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WORK AND STUDY

The new curricula for Soviet schools which have been designed to cover the future 8 and 11-year programs cannot be correctly understood unless the central fact is recalled that they replace 7 and 10 year schedules respectively. Thus the widespread but theory that the world is witnessing a massive recruitment of adolescents into manual labor is misleading. Unquestionably the new syllabi include more time spent on vocational training than the old, but they also devote more time to academic study, since they take a year longer to complete in each case.

At present, the total number of hours of instruction provided by the 7-year curriculum is 6402.¹ By adding an extra year's schooling, the 8-year program provides an additional 1015 hours.² Of these precisely 583 are allotted to manual work, nearly 60%, and the remainder to general education.

The next step toward comprehension is to calculate how much production work the pupil would have done in that time without the new schedule. A reasonable guess would be that he might have worked six hours a day, six days a week, for perhaps 48 weeks of the year, or a total of 1728 hours. The inescapable conclusion is that he will do about one-third as much manual labor at the 14-15 years stage under the new system as in the past, and will be better educated academically to the extent of 432 hours of extra schooling. It is true that in the cities most of the seven-year school graduates go on to complete a ten-year secondary education, and thus this comparison of the 7 with the 8-year curriculum is mainly valid for the rural areas. The fact remains that the children of approximately half the Soviet population, those who live in rural areas, will be better educated and will perform less physical labor as a result of the introduction of the 8th school year.

The Second Stage

The switch from 10 years to 11 years of education at the second stage is to be accompanied by systematic vocational training for two days a week on an average between the 9th and 11th grades. The new curriculum allots a total of 1356 hours to this manual work sector, as compared with 504 hours in the present 10-year program. It is inaccurate to assume that all of this time will be devoted to production-line duties. In fact a small proportion of it will be spent on the theory of production, a rather larger share on vocational training, and most of it on the real thing. While it is true to say that the new secondary schedule will devote 852 more hours

¹ Narodnoye Obrazovaniye, No. 7, July 1955, p. 4.

² Soviet News, 5 June 1959; Pravda May 20th 1959 Appendix III below.

to the production sector than the old, it will also allot:

116 more hours to mathematics
104 more hours to physics
67 more hours to chemistry

As in the first stage, therefore, second-stage graduates will be better trained academically than at present. The direct loss to the economy caused by keeping them in school a year longer can be expressed as:

$1728 - 852 = 876$ hours per pupil, or approximately 6 months working time. There is to be no loss in educational standards, although the process of emphasizing science and mathematics at the expense of the humanities will clearly continue, as is required, in the Kremlin's view, by the technological exigencies of the 20th century.

It should not be thought that there is anything unique about the renewed Soviet interest in vocational and production training. The Swiss schools are currently introducing a "work year", which has already been started in Zurich and in some rural areas (see Appendix IV, p. , below). As in the Soviet case, this is additional to, not instead of, the routine formal educational schedule.

As for the emphasis on mathematics and science under the new schedule, it is comparable with the German Oberrealschule,³ which similarly deemphasizes humanities and elective subjects, but lasts thirteen years instead of ten in the present Soviet secondary schools. The reform now in progress in the USSR will move a little way towards closing that qualitative gap.

T.R.G.

³ German children may also choose the classical gymnasium or the modern language gymnasium. Thus even in Germany, probably one of the best educated nations in the free world, the overall exposure to science and mathematics per pupil is less than in the USSR.

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CLASSES FOR THE NEW CLASS

By David Burg
The Reporter
19 February 1959

"In my opinion all pupils - without exception - should be engaged in socially useful labor at factories, collective farms, and so forth, when they have finished seven or eight grades." Khrushchev chose these words last September to sum up to the party presidium his projected "reform" of Soviet education.

Perhaps no better evidence of a change in the conduct of Soviet affairs has come to light since Stalin's death than what has turned out to be the defeat of Khrushchev's personal scheme to revolutionize his country's school system. For public objections to the teen-age labor plan triumphed at December's session of the Supreme Soviet. The law the deputies approved has so many loopholes that the principle of "socially useful labor" for every youth, beginning at the age of fifteen, is foredoomed.

Behind this development lay a three-month campaign led by the Soviet professional elite. Parents and educators played the key role. Invited by Khrushchev to take part in an organized "nation-wide discussion," they succeeded in defending the very thing he had attacked: the right of young people to finish secondary and even university education before being assigned to full-or part-time work.

In Russia, membership in the professional classes carries with it far more privileges than in the United States. During my five years as a student at Moscow University, despite the stiff curriculum and sometimes marginal living allowances, I never heard of anyone withdrawing voluntarily. The young Russian's road to opportunity lies inevitably through the vuzy - universities and other institutions of higher learning. Selfmade men like Khrushchev are a vanishing breed in the new generation, even among today's party functionaries; a diploma has become the indispensable passport to a different - and incomparably better - life. Just as the universities are the crucible of the New Class, they are essential to its perpetuation.

My friend Petya was a student at the Geodetical Institute in Moscow until he failed his exams and was drafted into the army. After three years of service he returned to Moscow. But in time the authorities told him that in order to keep his residence permit he would have to find work. Petya passed through a succession of dreary manual jobs. When I last saw him he was working on the assembly line at a fountain-pen factory, with wages of six hundred rubles a month and slight hope of promotion. Had he graduated from the Geodetical Institute, his first job would have paid at least nine hundred rubles, plus a liberal living allowance for field work. Had he shown moderate efficiency he could have hoped in ten years to have an income two to four times his starting salary.

Three Months of Debate

Russian children begin formal schooling at seven. Until now they have been taught under a relatively conservative system introduced in 1934, which provides for seven years of primary preparation (compulsory since the war) and three years of secondary, pre-university training.

Khrushchev's attempt to revise this system can be traced to three vexing state problems: shortages of young manpower caused by the depressed wartime birth rate; student political unrest, which he has said can be curbed by the chastening effect of pre-university work experience; and a whole complex of "lingering bourgeois attitudes," which he blames on the schools.

Last May Khrushchev criticized the educational system for failing to indoctrinate youth with proper respect for physical labor. Parents as well as children, he complained, suffered from the "haughtily contemptuous" view that factory and farm work is "humiliating." He proposed taking young people out of school and throwing them into the machinery of production before they obtained the treasured "certificate of maturity" - the secondary diploma prerequisite to University admission. Night and correspondence courses for working teen-agers would have been the only path to a belated higher education.

No one openly challenged Khrushchev directly during the three-month debate. Implementation of the plan, however, was politely but determinedly talked to death.

Perhaps the most formidable figure to take the field in opposition was organic chemist Aleksander Nesmeyanov, chairman of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. As spokesman for this influential body, Nesmeyanov met the work-before-study theory head-on. "Every stage of education and every subject," he objected, "has its optimum age. My experience shows that for university-level studies this age is from seventeen to twenty-two or twenty-three years. Each year of delay is a loss from the physiological point of view and an enormous loss for the state." Furthermore, he said, aiming again at Khrushchev, "continuity of instruction" is "an important requirement." Nesmeyanov's views were echoed by his colleagues all over the country.

Pravda and Izvestia devoted a special page each day to comments from citizens. Smaller newspapers also provided extensive space. At ad hoc conferences convened in Moscow and throughout the provinces, groups of educators, industrial managers, agricultural officials, party functionaries, and parents met to voice their opinions. The monolithic strictures that had governed public discussion during Stalin's lifetime were forgotten.

Inevitably, the new school regulations adopted in December follow Khrushchev's formulation closely. They decree that secondary education, "beginning with the ages of fifteen and sixteen years, is accomplished on the basis of union of instruction and productive labor, in order to engage all young people of these ages in socially useful labor." But this principle is effectively canceled out by other provisions.

To accomplish his basic objective, Khrushchev had offered two alternatives for reorganizing the school system. The first of these plans called for young people to go to work as soon as they had finished eight years of elementary schooling. Except for the "unusually gifted," all students would obtain through night and correspondence courses the secondary training required for enrollment at a university. The new law rejects this entirely.

Last September Khrushchev had declared that if general classroom instruction were nonetheless to be continued beyond the eight-year primary level, then "chief emphasis" must be given to vocational training. But a leading educational official speaking at the December Supreme Soviet session when the law was passed made it plain that formal secondary education will remain in force in the Soviet Union, and that nothing like "chief emphasis" will be placed on job training.

Although the ten-year school system has indeed been supplanted by a combination of compulsory primary schools (now eight years) and "general-education labor polytechnic schools" (three years), all but one-third of pupils' time at the latter will be devoted to academic courses. The only new departure lies in the addition of an eleventh year of vocational preparation - from the standpoint of the young people themselves, not an undesirable feature. If anything, it runs counter to the scheme to get them out on the job at an earlier age.

