16 *Organization of Soviet Marxism*

THE METHOD OF COMPULSION

1. *The NKVD.* As Marxists, the Soviets believe that their political and social goals cannot be attained without a strict control of the people—in the interest of the people—during the period of proletarian dictatorship. Thorough as the control of the party organs is, it might not be sufficient to prevent counterrevolutionary activities. Hence, the customary device of a dictatorship, the secret police, was created to supervise the nation's life in all its aspects.

Until 1934, the Union State Political Administration (abbreviated to OGPU in Russian, or simply to GPU) was in supreme command as the party's watchdog, overseer, and executioner. Its history went back to the days of the dreaded Czarist *Okhrana* which for decades had been an important instrument of oppression and had acquired a world-wide reputation for its methods of persecution and torture. In 1918, the leaders of the Russian Revolution created an "Extraordinary Commission to deal with Counterrevolution, Speculation, and Sabotage," abbreviated *Tcheka.* Felix Djerjinsky was made president of the board. The new organization continued the methods developed by the Okhrana and put them to the service of the Soviet state. The Tcheka's activities during the years following the Revolution may never be fully revealed, but the record of its reign of terror would rank high among those of similar organizations. The Tcheka was officially abolished in 1922 but in reality its activities were continued, though in less conspicuous fashion, by its successor the OGPU, or GPU. In the beginning, the personnel of the GPU, including its president, was much the same as that of the former Tcheka.

The GPU was organized into six departments: (1) the operative and general; (2) the foreign; (3) the economic; (4) transport and passports; (5) the Red Army; (6) the secret service.[1] The GPU had branch offices in all cities and in many railway stations. One

[1] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1938, pp. 577–578.

should not assume that it operated in the political field only. It was also active in the elimination of common criminals; it influenced the condition of prisons.

In 1934, the GPU, whose name had become a symbol of terror, was abolished as such. However, its organization was incorporated into the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (abbreviated to NKVD in Russian) where it operated under the Bureau of State Security. In 1941, this Bureau became an independent Commissariat of State Security (abbreviated to NKGB in Russian). Since then, uniformed and plain-clothed agents of the NKVD or NKGB became known as NKVD men.

No outsider can fully appraise the NKVD's political activities. One may well question the extreme statement that there would be no Communist party or even a Soviet Union without the GPU; [1] it is doubtful whether any regime can survive on the strength of its secret police alone, without the negative support at least of a majority of the people. Thus it is quite possible, as the Webbs point out, that the Russian people as a whole had no basic objection to the GPU [2] and that they look upon the NKVD as the custodian of the proletarian revolution and its interests.

Every person in the Soviet Union, whether man, woman, or child, is under the permanent supervision of the NKVD through the local communist cells whose secretaries inform the NKVD of suspected noncooperation or subversive activities. The NKVD should be regarded as the most important instrument of the party in keeping the people in line. After all, the class struggle, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, is still in progress. Antisocialist influences may penetrate so long as there are capitalist countries. Since the weeding out of counterrevolutionary elements is one of the foremost tasks of the NKVD, this agency has been developed by the government into one of its most efficient organs. The internal organization is not too well known but it seems to be built on the lines of Soviet military hierarchy.

2. *Individualism and Individuality.* The Soviet state is highly collectivized. The nature of its ideology excludes individualism. The

[1] W. A. Rukeyser, *Working for Soviets*, Covici, Friede, Inc., New York, 1932, p. 182.

[2] S. and B. Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 585.

state watches through its control organs to see that such individualism may not develop lest it disturb the cooperative philosophy of socialism. Yet the Soviets insist that they do not want the individual to lose his identity. They maintain that theirs is no equalizing concept of society like Nazi totalitarianism where the individuality of the citizen is completely lost in the machinery of semimilitary mass organization. While individualism is opposed in the Soviet Union, individuality is encouraged. Moreover, there has been an official change of attitude in regard to the mass and the individual. True, the Soviet system originated through mass action, the revolutionary proletarians being the "cadres" of the movement. But this period has passed. Stressing the action of cadres rather than that of individuals was discouraged from the middle nineteen-thirties. Motion pictures, theaters, books, and political demonstrations have emphasized the value of the individual, thereby symbolizing the growing consolidation of a strong and unified Soviet state. Previously, the party had proclaimed that everything depended on its cadres; now it stressed that everything depended on the individual worker.

Thus a new emphasis was laid upon the human being, neglected during the pioneering years. This policy, it should be noted, is in direct contrast with the attitude of Nazi-Fascist totalitarianism. While on the whole the country was ruled on the assumption of its collective character, individuals in the mass now became distinct and stood out according to their character and ability. Class consciousness was still a prerequisite for success in the Soviet system, but gradually, during the years preceding the war, the responsibility was increasingly shifted to the members of the collective. The purges hampered this development considerably; the average Soviet citizen would hardly show any inclination to expose himself to suspicion and preferred to remain an inconspicuous part of the mass. However, the trend itself existed and marked a significant new departure coincident with the general tendency toward consolidation and pacification.

How far is the individual allowed to express his own ideas? Dare he speak up at all? In principle, he is allowed to offer constructive criticism so long as it pertains to his work and remains within the framework of the Party Line. He could not say that he did not like

the *Politbureau* without being purged immediately. He may, however, in the meetings of his working group, indulge in "self-criticism," meaning by this an indictment of shortcomings of his section or of the management. He may criticize working conditions within reasonable limits; he may also accuse responsible persons within his factory of not having cooperated to the fullest. While such self-criticism has somewhat decreased in the last years, it is regarded as one of the proofs of "Soviet democracy." It is typical of the Russian character. The Soviets do not like Dostoievsky's literary creations because many of his heroes indulge in self-humiliation and self-effacement. Yet psychologically, Soviet self-criticism, although more productive and materialistic, exactly meets the urge of the Russian character to confess, to humiliate itself, to indulge in self-abasement.

A broader kind of self-criticism is found in the workers' correspondence, letters to the editors of the country's newspapers and periodicals. This type of criticism has been endorsed by the government. Millions of letters pour into the editorial offices and are checked for the use of the government; in a few instances, they are printed in the papers. For the most part, the letters contain suggestions for improvements. Bolshevik leaders insist that the will of the masses is being carried out and that the participation of the masses remains essential; therefore public criticism is most important in finding out what the masses think and want. In reality the Party Line is set up without popular consultation. All the major decisions have been made by the top-ranking party organizations and have then been accepted by the Supreme Soviet without important changes. The dictatorship of the proletariat takes the form of those masses of proletarians who "dictate" surrendering themselves to their leaders.

The war has somewhat furthered the degree of freedom of expression. Early in 1944 Soviet publicists claimed that they were allowed to express their own opinions, and the Soviet government made it clear that it was not responsible for newspaper articles which represented the personal opinion of the writer.

But this apparent relaxation of stringent supervision in the government-controlled and subsidized press cannot be taken too literally. Certainly the trend toward individual expression has become

stronger than ever before, but so long as there exists a dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, so long as communism has not been achieved and counterrevolutionary influences may still make themselves felt, the state and the party, according to the Marxian doctrine, must of necessity limit the freedom of the spoken and written word.

