader must be forgiven if he wonders how many are supplied, at that age, in Great Britain or Western Germany.

Another reason for caution is his statement that "95% of all Soviet schools have fewer than 80 pupils." If this is true, it is obviously a great handicap for the Kremlin. But Cultural Construction in the USSR (State Statistical Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 76) shows that there were 213,000 schools in 1955/56 with 30,070,000 pupils, an average of about 142 pupils per school. If 95% of these had fewer than 80 pupils each, the remainder must have been startlingly large, to a degree which seems improbable.

However Mr. Kline's figures on the 10 year schools (top of p. 3) are more interesting. He points out that Khrushchev has estimated the backlog of 10 year school graduates who were unable to enter institutions of higher education, as of 1957, at 2.5 million, and that extrapolated to mid-1959, there would be "at least 4 million, and perhaps as many as 4.5 million" in this category. Thus he assumes that a minimum of 750,000, and a maximum of 1,000,000 10-year school graduates will be available to the economy in each of the years 1958 and 1959 from this source of labor alone (there are five other sources: seven year schools, labor reserves schools, technical trade schools, specialized secondary schools and the universities.) Thus by comparison with the gloomier prognoses of the "labor shortage" school of thought, Mr. Kline is distinctly realistic, though still short of the mark. In fact there were 5.6 million pupils in the 8th-10th grades in 1957-58<sup>1</sup> of whom 1,340,000 graduated in 1958. Hence the 1959 and 1960 10th grades will be more numerous than ever before, and quite possibly twice the size estimated by Mr. Kline.

His argument hinges on the central proposition that the universal 8-year school is to replace the goal, which was never attained, of the universal 10 year school (p. 3). But there appears to be more substance in the opinion of Mr. Nicholas DeWitt, who recently wrote:

"In the new structure the major component will be the compulsory 8 year school, which will replace the present 7 year school" (Problems of Communism, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1959)

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<sup>1</sup> Vestnik Statistiki, No. 11, 1958, p. 8.



Mr. Kline makes the questionable statement that: "Positively the reform embodies the requirement that every Soviet school-child upon completion of the 8-year school (at age 15) shall take a full-time job..." But one searches the text of the law, the Theses, Khrushchev's memorandum and every other Soviet source in vain for any mention of the word "full-time" or for any approximation to it. Moreover Mr. Kline himself goes on to list (p.4) at least 2 separate channels (secondary general labor, polytechnical schools, and specialized secondary schools) both of which preclude the possibility of a full-time job at the age of 15.

The suggestion that the reform hints at the eventual withering away" of formal education for the great majority, coupled with an intensified pursuit of formal education for a tiny élite (p.6) is distinctly puzzling. A session of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet has just been told by the Deputy Chairman of the Kazakh Council of Ministers<sup>2</sup> that the number of graduates from secondary schools in the republic is planned to be about 65,000 in 1965. The way in which the broadcast is phrased provides grounds for the belief that this figure refers to the 11 year schools. Since the present graduation rate from Kazakh 10 year schools is about 70,000, p.a.<sup>3</sup> (approximately one-third of the relevant age group) the 1965 target is far too large to constitute a "tiny élite".

As early as 1963, at a time when demographic recovery will just be beginning, Kazakhstan plans to send 42% of 8 year school graduated on to the 11 year schools. This proportion appears to be representative, because in Azerbaijan too the 11 year schools are scheduled to absorb more than 40% of 8 year school graduates.<sup>4</sup> The crucial fact to remember in this connection is that, as Mr. Kline rightly stresses (p. 9 above), at present only 30-35% of Soviet children are graduating from the 10 year schools. Thus the Kremlin is not aiming to reduce the proportion of children who receive a full secondary education. What it aims to do is to give to a slightly higher ratio than before, 11 years of schooling instead of 10, devoting one year of this time to vocational training, but without lowering the academic standards required to any substantial degree.<sup>5</sup>

The charge that the reform is an attempt to meet an incipient labor shortage is rightly rejected by Mr. Kline, using the irrefutable logic of the time factor. In view of the

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<sup>2</sup>Alma Ata Radio, 28 March 1959, relevant text appended below.

<sup>3</sup>Cultural Construction USSR, Moscow, 1956, p. 149.