The new law overrules Khrushchev on another key issue. In guaranteeing the eligibility of future eleven-year graduates for direct university admission (provided that they do well enough on competitive entrance examinations), it ensures that the schools will continue to be oriented toward preparation for higher education.

The New Class, wrote Yugoslav rebel Milovan Djilas, "would like to live quietly. It must protect itself even from its own authorized leaders now that it has been adequately strengthened."

Khrushchev's rebuff was administered primarily by professional people, not by the apparatus of officialdom which composes the essential ingredient of the New Class as Djilas defined it. But the educational debate and its outcome point up Djilas's analysis of Communist society: "As the class grows stronger, the party grows weaker."

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Soviet Studies
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THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM

With the publication of the Theses of the Party Central Committee and USSR Council of Ministers "On Strengthening the Ties between School and Life and on further Developing the System of Public Education," on 16 November 1958¹ a new stage of the long-standing discussion on educational reform² was opened; it was concluded by the adoption of the law of 24 December 1958 by the USSR Supreme Soviet.³ As distinct from the earlier stages of the debate, which was dominated by the educationists and by discussion articles in the press, discussion meetings were held in many localities, factories and farms: in the RSFSR there were 199,000 such meetings, attended by 13 million people of whom 800,000 took the floor (in the Ukraine the corresponding figures are 90,000, 10 million and 500,000; in Kazakhstan 17,000, 1.3 million and 100,000; in Lithuania, 6,200, 400,000 and 18,000).⁴ The major amendments to Khrushchev's reform plan occurred between his memorandum of 21 September 1958 and the Theses published by the CC on 16 November; many of the arguments made in the course of the following discussion were directed against proposals of the Memorandum no longer contained in the CC Theses. Still, controversy about basic issues continued in evident awareness of their social implications, and found expression also at the Supreme Soviet session. These arguments certainly foreshadow different approaches to the practical problems which will arise in the individual republics when the very general framework provided by the law will have to be filled by concrete legislation and administration.

Khrushchev's approach to the problem of educational reform, as explained in his Memorandum of 21 September, may be summarized as centered round three basic principles: (1) emphasis should be laid, not, as envisaged by the XIX and XX party congresses, on broadening the system of ten-year schools (even in the more practical shape which was conceived during the preceding discussion, as including preparation for industrial or agricultural labor) to make it eventually universal, but on improving the basic (primary) school, if possible increased to eight years and also reformed with a view to preparing pupils for practical work; (2) this basic school should generally be followed by a period of practical work in industry or agriculture, the young people being given the opportunity to combine that work with completion of their secondary education; (3) the (reformed) "full secondary school" (increased to eleven years) should continue, apart from some exceptions, only for a transition period: eventually the main path of full secondary education (and subsequently, to the university) would lead through the Schools for Worker (or Peasant) Youth, improve and with shortened hours for those attending so that the combination of practical work and further schooling would be feasible for a large number of boys and girls.

The facts on which the first of Khrushchev's suggestions is based are fairly clear. From the data given in his Memorandum it follows that in 1957 only slightly over a fifth of the pupils completing secondary school could directly enter higher education. In some rapidly developing regions the prospects are better, but even there, of course,

only a minority will proceed to higher education.⁵ On the other hand, the requirements of modern technology demand a higher educational standard of the ordinary worker. G.I. Zelenko, Head of the USSR Labor Reserves Administration, stated in Komsomolskaya Pravda 10 September 1958 that in fully automated shops of the engineering industry more than 50% of all the workers were fitters, 30% repair workers and less than 20% machine operators; in his report to the Supreme Soviet he argued in more general terms that technical progress reduces the importance of the purely manual occupations and creates a large number of new occupations concerned with the servicing of complicated machinery and hence requiring thorough training and a good level of general knowledge. The preamble to the education law, while rejecting as misleading the assertion that in communist society the automation of production will lead to a disappearance of physical labor, forecasts that in its character such work will increasingly approach that of technicians.

Seen from such a perspective, the shortcomings of the present educational system lie in the insufficient schooling of the mass of the workers and peasants. According to the calculations of the Central Statistical Office, 20% of the entrants to the present obligatory seven-year school fail to complete the seventh form (even with allowance for those who do it after repeating forms); the need to have continuation classes for these young workers was generally emphasized. In a leading Leningrad engineering enterprise 9.9% of the production workers have complete secondary education, 40.5% incomplete secondary education (at least the seven forms), and 49.6% (72% of these under 40) not even this.⁶ These facts cause an economist⁷ to demand that at least as much attention be devoted to securing for all workers the basic minimum as to the general introduction of secondary education: she expects from future technical progress the creation of a demand for higher general qualifications even in the ordinary production (manual) worker.

This shift in emphasis against earlier stages of the discussion does not imply a weakening of the demand that the advanced worker, even if he has no further ambitions, should have full secondary education. Undertaking to do this while continuing at one's job plays an important part in publications about "socialist competition."⁸ Yet at least in the Ukraine the new Eight-Year Schools are being set up by reorganization of the existing Seven-Year Schools but also of "some [complete] secondary schools the basis and pedagogical staff of which does not come up to requirements."⁹ Fears lest the reform might lead to a restriction of (full) secondary education were fairly widespread; to answer them, art. 7 of the law adopted by the Supreme Soviet states that existing educational services must in no case be reduced and Kairov, President of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, with the explicit intention of refuting these fears, gave figures from which the following development plans emerge:

| <u>Total number of pupils (millions)</u> | <u>1958</u> | <u>1965</u> |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Basic School (seven years in 1958, eight years in 1965)..... | 26 | 36 |
| Senior forms of secondary school (in 1958 8-10, 1965 9-11)..... | 3.3 | 4.4 ¹⁰ |
| [Continuation] Schools for Worker and Peasant Youth. | 2.2 | 4.8 |
| TOTAL..... | 31.6 | 45.3 ¹⁰ |

The Schools of Worker and Peasant Youth offer opportunities for completing the basic (at present seven-year) education as well as for completing the secondary school while at work: the proportion of senior forms in the total is naturally increasing¹¹ and their present attendance may form just half of the total of those schools. It follows that at present 4.4 million boys and girls attend, in different ways, the three forms of the secondary school; in 1958 1.6 million obtained certificates of maturity, 448,000 (including many who had spent some years in industry, i.e. presumably already had their certificate of maturity) were admitted to the universities.¹² If the share of the senior forms amongst the pupils of continuation schools increases even slightly, in 1965 seven million will receive senior secondary education. Kairov forecasts an increase in the number of graduations from both forms of the senior secondary school by 28%; this figure, however, lags behind the total increase of the school population by 43%. According to Elyutin's report, university graduations will increase by 40%. These figures indicate no standstill in the development of any of the existing forms of secondary education but a mere shift in the respective speed of their development. They may, however, represent an amendment of original plans under the impact of the discussion. Even so, they contrast with the intention of the XX Party Congress to make full general education universal within the course of two five-year plans.

In his Memorandum Khrushchev, while evidently preferring an eight-year course for the basic school, proposed that the eighth year be left to the discretion of each Republic. In the November Theses, however, the eight-year basic school was taken for granted. A nine-year basic school was demanded by representatives of national republics, in particular from the Caucasus¹³ and from the Baltic states¹⁴ (the delegates of which continued to defend their standpoint also at the meeting of the Supreme Soviet) on the ground that it was required to master the Russian as well as the national language (plus a foreign language, as in all the schools of the USSR).

Those who insisted on the general eight-year period had to make concessions at the expense of the obligatory Russian language teaching either by letting it start only in a higher form¹⁵ or by leaving to parents in the Union and Autonomous Republics the choice of whether to enter their children in a school teaching in the national or the Russian language, the study of the second language becoming a voluntary subject. The second solution was adopted already in the CC's November Theses; its application was left to the discretion of the individual republics. Kairov made the case for the majority view on the grounds that prolongation of the obligatory school period by two years would (a) strain the available resources which were already fully occupied by the suggested extension by one year, and (b) unduly delay entrance into jobs as well as into higher education.

In the course of the discussion, two teachers of Leningrad continuation schools had supported the case for an obligatory nine-year schooling independently of the special conditions of the national republics, on the ground that it would raise the school-leaving age to 16 when young people would be old enough to start work, and that it would create sounder foundations for the function of the continuation schools which, according to the CC's own Theses, are intended to form the main channel for the completion of secondary education.¹⁶ This suggestion, presumably made without much hope for its immediate realization, may indicate the problems from which further developments in primary schooling may start. From the standpoint of the prospects of

the non-Russian cultures the parents' free choice is a two-edged sword: for in places like Yakutia or even Kazakhstan it may easily encourage assimilation to the leading nation of the Union whose language opens so many more opportunities (though in the Ukraine this would be less likely). From this point of view, the representatives of most of the minor republics were consistent when they favored a nine-year school as necessary for effective bi-linguality.