3. *Family Life*. Marx and Engels were prepared to give up traditional family life in the belief that only among the bourgeoisie did the "completely developed form of this family" exist:

> On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. . . . The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital. (The complement is public prostitution.) Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty. . . . The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion, than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the woman. . . . Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each others' wives. . . . Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women. . . .[1]

This tirade was never taken too seriously, even by convinced Marxists. The experience of disrupted family life in the first years of the Soviet Union's existence proved that Marx and Engels erred when they regarded the family as an exclusively bourgeois institution.[2] Human desire for family living developed early in the history of the human race and the family has become the basic unit of the state. While the aspects and forms of family life have always been affected by a changing environment, its dissolution, that is, the abolition of marriage as the foundation stone of an orderly society, would invite anarchy. As long as we need the state, we need

[1] Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Part II.

[2] Marx himself was a good father who took care of his wife and children without following his own prescription of morals. He and Engels lived a bourgeois life. They adapted themselves to existing conditions, yielding to the social pressure of their time.

the family. According to Marxism, a classless society would need neither.

During the first few years of the Soviet regime family life was disrupted, but not because of orthodox Marxist considerations. The conditions of the country were such that housing, nutrition, and the impact of a completely new life upset normal social living. In addition, the enthusiasts of collectivization looked with suspicion on the privacy of family life as indicative of counterrevolutionary tendencies and bourgeois inclinations. So the general upheaval disturbed family relations. Never, however, have women been "communized" as anti-Bolshevik propaganda tried to convince the world was the case.

As time passed and the Soviet state became stabilized, the policy of consolidation reached the family, too. The climax of a conservative movement, sponsored by the Stalin government and expressed by new family decrees and the prohibition of abortion (1936), found the family restored to a place of honor in the Soviet state. Obviously, the new society called for a new type of relationship between man and wife, parents and children. The official reconfirmation of women's equality (Article 122 of the Stalin Constitution), the comparative ease of obtaining a divorce, and the refusal of the government to distinguish between "registered" and "unregistered" marriage (legal marriage and concubinate), all contributed to a new vision of family morality which necessarily differed from that of the West. One should not forget that marriage outside the Soviet Union is an institution of a partly worldly, partly religious character. Many nations give the churches a decisive role in the marriage institution. The Soviet Union does nothing of the kind. It regards marriage as a private concern of the individual citizen but it looks upon a couple with children as a potential unit for the perpetuation of the socialist fatherland and is willing to preserve this unit intact.

The laxity of which the Soviets were often accused when they were trying experiments in new social living, no longer exists. Although the government believes that sex relations are the private affair of the parties involved so long as the community is not harmed in any way, the élite, the Communist party members, or the members of the *Komsomols* are expected to lead a moral if

not an abstinent life. Their behavior must be exemplary; a decorous family life is part of such conduct and clearly shows how much the views on marriage and the family have changed since the early days of the U.S.S.R. Bad housing conditions in the overcrowded cities, and the fact that both parents are busy working and fulfilling their political duties, attending meetings or receiving additional education, make it difficult to intensify family life. Most children have to stay in the communal crèches or kindergartens. Families cannot seclude themselves because their individual members are not in a position to manage their own lives. So numerous are their obligations that there is hardly time for private life. The GPU does not control the home as does the Gestapo, but on the other hand German children stay at home at least until they are six. Soviet children are very rarely brought up by their mothers; they enjoy the facilities of children's homes where they learn to live "collectively."

Whether a greater intensity of family life may be restored when the housing problem is solved and a greater prosperity enables men and women to work fewer hours is a matter of conjecture though it is quite possible. However, the Soviet government decided not to wait for such a favorable time but encouraged the trend toward conservative family life by promulgating new family laws on July 8, 1944, supplementing and reinforcing those of 1936.

Increased material aid will be given to "expectant mothers, mothers of large families and unmarried mothers in order to encourage large families and increase the protection of mother and child." [1] In view of this tendency, certain differentiations are now being made between married and unmarried mothers which formerly did not exist. The reasons for this are not of moral nature; there is no discrimination against children born out of wedlock, nor are unmarried mothers ostracized. But the population policy of the Soviet government is directed toward a high birth rate and a consolidation of social life. Inasmuch as the recognition of marriage as a fundamental principle seems to exclude social experimentation and is the best guarantee of a successful rearing of children, bachelorhood is discouraged and penalized by a special tax. Families with one or two children will have to pay a nominal tax, too.

[1] Edict of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. on the Increase of State Aid for Mothers and Children, *Information Bulletin* of the Embassy of the U.S.S.R., Washington, July 25, 1944.

Divorce has become considerably more difficult. It has now been made the object of complex court actions and rather high expenses. It is contingent upon the failure of the court's attempts to reconcile the parties. The petition for divorce must be advertised by the complaining party in the local newspaper at the expense of this party. If a divorce is to be granted, a settlement concerning the custody of the children as well as property arrangements have to be effected, just as in capitalist countries.

The Soviets do not tolerate bigamy and frown upon promiscuity; they are proud of having almost entirely eliminated prostitution. Their institutes for the physical and social rehabilitation of the few remaining prostitutes are well known. Marxism still influences the political and economic aspects of Russian life but it no longer has much effect on the family.

4. *Church and Religion.* It was Lenin himself who saved the church from utter destruction when, in 1919, the majority of the Communist party demanded the elimination of all religious activities and beliefs. The status of the church is now defined in Article 124 of the Constitution of 1936 which, while separating state and church completely, grants freedom of religious worship. At the same time, it permits freedom of antireligious activity. The Communist party, of course, is fundamentally antireligious and would hardly permit any churchgoer ever to become a member.

The Marxian enmity toward religion is well known. "Religion is the moan of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opiate of the people." [1] Religion, for Marxists, is like idealism without a realistic basis, shifting the center of gravity of man's interests to the other world while neglecting this world and its woes. If religion could improve present social conditions Marxists might recognize it as an ethical power, though unwilling to accept its spiritual motivation. For them, a change can be brought about only by the transformation of the economic system. Spiritualism, in no matter what form, merely serves in their eyes to divert the people's attention from facts to illusions; therefore, it is an "opiate."

In addition, the church has, in the opinion of Marxism, collabo-

[1] Karl Marx, "Criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right," in *Selected Essays*, trans. by H. J. Stenning, International Publishers Co., Inc., New York, 1926, p. 12.

rated with the ruling classes, or, in other words, has helped the capitalist state to maintain the *status quo*. If the capitalist state is destroyed, its church must go down too; otherwise it might remain as a counterrevolutionary power within the new socialist society. No state which is dominated by an ideology permeating its entire organization can permit such a power to persist. We have seen the difficulties of churches in Nazi-Fascist countries. The difficulties increase under a dictatorship of the proletariat. They were particularly acute in Russia where the Greek Orthodox Church had been so closely associated with czarism and had helped to keep the masses of the people in utter ignorance, superstition, and poverty.[1] Considering the record of this church over a long period of time, it is not surprising that the new regime should have sought its destruction. As a matter of fact, the reopening of several churches soon after the victory of the Revolution, and the destruction of very few others, were signs of extraordinary political discipline. The Nazis have ruined more synagogues than the Bolsheviks have churches.

Democracy grants its citizens religious freedom and its corollary, tolerance. Tolerance, if genuine, is by its nature indivisible; it must be extended to believers and nonbelievers alike. It follows that moral crusades against the Soviets can only be justified when they are directed against outright persecution. However, rumors of persecutions of believers have usually been exaggerated. The Soviet government opposed the existence of the church as a political agency but hardly ever enforced oppressive methods against believers except that the party excluded them as members.

