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# EDUCATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

All writers about the Soviet Union, including the Russians themselves, pay great attention to its educational system, because it has always been particularly important there. Russia had been a very backward agricultural country, with the majority of its population illiterate. Therefore the success of the Soviet Union, which had to be developed at top speed into an industrialised state, depended very largely on the possibility of the rapid education of masses of people.

Four days after the establishment of the Soviet Government in 1917 the Bolsheviks published a long-term educational programme; its general ideas are described in the Webbs' "Soviet Communism" as follows:—

"... A universal and classless provision of both 'enlightenment' and training for life in all its fullness and variety, for all ages from infancy to manhood; disregarding practically all ancient scholastic tradition; avowedly based exclusively on the latest science in every branch, and freed from every kind of mysticism; devoted to the end of fitting everyone for life in the service of the community; the whole system to be, in principle, gratuitous, secular and universally obligatory."

This outline is intended to give factual information about the Soviet educational system as it is to-day, and to provide a basis for study and discussion of its methods and aims, and the part it plays in the life of young people.

## 2. A FEW GENERAL FACTS.

\*By the constitution of the U.S.S.R. free education is provided for all, and is compulsory up to 15.

Lessons are given in the native language of the different Republics of the U.S.S.R.

Boys and girls are always educated together.

\*ARTICLE 121 of the Soviet Constitution reads: "Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to education. This right is ensured by the universal, compulsory elementary education; by the fact that education, including higher education, is free of charge; by a system of State scholarships for the overwhelming majority of students in the higher educational establishments; by instruction in the schools being conducted in the native language, and by the organisation of free vocational, technical and agronomic training for the toilers in the factories, State farms, machine and tractor stations, and collective farms."

keep to their regular time-tables, and the children are not directly feeling the effects of the war. But they are all conscious of it, and are doing what they can to help their country.

THIS OUTLINE CANNOT ATTEMPT TO GIVE A COMPLETE AND FULL ACCOUNT OF EDUCATION IN U.S.S.R., AS IT APPLIES TO ALL ITS CITIZENS, OLD AND YOUNG. BUT IT IS HOPED THAT IT WILL SERVE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO DISCUSSION AND TO MORE DETAILED STUDY. A LIST FOR FURTHER READING IS GIVEN.

## QUESTIONS.

Here are some questions for discussion. We should like to receive reports of your discussions, and also to hear any queries or comments that you have.

1. What main difference do you notice between the educational system in U.S.S.R. and in this country?

2. Do you think that the system of pre-school education may tend to break up family life?

3. Do you think it would be valuable for everyone to have secondary education to 18 years?

4. Is "book-learning" a good thing by itself? What do you think about the Soviet efforts to make education part of real life?

5. Does all-round knowledge help you to work better?

6. Do you think that boys and girls should be educated together?

7. Do you think that the flourishing of national culture, and development of languages and literature, is a help or a hindrance to international understanding?

8. The aim of the Third Five-Year Plan is to "raise the level of the whole working class to the level of engineers and technicians." What effect do you think the achievement of this would have on the life of the country?

9. What part should university students play in war-time? What is the best contribution that they can make to the war effort?

10. Do you think that the teaching of every branch of study from the materialist point of view is likely to limit the "all-round" nature of the education?

11. Do you think it right that religion should be completely excluded from the schools and universities?

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("Anglo-Soviet Journal," October, 1941.)

"Collective farmers of the Kalinin district carried out large-scale repairs and alterations to the schools. On the Monday teachers and pupils went to help the farmers with the harvest. In Sverdlosk, during the summer holidays, over 50,000 boys and girls worked in industry.

"The Ivdelsk Region is the most northerly of the Ural area, and there are still nomad reindeer breeding and hunting tribes there. But all children, even here, are at schools and are helping in defence. The Ivdelsk secondary school gave 74 pupils to the industrial Kombinat (technical school). The younger children collect scrap metal, and their efforts have already produced four tons."

#### "Children First."

(From Soviet War News, 6th February, 1942.)

