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THE SOVIET PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM - A KEY TO THE 'NEW SO--ETC(U)
MAR 75 R F COLLINS

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STUDENT RESEARCH REPORT

MAJ. ROBERT F. COLLINS
THE SOVIET PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
A KEY TO THE "NEW SOVIET SOLDIER"

-1975-

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FOREWORD

This research project represents fulfillment of a student requirement for successful completion of Phase III Training of the Department of the Army's Foreign Area Officer Program (Russian).

Only unclassified sources are used in producing the research paper. The opinions, value judgments and conclusions expressed are those of the author and in no way reflect official policy of the United States Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Department of the Army, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff of Intelligence, or the United States Army Institute for Advanced Russian and East European Studies.

Interested readers are invited to send their comments to the Commander of the Institute.

**RICHARD P. KELLY
LTC, MI
Commander**

SUMMARY

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The author's intention in this paper ~~is to~~ present^S an overview of the pre-school educational system in the Soviet Union, and how the Communist party has focused on education, especially pre-school education, as an instrument to further their continued stay in power. ~~He intends to trace~~^T the basic tenets on Marxism-Leninism on education ~~to~~ show how the current leaders have utilized this ideology in pursuit of avowed aims. The author then advances the theory that pre-school education helps develop those traits the Communist party desires in their soldiers, and draws the conclusion that the educational system has been extremely successful in not only strengthening the military forces, but the Communist state as well.

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THE SOVIET PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM -
A KEY TO THE "NEW SOVIET SOLDIER"

'Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

Alexander Pope
Moral Essays (1720)

The purpose of this paper is to examine the Soviet system of pre-school education, and in a lesser degree primary school education, in order to gain an insight into the motivation of today's Soviet soldier. The intent is not to argue that education completely explains the actions and thought processes of the modern Soviet soldier, but to show that the Soviet educational system, particularly during the formative years - birth to age eight - plays a primary role in forming and molding the opinions, attitudes and personal characteristics of the "New Soviet Soldier."

In one author's opinion, the Soviet soldier manifests four outstanding qualities which are the basis of his combat effectiveness and morale: (1) valor, (2) high level of discipline, (3) ability to endure severe deprivations, and (4) the simple and genuine love of country.¹ This listing, although certainly not complete, is still accurate today. My point is that all these characteristics are learned characteristics. The Soviet educational system is openly and actively conducting an educational program to instill and develop these traits in its future citizens.

The Soviet Union claims that it is in the process of creating a "New Soviet Man" with its educational system. It

must be noted that the meaning of the term "educational system" in the Soviet Union encompasses many more things than does the same term in Western societies. Generally speaking, everything in the USSR that contributes to the furtherance of the Communist society and the building of a "Communist morality" is considered to be part of the Soviet educational system. The pre-schools and primary schools provide the initial phases of controlled socialization (the process of transforming an individual into a willing and productive member of Soviet society or the Soviet Armed Forces), and in the process, these schools lay the foundations for the conscious and unconscious determinants used in the majority of thoughts and actions of the future Soviet citizens. One last point should be made before getting into the body of the paper, although perhaps the point is too obvious to mention. The Soviet educational system has had a completely different background, tradition and heritage as compared to the Western educational experience; consequently, it has developed along totally different lines as compared to Western models. Western value judgements should not be made on Soviet education as regards its being "good" or "bad." An attempt should be made to examine the Soviet system, if possible, without bias and with objectivity, and then draw conclusions on the effectiveness and long-range viability of the system, and on the impact of the system on the Soviet military force.

Before looking specifically at pre-school education, it is helpful to present an overview of the Soviet attitude towards

education, and how this attitude fits under Marxism-Leninism.