While exposed to journalistic attacks of rabid atheists, the churches throughout the Soviet Union enjoyed considerable freedom of worship. Stalin even tolerated a few monasteries. He never pretended, of course, to do so for sentimental reasons—although he himself was once a student in a theological seminary. Marxism is ideologically antireligious but Sovietism became strong enough to be able to tolerate a strictly nonpolitical, powerless institution. The Constitution of 1936 returned civil rights to priests,

[1] See Paul Miliukov, *Outlines of Russian Culture*, Part I: "Religion and the Church," University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1942. Cf also J. S. Curtiss *State and Church in Russia*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1940.

but, as the late Metropolitan Sergei, the first patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church under Soviet rule, pointed out, even before 1936 freedom of religion existed. Instances of local antagonism were corrected by the higher authorities.[1] The patriarch also stated that the church had plenty of money from voluntary contributions. The government has even allowed it to send money to America to help orthodox churches here. Religious instruction, however, may only be given privately.[2]

Wallace Carroll reports that in 1939 there were still thirty million believers of all sects in the Soviet Union. This number was submitted by the president of the League of the Militant Godless and thus might be exaggerated. "Before the Revolution, Russia had a hundred thousand parishes and religious communities. In 1941, the Soviet government estimated that the Russian Orthodox Church and the Renewed Orthodox Church maintained 4225 churches and 37 monasteries, the Roman Catholics 1744 churches and 2309 chapels, the Moslems 1312 mosques, and the Jews 1011 synagogues. The high proportion of Catholic churches was largely due to the recent annexation of eastern Poland and the Baltic States." [3] For a country known to be "godless" this number of open churches seems to point to a brighter future for religion in the U.S.S.R. Immediately after the outbreak of the Russo-German war, when the churches proclaimed their complete support of the fight against Hitler, the so-called antireligious museums were closed.[4] The antireligious organ *Bezbozhnik* (The Godless) ceased publication. The Soviet government, in reply to inquiries of the American government in the matter of religious freedom, has given reassuring answers. The reasons for this reversal of policy were several. The pressure of war diverted attention to more pressing issues than the ideological struggle of the state against the church. The necessity for the Soviet Union to cooperate closely with her Western Allies during the war and postwar years made a compromise by

[1] Wallace Carroll, *We're in This With Russia*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1942, pp. 148–151.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

[4] Antireligious or godless museums consisted of two sections. The first was to prove through the presentation of scientific facts that the Bible was wrong; the second was purely propagandistic, pointing to the sins committed by the church against the people in czarist times.

the Soviets over a momentarily minor matter feasible. Also, the patriotism shown by the believers in support of the war, their donations to the Red Army, and the resulting cordial correspondence between Stalin and the church dignitaries initiated the beginning of a period in which state and church may reach a workable *modus vivendi* even though Marxism can never give up its fundamentally antireligious attitude.

However, the church will not be allowed to gain political influence and the state will reserve the exclusive supervision of education and of social problems.

In September, 1943, permission was given to reconstitute the Holy Synod. This supreme body of the Russian-Orthodox Church elected the Metropolitan Sergei as its patriarch.[1] This important event was not only an official recognition of the church's loyalty to the Soviet Union. It also helped to strengthen Russian nationalism, for, despite its association with the czarist state, the Russian Church has always been part of Russia and has deep roots among the Russian people. The Soviet government will hardly permit the Holy Synod to exercise too great an influence upon the new society but it will grant its believing citizens the benefit of a spiritual organization. At the same time, it will be able to present the new situation to the outside world as evidence that it has gone a long way since 1917 and that the new Soviet nationalism is a far cry from early Bolshevism.

The majority of Soviet citizens today, to be sure, have very little interest in religion. Their education in Soviet schools has taught them to direct their spiritual craving into different channels. They believe, first and foremost, in the righteousness and future of their political religion; social and economic ideologies possess the character of a religion, as has often been pointed out.

Furthermore, Soviet citizens have another outlet for the spiritual urges of their souls: the cultural and artistic endeavors of their nation and the treasure of the arts created by inspired men of all countries. For them, to hear a symphony concert, to enjoy a play with a lofty message, to read a good book, or to study at the feet of great scientists is sincere worship, devoid of everyday escapist

[1] Patriarch Sergei died in May, 1944. His successor was Alexei, former Metropolitan of Leningrad, who was decorated for his heroism during the siege of that city.

entertainment as we know it in the West. One may wonder whether this will prove to be sufficient in the long run and whether there might not come a time when the spiritual needs of the people will grow so strong that they will turn again to a spiritual religion.

THE METHOD OF INDOCTRINATION

1. *Soviet Culture*. The establishment of a classless society, so the Soviets claim, means the inauguration of a genuine state of democracy. The prerequisite for democratic living is a high standard of education for all citizens. American democracy has recognized this necessity and, in the course of its existence, has developed a school system unsurpassed in the opportunities that it offers. Obviously, uneducated citizens are not capable of understanding the duties of responsible citizenship. The leaders of Soviet socialism, their final goal always in mind, came to similar conclusions. Lenin stated that the two things a socialist society requires most are, first, the greatest possible amount of industrial output and, second, the highest possible degree of culture and education.

Prompted by the desire to speed popular education as much as humanly possible and to create a new proletarian culture, the Soviet government began to make the people culture-conscious from the beginning of its rule. *Kulturi*, culture, now embraced all the things contributing to a higher level of living. Many of the hundred-odd nationalities of the Soviet Union had to start learning from the beginning how to live as cultured human beings. Some of the Far Eastern nomadic tribes had to be settled and civilized. This meant, first, a campaign for literacy. Within two decades, the Soviet government succeeded in changing a 75 to 80 per cent illiterate people into a population of which only about 20 per cent—including the Far Eastern tribes—could not yet read or write.

In accomplishing this task, the Soviets had to overcome extraordinary difficulties owing to the fact that many of their nationalities and tribes beyond the Urals had not even developed an alphabet. Philological and anthropological expeditions were sent out by Moscow to explore the cultural history of the tribes in question and to devise an alphabet for them. More than seventy new alphabets have been developed in this way and have enabled primitive tribes to become at least semiliterate.

In addition, the Soviets taught their peoples something about the rudiments of the art of living. To come clean-shaven to work, to have well-set hair and manicured fingernails, to look one's best when attending the theater—all this was considered indispensable for culture. The state perfume trust, which up to the war sold an incredible amount of cosmetics to women, is as much a part of this "culture" as the beauty parlors and the barber shops which are crowded from early morning until late at night; many of their customers have to patronize them whether they like to or not. Amusement parks in all the larger cities are a mixture of Coney Island, promenade grounds, and athletic fields where loud-speakers transmit music by Beethoven and Tchaikovsky instead of jazz; they are called "Parks of Culture and Rest."