"To care for the children is one of our most responsible tasks to-day. Ruined towns and villages can be rebuilt. Factories and workshops that have been put out of action can be restored. But it is difficult to give back his normal life to a homeless child deprived of his happy childhood. . . .

"Populations of invaded districts and front line areas have been transferred to towns and villages in the rear. The evacuated children have found themselves in new, unaccustomed surroundings. . . . Now, more than ever, they require the care and tenderness of the country as a whole and of each individual citizen. In the liberated districts the first piece of bread, the first repaired house, is for the children. During evacuation the first train is for the children. . . .

"In the various homes and kindergartens the children are assured of skilled care and normal food. They are given the chance of learning and resting, and are taught the habit of work. These children's homes, the boarding schools—these are excellent and essential. But they cannot take the place of the family, and many children who have been left without parents need a family. . . .

"The whole of our country has heard of the lead given by women workers in the 'Krasny Bogatyr' Mills; these women have adopted orphan children. In the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan, a woman teacher has done the same. Following this example, the children evacuated to Tashkent were given homes in the space of a few days.

"We cannot rest calmly with folded arms, leaving the State to provide all the care needed by our orphan children. To-day every citizen on his personal initiative must help the Party and the State, which are confronted with numerous responsible tasks. It is easier to educate than to re-educate children. . . ."

These extracts do not give a complete picture of Soviet education during the war. Many places, far from the front, are able to

A small charge has recently been introduced for higher education from the age of 15. All students who reach a certain standard are, however, given scholarships. The scholarships are sufficient, if necessary, to maintain the student while he is studying. A common question put by Soviet students to students from abroad is: "How much are you paid to study in your country?"

Free industrial training is provided.

Education is not confined to the classrooms of schools or even to young people. It is part of the life of most of the people. One of the guiding principles is that education should be part of real life, and not just book-learning; that the children are being prepared to be workers and useful members of society, and that their education must give them an all-round basis for their future.

### 3. EDUCATION, THE PEOPLE AND THE STATE.

Education in the U.S.S.R. is planned centrally by the Commissariats in the different Union and autonomous Republics. A considerable latitude is allowed for varying conditions.

The Central Planning Commission, which plans the economy for the whole U.S.S.R., has a cultural section. This makes the general educational plan, covering such points as the number of new schools to be built, the kind of schools, the number of new teachers, new libraries, etc. For example, the Third Five-Year Plan provided for 20,000 new schools and for the training of 500,000 new teachers. The Planning Commission also decides the sum to be allocated to each Republic for education from the central budget. The Commissariats for Education of the Republics, within the outline of the general plan, are responsible for the expenditure of the sum allotted, and for the administration of education.

This division between Central and Republic control of education means that the fundamental principles are laid down by the Educational Committee of the Council of Peoples' Commissars of the U.S.S.R., which sends out general directions; the Commissariats of the individual Republics apply these principles and issue more detailed directions, such as the best division of the time-table, etc.

Education is a matter of keen public interest, which is stimulated by the most friendly relations between school authorities, staff and pupils. Through School and University Councils the teaching staff and the students have a big say in management. Parents' Councils, Education Commissions of local Soviets, Trade Unions, and many other popular organisations take part in the organisation of education.

The amount spent on education has been rapidly increasing. It is estimated that between 1932 and 1941 the amount per head spent on education has increased eight times; it is now 12 per cent. of the national budget.

#### 4. HISTORICAL.

There was no universal education before the establishment of the Soviet Government, so that millions of children never went to school at all. The mass of the peasant population was ignorant, illiterate, filled with superstition.

For the national minorities things were particularly bad, because the policy of the Government was to crush the culture of nations, such as Ukrainians and Georgians. They were not allowed to use their own languages in newspapers, books, or in the courts; those that went to school were taught in Russian. An idea of the official attitude to education is given in the following statement of Shiskov, Minister of Instruction, which was made in the presence of Tsar Alexander:—

"Knowledge is useful only when, like salt, it is used and offered in small measures according to the people's circumstances and their needs. . . . To teach the mass of the people, or even the majority of them, will bring more harm than good."