<sup>4</sup>Radio Baku, 27 March 1959.

<sup>5</sup>See the proposed curriculum for the 11-year school, Sovetskaya Pedagogika, (January 1959, pp. 39 et. seq. )

fact that some analyses (e.g. Ost Europa and Mr. DeWitt's article in Problems of Communism) have not yet recognized the importance of this cardinal piece in the jig saw puzzle, Mr. Kline's reasoning is worth repeating:

"The war-time drop in the birthrate will be reflected in the reduced ranks of young people entering the labor force (aged 16) between 1958 and 1962, whereas the effect of the reform will not be fully felt until 1962 or 1964. The transfer to the new universal 8 year school is to begin in 1959-60, but students now in grades 8-10 will be permitted to complete the 10 year school - with an increased dose of vocational training" (p. 7).

The effect of this notable piece of realism is unfortunately reduced in his following paragraph in which Mr. Kline claims that

"the new system will make available a labor force of several million young people, ages 15-20, drawing heavily upon hitherto untapped manpower resources."

But in fact a system which changes seven-year students into 8-year students, and 10 year students into 11 year students can clearly do no such thing.

The likelihood of a downward revision of the legal minimum age for full-time work (at present 16) would seem remote, and for the same reason. Mr. Kline correctly notes that "most students will finish 8th grade when they are 15", but does not point out that at present most students finish 7th grade at 14. This latter fact has been partly responsible for the hiatus in youthful careers and attendant unemployment difficulties which the new reform is designed to overcome. On balance, therefore, there is solid reason to think that there may after all be no change in the minimum working age for the next few years.

The theory of élitism developed in Mr. Kline's article, which postulates that "for the overwhelming majority " formal education beyond the 8th grade would be limited to evening and correspondence courses (p.8) would imply massive redundancy among school teachers, of whom at present there are about 1.7 million.<sup>6</sup> However Soviet press reports suggest that the reverse process is planned - a sharp expansion in their number. An indication of this is provided by the figures for the Moldavian SSR, where the 1965 target requires an extra 12,000 teachers.<sup>7</sup> The total number of teachers in the Republic at present is about 21,000<sup>8</sup>, so that in this area the virtual abandonment of formal education after the 8th grade would seem most improbable.

<sup>6</sup>Cultural Construction, USSR, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup>Teacher's Gazette, 19 March 1959.

<sup>8</sup>Cultural Construction, USSR, p. 103.



Finally attention should be drawn to the draft regulations on the new school system, which were published in Teacher's Gazette, on 21 March 1959. In the section dealing with the 11-year schools and production it is laid down that:

"The factory administration allots engineering and technical personnel, who are to be paid out of the school estimates, for the vocational training of pupils."

This division of financial responsibility, like the division of the 11-year school's curriculum into 1/3 vocational training and 2/3 academic education, makes it still more clear that the Ministries of Finance and Education regard the 11 year schools primarily as an educational and only secondarily as an industrial, instrument.

r.r.g.

ON STRENGTHENING THE LINKS OF SCHOOLS WITH LIFE AND ON  
THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE KAZAKH SSR

By Zakarin, Dep. Chairman,  
Kazakh Council of Ministers  
Alma Ata Kazakh Regional Service  
March 28, 1959

...It is proposed to conduct the reorganization of schools in Kazakhstan in the following manner:

During the 1959-1960 educational year the transfer to the new educational plan and program will be carried out in all grades of primary schools and all first to fifth grades of eight-year and secondary schools. The remaining grades will continue to work according to the now existing educational program.

The complete transition to the new educational plan in eight-year schools will be completed in the 1962-63 educational year. During the 1959-60 educational year the ninth grades will change to an eleven-year educational term in 36 experimental schools. Every year a greater number of secondary schools will link their studies with productive work.

By 1965 there will be 3,267 eight-year schools in the republic. The number of general secondary educational schools will increase to 1,947, against the 1,635 in 1958, and the number of graduates of secondary schools will increase almost by 16,000 pupils in 1965 compared with 1958, or, in other words, it will amount to 65,860 persons.