At the same time, the young Soviet state had no difficulty in arousing a fervent and absorbing interest in the arts as the most important manifestation of culture. Art enjoyment and understanding is now the possession of the whole people and not, as the Soviets point out repeatedly, the privilege of a ruling class. The tremendous demand for art, once aroused, became one of the most effective means of indoctrination and education in the hands of the proletarian dictators. Ever since Lenin, Soviet leaders have recognized that the innate desire of man to create, or to absorb the artistic creation of others, could be used for the purpose of molding mind, feeling, and morale according to definite patterns. They saw to it that art "ceased to be a luxury and became an essential component of education and of the whole organization of society." [1]

The educational success of the Soviet government in the fields of culture and, specifically, in the realm of the arts is unique in the annals of intellectual history. The intensity and passion with which all types of people have used the opportunity of educating themselves through artistic media is rather moving. It bespeaks eloquently the need of the human soul for beauty. It must be admitted by even the most violent opponents of the Soviet system that the speed with which the masses of the Soviet people became literate and art-loving is as fantastic as it is significant. The Nazi-

[1] Kurt London, *The Seven Soviet Arts*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1938, p. 19

Fascist nations have imitated the Soviet idea of using the arts for educational purposes albeit with wholly different aims.

The Soviet quest for culture manifests itself in an infinite variety of ways. One cannot understand the spirit of this country without knowing the extent and meaning of its new culture. Roughly, it may be divided into two aspects. One is the cultivation of the intellect through informal education. All adults and adolescents are subject to it and the enjoyment of the arts is made available to all. Art education is given to those who prove to have above-average talent. To be an artist is an honor, and very remunerative, too.

The other aspect embraces formal education in schools, art schools, and extracurricular activities mainly of an artistic nature, suited to give growing children an opportunity for self-expression and, at the same time, to reveal talent which must not be lost to the nation. All through the school years, the arts form an essential part of the curriculum. Indirect artistic influence through environmental features is considered important and is particularly evident in the clubs of workers and of youth organizations.

Naturally, all these fields of culture are under strict supervision of the party and the government. The dictatorship of the proletariat could not forego control of the arts which it regards as essential instruments of socialist construction. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Soviet state not only provides for comprehensive art organizations but even goes so far as to issue directives on the style of the art to be produced and cleared for public exhibition. For believers in the freedom of artistic creation, this restriction seems prohibitive and mars the fine impression made by the attempt to assist and further the arts.

The total control of the arts and of artistic personnel is entrusted to the All-Union Central Committee on Art which was set up in 1936 and reorganized in 1939.

2. *The Central Committee on Art.* In the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of September 25, 1939, in reference to the "situation regarding the Committee on Art," the committee's activities were defined as follows:

> The Committee on Art affects leadership over all phases of art in the U.S.S.R. except cinematography; directly supervises the most important artistic organizations and enterprises of all-union scope by personal di-

rections and through the administration of the art committees of union republic scope; it supervises the artistic organizations and enterprises of republic and local standing

The committee is attached to the Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*) and has a vast scope of responsibilities, the most important of which are:

1. Supervision of the repertory theaters and concert organizations of all-union standing; direction and control, through the administration of art affairs, of the repertories of artistic-audience enterprises of republic and local scope.
2. Supervision of projects of monuments to outstanding sociopolitical, scientific, technological, and art workers, projects of architectural and sculptural character dedicated to important historical events.
3. Organization of exhibits, competitions, olympiads for all branches of amateur and professional art.
4. Cooperation with trade unions and politico-educational organizations in the development of artistic activity, coordination of the work of social organizations in the field of artistic activities.
5. Supervision of the activities of the organizations which embrace artists, such as the Unions of Soviet Composers, Soviet Artists, Soviet Architects, Theater Societies.
6. Control of openings and closings of artistic enterprises (for spectators) as well as of educational institutions; promotion and supervision of groups on tour (theaters, ensembles, and individual artists).
7. Government control of shows and repertories and their advertising; supervision of production of recordings; regulation of prices for tickets.
8. Regulation of finances, artists' fees and royalties.

These are some of the main duties of the committee. Its absolute power in directing art policies is set forth in Part III, paragraph 6 of the Decree of 1939; there it is stated that the president of the committee may revoke rulings of the art administrations of the *Sovnarkoms* of the union republics that are contrary to the rulings of the *Sovnarkom* of the U.S.S.R.

The Committee on Art consists of the following main departments:

1. Chief administration of theaters.
2. Chief administration of musical enterprises.
3. Chief administration of enterprises of pictorial and graphic arts, museums, galleries, and public monuments.

4. Chief administration of circuses.
5. Chief administration of control over spectacles and repertories of theaters, concerts, the fine arts, radio, and records.

In order to ensure the efficiency of supervision, a Control Inspection Group is attached to the bureau of the President of the Committee on Art. The Soviets are on constant guard lest subversive tendencies creep into the arts. It seems that of all their cultural organizations, only the former Chief Administration of Cinematography (*GUKF*) failed to keep its promises. Since 1938, GUKF has been liquidated and has become the only artistic branch in the Soviet Union to work on a decentralized basis. Formerly subject to the Committee on Art, the films are now entirely separated from it as far as the technical and industrial sides of production are concerned. In purely artistic matters, the committee still has a certain unofficial influence.

Since the state completely subsidizes the arts, it has created organizations which at the same time help to supervise them and make them available to the masses. There are art cooperatives which enable artists to study and create; the cooperatives also act as the artists' "agents" by selling art products to the state, municipal, and club organizations. There are artists' trade unions which determine wage scales, provide rest homes, arrange for financial assistance, supply proper food and medical care for the artists, and act as their legal representatives in cases of conflict. There are associations for creative artists, established in 1932, which provide protection and security for writers, painters, sculptors, musical composers, architects, and creative workers in other branches of the arts. All these organizations are headed by the art administrations of the union republics and, finally, controlled by the All-Union Committee on Art.[1]

It must be stated, however, that artists are not entirely free to express themselves as they may wish. In return for economic security and a high social standing, they must give up their individualism (not individuality) and conform with the Soviet state's conception of what type of art should be given to the people. They are told that Soviet art must be created in the style of "socialistic realism" and that it should never be either "formalistic" or "natu-

[1] Cf. London, *op. cit.*, Chaps. 2, 3

ralistic"; that Soviet art must deal with the problems of the new society and never become art for art's sake; that it must not foster counterrevolutionary tendencies nor be addressed to a few esthetes instead of to the whole people. Artists who cannot follow these rules lose their professional standing. Only those who identify their talent with the social and esthetic conceptions of the party are given the opportunity to work in an atmosphere of security. They alone are given money, titles, and medals; they alone belong to the nation's "aristocracy of mind" which the Soviets strive earnestly to build up.

The Soviet peoples, particularly the Russians and Ukrainians, are tremendously gifted for artistic creation. Until the beginning of the Russo-German war, they were producing enormous quantities of art work of every kind. The enforcement of "socialistic realism" did not entirely impede the development of artistic quality but, to be sure, most of the art works were clearly utilitarian, educational, and propagandistic. The first quarter century of Soviet culture saw many startling creations but there can be no question that political decrees are not exactly helping the production of timeless works of art.

Since the beginning of the thirties, the Soviet government has taken a rather conservative stand in matters of taste.[1] It has fostered the use of classical culture as the basis on which a new Soviet style should develop its own dignified line. It has gone much too far in opposing modernism. But it is possible that its cultural policies may willingly forego the opportunity of permitting the growth of individual great art now for the sake of a broader basis of culture in the future, when the educational level of the Soviet people may permit the relaxation of conventionalism and conservatism in the field of the arts.