Khrushchev's original suggestion to interpose between school and university an obligatory period of work in industry or farming, supplemented by continuation education, was opposed on three grounds: (a) because it was in itself regarded as undesirable, whether in principle or with reference to particular conditions; (b) because the compromise solution tentatively offered by Khrushchev to meet the universities' need for young entrants in science and mathematics was regarded as even less desirable than the existing state of affairs; and (c) because the present condition of continuation schooling does not justify its becoming the main channel of senior secondary education.

Straightforward attacks against the division of secondary education into two stages originated not only from some parents¹⁷ but also from those Ukrainian educationists who had successfully introduced vocational training in the normal secondary school curriculum and, for that very reason, denied any need to delay university entrance for the mere purpose of getting the entrants acquainted with manual labor.¹⁸ V.A. Sukhomlinski, Headmaster of the Pavlish Secondary School and now a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences,¹⁹ in straightforward contradiction to the CC Theses answered the question: Which path of secondary education should be the basic one? in favor of the general polytechnical school. He regards manual work under the age of 16-17, unless it is performed under pedagogical supervision as dangerous to health and he wishes to achieve a reasonable school-leaving age after the full eleven-year school by reducing the school entrance age to six. On this last point, very different opinions, partly influenced by the state of local communications, were expressed in the course of the discussion: some participants even desire a school entrance age of eight, leaving the most elementary school to pre-school education, and they use these arguments against the proposals of a nine-year basic school popular in the national republics. Nesmeyanov, speaking at the CC of the Teachers' Union,²⁰ argued from the standpoint of brain development in favor of an early university entrance age. He regards evening schools as less effective means of instruction; as against the argument that early experience of employment would help the young people to assess their inclinations and hence avoid the frequent mistakes in choosing a profession,²¹ Nesmeyanov deems that this problem can also be solved by extra-curricular club activities in the framework of the senior secondary school. Even apart from the straightforward opponents of the CC's emphasis on the Continuation School there were numerous advocates of a direct transition from the junior (basic) to the senior secondary school.²²

With reference to the particular conditions of individual Union Republics the case in favor of retaining and further developing the system of full secondary schools, in particular in the countryside, was first made by the representatives of all the three Central Asian Republics: they argued that in their particular conditions the development of a continuation school system in the countryside was almost impossible; in particular the girls, whose education still strongly

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suffers from traditional prejudice, would be virtually excluded from higher education unless at least in the villages the full (eleven-year) secondary school was retained and developed.²³ This case, however, is not particularly Central Asian in character: in view of the existing conditions for continuation education in the countryside, the end of the obligatory basic schools means for many village youths the end of any education whatever.²⁴ Some educationists²⁵ find the solution in correspondence courses (but these lose up to two-thirds of their participants in a single year);²⁴ the Ukrainians, who do not have to deal with such enormous distances, prefer the concentration of full secondary education in a restricted number of well-equipped secondary schools with an appropriate connection with production and, where necessary, boarding accommodation.² "In the interests of increasing the role of society and of helping the family in the education of the children" (art. 5 of the law), development of the Boarding School system from the present accommodation for 180,000 children to 2.5 million in 1965 is envisaged, some of the Boarding Schools being basic (8 years), others (complete) polytechnical secondary schools: no data about the intended proportion of these two types, however, have been given.

The girls' problem, though it surely appears in sharper forms in a Muslim country, is not a peculiarly Central Asian one. There were plenty of suggestions to emphasize domestic science in the girls' training (and even one to avoid their training in the countryside for jobs for which they were supposedly not suited, such as those of builders or tractor drivers²⁶), but also warnings against the danger to the equal status of women involved in their training for particular "female" occupations.²⁷ However large a contribution may be made by male prejudice, and more material considerations, to suggestions for excluding women from tractor driving, they are surely not fit for iron-ore mining: yet in a town such as Kirovograd, which thrives on iron-ore, a school for hospital nurses, with 300 pupils, offers the only opportunity for occupational training of girls. Such a state of things may not only support the obvious suggestion to move light industries to the place²⁸ but also provide an argument in favor of the general "polytechnical" eleven-year school which is not necessarily bound to any specific vocational training.

In his Memorandum, Khrushchev tried to meet academic opposition against the interposition of a period of factory work between school and university by the tentative suggestion that special schools might be established for children with particular gifts, not only in artistic fields such as ballet and music (where the institution is familiar, and scarcely controversial²⁹) but also in fields such as mathematics or physics, so as to secure the recruitment of research-workers at an early age. Seizing this tentative suggestion, Academicians Ya. Zeldovich and A. Sakharov, writing in Pravda on 19 November, suggested the establishment of special schools with emphasis on these subjects and a shortened schooling period so as to secure early university entrance. Most of the supporters of similar suggestions, however, regard the physico-mathematical schools, or forms, as a mere aspect of the streaming in the senior forms of secondary schools desired by many pedagogues (see below, next page), envisage the acquisition of suitable non-research qualifications, such as those of calculators, drafters or radio-technicians as part of the curriculum, and the entrance of not more than 30-40% of the graduates of these schools into

higher education. Even A. Aleksandrov (Rector of Leningrad University) who put much of the emphasis of his contribution³¹ on the desirability of quickening the access of gifted young people to the universities, rejected the suggestion of special schools or forms for the most gifted because of its demoralizing effects, in particular upon those thus favored. He suggests greater flexibility in the curriculum as applied to individual pupils and the setting of special tasks, beyond the obligatory curriculum, by the performance of which those with particular interests in, and qualifications for, some subject may qualify for university entrance in their particular field.

The Zeldovich-Sakharov suggestion gave Academician M. Lavrentev the opening for the counter-attack, in Pravda on 25 November, under the straightforward heading: Are special schools for "particularly gifted" children necessary? His argument, which found overwhelming support,³² is mainly based upon the undesirability, from the educational as well as from the social point of view, of "segregating a privileged group of Wunderkinder"; he points out that some of the greatest mathematicians would certainly not have qualified for the "special schools" from the scholastic point of view while some of the "most promising" pupils prove failures when confronted with tasks of actual research. It was also pointed out that the "schools for children with particular gifts" would create ample openings for parental influence and pressure, as did in earlier days the privileges of the "medallist".³³ Kolmogorov, on the other hand, disagrees with Khrushchev's suggestion that wire-pulling by influential parents is the main cause of the increased share of children of the intelligentsia in university admissions: in his opinion, the universities' own exaggerated requirements are responsible since they can be met mainly by graduates of the very best secondary schools with excellent teachers and a well-developed set of voluntary study-groups, i.e. of those urban schools which are mainly attended by children of the intelligentsia. This argument hits not only the suggested "special schools for children with particular gifts" but also Aleksandrov's more moderate suggestions; it points to a real contradiction between the higher educational institutions' desire to get entrants with maximum scholastic qualifications and the urge to recruit talent from a broader basis, i.e. the very contradiction which Khrushchev tried to solve by combining general recruitment for higher education from factory floor and farm with a side-path for children "with particular gifts". Academician A.N. Nesmeyanov, writing in Literaturnaya Gazeta on 20 December 1958, described the tendency to create special schools as "anti-democratic" (many years have passed since such terms were used in reference to a suggestion even tentatively put forward by the CC!) He argues in favor of uninterrupted education, i.e. against the request for the spending in industry of a certain period between school and university--not to speak of an interval between the basic and the senior stage of secondary education, and for a furcation (streaming) at 15, at least between a science and a humanities branch of the senior secondary school, as the only means to reduce that overburdening of the pupils which is regarded by most participants in the discussion as the main shortcoming of the present Soviet school, in particular since production practice has been added to the curriculum of the senior course without its duration--as distinct from that of the basic course--being lengthened.

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Khrushchev's somewhat hesitant suggestion of "special schools for gifted children" was a corollary of the main feature of his original scheme, that is, the entrance of the great majority of young people into employment before further education, and the implied delay of the choice of trade or profession to a more mature age. Once the idea of special schools for the gifted was dropped, the emphasis on continuation schooling became a mere improvement in the status of what hitherto had been a backyard of secondary education. The ordinary "polytechnical" secondary school remains the main path to higher education, and its problem of over-burdening continues. N. Goncharov and A. Leontev, writing in Pravda on 21 November 1958, recommended Goncharov's long-standing demand for streaming in the senior forms of the secondary school,³⁴ as an alternative to the evidently unpopular suggestion of special schools for children with particular gifts. They received ample support in the discussion³⁵ but also occasional opposition on the grounds (1) that streaming in the major towns would create a handicap against children from smaller towns and villages where such differentiation is impossible, (2) that it might induce a neglect of subjects outside the chosen specialization and hence (3) enforce a choice of career at a fairly early age, and (4) that the choice might not conform to the needs of the national economy for different types of specialists which would be better secured if young people's inclinations were influenced in the desirable directions by the close association of their senior secondary schooling with their practical work.³⁶ These, indeed, are the main arguments in favor of Khrushchev's original approach: it is remarkable that Pravda, in its survey published two days after Ivanenko's letter,³⁵ stated that the majority of its correspondents supported streaming.