Another prominent member of the same Government said:—

"Education should be proportionate to the prosperity of those who are being educated."

Those schools and colleges that did exist were for the children of upper classes, but the fierce restrictions of the Government deprived them of much cultural value. Conditions were so bad in them that suicides among children were very frequent. According to Miss Hebe Spaul in her book, "The Youth of Russia," this grew so serious that a special Commission was set up by the Ministry of Public Instruction to inquire into the causes of suicide among pupils.

Seventy-three per cent. of the adult population were estimated to be illiterate. In some of the minority nations less than 5 per cent. were literate (e.g., 2 per cent. in Kazakstan, 1 per cent. in Uzbekistan, .5 per cent. in Tadjikistan), and 124 of the 175 nationalities in the Russian Empire had no written alphabet.

With this background, and the chaotic state of the country in the first years after 1917, the Soviet educational system did not spring up ready-made. The position was made even more serious by the terrible famine of 1921. The wars and the famine left numbers of young orphans, destitute and homeless. They formed into gangs and became lawless and thoroughly depraved; they lived by theft and often murder, becoming the terror of the countryside and the cities. They lived in cellars and sewers, horribly diseased, both physically and mentally. Those children needed not only education, but moral rescue.

Years of constructive effort in the face of incredible difficulties were necessary. Because of the rapid expansion of education, equipment could not keep pace; there was an acute shortage of teachers, buildings, books and equipment. For many years schools in thickly-populated places, such as Moscow, had to be used in shifts. In addition, there was the weight of superstition and ignorance to over-

#### 11. EDUCATION IN WAR-TIME CONDITIONS.

These extracts from Soviet newspapers and recent articles give some idea of what is happening now in the Soviet Union, and what the children are doing.

##### "Invasion must not stop education."

(Extracts from a "PRAVDA" article, quoted in Soviet War News, 21st January, 1942.)

"The war has caused considerable alterations in the system of Soviet higher education. Everywhere work has to be adapted to war-time needs. . . . Young men and women who were going to become agronomists, engineers, or teachers have enthusiastically taken up military professions.

"About 2,500 students and teachers of Leningrad higher educational institutes are fighting in the ranks of the Red Army. . . . Many girl students have trained as nurses. High schools were evacuated in good time, and continued their work well in the rear. With the assistance of local organisations, it has been possible to arrange lectures and work in re-equipped laboratories.

"Educational courses must to-day be curtailed, and the tempo of studies must be increased many times; we can at present neither teach nor learn in a leisurely random fashion. . . . Holidays have been curtailed, and examination dates advanced. . . . The war has shown us the necessity of creating new specialities in order to associate science as closely as possible with military affairs. . . . Many students to-day gain their production experience in actual work on defence enterprises, at benches, or in departments producing goods needed at the front. Military knowledge is compulsory for all students, no matter what subject they are studying. The young Soviet specialist must be prepared at any moment to become a fighter or commander of the Red Army. Military knowledge and practice gained in conditions closely resembling those at the front constitute the most important part of the programme of higher educational institutes."

##### "What the school children are doing."

(Gavrilov, People's Commissar for Education, quoted in Soviet War News, December 3rd, 1941.)

"Whole armies of school children in the Soviet Union to-day are giving their contribution to the defence of the country by working in the fields of the collective farms and State farms. In the Kuibishev district 46,000 pupils are working under supervision of their tutors. Far from the front, where children are continuing their normal education, military training is one of the most important subjects. School groups are preparing reserves for the Red Army—motor cyclists, pilots, drivers, aviation technicians, etc. In the Saratov and other districts pupils of secondary schools, together with teachers, are learning to drive tractors."

other sections). They may pursue general cultural subjects, hobbies, or some other technical course which they want for their work.

The great number of clubs are also centres of education, as well as recreation, and in big towns they are deservedly called "Palaces of Culture," as they are complete with theatres, cinemas, libraries, music rooms, study rooms, gymnasia, etc. The same sort of facilities are to be found in the famous "Parks of Culture and Rest," where there are open-air theatres and concerts. The Soviet theatre, opera and ballet, drawing on classical Russian, as well as foreign works, together with the works of modern artists, are of high standard and very popular. In the non-Russian Republics, which were formerly primitive and backward, the cultural renaissance is particularly striking.