3. *Adult Education.* Immediately after peace was restored in the early twenties, a "Down with Illiteracy" society was founded whose branches became active in every factory, every social organization, and every club of the country. It is estimated that in 1932 about eighty million people attended schools of various types, that is, half

[1] Soviet esthetic conservatism was a consequence of the Stalin consolidation of the thirties. It was otherwise during the first decade after the victory of the Revolution when political propaganda affected the arts and led to extreme modernism and often misunderstood expressionism. Cf. London, op. cit., pp. 75, 76.

the entire population.[1] However, the need for systematized training made it necessary to establish regular adult schools which operated in the evenings only. The illiterate worker, young or old, first entered the literacy school; for four months he worked on the alphabet and for five more months on a "postalphabet" course. During the following nine months, he had to absorb a four-year syllabus in a "semiliterate" school and then conclude his studies in a higher school during the following two years. These concentrated studies correspond to a full seven-year school syllabus.

Workers who have an incomplete secondary training and want to supplement it to enter the university or one of the higher technical institutes of university rank may enroll in *rabfacs*, "worker's faculties." These are supposed to be temporary institutions because in time, when everybody will have received a free and compulsory secondary education, they will no longer be needed. Workers who have graduated from secondary school receive every assistance for advanced study and are relieved of their work.

There is almost no field of knowledge which is not made available for study to the workers. (The term "worker" is used in the Soviet Union as an honorary title. Man as producer is a worker; man as member of society is a citizen.) The Soviet cultural workers, extending from university professors to village teachers, form a wide front of trained educators who help in the work of adult education; they also include untrained amateurs who make up in enthusiasm what they lack in knowledge. These *Cultarmyists* (the word is copied from *Redarmyist*) number many hundreds of thousands of men and women who are responsible for the extraordinary speed with which the Soviet Union achieved literary and culture-consciousness among its peoples.

Among the institutes which are the intellectual trustees of Marxian culture are the Communist Academy of Science, the Institute of Lenin, the Academy for the Communist Training of the Youth, and the so-called Communist Universities which are frequented mainly by workers who have been graduated from evening schools or the *rabfacs*.

Informal education is given in the many clubs, almost a hundred thousand of them, which are organizing what one might call the

[1] Beatrice King, *Changing Man*, The Viking Press, New York, 1937, p. 224.

"extracurricular" activities of the workers. These institutions are often endowed with the most luxurious appointments, at least in the larger cities, and cost the government great sums of money. The Soviet leaders have never refused to spend money on their growing civilization; in 1938, the entire cultural budget amounted to 42,000,000,000 roubles. The employees of "all industrial establishments, offices and institutions contribute to the trade unions a sum equivalent to 1 per cent of their total payroll for cultural work among employees and members of their families." [1] Since the national payroll amounted to almost 100,000,000,000 roubles in 1938, the sum of 1,000,000,000 was available for cultural activities in the clubs.

Many of these clubs or "palaces of culture" belong to the trade unions. The scope of their activities may be judged by the fact that the Railwaymen's Central House of Culture in Moscow spent no less than 17,000,000 roubles for cultural activities in 1938 alone.[2] These grandiose cultural activities are not the only ones that help to educate the masses. There is an organization of amateur artists, consisting of 70,000 amateur art circles that are greatly encouraged by the government. There are ideological service hours near the "Red Corner," a type of altar decorated principally with red cloth, the Soviet emblem, and pictures of Lenin and Stalin—clearly an adaptation of the Icon and very similar in its use. There is no Soviet ship on the high seas without its Red Corner, and the factories have special rooms assigned to house it.

Innumerable groups exist within the organization of the clubs. There are groups for political study, dramatics, choral singing, and general education. The many thousand substantial libraries throughout the country are an additional asset in cultural education; books are loved and their editions, although numbering millions of copies, are so rapidly exhausted that the average buyer is fortunate if he can find what he wants. The building up of private libraries is encouraged but not easy to carry out. Moreover, art in all its forms is made available to the workers. Their organizations secure theater tickets for them, or, if the town is too small for the maintenance of a repertory theater, touring companies are invited for "command"

[1] M. Kijnetzov, *Palaces of Culture and Clubs in the U.S.S.R.*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939, p. 8.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

performances. The same holds true of symphony orchestras and of circuses. Among the few forms of lighter entertainment, the circus is extremely popular with Soviet citizens.

If there are museums, groups of workers, led by a guide who is an expert in art and art criticism, visit them during their free days; if there are none, art galleries arrange temporary exhibits. Motion-picture films are shown through loaned projectors if there is no permanent cinema. In all these cases, the government sees to it that under no circumstances are people in small villages or peasants shown third- and fourth-rate art. When the Arctic Eskimos wanted to see some plays, the Moscow Little Theater, one of the finest in this theater-minded country, manufactured light-weight stage settings, flew all its best actors and actresses to the Arctic, and played Shakespeare for them. The principle of equality is applied in the cultural realm; the Committee on Art may decide upon the quality or suitability of subject matter for various regions but it would not, as a rule, permit discrimination between town and country.

Needless to say, the radio has a large role in the dissemination of education. There are training courses given over the air and there is much "incidental" instruction arranged in popular and entertaining ways which make it easy for listeners to assimilate new knowledge.

The cultural activities of the Red Army deserve specific mention. The extent to which the authorities encourage the soldiers' interest in the arts and general culture is unique. While the governments of many nations have recognized that soldiers must be given ideological indoctrination and training in technical fields, no other army in the world has ever indulged in artistic activities like the Red Army. Its legitimate theater ensembles, its symphony and folk-music concerts, its section for painters and sculptors have been highly developed. There are both amateurs and professionals. The families of the Redarmyists participate in these artistic efforts; in fact, even the children of soldiers are given the opportunity of exhibiting their paintings and sculptures in special Red Army museums. Naturally, many of these activities are definitely related to ideological instruction, and, psychologically, the impact of culture upon a military machine opens new perspectives. The heroic stand of the Red Army has proved that the enjoyment and creation of

art does not in any way effeminate soldiers; on the contrary, it probably gave them a greater sense of the values they were defending.

The question may be asked whether these cultural activities of the Soviet state are not motivated by the same reasons which caused the Germans to create the *Kraft-durch-Freude* and the Italians the *Dopolavoro* organizations. No doubt, ideological indoctrination plays its part. But there exists one fundamental difference, namely, that respect for and appreciation of culture are integral parts of the Soviet creed. In the attempt to create a new socialist civilization typical of the Soviet peoples, it appeals to the ideological as well as to the patriotic feeling of the masses. It tries to establish a national culture. In the Nazi-Fascist countries, cultural activities were one of the many devices for ideological propaganda. In the Soviet Union they serve the same purpose but, in addition, they are among the most important means of education for citizenship in a socialist society.

4. *The Soviet School System.* HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY. The development of Soviet schools took place in three phases before it reached its 1941 status. The first occurred during the chaos of the revolutionary wars and foreign intervention; it lasted roughly from 1917 to 1921. At this time many radicals declared that schools were as unnecessary as the influence of the family was dangerous. In spite of Lenin's decree promising free compulsory education for both boys and girls in every child's native tongue, school life in these years remained precarious. The more radical view never gained the upper hand but an acute shortage of politically reliable teachers impeded school reorganization.

The second period was characterized by the importation of American progressive-education methods, notably, the Dalton Laboratory Plan and the project method. The new methodology had become known to the Russians through the writings of John Dewey, William H. Kilpatrick, and their followers. Its application in the Soviet Union gave rise to "collective learning," a strange kind of study teamwork organized in so-called brigades. Pupils in groups of four to six worked out projects together without considering individual differences. During the few years in which these methods flourished, university students frowned upon lectures and

concentrated upon collective work in seminars. As during the first period, professors and teachers were sharply censored by students and could be dismissed on recommendation of the latter.

