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Background Information USSR

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THE SIXTH DAY OF THE WEEK

Under the Soviet educational law which was passed in December 1958,¹ a major role was allotted to the schools for working and rural youth, in which adolescents already in the labor force are encouraged to obtain a secondary education in their free time. It was even then made plain that an incentive, in the shape of time off from work, was to be provided so that the plan should appeal as widely as possible to potential students. Article 4(a) of the law stated that:

"to create the necessary conditions for students in evening (shift) general secondary schools, the USSR Council of Ministers shall establish a shorter working day or a shorter working week for persons successfully pursuing a program of studies without taking time out from production."

This clear statement of the USSR's intention to forego a proportion of adolescent labor in order to achieve a higher educational standard has now been expressed in concrete and specific form by an edict of the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR, which was published in Pravda, on 21 November 1959 (see Appendix below). Presumably the other republics will follow suit with a similar decree before long.

The decree provides for a five-day work week, instead of the usual six days, for pupils of the 9-11th grades of the schools for working youth and the secondary correspondence schools. One working day, or the corresponding number of hours per week, is allotted to education. In 1958 there were 2,200,000 pupils in the schools for working and rural youth,² but it is planned to have 4,800,000 of them in 1965. For purposes of calculation, therefore, a figure of 3.5 million pupils might be selected as the average in these schools during the 7-year plan, on the assumption that the plan will be fulfilled in the main.

Pupils of the 9th-11th grades in rural and correspondence secondary schools are allotted two days off a week, or the equivalent number of hours, by the decree. But there is a qualifying clause stating that normally pupils will not be allowed to take more than a total of 36 days off in the course of a year. It

¹Pravda and Izvestia, December 25, 1958; Background Information, 12th March 1959 "Khrushchev and the School Reform", p. 19.

²I.A. Kairov, Izvestia, December 24, 1958. Background Information, 20th February 1959 "Education as Seen by the Supreme Soviet".

must be remembered that the majority of young workers in these grades are under 18 years of age, and therefore they have a legal right to one month's holiday per year. In addition, they have a legal working day of only six hours.³

Thus the effect of the decree will be to produce about 9 1/2 months' work per year - instead of 11 - from each of these 3 1/2 million adolescents. To put it more clearly, the net result will be to switch the equivalent of about 440,000 man-years from the economy and into education.⁴

In this connection it should be recalled that on the basis provided by Planned Economy, No. 9, 1959, there will be a loss to the economy of about 480,000 man years p.a. in 1963 as a result of the reform of the full-time secondary schools (see Background Information, 25 September 1959, "Man Years Lost by School Reform"). Therefore the loss to industry and agriculture arising out of these two segments of the reform taken together is likely to be equivalent, on the average, to roughly the work of 900,000 adolescents a year.

In considering this impressive total, one appreciates the validity of the remark made by Mr. Peter Wiles (Encounter, December 1959) that:

"Further growth (of the Soviet economy - r.r.g.) now makes domestic ease necessary, if only as a means to full employment..."

The statement could equally well be made that further growth now makes further education desirable, partly as a means to full employment, and partly for its own sake.

r.r.g.

³ Sotsialisticheskaya Zakonnost, No. 10, October 1959.

⁴ While being educated the pupils are to be paid 5% of their average wages at their place of work, but not less than the fixed minimum wage.

PRIVILEGES FOR THOSE WHO WORK AND STUDY

Pravda,
21 November 1959
Tass

The Soviet state displays great solicitude for those who study without taking time off from production. In accordance with the decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On establishing a shorter work day or a shorter work week for those successfully studying without taking time off from production in Schools for Working and Rural Youth, evening (shift or seasonal) and correspondence secondary general schools", the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR has issued a decree.

It states that pupils in the 9-11th grades of the Schools for Working Youth and secondary correspondence schools will now work not 6 but 5 days a week during the educational year. One working day, or the corresponding number of working hours (where the working day has been shortened in the course of the week) is allotted to general education. For those who study in the 9-11th grades in the Schools for Rural Youth and secondary correspondence schools, 2 working days or the corresponding number of working hours (where the work day is shortened in the course of the working week) are allotted for the same purpose. The wages of pupils during the time off from work are to be paid at the rate of 50 per cent of the average wage at their basic place of employment, but not less than the established minimum.

In the course of the school year pupils in the 9-11th grades of these schools will be released from work for not more than 36 working days or the corresponding number of working hours.

Managers of enterprises, building sites, institutions and organizations have the right to grant pupils of the 9-11th grades in these schools an additional 1-2 days off from work per week (where this does not harm production) without pay.

During the graduation exams for the 11th grade, pupils will receive an additional leave of 20 working days with pay at their main place of employment based on their tariff rate or rate of pay.