Comparative figures of the number of theatres, etc., are a guide to the lack of cultural development before 1917:—

	1913.	1933.	1940.
Theatres .....	153	587	825
Clubs .....	222	61,000	100,000
Libraries .....	12,600	40,000	70,000

Adult education also takes the form of Sunday universities, where people can study and attend lectures on their free days, and the parents' universities, which run courses in child welfare.

The cinema is regarded as one of the most useful methods of cultural education. The film industry has grown up since 1917, and Soviet film directors, like Eisenstein, are world famous. Great use has been made of travelling cinemas, which take films to remote farms, in the Siberian forests, the auls (native villages) of Kazakhstan, while in the far north the operators take their apparatus by dog or reindeer team. There are many studios which specialise in making films for children and young people.

Great as some of the achievements are, the needs in many places are still greater. There is still in some places the job of finishing the wiping out of illiteracy. According to the "Anglo-Soviet Journal" (April, 1941), illiteracy is still as high as 24 per cent. in some of the more remote regions, and the aim was set by the Government of abolishing this by 1942.

One of the most powerful centres of adult education is the Red Army. Each young man, unless physically unfit, spent at least two years doing his military service. Nearly half the time of the conscripts, in peace, was spent in education, not only of a military nature, but also in the arts, music, drama, literature, science, etc. The Red Army Houses provide facilities similar to those of the Clubs and Palaces of Culture.

(The preceding information referred to the educational system before the invasion of Russia in June, 1941.)

come, which amounted in some remote places to active opposition to the teachers by previously oppressed primitive tribes.

## 5. THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO-DAY.

- (A) **From babyhood until eight years:**—Creches, kindergartens, playgrounds, nursery schools. (These are optional.)
- (B) **The Seven-Year Schools:**—Compulsory for all. 8-15 years.
- (C) **The Ten-Year Schools:**—8-18. Was becoming compulsory in the towns before the war. (Compulsory education now ends at 15.)
- (D) **Industrial Education:**—Factory and Trade Schools.
- (E) **Professional Education:**—Professional Schools and Academies.
- (F) **Higher Education:**—Universities, Schools and specialised Institutes.
- (G) **Adult Education:**—Clubs, correspondence courses, films, etc.

	1913.	1940.
CHILDREN IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS	7,800,000	35,000,000
STUDENTS IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS .....	35,800	951,900
UNIVERSITIES .....	71	716
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS .....	112,000	650,000

## 6. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION.

A system of optional pre-school education for children under eight years was introduced under the Soviet regime. Before this there was provision for only 550 children in creches. The number of places in creches increased from 600,000 in 1932 to over three million in 1937, and has risen ever since.

The creches are usually attached to a place of work, such as a factory, or a collective farm, or one may serve several blocks of flats. Parents, the Management and Trade Union Committees of factories, farms, etc., where they are situated, and the Commissariat for Health, co-operate in running the creches. When mothers who are working leave young babies in the creches, they get time off to feed them, and therefore it is important that they are near their place of work. Here are some extracts from a description of a typical creche by Mrs. Beatrice King:—

"The rooms are very large and lofty, admitting the maximum of light. . . . Each room has a verandah, where the children sleep, summer and winter. There is a large kitchen, where the chief meals are prepared, as well as a laundry. The creche has considerable ground, which was being laid out as playgrounds and

gardens at the time of my visit. Each group (from 12 to 15) has a qualified person in charge, helped by an untrained attendant. . . . The creche is one of the most powerful centres for parents' education."

Nursery infant schools continue the work of the creches, attendance still being voluntary. The number of children attending these increased from 800,000 in 1928 to one and a half million in 1933, and three and a half million in 1940. Co-operation between parents and teachers is very close, through a Parents' Council meeting monthly with the school staff. Parents are encouraged to visit the school, and teachers to visit the homes of the children. The children have a few lessons according to age, plenty of play, meals and sleep. Formal education begins at six years.