The third period was initiated by the first Five-Year Plan. Its importance comes from the fact that it saw the introduction of the Labor School, the establishment of the principle of "polytechnization," and the abolition, in 1931–1932, of the Dalton Plan and the project method. The Labor School was not successful. Its curriculum centered around the three main topics of nature, labor, and society, what might be called a broad social-science curriculum. It was eliminated in favor of the traditional curriculum and soon traditional teaching methods were likewise reintroduced.

Polytechnization, on the other hand, has remained an essential part of Soviet education. It is a socialist principle, outlined by Marx who, in turn, had developed the idea from earlier socialist theoreticians. Education, according to Marx, means three things, namely, intellectual development, physical development, and polytechnical education. Polytechnization will give students knowledge of the general scientific principles of all production processes and will, at the same time, familiarize children and adolescents with the tools of production and their use. Polytechnization should not be confused with vocational training; rather it is intended to teach an understanding of the relations between life and work, and to prepare the young to play their role in the industrialization of the Soviet Union. It emphasizes the interaction between economy, politics, and learning; it strives to make a whole man out of the future Soviet citizen in so far as he should be taught to understand the integral process of life in an industrialized socialist society. The children will therefore include in their studies theoretical and practical technology; they will do manual work to put what they have learned into practice; and they will broaden their horizon through excursions to factories and other centers of economic life. Usually, every school is expected to be under the patronage of a factory or collective farm in its neighborhood. Workers will establish personal contacts with the pupils, thus enabling the youngsters to grasp the significance of industrialization and collectivization for the ultimate goal of socialism.

At the end of the second Five-Year Plan, the Soviets were mov-

ing toward the accomplishment of their goal, the establishment of a compulsory free ten-year education for all (elementary and secondary), thus living up to the resolution of the Party Congress of 1923 which proclaimed:

> The school must be used as an agency for the elimination of all social classes and building the communist state. Accordingly education must be free and compulsory for all without distinction of sex and up to the age of 17 and should start as early as possible All must be enabled to attend school by the provision of food, clothing, shoes, and school supplies at public expense.

A comparison of the Soviet school situation in 1939 with the conditions which prevailed in 1914 indicates the progress achieved in the space of twenty-five years: In 1914, there were only one million secondary school pupils throughout the whole Russian Empire; in 1939, twelve million. In 1914, there were a mere 8,137,000 pupils studying in all types of schools; in 1939, about 47,500,000. Against not even a hundred thousand czarist teachers in 1911, there were one million in 1939, and the third Five-Year Plan provided for an additional 600,000. Against 112,000 university students in 1914, there were now at least 600,000, a number that was fast growing with every new term.[1]

This all goes to show that the cultural program of the Soviet planning system has apparently been more successful than its industrial counterpart. It also confirms the supreme importance attached by the Soviets to the education of their people and, especially, of their growing youth, the torch bearers of communism. It is worth examining the educational philosophy upon which a socialist school system is built.

There is, first of all, the principle of free education for all from the cradle through the highest institution of learning. In fact, until the fall of 1940, when the Soviets began to curb free secondary education by introducing fees for all except the *otlitchniki* ("A" students), the Soviet school system appeared just as democratic as the American system. Both school organizations believe in universal high-school training as a natural and necessary continuation of the elementary level; neither system regards high schools as pri-

[1] O. Leonora, *Public Education in the U.S.S R*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939, pp. 11, 14.

narily preparatory for university studies reserved for the limited numbers of an élite. Both believe that society should educate its future citizens toward as high a degree of civic responsibility as possible. Both systems, also, hold, in theory at least, that education must be made available to all regardless of race or creed, and that environmental needs should determine the local curricula of individual schools. Both systems strive for excellent vocational training and both emphasize the equality of educational opportunity of the sexes.

Until 1940, both systems believed in coeducation; however, the Soviet government has changed its mind and has, since then, reintroduced a separation between boys and girls during the years of puberty. It is interesting to note that some of America's progressive private schools, such as the Dalton Schools, had also frowned upon coeducation of children during their high-school years even before the Russians promulgated their reversal of opinion.

However, the two countries differ in the matter of religion. Both would agree that state and church should remain separated. But while American schools do not discourage extracurricular religious instruction, the Soviet schools have ceased mentioning religion and have substituted political ideology for religious teaching. Also, in contrast with the decentralization of American education, the schools in Russia depend on the momentary stage of central planning; while local authorities are permitted to retain their own points of view, the basic directives for all curricula emanate from the central government in Moscow. In this way, the educational philosophy remains unified throughout the country and may be defined in terms of dialectical materialism, collectivism (cooperation as opposed to individual endeavor), internationalism, equality between the sexes, and the application of science to the problems of social life.[1]

The generosity of educational offerings was restricted in 1940 when the European War came into full swing and the Soviet government realized that it would eventually not be able to stay out of the conflict. The introduction of fees for secondary education for all students whose work was not rated at least two-thirds A and

[1] George S. Counts, *The Soviet Challenge to America*, The John Day Company, New York, 1931, pp. 340ff.

one-third B was coupled with a decree for a vocational labor draft, the State Labor Reserves. It was ordered that youths from fourteen to seventeen, respectively grouped according to types of vocation, be inducted into newly organized training schools. About one million boys, but no girls, were scheduled for vocational draft without being allowed to leave the job assigned to them for at least four years. Instruction and maintenance were to be free of charge. All graduates were to be deferred from military service and paid according to the usual rates. The former Factory Apprentice Schools, whose enrollment had dropped considerably, were obliged to turn over their buildings and equipment to the new vocational training centers.

This decree was a violation of the Constitution which ensures the right of education ". . . free of charge including higher education, by the system of state stipends for the overwhelming majority of students in higher schools." [1] It was probably necessary to enforce greater effort in securing trained labor reserves for the defense industries. Until the introduction of this decree, one could say that the Soviet school system was one of Russia's finest and most democratic achievements, especially after the Constitution of 1936 had removed the previous discrimination against the children of non-proletarian backgrounds.

TYPES OF SCHOOLS. During the first three years of their life, children are taken care of mostly in the *crèches* which are financed and supervised either by municipal authorities or by factory combines whose workers are offered their facilities. Bad housing conditions and the parents' lack of time make these homes for infants imperative. The children receive good care, food, and the faint beginnings of a social education. They live in small separated groups in order to restrict possible illnesses to the smallest number of cases.

At the age of four, children go to the kindergarten where they stay for the next four years. While the *crèches* are under the control of the Commissariat of Health, the kindergartens are under the control of the Commissariat of Education. The children are

[1] Article 121 of the Constitution of 1936. In the absence of an official translation, Anna Louise Strong's version is used, as quoted in Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 528ff.

divided into age groups of four- to five- and six- to seven-year-olds. A daily record is kept of each child. At least three elaborate reports on the individual children are given every year. The kindergartens give the children preschool instruction and begin definite political indoctrination. The degree of receptivity of the children is noted in their records which may be important for future investigations. The institutes are well equipped and neatly decorated. In the larger industrial cities, one may find them located in remarkable buildings with highly artistic murals and beautifully landscaped gardens.