With the dropping of the principle of general production practice after the basic school, the problem of selection for higher education reopens. As long as the secondary school roughly supplied as many graduates as the universities could take, parental patronage would mainly affect the choice amongst the existing opportunities for higher education and the placing of its graduates for their first jobs. When the discrepancy between secondary school graduations and admissions to higher education developed, what Khrushchev called "the second competition," i.e. that between the parents, might influence access to higher education: one of Khrushchev's arguments in favor of the suggested drastic reorganization was in fact to replace parental wire-pulling by a selection process which is partly implied in the very combination of industrial work with further education, and might be supplemented by recommendations of candidates for admission to higher education, and might be supplemented by recommendations of candidates for admission to higher education by trade unions, Komsomol and management. For agricultural higher education the principle may be upheld leaving, say, a fifth or a quarter of the total vacancies for entry by free competition amongst graduates of secondary schools.³⁷ Yet even in technical colleges a tendency may arise to reduce the required period of practical work in order to get graduated engineers at an earlier age.³⁸ Some teachers protested against the new ruling that 80% of the admissions to pedagogical institutes should come from factory or farm, sound though this ruling might appear if the demand for a polytechnical orientation of the school is taken seriously. It was suggested that the school itself, as the body most suitable to judge the pedagogical capacities of its pupils, might recommend the suitable ones for immediate progress from secondary school for training as teachers. The issue, which in the CC's scheme would still allow for different

solutions ranging between the need for young and gifted mathematicians on one hand, and well-experienced state farm directors on the other hand, shifts to a different field as soon as decisions about a child's future have to be made during school age: immediate transition from the basic to the secondary school, and, a fortiori, streaming within the latter,⁴⁰ require recommendations by the teachers' council. A correspondent to Izvestiya on 18 November 1958 even wants to let the teachers' council, supplemented by parents' representatives (the very people against whose wire-pulling Khrushchev had warned) recommend secondary school leavers for direct entrance to higher education without competitive examination. The fact that such suggestions are still being made shows the extent to which basic problems of the educational reform are still open. It is impossible to have, at the same time, a school system which, however closely associated with practical work, is intended to lead those most suitable to early university or technical college entrance and a selection system based upon experience in practical work and the confidence of social organizations acquired in the course of that work. To that extent, as the course of the discussion enforced consideration for the first requirement, Khrushchev failed in his effort to satisfy the second.

This failure was implied in the impossibility of making continuation schooling, at its present stage, the chief form of secondary education in any other sense than that of encouraging words, intended to promote its further development. A type of schooling the advocates of which say that it must become "a secondary school of full value with stable attendance, enjoying all the rights of the day-time secondary school"⁴¹ cannot assure the satisfaction of a great nation's educational requirements. Nor can a reform intended to help the farmers be carried out on foundations which, as we have seen, induce the very representatives of the rural areas to insist on the preservation and further development of the existing secondary schools lest the peasants be deprived of the existing educational opportunities. (At present, the continuation school leading young peasants to university entrance qualification is represented only by evening classes attached to existing full secondary schools and attended by a mere 23,500 peasant pupils.)

Even in the towns the educational opportunities available to the worker who enters employment after primary schooling lag far behind those available for immediate completion of secondary education. In the USSR as a whole there are 26,863 full secondary schools, yet only 6,637 (continuation) Schools of Working Youth; 4,000 trade schools, with a course of one or two years, of all kinds; and also 3,753 tekhnikums to train the middle range of specialists.⁴² Nor are the existing facilities for continuation education fully used. Even in Leningrad 25-30% of those entering the evening continuation schools drop out in the course of a year.⁴³ The Director of a Working Youth School in Kostroma suggested that an incentive to continuation education, or to make such education a condition of employment in the highest and best-paid grades of manual work.⁴³ It appears, however, obvious that the state will not face such increases in the wages bill before technical progress has advanced to a point where completed secondary education, less bookish after the recent reforms, is, indeed, a condition for more efficient work.

In these circumstances, the reorganization cannot immediately pursue purposes other than, on the one hand, a closer connection of the existing secondary school with production and its needs; and, on

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the other hand, a strengthening of the position and status of the continuation school which, for many years to come, can evidently supply only a minority of the entrants to higher education. Shorter hours or a shorter working week are promised to those who regularly attend continuation schools, so these may cease to be evening schools (art. 4a of the law). Most consistent in these ways are the Ukrainians who wish young workers attending continuation schools to have two to three days of the working week free for the purpose. On the other hand, the Ukrainian system of letting the pupils of ordinary secondary schools acquire a trade requires their participation during two to three days per week (or, in the countryside, during half a year) in normal production work.⁴⁴ As in the course of the new seven-year plan the general introduction of a five-day week is intended, the difference between the two types of secondary schooling may eventually be reduced to one of emphasis and of composition of the pupils, the "polytechnical" secondary school being attended by children coming directly from the primary school and aiming at quick university or technical college entrance (the more so as in future completion of primary school will be sufficient for entrance to the tekhnikums, i.e. training for the middle technical, nursing, etc., careers), while most of the pupils of the continuation schools will be young workers and peasants with some production experience, aiming at the improvement of their educational standards in order to become more efficient workers⁸ or with a view to an engineering or managerial career within their industries. The shift against the pre-reform state of things would be important enough; it is possible that Khrushchev, when raising the demand for a general production practice after the primary school, intentionally overstated his case so as to achieve what is possible, namely a less bookish secondary school and easier access to higher education for workers and peasants who entered employment immediately after primary school. Pedagogical opinion, on the other hand, may have accepted the compromise because the dropping of the promise of universal ten-year education was compensated for by the actual introduction of the primary or basic eight-year school (which many of its advocates certainly regard as only a first instalment) and by prolongation of the full secondary school to eleven years which, not more than a year ago, was still a question of controversy and experiment.⁴²

The majority of the graduates of the primary school will, of course, become manual workers. The established organization for teaching them a trade is the system of Labor Reserves. In connection with the reform the Labor Reserves administration elaborated fairly ambitious targets, in Georgia, for example, involving more than half the primary school leavers (i.e. about two-thirds of those who do not proceed to higher education) in a system of trade schools, with a course of two or three years in the towns and of one to two years in the countryside.⁴⁶ Even more ambitious plans were developed by Bordadyn, writing in Izvestiya on 18 November 1958: in connection with Khrushchev's original scheme he suggested that all the primary school leavers (including those eventually proceeding to the universities or technical colleges) should, at first, acquire a skill in the school of Labor Reserves, and then proceed to their practical work.⁴⁷ This suggestion provoked criticism, not only in view of its destructive effect upon secondary schooling but also on the ground that the School of Labor Reserves were not fit even for their proper job: they were reproached for being uneconomic and far too bookish; it was even sug-

gested to transfer them to administration by the enterprises and sovnarkhozy.⁴⁸ To some extent, the reproaches levelled against the Labor Reserve Schools may express only the obverse of their advantages as seen from the national point of view, namely their capacity to train workers with a broad outlook and manifold skills (instead of being just adapted to the needs of some particular factory), i.e. workers who would be available for the development of new industrial regions. These functions were claimed for them in Zelenko's report to the Supreme Soviet which did not go to the length of Bordadyn's demands yet emphasized the importance of the Labor Reserve Schools for the basic industries, including in particular those which are not allowed to employ people under 18 so that the interval between 16 and 18 may be sensibly filled by their acquiring a trade, and also as an opportunity for girls to acquire suitable trades.

The law on the educational reform envisages the transformation of all the existing institutions of trade training into "trade-technical schools" with a curriculum of one to three years, in training agricultural workers one to two years, according to the skill required. The question of administrative subordination is not decided in the law but from Zelenko's report it is fairly clear that leadership in the elaboration of curricula, etc., will be exercised by the Administration of Labor Reserves. The criticism levelled against these schools is taken account of by the demand that they should work more economically: the students' interest in good progress and productivity should be increased by replacing their present free maintenance by apprentices' stipends⁴⁹ and, after some progress, by piece-rates on the ordinary scales.

Evening classes with a three-year course are being attached to the Trade-Technical Schools so as to enable youths who have had no systematic training to increase their qualification (and hence earning power) by two to three razryady, and also to complete their secondary education: perhaps as a bait for management, Zelenko claims that in view of the envisaged shortening of the working day and working week those attending these classes need not be given that partial release from working time which is promised to active pupils of the Continuation Schools. As the working day, of course, is being shortened for all workers, Zelenko's argument makes sense only if it is supposed that the extra effort needed for the attendance of evening classes after a normal working day will more readily be made if it is likely to result in an immediate increase in earning power rather than in the completion of general secondary education, the value of which for the average student may be questionable in view of high university and technical college entrance requirements yet which will be available for those desiring it even in the Trade-Technical School.