There are, in addition, numerous children's playgrounds, and a typical service is the provision of "children's rooms" at all big railway stations.

Through the creches and infant schools, the Soviet children attending them are properly cared for from the beginning, and are taught the principles of health and hygiene. A doctor is on the staff of each school. The activities, including play, are designed to develop social habits, self-reliance, and a sense of responsibility. For example, a popular toy with youngsters is a set of coloured bricks, like ours in everything except size; these bricks are just too big for one child to be able to move and build by itself; it must, therefore, seek the help of a playmate if it wants to build with the bricks.

For mothers, the system means that those who wish can go to work and can take part in public activity without being tied to the house. It is an important factor in making the theoretical equality of women with men a real and practicable thing. At the same time the creches and kindergartens are schools for parents, where they can learn the best ways of bringing up their children.

## 7. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

	1913.	1929.	1933.	1942 (plan).
Seven-year schools	6,800,000	11,700,000	21,300,000	23,000,000
Primary (8-15).				
Ten-year schools...	1,000,000	2,700,000	5,500,000	17,000,000
Secondary (8-18).				
Total ...	7,800,000	14,400,000	33,400,000	40,000,000

Compulsory education from 8-15 has been established in stages throughout the Soviet Union; now it can be said that every village has its school. Over 20,000 schools were built during the Second Five-Year Plan, and another 20,000 in the Third Five-Year Plan, of which 4,000 were in towns and 16,000 in rural places. The more backward parts of the U.S.S.R. have received special Government assistance to help them catch up with the rest of the Union.

Students are also assisted financially by the many services that are available to them, either free or at greatly reduced prices, e.g., railway fares for student travel in the long summer vacation. In many cities there are "university towns," which provide for all the students' academic and personal needs, from libraries to cheap restaurants and free laundries.

There are no obstacles in the way of student marriages. A number of students are married and have children; the universities have their creches for babies, just as the factories do. Each university has its own medical staff, rest home, and sanatorium. The university hostels have married quarters, as well as single. Numerous clubs flourish in the universities, and sport of all kinds is very much encouraged.

Soviet university education, too, aims at being all-round and related to life; even the most specialised courses include lectures in Marxism-Leninism (this includes history, economics, and political theory). Less than half the time is devoted to lectures, and the rest to discussion classes, which run parallel with the lecture courses. The ordinary course lasts five years; progressively more time is devoted to individual study and practical work, on which special emphasis is placed.

No religious teaching is given in any schools or colleges in the Soviet Union. Nor are there any formal religious observances, such as morning prayers. All the subjects are, moreover, taught from a materialistic point of view, and this may be regarded as one of the main differences between Soviet education and ours.

Six months before the Soviet student leaves the university he is sure of getting a job, because, with the rapid expansion of the whole economic life of the country, the demand for trained technical experts, teachers, etc., is greater than the supply. At the same time the general cultural needs are such that art students, writers, actors and so on also have an assured position.

In addition to the regular universities, over 200,000 people take part in correspondence courses of higher education, which are the equivalent of a university course. Many thousands more study at evening institutes, and nearly all the universities have courses for part-time students, in addition to the correspondence courses.

## 10. EDUCATION FOR ADULTS.

The Soviet Union has been described as a "nation of students." The work of wiping out illiteracy among adults led on to the education of the newly literate people. Through all sorts of study and discussion circles in factories and farms, through the wireless, the Press, the cinema, wall newspapers, etc., this wide adult education is carried out. Those who wish to study some subjects more fully can take up correspondence courses, attend evening schools, etc. (see

without interrupting his work. The system is in operation in every industry. The foremost workers are able to take up more advanced studies in special industrial institutes, research institutes, e.g., Industrial Academies give a three-five-year course for Stakhanovites,<sup>†</sup> the most outstanding of whom may then be put into administrative posts in the Commissariats. Even the most unskilled of workers can, if he chooses, become a highly-skilled worker through these courses.