The elementary-school course begins when the child is eight years old and lasts four years. The child then changes over to the first part of the high school without a special examination. This first division of secondary training takes three years. The student is then fifteen years old and has to decide what course of studies he wishes to follow. He may finish senior high school in three more years, after which he may enter one of the universities or higher institutions of technical or artistic training (at eighteen). He may, if he is extraordinarily talented in one of the arts, enter a special art secondary school (with a four-year course) and then change to one of the academies of art, music, architecture, literature, or motion pictures (at nineteen).

The student of fifteen may also enter a "technicum," covering a three-year course of vocational character. Technicums are the Russian counterparts of American vocational high schools and are very popular with young people who want to become technicians and engineers. The graduate of the technicum may also enroll in an institution of university rank. University studies take an average of five years; they may be followed by two to three years of postgraduate studies at one of the academies of science or art which are also attended by older students and artists who feel that they need supplementary study. Universities are institutions of professional training. They are organized along the same lines as the universities in continental Europe where there are no colleges.

Apart from technical and artistic training, the practical aims of education in Soviet schools are, briefly: first, to impart a definite body of knowledge of a general character; second, to train the students in the socioeconomic problems of Marxism, in the principles of the class struggle, the structure of the Soviet state, and the

place of labor in society; third, to introduce the students to the problems of practical work in a socialist community. It is almost unnecessary to add that the Marxist-Leninist ideology determines both teaching methods and curriculum content.

Parents are urged to participate in school administration. School Councils, which are elected, have to consider important details of school policies, for example, sanitary conditions; economy and general welfare; criticism of the curriculum; and encouragement of school attendance. Cultural activities fostering all the arts are discussed and decided upon. The self-government of schools, however, has been losing ground since the middle thirties, because the authorities have returned to traditional school discipline and conventional teaching methods.

The organization of life at the universities is remarkable. Tuition is free. In addition, about 88 per cent of the students receive allowances from the state ranging from 130 to 200 roubles a month. Students working at the academies of the People's Commissariats earn their money according to the rates of skilled workers, up to 700 roubles. Many students who come from out of town are given free lodgings; the majority receive board and some of them clothing. Vacations may be spent free at special rest homes in various regions of the country and the students use this opportunity to become acquainted with their fatherland. The fundamental difference between the Soviet student and his colleagues in other parts of the world is his professional security and, therefore, his mental peace. Not only is he free of financial worries while he pursues his studies, but he also knows that there will be a place for him after graduation. University study is no sinecure in the Soviet Union; it is regarded as work of a highly responsible nature. The state supports the student and expects him in turn to repay society through hard work and meritorious conduct. Up to the time of the war, there were 716 Soviet higher educational institutions which were training students in 178 different branches of scientific, technological, and art fields. All these institutions are regarded as potential contributors to the building of a socialist society and therefore esteemed by the people as important and necessary.

One other branch of education should be mentioned—the correspondence courses. More than 200,000 men and women who

have had a secondary education but whose work or geographical location makes it difficult or impossible for them to attend full-time university courses, learn through correspondence lessons. This type of self-education is given official recognition on a par with regular academic study.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. Extracurricular activities are predominantly cultural in character and center mainly in the so-called circles which are engaged in manifold and widespread artistic activities. The program to be followed and the methods to be used are not decreed but suggested by the experts of the Central House for the Artistic Training of Children in Moscow, which has about a hundred branch offices throughout the country. This institution supervises the artistic training in schools, in special training centers, and particularly in the circles. The functions of the Central House are divided into departments for music, painting, sculpture, theater, literature, games, and dances. The motion picture is excluded and is handled instead by the children's film-production centers.

The influence of the Central House is far-reaching although it is difficult to judge to what extent its suggestions have been accepted. In some instances, they have become law; in others, they were discarded. The institute is a unique phenomenon, additional proof of the importance that the Soviets attach to the artistic education of young people.

The art circles are divided into groups similar to those of the Central House. Teachers contribute their work mainly on a voluntary basis. They are expected to guide the children and not to impose their personal style or artistic conception upon them. Good work done by the children in these circles does not remain unnoticed. The most talented take part in a competition, the winners of which compete with those of other communities in a regional contest. The regional winners in turn enter the district competitions. Finally, the most gifted children of all the union republics are chosen. The supreme test is held in Moscow. The winners are highly honored and are given the opportunity of entering the best training institutions in the field of their choice. Their careers are ensured from this day on unless they lose their eagerness for continued study and improvement. The competitions are called "olym-

piads." They not only encourage the amateurs to express themselves artistically, they also are a quest for new talent of which, the Soviets are convinced, there can never be enough.

In a more informal way, the children's free time is filled with opportunities for artistic appreciation. They have permanent repertory theaters for their exclusive use; they have their own publishing house which distributes hundreds of thousands of children's books every year; they are offered daily radio programs directed to three different age groups; they have their own motion pictures and a film studio producing movies for children and adolescents exclusively. Usually, the programs are differentiated for children up to eight, for those between eight and twelve, and for youngsters between twelve and seventeen.

Children are taken seriously in the Soviet Union. Their artistic production receives much attention. There are regular exhibitions of children's paintings; there are youth magazines which publish their writings; and there are children's concerts offering a program of music written for them by grown-ups and adolescents. The Central House for Artistic Education, which is under the supervision of the Commissariats of Education, maintains an enormous correspondence with gifted children in all parts of the country and advises them how to produce art.[1]

But the stress on the arts and general culture should not be mistaken for an overemphasis on esthetics, for every aspect of the regular and extracurricular activities is made to fit the pattern of ideological training. On the one hand, in accordance with Lenin's wish that "production" of culture be given predominant care because only thus could a classless society be prepared, encouragement of art is used to educate children to the desired realization of their place and function as members of a socialist society. On the other, the Soviet social and economic system is pictured as representing a higher stage in human development than the systems existing in other countries. If the Nazi youth feel contempt toward all non-Germans, the Soviet boys and girls retaliate with pity for the outside world under the "yoke of capitalism," and feel that one day they may have to help liberate their fellow men. The youth movements strengthen this attitude and give the finishing

[1] London, *op. cit.*, Part V, "The Children and the Arts," pp. 317–341.

touches to the education of youth, although the alliance between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union has brought to Soviet youth a greater knowledge of the outside world.

YOUTH MOVEMENTS. We have seen that, in the totalitarian states, youth movements are among the most effective instruments for indoctrinating youth in the prevailing ideology and for preparation for national defense. The Soviet Union, too, established a youth organization which originated in the first years of the revolutionary period when anti-Bolshevik elements were trying to consolidate themselves. The Soviets answered with the *Youk* organization (*Youk* meaning Young Communists). But like many German communists who became members of the Nazi Storm Troopers in order to commit sabotage whenever possible, so the anti-Soviet elements began to flock to the *Youk*. This became known; the *Youks* were disbanded and replaced by the All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth, the *Komsomols*, reliable sons and daughters of the Revolution who became the vanguard of Soviet reconstruction. Ever since, the *Komsomols* have remained the center of Soviet youth organizations and the natural candidates for party membership. They have stood in the front lines of the revolutionary wars; they also have done pioneering work in the cultural fields. From the Soviet point of view, they have certainly earned the gratitude of the party leaders. Their importance is, in fact, surpassed only by the party itself. Since 1935, their activity has been restricted mainly to educational fields, and it is since that time that the *Komsomols* have really become the senior supervisory group within the youth movement. It may be mentioned here that the publication of this organization, *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, is a newspaper of great influence which has a daily circulation of several hundreds of thousands of copies.