The scope of Soviet education is extremely broad in conception. It embraces the entire cultural apparatus; all of the agencies involved in the molding and the forming of the minds and hearts of all ages in the country. It includes the regular school system from the pre-nursery, the nursery school, the kindergarten, the ten year school of general education, and the university and scientific institute, as well as a wide range of schools designed to give specialized training at different occupational levels. It includes two other systems of schools, one for training officers in the armed forces, and the other for training party members. It includes universities for training Communist leaders in other countries, people's universities for the education of adults, atheist institutes or seminaries, schools for preparing young people for parenthood, etc. But it also includes the press in all its forms - the newspapers, the periodical, the book, the library, the bookstore, and even the calendar. Then there must be added the modern media of mass communication, such as radio and television, and the agencies of entertainment and amusement - the theater, the movies, the circus, the playground, the club, the museum, and the public park. It includes works of literature, music, graphic art, science, scholarship, and philosophy. It includes the political and cultural potentialities of all organizations, and particularly professional unions and organizations for children and youth. It even includes the process of oral

persuasion which, through the activities of a disciplined party membership of about 14.5 million, reaches the most distant villages and the far borders of the Soviet Union. One might also include the role of forced labor or "corrective" labor camps, which involved millions of persons during the rule of Stalin. Even economic institutions, factories, collective farms, mines, etc., are regarded as educational institutions.² The point is sufficiently made - the USSR is deadly serious about education, and deadly serious about what education should accomplish.

Education in the USSR is, first and foremost, a political tool of the Communist party for the furtherance of its aims. Not only do the Soviet authorities openly declare the political aims of their educational system, they deny emphatically that it could be or should be otherwise. They argue that education must function according to the needs of society, and that theirs is by definition a socialist society moving towards communism, a society which needs trained citizens who will be able and willing, to continue the job of social transformation. Education must therefore be political in nature, since this is a political task.³ The two following statements - one by the Minister of Higher Education (V. P. Yelyutin) and a policy statement by the Central Committee reflect the direction of Soviet training:

The role of Soviet education is to assist in the building of a communist society, in shaping the materialist world outlook of the students, equipping them with a good grounding in the different fields of knowledge and preparing them for socially useful work.⁴

Upbringing must inculcate in the school children a love of knowledge and of work, and respect for people who work; it must shape the communist world outlook of the pupils and rear them in the spirit of communist morality and of boundless loyalty to the country and the people, and in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.⁵

Here we see that Soviet education has become inseparably intertwined with and dependent upon political aims. This is the single most striking difference between Soviet and Western education. Education is completely subordinated to the political process, which in turn is completely subordinated to the Communist Party. The Party has always used education as a means to further and insure its own existence. Education has always been under the direct control of the Communist Party, and the Party has never lost awareness of the power of education. Historically, the Soviet Union, since 1921, has appropriated a greater percentage of its national income to education than has any Western country. Constant change and modification is an integral part of the Soviet educational system as indeed, it is a part of all viable educational systems. But there is an important difference in Soviet changes. The Soviet system operates within a Marxism-Leninism framework, and it is impossible to make changes that do not fall within this ideological framework. The Party is the sole "true" interpreter of Marxism-Leninism, so in effect, only the Party can make changes in the system. Under a Communist regime the tasks of education are too important to be delegated to professional educators who may hold a less zealous commitment to the building of a "new society." It is the political leaders who are initiators of educational policy changes while

the educational authorities become implementers of those changes. Change comes from the top, not from the bottom.

Marxism-Leninism has caused these attitudes to develop. Not only has this ideology caused these attitudes to develop, it insures that these attitudes are reinforced. It is fashionable nowadays for Western commentators to disclaim the importance of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union as the USSR must "face up" to the political realities of today's modern world. They claim that Soviet decisions are based primarily on pragmatism rather than a desire on their part to follow the dictates of Marxism-Leninism. These commentators concede that at one time this ideology played a major role in Soviet affairs (beginnings of the Soviet State), but as time passed, Marxism-Leninism gradually decreased in both importance and influence in the USSR. They claim that the current Soviet leaders make their decisions first, and then rationalize their actions according to Marxism-Leninism, or modify its existing interpretations to match up with decisions already made. It seems to me that this view is incorrect. Soviet citizens are taught by the tenets of Marxism-Leninism literally from their birth to their death. They are exposed to no other way of viewing themselves or the world about them. Marxism-Leninism is the most important single ingredient in the "mix" of educational subjects throughout the student's schooling and also in his life after leaving the schools. It is difficult for us to imagine the pervasiveness of this ideology in the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders, either unconsciously or consciously, are greatly influenced by this

ideology in their decisions. Obviously Marx was not able to write about situations which would occur in the twentieth century, and some very real problems exist in Marxism today in trying to explain why many things predicted by Marx have not come to pass. Still, even with its difficulties, Marxism-Leninism is a powerful and viable philosophy for the Soviet Union and for its peoples. Because it is such a determinant in education, a brief outline of some of its tenets as they apply to education is worthwhile.