Technical education courses include not only a general survey of technology and the organisation of production, but also general education and lectures on the national economic plan of the whole country. This system provides one of the most important means of fulfilling one of the main aims of the Soviet Government—"the elimination of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour." This can only be done, said Stalin in a speech to a Stakhanovite Conference, by raising the cultural and technical level of the working class to the level of engineers and technicians.

### 9. HIGHER EDUCATION.

Before 1917 university education was almost entirely confined to the nobility and professional classes. There were 91 universities, with about 112,000 students; in 1940 there were 700 universities, with 650,000 students. It is among the formerly backward nations of the U.S.S.R. that expansion has been most rapid. Byelorussia, which formerly had no universities, to-day has 22. Azerbaijan has 13, Uzbekistan 30, both of them in Asiatic Russia. The number of women students is another completely new feature: they comprise 47 per cent. of the total.

There are four main types of university:—

- (a) Thirty universities in the principal cities. Each offer courses in a number of different subjects.
- (b) Higher education institutes, giving education of university standard in one group of subjects.
- (c) Specialised industrial academies, giving practical and theoretical training of university standard to workers from industry. (See Vocational Training.)
- (d) Other specialised institutes for teachers, agricultural specialists, lawyers, musicians, artists, actors, directors, writers, physical training instructors.

Entry to the university is based on merit. Under the decree of September, 1940, a small fee is charged. Scholarships are given to those showing merit, however. The scholarships are sufficient to maintain the student while studying. Those who can afford to do so pay the fee from their scholarship money. Otherwise the university courses are free to the scholarship winners.

<sup>†</sup>A Stakhanovite is a worker who improves his and his team's technique of work so that much more is produced in a given time with the same amount of effort.

The ultimate aim is to establish the ten-year school for all children, and as a step towards this the Third Five-Year Plan provided for compulsory education up to 18 in the cities (which was being widely achieved), and a great increase of pupils in the ten-year schools in the country. But in September, 1940, the international situation made it necessary to interrupt this process, and make 8-15 the compulsory ages for education in the towns, as in the country, with the ten-year school voluntary. A decree was issued shortly after this providing for training of youth in factory and trade schools, starting between the ages of 14 and 17.

### Methods.

After a period of experiment in different methods of education, the actual method of instruction in Soviet schools is much the same as in this country. Great importance is placed on making everything part of real life, and not just book-learning. Lessons are accompanied by practical work wherever possible; excursions are made to factories, farms, theatres, as well as to museums, zoos, etc., as in British schools. Increasing use is made of films, and there is a plan to have a cinema room in every school.

The life of a school is very much part of the community around it, through friendly connection with a factory or collective farm, through Parents' Councils, and through use of the school building out of school hours. Sir Bernard Pares, in his "Penguin" Book on Russia, says:—

"It is one of the main objects of Soviet education that the worker should become an 'all-rounder,' with an understanding not limited to one particular process. . . . The Soviet citizen is to understand as a whole the functioning of the work of the community. . . . He is to have an idea of the whole organisation and distribution of production. For that reason, even at play, he is to be extending his knowledge." (This might be considered with the quotation given in the introduction to the Outline.)

The curriculum of all schools includes nature study, art, music, physical culture, and social science. By a decree of September, 1940, one foreign language—English, French or German—was made compulsory for all from 12 years. In schools where the lessons are in a non-Russian tongue Russian is also studied.

Education in music, art and literature is not neglected because of emphasis on practical subjects. Dr. Morley Davies, in his notes on a visit to U.S.S.R. in 1939, remarks on the translations that he saw of Hans Andersen, Dickens and Cervantes in a Moscow school library. Russian classical authors, such as Tolstoi and Chekov, are widely read, as well as Gorki, Sholokov and other modern writers.

Dr. Davies describes a visit to a school where, in the fifth class, they were using surveying instruments and wire models, which gave practical demonstrations of measurements, such as the cubic centimetre and the addition of fractions. Formal geometry, he said, was started in the seventh class (14 years old), which seemed very late to him.

A conspicuous lack in the curriculum of the schools is of any religious teaching; in fact, a materialist outlook is inculcated from the earliest years.