For the foreseeable future, the three school types emerging from the reform are likely to go on competing with each other, all the more since, in consequence of the reform itself, the distinctions between them have become less marked. The full "polytechnical" secondary school is likely to be backed by the influence of the intelligentsia and by the interest of higher educational institutions in uninterrupted education, the Continuation School by the party's interest in increasing the proportion of people from factory and farm within the managerial strata as well as within its own hierarchy, while the Trade-

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Technical Schools will presumably reflect the ordinary workers' requirement at each state of the country's technological development.

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- 1 English translation in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press 25 December 1958.
- 2 Cf. Soviet Studies vol.IX pp.103 ff. and 368 ff., vol.X pp. 104 ff. and 199 ff.
- 3 Published in the whole Soviet press (and in Vedomosti Verkhovnoy Soveta SSR 1959 no.I). For the discussion in the Supreme Soviet the reports given in Pravda, Izvestiya and Uchitelskaya Gazeta should be used concurrently, as different aspects of the various discussion speeches were emphasized in the reports given by those papers. In the further course of this report, and in the notes, the year in all quotations is 1958.
- 4 Kairov's report at the Supreme Soviet meeting. The figures of participants amount in Kazakhstan and Lithuania to more than an eighth of the total population (in the RSFSR slightly less), in the Ukraine, which from the very start took a particular interest in the matter, to more than a quarter.
- 5 The seven-year plan of the Kazakh SSR envisages a total of 697,000 graduations from the primary (in future eight-year) and from the full (ten- and subsequently eleven-year) secondary schools: of these, 207,000 will continue their education while the rest learn trades. Z.S. Omarova, who gave these figures at the Supreme Soviet session, makes this point as an argument in favor of further development of the Labor Reserve Schools.
- 6 Sotsialisticheski trud no.10 p.109.
- 7 O. Gubareva, writing in Voprosy ekonomiki no.11.
- 8 See, for example, Zarya vostoka 26 November, and report from Rustavi in Pravda 6 December.
- 9 M. Grechukha (Deputy Prime Minister of the Ukrainian SSR) in Kommunist no.17 p.56. See also M. Boiko's article in Pravda 11 Dec-
- 10 The number of senior secondary school pupils has been calculated by deduction from Kairov's total, which includes also the Schools for Adults, the pupils of which in 1954-5 as well as in 1955-6 numbered 120,500 (Cultural Progress in the USSR, English edition, Moscow, 1958 p.127). It is obvious that no possible change in that number between 1958 and 1965 can substantially affect the number calculated as a residuum.
- 11 Ibid. p.163.

- 12 Report on Plan fulfilment in 1958, Pravda 16 January 1959; Elyutin's report to Supreme Soviet session.
- 13 The Minister of Education of the Armenian Republic, however, writing in Pravda on 27 November, opposed a longer term of schooling in the national republics. In Georgia opinions were divided (cf. Zarya vostoka 25 November, 2 and 8 December), as also in Kazakhstan where the issue, however, does not appear to have played so large a part as in the Caucasus or the Baltic states (cf. S. Zadin, Deputy Minister of Education of the Kazakh republic, in Kazakhstanskaya Pravda 19 November). Another suggestion for prolongation of the obligatory school period in the national republics came from Yakutia (P. Shadrin in Pravda 9 December).
- 14 Their case was made in Pravda 19 November by V. Nyunka, Secretary of the CC of the Lithuanian party and on 29 November by V. Latsis, Prime Minister of the Latvian republic, and at the Supreme Soviet by Pirn (Estonia), Gedvilas (Lithuanian Minister of Education) and Pelshe (Latvia); the same attitude was shown by Grosul of Moldavia. Berklay (Latvia) moved that the Union Republics be permitted to prolong the obligatory eight-year course by another year. No more, however, was heard of this proposal.

While most of the supporters of a prolongation of the school period in the national republics argued in favor of increasing the primary (compulsory) stage of education from eight to nine years, the head of the Riga City Education Department, writing in Trud on 19 December, suggested an addition of the extra year to the secondary period of schooling. Apparently he was impressed by the argument that the entrance age of youths into the production process should not vary according to their nationality; he may have overlooked the applicability of the same argument against differentiation of the entrance age to higher education unless he assumed, in accordance with the traditions of the Baltic countries, the desirability of a twelve-year period of schooling.

- 15 I. Seidov, writing in Bakinski rabochi 5 December.
- 16 I. Bulyshkina and G. Rozenblyum, writing in Izvestiya 21 December.
- 17 Report from Kalinin in Izvestiya 3 December.
- 18 A. Karpenko, Deputy Head of the Kharkov Education Department, ibid. 7 December.
- 19 Writing in Uchitelskaya Gazeta 29 November.
- 20 Reported in Uchitelskaya Gazeta 13 December. G. Isanbekov, Chairman of the Union's Bashkir Provincial Committee, put the question of the overburdening of young people in terms which are valid, in fact, even against the introduction of regular industrial work in the senior secondary school.
- 21 This argument, originally made by Khrushchev, is elaborated in Kommunist no. 16 p. 77.

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22 See, for example, the article published by M. Ivanov and V. Vinogradov (both senior officials of the Moscow Sovnarkhoz) in Izvestiya on 4 December.

23 The Uzbeks' decision was announced by Kh. Rashidov, Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic, under the characteristic title "In the Spirit of Lenin's Nationalities Policy," in Izvestiya on 30 November. In Kazakhstan the same case was made by S. Zadiñ, Deputy Minister of Education in Kazakhstanskaya Pravda on 19 November, and by N. Dzhandildin, Secretary of the Republican CC (ibid. 20 November and Pravda 18 November), at the Supreme Soviet meeting by Kh. M. Abdullayev (Uzbekistan), Z.S. Omarova (Kazakhstan) and S.U. Umarov (President of the Academy of Sciences of the Tadzhik Republic). Although Umarov made the point about the village youth, in particular the village girls in Central Asia, his tendency to preserve the full secondary school as the main form of senior secondary education is evident from his support given in his speech to the article by Goncharov and Leontev in Pravda on 21 November (see below in the text.)

24 P. Kovalchuk, Director of a rural secondary school (with pupils collected from distances up to 30 kilometres) in Ulyanov Province, writing in Komsomolskaya Pravda on 12 November.

25 Gergenov, writing in Uchitelskaya Gazeta on 22 November: he remarks that in Buryatia the main production units of state and collective farms are situated at distances of 20 to 100 km. from the administrative centres of these farms, where continuation schools would be located.

26 K. Andreyev in Uchitelskaya Gazeta 25 November.

27 O. Tyurenkova in Pravda 18 November.

28 V. Kanski in Rabochaya Gazeta 19 November.

29 But see a contribution to Trud 22 November.

30 E.g. Academician A. Kolmogorov, writing in Trud 10 December.

31 In Izvestiya 10 December.

32 It is impossible to enumerate all the contributions to the discussion made in this vein, as some of them may be found in nearly every newspaper issue devoted to the discussion. Surveys of letters were given in Pravda on 13 December and in Uchitelskaya Gazeta on 5 December. Yet although the suggestion was no longer included in the law submitted to the Supreme Soviet, Z.S. Omarova speaking at the session, argued against it. Instead, she advocated further development of the system of Boarding Schools.

A moderate advocate of special streams for children with particular gifts is Prof. D. Lordkipanidze (Corresponding Member of the RSFSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, writing in Zarya vostochna on 2 December): while arguing against special schools for such children on the familiar grounds that they are undesirable from the pedagogical as well as from the psychological point of view he uses the possibility of forming special forms for chil-

dren with special gifts in some particular fields as an argument in favor of large schools with numerous parallel classes.

33 See, for example, Selskoye Khozyaistvo 13 December, and also note 29 above. Pravda 30 November has a caricature of a family party at which the issue is being discussed in accordance with black-coated traditions though against the inclinations of the boy concerned.

34 Cf. Soviet Studies vol.IX p.106 and vol.X p.204.

35 Cf. the survey of correspondence in Pravda 10 December.

36 I. Ivanenko, Chairman of the Kursk Provincial Committee of the Teachers' Union, writing in Pravda, 8 December.

37 N. Panasenkov, Professor at the Omsk Agricultural Institute, in Selskoye Khozyaistvo 12 December.

38 Cf. the controversy in Rabochaya Gazeta (Kiev), 3 and 19 December, and V.S. Smirnov (Director of the Leningrad Polytechnical Institute) in Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly no.11 p.15.