The successful implementation of the reorganization of public education demands considerable strengthening of the teaching and material bases of schools. During recent years, and especially after the XXth CPSU Congress, much has been carried out in this direction with the help of the Party and Soviet organizations, the kolkhoz, and the public. Nevertheless, the general state of the teaching and material bases of schools cannot be described as satisfactory. The speed in building schools badly lags behind the increase in the number of pupils and the demand in political education. The large capital investments allocated by the state for the construction of schools are not being used up from year to year. This applies in particular to the republic's Ministry of Agriculture, which, in the course of several years, is unable to complete the construction of school building at sovkhoses. Contractors organizations under the jurisdiction of the national economic councils are also unsatisfactorily carrying out their work in building schools.

In 1959 leading sovkhoses in a number of oblasts in the republic worked out project plans for the construction of school buildings, boarding schools, training workshops, and other educational buildings for three to five years, taking into consideration the transfer of schools for one-shift work and the creation of normal conditions for successful work. No doubt this honorable initiative will be widely supported.



The Kazakh Council of Ministers, jointly with the State Planning Commission and other interested organizations, is at present working out measures for strengthening the material base of schools in liquidating multishift work at them, in supplying schools with the necessary teaching material and equipment, in giving the pupils of senior grades of secondary schools vacancies for their professional training in production practice, and in arranging production work for the graduates of eight-year and secondary schools.

According to preliminary estimates there will be 110,000 leaving the 8th grades in 1963. Of these about 47,000 or over 42% will be admitted to secondary general, labor and polytechnical schools with production training. A large number will be admitted to professional technical schools, some to the technical colleges, and the remainder must be sent to production work after giving them individual and brigade training.

The number of people graduating from the eighth grades will be increasing constantly in the following years. In addition, 30,000 to 40,000 will be graduating every year from the tenth grades of the present-day secondary schools and then the 11th grades of the labor-polytechnical schools with production training. The draft law envisages additional responsibilities for the leaders of the sovnarkhozes, ministries, and administrations, and the ispolkoms of the local Soviets of workers' deputies for procuring employment for these youths.

The Labor Reserves Schools of Kazakhstan have trained about half a million people many of whom have won the respect of the nation and have been awarded Soviet Union orders and medals. At present there are 174 labor reserves colleges and schools with a total of 50,000 students in Kazakhstan. The professional training establishments which are subordinated to the sovnarkhozes, ministries, and administrations, train and raise the qualifications of about 170,000 people a year. But the present level of professional training in Kazakhstan is lagging behind the increased requirements of the national economy.

The draft law submitted for study envisages the creation in the republic of professional-technical training establishments of a single type in lieu of the present trades, railway, mining industry, construction, agricultural mechanization colleges, labor reserves industrial training schools, and factory and workshop industrial training schools and the professional-technical schools of the sovnarkhozes and administrations. All these training establishments will be reorganized into two and rural professional-technical schools with one to three year courses depending on the trade.

The creation of single-type professional-technical schools in the republic should be completed within three to five years. Up to now the training of specialists for the various branches of the national economy, and culture and health services of the Kazakh SSR was not based on plans for the development of these branches and their requirements but mostly by the unjustified requests of the sovnarkhozes, ministries, and administrations. This led to an excess of specialists in one branch of the national economy and a shortage in another one.

Thus, in 1958, the training of mining and metallurgical specialists in the republic was considerably above requirements. At the same time there was a shortage in construction, motor transport and other specialists. Some technical colleges are training a large number of specialists in different trades while they should train specialists in only three to four allied trades. The Kazakh State Planning Commission, the Sovnarkhozes, the Ministries, and the administrations must review the trades being taught in the light of requirements of all the branches of the national economy.

The ministries, the administrations and the sovnarkhozes must take measures to provide the students at the technical colleges with work places at enterprises during the period of their training there, and the students of some special technical colleges with places for production training in sections of enterprises. Sections and workshops for the production of industrial products by students should be organized at industrial, construction and transport technical colleges, and large farms where all the jobs would be done by students should be organized at agricultural colleges.

The Kazakh Council of Ministers at present is working out measures for expanding special secondary education in the republic which envisage putting uniformity in the network of special secondary educational establishments, bringing them closer to production, and increasing their material base...

**NOT TO BE MICROFICHED**