### **Discipline.**

After many experiments in self-government, Soviet schools adopted a system in which the Head and the teachers are mainly responsible for discipline at school, but at the same time there is a measure of self-government and co-operation between teachers, children and parents in running the school. From the age of 12 the pupils form committees, which are responsible for class discipline, the organisation of leisure time in the school, care of school property, and help for backward pupils; they have, therefore, important responsibilities, for which it is felt the younger children are not ready. Corporal punishment is a criminal offence; in very difficult cases expulsion from the school may be used.

### **Physical Culture.**

A period of physical training is given every day to all, except those not physically fit, by trained instructors from the Physical Training Colleges, up to 15 years. Every spring children and adolescents are medically examined, and those who need strengthening go to rest homes and sanatoria.

District and National Sports Festivals are held annually for school children. A wide variety of sports and games are played. Thousands of school children take the tests for the junior "Ready for Labour and Defence Badge." Sharpshooting is very popular, and many children are excellent marksmen. In 1940 the People's Commissariat of Education issued an order to extend and improve physical training in schools, saying that every school must have its own athletic field; that more time be given to sport in the curriculum. Thirty-two Regional Centres were formed, where children's sports schools would be set up to train assistant instructors.

### **Out of School Hours.**

Lessons are mainly in the mornings, and last from four and a half to six hours, according to age. After the end of school hours, the premises are used for "children's circles," which pupils are encouraged and assisted to form. They include literature, reading, drama, chemistry, painting, exploration, photography, and many other subjects. Every school has a choir, and very often an orchestra.

These activities are intended to develop creative self-expression. All-round education is further helped by children's theatres, cinemas, clubs, and technical stations, and, above all, by the Palaces of the Pioneers. These Palaces are to be found in all big towns. They are marvellously equipped buildings, with rooms for all sorts of games, libraries, aeronautical rooms with many instruments and model 'planes, mechanics' rooms with engines to take to pieces,

gymnasia, etc. In the Moscow Palace of Pioneers there is a miniature open-air theatre, and a driving course, carefully marked with traffic directions, where the children drive small cars and are taught to observe the rules of the road.

Discipline is kept voluntarily by the members themselves, who are of all ages under 18. Most of the members join circles for carrying on their special interest. Ninety per cent. of the children going to the Palaces are said to be Pioneers,\* but there seems to be no ban on non-members. "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (Communist Youth paper), of 14th November, 1940, describes the opening of a local House of Pioneers; it had a military room, sculpture room, art room, music room, young naturalists' corner, aviation room with full-sized aero engine and control board, and a mechanics' room with machine tools. It was called a House, not a Palace, as it was not yet big or complete enough to be worthy of the title "Palace"!

Special sections of the parks have occupations for children, both entertaining and directly educational. Summer camps are widely visited in the holidays. All this provision for children strikes foreign visitors very forcibly; Sir Bernard Pares writes: "Whatever else Communism has done, it has re-created Russian childhood."

## **8. INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION.**

A system of training schools attached directly to factories has been functioning in the Soviet Union for many years; there was a great need for these, as Russia of 1917 had few skilled workers of her own. Skilled workers are trained free of charge for all branches of industry and transport, pupils being granted an allowance by the State while training. The education includes general subjects and Russian language and literature.

A decree was issued in October, 1940, setting up factory training and trade schools, in order to meet the need for far more skilled young workers in industry. Boys are drafted into these schools between the ages of 14 and 15. Factory Training Schools, mostly based on the existing Factory Schools, have also a six months' course, the Trade Schools a two-year course. Fifteen has been the usual age for starting industrial training, but when the ten-year school is finally established it will not start till 18.

There are institutions and organisations providing a number of different technical courses for both adults and children. Certain Commissariats organise special colleges and schools, and almost every factory has its own "technical groups" and technological courses. In 1936 500,000 railwaymen were attending various technical minimum courses and study circles. These free training facilities enable every worker to acquire the necessary technical knowledge

\*The Pioneers is the State organisation for children between 10 and 16. Younger children, from 8-11, can belong to the Octobrists, and the age for the Young Communist League is 14-23.