39 B. Khandros, writing in Komsomolskaya Pravda 12 December.

40 Correspondence to Pravda 10 December.

41 N. Dzhandildin at the Supreme Soviet session.

42 N. Kazmin and P. Rudnev in Partiinaya Zhizn no.19.

43 V.I. Petrov, writing in Komsomolskaya Pravda 26 November.

44 S. Chervonenko, Secretary of the CC of the Ukrainian CP, in Pravda 26 November. See also the editorial of Rabochaya Gazeta 26 December.

In his report to the Supreme Soviet, Kairov pointed out that, while practical work in the primary school must be purely educational in character, no economic effect whatever being expected, the pupils of the senior forms will perform their practical work at first as apprentices and, after having acquired a razryad, for the appropriate wage.

45 Cf. Soviet Studies vol.X p.105.

46 M. Chikhladze, Head of the Georgian Administration of Labor Reserves, in Zarya Vostoka 25 November.

47 In his article quoted above, however, the Head of the USSR Administration of Labor Reserves had developed a scheme which in substance corresponded to the eventually adopted one, with the mere difference (explained by the fact that Zelenko wrote before the Khrushchev memorandum) that senior secondary schools were regarded as an intermediate grade between trade schools and technical universities.

48 See note 20, and P. Rudoi's article in Izvestiya 10 December. It may be no accident that Kazakhstan, a region unlikely to pro-

SCHOOL ON NEW PATH

Concerning Draft Study Plans and Programs of Public Schools

By Candidate of Pedagogy M. Kolmakova

Pravda, p. 4

20 May 1959

The Russian Republic Ministry of Education and Academy of Pedagogy recently distributed for discussion the drafts of new study plans and programs for eight-year schools, secondary labor polytechnical schools offering production training and evening (shift) secondary schools for working and rural youth. The purpose of these documents is to fulfill the requirements of the 21st Party Congress and the law of the USSR Supreme Soviet on the reorganization of public education.*

The eight-year school, as defined by the law of the USSR Supreme Soviet, is an incomplete secondary school. However, it will provide a considerably higher level of education than the present seven-year school and will enable its graduates to take part in socially useful work and to continue their education at vocational and technical educational institutions as well as at evening schools for working and rural youth. Graduates of the eight-year school will also be able to continue their education at secondary labor polytechnical schools offering production training.

The eight-year schools will offer a considerably greater amount of study time than the seven-year school: 1015 class hours are being added. Thus, favorable conditions are being created for raising the level of the general-education and polytechnical schooling of students. The Russian language will be studied throughout the eight years, and a considerable amount of time is being set aside for practical activities. The students will acquire a wider knowledge of mathematics. Special attention will be given here to the development of computing techniques and the solution of practical problems. More time will be allotted for foreign language study. The goal of instruction is being changed: The main task will be the practical acquisition of oral speech skills by the students. The geography course is being expanded; students will acquire some background in economic geography. The Ministry of Education and the Academy of Pedagogy recommend that in the fourth grade of the eight-year school the elementary courses in geography and natural science be replaced by a single course in natural history, based on local materials.

According to the draft of the new study plan, drawing will now be taught in grades one through seven and music and singing in grades one through eight, i.e., two years longer than at present. Various forms of physical training will occupy a large part of work outside the classroom.

As stated in the explanatory memorandum to the new study plan, the main, fundamental difference between the eight-year school and the present seven-year school lies in the consistent application of a system of labor training, of psychological and practical preparation of students for work.

The fundamentals of labor training are part of the very content of the general-education courses of the eight-year school. The natural science course in grades five through eight offers fairly full coverage of plants, animals, the human organism and the development of the organic world.

* Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XI, No. 4, pp. 12-16.

Practical and laboratory work and excursions will be utilized in teaching this course; this will assure the students' theoretical and practical preparation for work. The physics course contains extensive material of an applied nature and will serve as a theoretical foundation for the study of such subjects as machine building and the fundamentals of electrical engineering.

Students in eight-year schools will acquire elementary knowledge about major branches of production and skills in measuring, computing, reading of blueprints and processing of the most common materials.

The draft study plan stipulates that the task of training students for socially useful labor will be accomplished in the eight-year school in various ways. The study plan includes a special subject - work. This will include manual work in the elementary grades, work in study shops and on training-and-experimental sectors and home economics in grades five through eight and familiarization with the fundamentals of machine building and the elements of electrical engineering in the eighth grade.

The draft study plan provides for socially useful production practice in grades five through eight: taking care of parks and gardens, landscaping cities, villages and settlements, helping collective farms to raise poultry and rabbits, etc. Two study weeks will be set aside for this practice in each grade.

The Russian Republic Ministry of Education and Academy of Pedagogy recommend that from the third grade on all students do two hours a week of such work as cleaning classrooms and school grounds, repairing furniture and study aids, and working in school buffets, lunchrooms and libraries. This work must be organized intelligently, taking into account the capacities of the children.

The inclusion of a home economics course in the study plan of the eight-year school is of great practical importance. In this course, given in the fifth through eighth grades, girls will learn the rules and skills of taking care of homes, clothing and footwear and will acquire knowledge and proficiency in dressmaking, sewing and cooking. It is considered advisable to give boys in the fifth grade some instruction in home economics, specifically in the care of homes, clothing and footwear.

The draft of the eight-year school study plan as a whole allots considerably more time for the labor training of students. Thus, 432 hours will be assigned to manual work in grades one through four instead of the present 206 hours, or 11.7% of the study time instead of 6%. In grades five through eight 895 hours will be assigned to work instead of 538, or 21.8% of the study time instead of 11.2%.

The draft study plans for the second-stage secondary schools provide for complete continuity between the eight-year and the secondary school; they offer young people the opportunity to obtain the secondary education necessary for skilled work or for entering a higher educational institution and likewise to acquire a vocation. Moreover, the present level of secondary general and polytechnical education is not falling but considerably rising. The new programs in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology are being drafted on the basis of the present-day level of development of science and technology. In the physics course, for instance, more time will be devoted to the study of such questions as the physics of the atom,

ultrasonics, semiconductors and the physical properties of plastics and their utilization in technology. The chemistry courses will acquaint students with the properties of high-molecule compounds and their classification and with active methods of synthesis. Considerable attention will be given to the study of plastics, artificial and synthetic fibers, and rubber and to the most typical processes in their industrial production.

The biology course is being closely linked with problems of the development of agriculture and the latest achievements in agronomy and zootechnology. A new course entitled Fundamentals of General Biology, more extensive than the Fundamentals of Darwinism course, is being introduced; it will provide the theoretical basis for training students for work in agriculture. The increased amount of time given to the study of the natural sciences will raise the students' level of knowledge of these subjects. In comparison with the ten-year school, the study of mathematics is being increased by 116 hours, of physics by 104 hours and of chemistry by 67 hours.

In accordance with the law on strengthening ties between the school and life and on further developing the public education system in the USSR, the level of education in the humanities will be raised and the study of history, geography and literature improved.

The secondary labor polytechnical school offering production training, in addition to providing a good general education, must give its students vocational training. Therefore instruction in it is being consistently combined with production work. The students will participate in the active production life of factories, plants and collective farms. The draft study plan provides that from the ninth grade on the students will regularly work in production an average of two days a week. The explanatory memorandum to the study plan states that in the specific conditions of a given school and depending on the special features of production, this work time may be concentrated in one or several periods within the school year. The students will be used not in auxiliary but in basic jobs.

In the course of the production training the ninth-grade students will receive the elementary vocational training and theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for independent work. Engineers, technicians and skilled workers of enterprises will be in charge of the production training of students. Students in the tenth and 11th grades will perfect their vocational training by working directly in enterprises.

The students' participation in production work will afford the school greater opportunities for character-building and enrich the content of education. By participating in the life of socialist enterprises and workers' collectives, the students will work in actual production conditions and will learn the value of labor and the importance of production discipline; the knowledge they acquire will be consolidated in practical work. Teachers will be able to apply active instruction methods on a wider scale and to do a better job of teaching students how to apply knowledge to life.

In the ninth through 11th grades of the secondary school 1356 hours will be assigned to the study of the fundamentals of production and to vocational training and production labor, instead of the 504 hours set aside in the present program of the ten-year school.

According to the draft of the new study plan, how will the production training of students in the secondary labor polytechnical school offering production training be organized and what qualifications will its graduates have? Take for example, the program of the rural secondary school. In the ninth, tenth and 11th grades

the students will study subjects common to all specialties - the fundamentals of crop farming and animal husbandry, farm machine building, electrical engineering, electrification of agriculture and the economics and organization of collective farm production. In addition, the study plan includes special subjects for the training of skilled tractor drivers, equipment operators, field workers, open-plot and greenhouse truck farmers, livestock specialists and workers, dairymaids, swine-herds, poultry tenders, laboratory workers for dairy sectors, etc.

The task of the evening (shift) general-education secondary school is to provide a secondary education for young people who have finished the compulsory eight-year school and work in a branch of the national economy.

