

EH
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BULGARIA

EDUCATION (1000)
Sovietization (1001)

SOVIET INFLUENCE DOMINATES BULGARIAN
EDUCATION.

SOURCE ISTANBUL: A 21-year-old Bulgarian who graduated from high school in 1955 and who escaped to Turkey in November of the same year.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until November 1955.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This report correctly presents the situation prevailing in Bulgarian schools. The schooling system streamlined according to the Soviet pattern, the use of Russian translated textbooks, the stress put on political education and compulsory study of the Russian language, are long known and confirmed facts. The only difference between today and former times is that there is less propaganda about the "Big Brother USSR" in the public opinion media, however, no change in the application.

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Source, who only recently completed his high school education in Communist Bulgaria, stated that "if there were no Soviet Union then teachers in Bulgaria would not have any material to teach." He claims that the one and only aim of Bulgarian educators is to prove to their students that the Soviet Union stands far above the rest of the world. Russian heroism by far surpasses that of any other nation, Russian industry is more advanced than that of any other country, Russian music and literature outrank the rest of the world, etc. Bulgarian and captive nations artists, scientists and men of letters are praised only if and when they follow the Soviet pattern. It is not only the Soviet Union that is getting all the praise but Russia and her people in general. Tsarist Russia, although

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despised because of her anti-revolutionary measures, is looked upon as a great friend of the Bulgarian people, and Bulgarian schoolchildren of all ages are taught that the "Russian armies" have twice liberated the country. The fact that the Russian army of 1878 was under the command of a Tsar and that the army which 'liberated' Bulgaria in 1944 was the Red Army, is not stressed.

In the courses of Bulgarian literature only the works of pro-Russian, not necessarily pro-Soviet, authors are analyzed. Thus, the most widely publicized Bulgarian authors are Ivan VAZOV, Hristo BOTEV, Nikola Yonkov VAPTZAROV and Hristo RADEV. Contemporary Bulgarian poets and authors have only one aim: to praise the Soviet Union and thank her for liberating and assisting Bulgaria. Source stated that during his two last years of high school he has not read or heard of the works of any other Bulgarian author with the exception of those mentioned above.

Scientific facts are shamelessly distorted only to flatter the Russians. Thus, for instance, Bulgarian high school students are taught that the steam engine was discovered by a Russian inventor, Ivan PALAUZOV, twenty years before the steam engine was heard of anywhere else. The then totalitarian and reactionary Tsarist regime is blamed for having opposed scientific developments and this is given as the reason for the withholding of PALAUZOV's important discovery. Similarly, Bulgarian children are taught that the wireless was not discovered by Marconi at all but by the Russian scientist Popov who many years before Marconi's 'false discovery' had sent messages over distances by wireless. Again reactionary-minded Tsarist Russia is blamed for not taking the necessary steps to perfect Popov's discovery.

Students in Bulgarian schools receive their examination and test marks not according to their abilities but according to the political presentation of their answers. Source gave the following explanation concerning the system whereby students receive marks:

A student unable to answer anything to an examination question receives the lowest existing mark, namely 1 and the remark "losh" (bad.) Someone who has some information concerning the required topic gets the mark 2 and the remark "slab" (weak.) If a student knows more or less the correct answer to a question but is helped along and prodded by his teacher, he gets 3 and the remark "zadovolitelen" (satisfactory.) If a student gives a perfect answer to a question but does not give politically correct examples, then he can get only a top mark of 4 with the remark "dobar" (good.) Only when quoting

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from Russian or Communist sources in answering a question can a student get the top mark of 5 and the remark "otlichen" (excellent.) Source gave the following example:

During a mathematics test in 1954 students of the SUNGULAR high school were given a simple mathematical problem concerning the production of a hypothetical factory. Source in solving his problem correctly spoke of "the production of the factory." The boy sitting next to him, son of a KARNOBAT Communist official, also solved the problem correctly and came up with the same solution. The next day when the results of the test were announced, source was surprised to hear that while he received 4 for the test the boy next to him, and who had given exactly the same answer, received the top mark of 5. When he spoke to the teacher about this, the latter showed him both test papers and asked source to decide for himself which was 'better presented.' It was simple to understand why the Communist boy had received top marks. His problem was worded as follows:

"Let us suppose that the factory in question is the tractor manufacturing plant 'Lenin' of KIEV....." This convinced source that 'political presentation' is extremely important even in learning mathematics!

Great importance is attributed to the teaching of the Russian language in all Bulgarian schools. As Russian is an obligatory course, school authorities do not like to see students fail during their Russian-language examinations. This means that students who know almost no Russian are also allowed to pass examinations. During the 1954-1955 scholar year's first term, 22 out of 35 students in source's class did not get passing marks in Russian. At the end of the year, however, all but one of the students had made the grade. The student was expelled from school for political reasons and, therefore, he was further discredited by not being allowed to pass his Russian examination.

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