Generally speaking, the Soviet youth organization is divided into three different groups with clearly defined duties for each.

1. *The Komsomols*. Members of this group are between the ages of fourteen and twenty-three. As party membership begins at eighteen, some of the *Komsomols* are already full-fledged party members and thus help the party maintain close control of the activities of the *Komsomols*. Admission is easy for sons and daughters of workers or peasants. Children of office employees are required to have the

recommendation of a *Komsomol* of at least two years good standing plus the sponsorship of a member of the party who has belonged to it for not less than three years. Children of former bourgeois need particularly good sponsorship. The probation time runs up to eighteen months.

The enforcement of discipline is the foremost task of this organization. The cells which control the members see to it that the orders of the Ninth All-Union Congress regarding *Komsomols* are carried out:

> The Komsomoletz must be energetic, honorable, daring, supremely loyal to the revolution, and an example to all youth and all workers. . . . The Komsomoletz fights persistently for the general line of the Party. He is obliged to study systemically the teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin. . . . The Komsomoletz is an active worker on the cultural revolution front. He fights for the polytechnization of the schools. He is an active physical culturist. He must be prepared at any moment to defend the Soviet Union with arms. He must study military matters, and master one form of military discipline. . . .[1]

In addition to this variety of duties, the *Komsomol* must be "politically literate." If after three years he still lacks the necessary knowledge of an intricate ideology, he may be compelled to give up his membership. This supreme penalty may also be enforced for indulgence in drinking or sexual laxity. Indeed, *Komsomols* are expected to be almost perfect specimens, and it is not surprising that they are chosen as the best leaders and teachers of the younger divisions of Soviet youth so as to exemplify the "purity of communist life."

2. *The Pioneers.* Members range from the age of ten to sixteen. The Pioneers are looked upon as the "children" of the *Komsomols*. They are organized in brigades of forty to fifty, subdivided into links of ten led by a *Komsomol*. The day upon which the boys and girls are officially enrolled and swear the oath of allegiance to the ideals of Lenin and the defense of the proletariat is a great occasion and widely celebrated. The Pioneers receive guidebooks from which they have to learn how to behave. There are five "laws" and five "customs." The laws decree that the Pioneers must always be faithful to the cause of Lenin and the workers' class; that they are

[1] Quoted by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 396–397.

to be regarded as the younger brothers of the *Komsomols* and of members of the Communist party; that they, in turn, should organize other children and lead them in exemplary manner; that they are supposed to be good comrades to other Pioneers and to the children of the workers and peasants throughout the world as well; and that they must strive to acquire a maximum of knowledge in order to understand the reasons for the struggle of workmen.

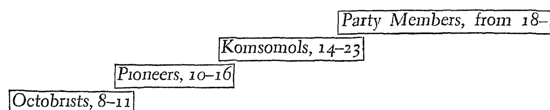
The customs demand that the Pioneers protect their own health and the health of others; that they fulfill their tasks promptly without wasting their own or other people's time; that they be industrious and persevering, find a way out of every difficulty, and learn how to work collectively; that they be careful of the people's property, particularly books, clothes, and the equipment of the workshops; and that they neither swear, drink, nor smoke.

The principle of polytechnization is, as far as possible, carried out by attaching pioneer formations to factories or collective farms. Their cultural education takes place in the "Palaces for Pioneers" which, at least in some large cities, are the realization of an adolescent's dream. The Pioneer Palace in Moscow possesses a luxuriously furnished clubhouse with all imaginable facilities including theater and motion-picture halls, libraries, rest rooms, and studios for young painters, sculptors, artisans, and photographers. There are also, in various other buildings, numerous technical facilities designed to give the young people an opportunity to develop their interests. Electromechanic machinery, steam engines, turbines, dynamos, motors, and physical, chemical, and biological laboratories are at the children's disposal.

There is no separation of the sexes. As a matter of fact, girls may be group leaders as well as boys. A separation is avoided even during the physical exercise periods.

3. *The Octobrists.* These comprise the youngest group, ranging from eight to eleven. They are organized into sections of twenty-five with a *Komsomol* as their leader; the sections are subdivided into groups of five children, led by a Pioneer. Young as they are, the children must already promise to live up to the rules prescribed for them. They are admonished to help the Pioneers, the *Komsomols*, and the members of the party; to be neat and clean; to work hard; and to strive to become Pioneers themselves.

It is interesting to observe that the different age groups overlap, making for better integration of the whole. Below is a chart of this organization which shows the dovetailing of the Soviet youth groups from the Octobrists up to the party members:



Unlike the Nazi-Fascist youth organizations, the Soviet youth movement is first and foremost political and cultural. Physical education is amply provided for, yet mental discipline and not militarism is the core of youth training. Military instruction for children of the kind provided in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy is frowned upon. Only the more mature *Komsomols* study military tactics as a required subject. Before the war, the regular period of service in the Red Army was considered sufficient to give all young and healthy Soviet citizens a thorough training: two years in the regular army, three years in the air force, and five years in the Red Fleet. The war has of necessity suspended age limitations; many a hero has been of high-school age. Military indoctrination of youth was not attempted in peacetime, but even during the war indoctrination has remained political and social rather than militaristic. The Soviets regard militarism merely as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.

It is possible that the war and the ensuing reputation of the military profession may change some aspects of education and of extracurricular activities when peace is restored. Premilitary training may well become a subject of singular importance and the number of military schools for future officers is likely to be increased. However, Soviet militarism will probably remain different from German militarism because it is the apparent tendency of the Soviet government to prevent the army from becoming too influential a factor. The constitutional amendment, granting the sixteen Union Republics the right of maintaining their own Defense Commissariats, may well be a skillful device to decentralize the Red Army, thus curtailing its political influence on perfectly unassailable grounds.

CONCLUSION

For many years, contradictions between Soviet theory and practice, between Soviet aims and methods have given the outside world a confused picture of the new Russia. Of the many books and papers written about it, few have been truly objective. The entry of the Soviet Union into the Second World War on the side of the Western Allies and the outstanding heroism of the whole Soviet people has brought about a change of attitude but many people still find themselves torn between their admiration for the Red Army and their dislike of Bolshevist practices.

Yet if the Second World War is to begin liberating humanity from many evil inheritances of previous centuries, deep-rooted mutual prejudices on the part of both Western and Eastern peoples must be eradicated. If, for example, the Soviet system is unsuitable for the West, just as Western political and social thought is unacceptable to the Soviets, each might yet benefit by the adoption of certain ideas or institutions of the other.

The alliance between the Western powers and the Soviet Union has initiated greater efforts toward better understanding in the West as well as in the East. These well-meant attempts are naturally limited by antagonistic ideologies but the Western and Eastern peoples must all face the fact that the fate of the postwar world remains dependent upon the extent of collaboration between the Allies. If peace is to be preserved for a long period, total peace must follow total war.

The responsibility therefore rests clearly with the Western Allies as well as with the Soviet Union. The only possible way to live up to this responsibility is an honest compromise on the basis of which one may hope that ideological and political differences of opinion may be ironed out gradually. The more progressive the social and economic postwar policy of the United States and Britain becomes and the less totalitarian the dictatorship of the proletariat shows itself to be, the easier should it be to reach such a compromise.

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