The Russian Republic Ministry of Education and Academy of Pedagogy propose the same content of general and polytechnical education in these schools as in the three-year general-education labor polytechnical schools offering production training. In these evening schools special attention will be given to the independent work of students. The organization of studies in schools of this type will have a number of special features arising out of the requirement that production work be combined with schooling. Instruction in two shifts (day and evening) will be organized at large industrial enterprises.

Rural schools in which collective farmers and state farm workers study as well as schools serving workers in inland and maritime shipping will be made seasonal schools. The system of classroom-and-correspondence education for young people will become widespread. The curriculum of the evening (shift) general-education schools calls for a study load of 18 hours a week. Four hours are set aside for consultations.

In drawing up the new study plan, an attempt was made to reduce the students' study load somewhat, mainly by eliminating secondary materials from the study programs, improving teaching methods and intelligently alternating the students' activities. The time given to studies requiring great mental strain will be reduced somewhat. It is also planned to extend the academic year an average of two weeks; this will make it possible to utilize the spring season for practical work, excursions and the development of physical culture and sports.

It is proposed to establish four vacation periods in the course of a year: a five-day autumn vacation (Nov. 5 to 9), a 12-day winter vacation (Dec. 30 to Jan 10), an eight-day spring vacation (March 24 to 31) and, finally, a summer vacation of 85 days for grades one through four, of 72 days for grades five through seven and of 66 days for grades eight through 11.

The draft study plan envisages a slight change in the study day. It has been decided, in particular, to reduce first-grade classes to 35 minutes. The main recess will be extended from 40 to 50 minutes.

The boarding schools will follow the study plans and programs of the eight-year schools and of the secondary schools offering production training.

The draft study plans and programs have been submitted for discussion to the broad pedagogical public - teachers, scholars and parents. This discussion must proceed under the banner of criticism with a view to improving study plans and programs by further raising the level of general education in Soviet schools, preparing students for labor and eliminating the still heavy study load of students.

DIE REVISION DES VOLKSSCHULGESETZES

Neue Zürcher Zeitung
15 May 1959

Unter den fünf Vorlagen, die am 24. Mai den Stimmberechtigten des Kantons Zürich zur Abstimmung unterbreitet werden, darf der Entwurf für die Teilrevision des Volksschulgesetzes eine besondere Bedeutung beanspruchen dank seinem ausgesprochen pädagogisch-kulturellen Aspekt. Das Kernstück des Gesetzesvorschlags, die Reorganisation der Oberstufe, wird auf Jahrzehnte hinaus dem Oberbau der zürcherischen Volksschule ein wesentlich verändertes Gepräge verleihen, und die fortschrittliche Konzeption wird ihre Wirkung auch auf die anschließenden Mittel- und Berufsschulen nicht verfehlen. Es wäre deshalb bedauerlich, wenn dieses Gesetz vom Wahlkampf um den vakanten Sitz im Regierungsrat überschattet und der Aufmerksamkeit der weiteren Öffentlichkeit entgleiten würde, da es, zum mindesten in rein sachlicher Beziehung, von ebenso großer Tragweite sein dürfte. Im folgenden sollen die gewichtigsten Änderungen gegenüber der geltenden Ordnung hervorgehoben werden; für Einzelheiten muß auf den ausführlichen Beleuchtenden Bericht des Regierungsrates an die Stimmberechtigten verwiesen werden.

Notwendigkeit einer Revision

Das Bedürfnis nach einer zeitgemäßen Revision des Volksschulgesetzes, das in den wesentlichen Teilen auf das ehrwürdige Alter von 60 Jahren zurückblicken kann, ist unbestritten. Die ersten Bestrebungen in dieser Richtung gewannen schon vor rund einem Vierteljahrhundert, in den dreißiger Jahren, Gestalt, und sie sind seither nie mehr zur Ruhe gekommen. Der erste Anlauf allerdings, der Antrag des Regierungsrates für eine Totalrevision aus dem Jahre 1946, kam bereits in Kantonsrat zum Stehen, indem das Parlament nach langwierigen Beratungen den Entwurf an den Regierungsrat zurückwies mit dem Begehren, es sei die Revision vorerst auf die wichtigsten und dringlichsten Punkte, so namentlich auf eine Reorganisation der Oberstufe, zu beschränken. Über diese Neuordnung hinaus enthält der neue Gesetzesvorschlag, der im Kantonsrat nur mehr geringe Widerstände zu überwinden hatte, auch einige Bestimmungen über Sonderklassen und Versuchsklassen sowie über die Kindergärten.

Die Abänderung des Gesetzes drängte sich vor allem im Hinblick auf die Verschiebung auf, die im Laufe der Zeit zwischen der Primaroberstufe, der 7. und 8. Klasse, und der Sekundarschule eingetreten ist. Vor 60 Jahren war die Primaroberstufe die eigentliche Normalschule, während die Sekundarschule einer verhältnismäßig geringen Zahl von Kindern den Anschluß an die Mittelschulen und den Berufsschulen gewährleistete. Inzwischen hat sich das Verhältnis umgekehrt, indem nunmehr rund zwei Drittel der Schüler die Sekundarschule besuchen, während der kleinere Teil seine Schulzeit in der Primaroberstufe abschließt. Mit dieser Verlagerung des Schwergewichts war eine deutliche Abwertung der 7. und 8. Klasse verbunden, ein Prozeß, der im Zeichen des Dranges nach besserer Bildung als Grundlage für ein gutes berufliches Fortkommen progressive weiterging. Auf der andern Seite wurde die Sekundarschule mehr und mehr von mäßig begabten Schülern überlaufen, so daß auch sie ihrer ureigensten Aufgabe, eine gehobene, den Anschluß an die Mittelschule gewährleistende Bildung zu vermitteln, nur mehr unter größten Schwierigkeiten gerecht zu werden vermochte.

Unter diesen Umständen erwies es sich als unumgänglich, nach einer Lösung Ausschau zu halten, die sowohl den Schülern als auch der Schule wider ein neues Gleichgewicht bieten würde, und man hat diese Lösung mit der Einschiebung eines dritten Schultyps, der in langjährigen Versuchen seine Bewährungsprobe bereits bestanden hat, gefunden.

Die neue Oberstufe

Die Reform der Oberstufe läßt sich vom Ziel leiten, allen Schülern eine ihren Fähigkeiten und ihrer Begabung angemessene Bildung zu vermitteln. Angesichts der stärkeren Entfaltung der persönlichen Anlagen im 7 bis 9 Schuljahr kann man dieser Aufgabe nur durch eine stärkere Differenzierung in der Gliederung der Oberstufe gerecht werden. Man will deshalb drei Schultypen schaffen, die sich nach Stoffprogramm, Unterrichtsmethode und Unterrichtstempo diesen Anlagen und den Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten besser anpassen können. Allen drei Abteilungen ist gemeinsam das allgemeine Bildungsziel: die bestmögliche Förderung und Er-töchtigung durch die Vermittlung eines elementaren Wissens, die Ausbildung von Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten und durch ihre Erzieh-ung zu charaktervollen Persönlichkeiten und damit wertvollen Mit-gliedern der Volksgemeinschaft.

An der Gestaltung der Sekundarschule sollen keine westentlichen Änderungen vorgenommen werden. Der Umstand, daß sie von den schwächeren Schülern entlastet werden soll, bietet schon Gewähr-genung, daß sie sich freier wird entfalten können als bisher, so daß ihr Niveau eine beträchtliche Hebung erfahren wird. Neben sie wird künftig die Realschule treten, die grosso modo die bisherigen Versuchs- oder Werkklassen ersetzen wird. Sie hat die Aufgabe Schüler, die an sich gute intellektuelle Fähig-keiten aufweisen, aber eher praktisch-anschaulich veranlagt sind, so zu fördern, daß sie einerseits in eine Berufsschule oder eine Berufslehre eintreten und andererseits auch, ausgerüstet mit einem guten Schulsack, direkt ins Erwerbsleben übertreten können. Die Bezeichnung Realschule weist darauf hin, daß man sich in dieser Abteilung mehr an das "Reale", das wirklich Vorhandene, an den sicht- und greifbaren Gegenstand halten will. Der Lehrer wird hier nicht so oft lediglich an das Vorstellungsvermögen der Kinder appellieren mit der Formel: "Stellt euch vor..." Er wird vielmehr, wo immer es angeht, das Vorzustellende leibhaftig vor die Schüler stellen und es betrachten und - körperlich - "begreifen" lassen. Die Anschauung soll hier aus dem ureigensten persönlichen und direkten Erleben herauswachsen und nicht so sehr, wie dies bei Kindern mit hochentwickeltem Vorstellungsvermögen und Phantasie der Fall sein darf, aus dem Hörensagen, aus dem Betrachten eines Abbildes oder eines von allen Einzelheiten der Wirklichkeit abstra-hierenden Schemas.

In der Oberschule schließlich gedenkt man dieses persönliche Erleben noch zu vertiefen, indem der Schüler überall dort, wo sich dem Begreifen Schwierigkeiten entgegenstellen, dazu angeleitet wird, durch die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Werkstoff selbst, durch eigenes Entwerfen und Bearbeiten jene grundlegenden Kennt-nisse und Fertigkeiten sich anzueignen, deren er bedarf, um nach-her im Erwerbsleben seinen MaNn zu stellen, dies nicht im Sinne einer Einführung in spezialisiertes handwerkliches Können, die nach wie vor der Berufslehre und dem Anlernen überlassen bleibt, sondern zwecks Erleichterung der geistigen Verarbeitung. In der Oberschule

wird deshalb dem Arbeitsunterricht ein wichtiger Platz zugewiesen, wobei auch ein gut Stück Erziehung zu Sorgfalt und Genauigkeit und Gewöhnung zu eigenem Denken und zu Beharrlichkeit in der Durchführung einer einmal übernommenen Aufgabe verwirklicht werden kann. Die Oberschule soll zwei Klassen umfassen. Das Gesetz sieht indessen vor, daß auch hier eine dritte Klasse angeschlossen werden kann; man will hier insbesondere Raum lassen für die weitere Entwicklung des sogenannten Werkjahres, das in Zürich bereits eingeführt ist und auch schon in einigen Langgemeinden Fuß gefaßt hat. Dieses Werkjahr wird, wie die guten Erfahrungen beweisen, auch vielen Oberschülern erlauben, mit Erfolg eine Berufslehre abzuschließen.

Für den Übertritt von der Primarschule in die Oberstufe ist eine Lösung gefunden worden, die als überaus weitherzig bezeichnet werden darf. Es soll den Gemeinden überlassen werden, ob sie eine Totalprüfung oder aber den prüfungsfreien Übertritt wählen wollen. Grundsätzlich haben Prüfungen in Rahmen der 6. Klasse der Primarschule zu erfolgen, wobei auch das Urteil des Primarlehrers zu berücksichtigen ist. Man hofft, dank dieser Neugestaltung bereits bei Schulanfang ungefähr den richtigen künftigen Klassenbestand zu erhalten. Die Probezeit andererseits wird auf das ganze erste Quartal verlängert. Unter diesen Umständen wird die Zahl der Rückweisungen stark zurückgehen und der Unterricht für Lehrer und Schüler von Umtrieben und psychischen Belastungen weitgehend befreit. Die Regelung der Zuteilung ist im übrigen der vom Kantonsrat zu genehmigenden Verordnung überlassen, die auch das Verfahren für den Übertritt von einer Abteilung in eine andere regeln wird.

Das 9. Schuljahr

Mit dem Ausbau der Oberstufe stellt sich auch die Frage der Dauer der Schulpflicht. Das Bedürfnis, die heute bestehende Lücke zwischen dem Schulaustritt nach achtjährigem Schulbesuch und dem Eintritt in eine Berufslehre zu füllen würde für eine allgemeine Ausdehnung der Schulpflicht auf neun Jahre sprechen. Mit Rücksicht auf die bäuerlichen Gegenden, wo sich dieser Wunsch weniger dringlich geltend macht, hat man indessen von einem kantonalen Obligatorium abgesehen. Schon bisher hatten die Gemeinden den Kindern Gelegenheit zu bieten, die Schule ein neuntes Jahr zu besuchen. Neu ist nun die Ermächtigung der Gemeinden, das 9. Schuljahr auf ihrem Gebiet obligatorisch zu erklären. Machen sie von dieser Möglichkeit nicht Gebrauch, so bleibt es grosso modo bei der heutigen Regelung. Immerhin soll auch Repetenten das Recht zugestanden werden, alle Jahreskurse der Volksschule zu besuchen, das heißt auch ein 9. oder gar 10. Jahr in die Schule zu gehen, um etwa die Realschule vollständig zu absolvieren. Die Möglichkeit, schulmüde Kinder vom Besuch des 9. Schuljahres zu befreien, ist unter bestimmten Voraussetzungen gewährleistet; auf der andern Seite wird den Gemeinden gestattet, auch besondere Jahreskurse, zum Beispiel das Werkjahr, für die Erfüllung der neunjährigen Schulpflicht einzurichten. Man darf diese Regelung ohne Zweifel als großzügig bezeichnen. Die Stimmberechtigten werden ihr zufolge Gelegenheit haben, in ihren Oberstufen gemeinden zur Frage des Obligatoriums Stellung zu nehmen.

Versuchsklassen und Kindergärten

Einen Fortschritt im Sinne eines differenzierteren Ausbaues der Volksschule darf man auch die Bestimmungen über die Sonderklassen und über die Versuchsklassen nennen. Schüler, die dem

Unterricht in den Normalklassen nicht zu folgen vermögen, aber gleichwohl bildungsfähig sind, sollen in Sonderklassen unterrichtet werden. Darunter sind jedoch nicht nur die längst bestehenden Spezialklassen zu verstehen, in denen vor allem schwererziehbare oder sittlich gefährdete Kinder zusammengefaßt werden, sondern auch etwa heilpädagogische Klassen, wie sie in Zürich bereits bestehen, oder Förderklassen, in die Kinder mit temporären Entwicklungsschwierigkeiten eingewiesen werden können. Kinder, die auch in solchen Klassen nicht unterrichtet werden können, sind von der Schulpflege einer ihnen angemessenen Bildung zuzuführen; lediglich außerhalb ihrer Familie untergebrachte Kinder sollen von dem Jugendfürsorgestellten betreut werden.

Bemerkenswert sind sodann die Vorschriften über Versuchsklassen. Die seit 15 Jahren im Kanton bestehenden Versuchsklassen - es sind mittlerweile hundert geworden - entbehren bisher einer gesetzlichen Grundlage. Das revidierte Gesetz wird sie in erster Linie in die Real- und in die Oberschule eingliedern. Eine Verwerfung des Gesetzes aber würde bedeuten, daß man sie auflösen und wieder zur alten Zweiteilung zurückkehren müßte. Um in Zukunft eine Wiederholung einer Situation zu vermeiden, wie sie sich jüngst in rechtlicher Hinsicht herausgebildet hat, sollen auch in Zukunft im Interesse einer gesunden Weiterentwicklung der Volksschule Versuchsklassen bewilligt werden können: doch sollen diese Bewilligungen befristet sein.

Willkommen wird vielen Gemeinden die Neuerung sein, wonach der Staat in Zukunft auch an die Erstellung von Kindergärten, das heißt an die Baukosten, Beiträge gewähren darf. Der Kindergarten ist mehr und mehr zu einer Art Vorschule geworden, und die Volksschule hat ein Interesse an der guten Führung der Kindergärten, da sie ja die Kinder von ihnen zu übernehmen hat.

Schlußbetrachtung.

Der Erfolg der Oberstufenreform wird weitgehend von der Qualität und der Einsatzbereitschaft der Lehrerschaft abhängen. Ihrer Ausbildung ist deshalb größte Beachtung zu schenken. Die Lehrer an den Versuchs-, Werk- und Abschlußklassen, alle ursprünglich Primarlehrer, haben sich in besonderen Kursen neben ihrer Lehrtätigkeit auf ihre Aufgabe vorbereitet. Die Normalausbildung wird teilweise andere Wege beschreiten müssen. Eine definitive Regelung wird auf dem Gesetzeswege erfolgen. Bis dahin soll die Ausbildung der Oberstufenlehrer durch eine Verordnung festgelegt werden, die dem Kantonsrat zur Genehmigung zu unterbreiten ist.

Die Reorganisation der Oberstufe wird da und dort organisatorische Umstellungen nach sich ziehen, die indessen vom Staat durch Beiträge erleichtert werden. Die Gesamtkosten lassen sich nur schwer abschätzen. Immerhin ist festzustellen, daß die Reform im Prinzip nicht mehr Lehrkräfte erfordern sollte, sondern daß sie nur anders gruppiert werden. Hinsichtlich der Schulhäuser kann darauf hingewiesen werden, daß bei den Neubauten in den letzten Jahren bereits auf die Neuordnung Bedacht genommen worden ist. Der Regierungsrat schätzt den jährlichen Mehraufwand - allerdings unter allem Vorbehalt - auf ungefähr eine Million Franken.

Das neue Volksschulgesetz verdient die Unterstützung aller Volkskreise. Es muß als Ganzes beurteilt werden und sollte nicht wegen einer Einzelheit, die vielleicht nicht restlos gefällt, abgelehnt werden. Es wird dem Kanton Zürich in einer Zeit, da Bildung und Ausbildung von stets größerer Bedeutung werden, auf Jahrzehnte hinaus eine vollwertige Volksschuloberstufe bringen. Wir empfehlen mit der Freisinnigen Partei die Vorlage zur Annahme.