Most of the basis of Soviet pedagogy is found in the historical materialism portion of Marxism. Historical materialism of Marx-Engels, as interpreted and modified by Lenin, assumes that all social forces and phenomena are determined by the economic bases and institutions of society. According to Marxism, the laws of historical development demonstrate the inevitable movement of human society towards communism, and in this process the individual, by correctly perceiving and understanding these laws of historical evolution, may hasten or even influence the process itself. Thus everything that contributes to the operation of these laws of society is moral. The quest for world revolution becomes a moral imperative of the laws of historical development. Collectivism is the central concept of communist life; it must be realized wherever possible, since it is the basis of future society.

In a socialist society the collective and not the individual exercises the dominant role. Individualism that is not

part of the common effort or that does not contribute to the highest entity - the collective - is inconsistent with the nature of socialism. Society is a higher entity than the individual, and the individual (read Soviet soldier) exists for society and not vice versa. Collectivism is that particular principle in socialism that defines the relation between the individual and his society. It means the total subordination of the individual good to the common good and a glorification and sanctification of the society and the state. The principle of collectivism not only determines how the school should define for the child his relationship to society; it not only outlines the image of the socialist state, but it also determines a considerable part of the methodology of Soviet education per se.

Communism finds a pseudometaphysical sanction for morality in the laws of history. Moral conduct consists in acting in accordance with the dictates of history. In communist philosophy, moral behavior is behavior which contributes to the inevitable development of society towards communism. Lenin stated "The basis of communist morality is the struggle for the consolidation and completion of communism. That too is the basis for communist training, education and teaching. The child must be taught to follow directives of the CPSU because the party is the only authoritative institution having an insight into the objective operation of historical laws, and thus the only body capable of correctly determining moral conduct. Consequently, moral behavior is that behavior which is sanctioned by the Communist Party."⁶ The Soviet educational system has always

devoted a large part of its effort to indoctrinating this communist morality into its students.

Marxism-Leninism is above all a materialist ideology which attempts to explain the universe and society entirely through mechanistic and economic concepts. Dialectical materialism as a "science" assumes that all the phenomena of the universe can be fully explained by the dialectical method as simple manifestations of the material world. This is a key point; Marxism-Leninism unequivocally states that all reality is knowable and explainable by human beings. There is consequently no place in communist pedagogy for idealism, mysticism, transcendentalism, or religion. Religion, which purports to explain a number of natural phenomena in spiritual, immaterial or supernatural terms, is the direct antithesis of materialism. The materialistic essence of communism uncompromisingly demands that the adherents of communism be materialists. Only a materialist can be a true communist.

The objection to religion on philosophical grounds - as antithetical to materialism - is not the sole objection. Religion as an ideology contributes to the delusive consciousness of the working class. It prevents the working class from perceiving the exploitations that go on in a capitalist society. Religion, as a form of ideology reflecting the economic conditions of a capitalist society, is a powerful instrument in the hands of the ruling class for keeping the masses in ignorance and obedience. Since this is the case, science must be used

extensively to demonstrate the materialist nature of the universe and thus refute "religious superstition." Materialism has always been an important principle determining the content of education in the Soviet Union.⁷

This has been a much oversimplified version of some educational doctrines in Marxism-Leninism, but collectivism, communist morality, and materialism are so basic to Soviet education that we must recognize them as basic determinants in the system if we are to proceed to practical applications with an examination of some of the school practices and how they shape the development of the modern Soviet soldier.

The Soviet educational program for a child, in a sense, starts before his birth. Soviet books on upbringing are widely read and taken seriously by parents, teachers, and others engaged in work with children, according to Western educators, notably Urie Bronfenbrenner, who have visited the USSR. Moreover, the interest extends beyond those directly concerned, since upbringing is virtually a national hobby in the USSR. Daily newspapers frequently carry articles and letters on the subject, public lectures on the topic are widely attended, and questions of upbringing constitute a common subject of conversation among parents and nonparents alike.⁸ Here we find a basic difference in socialization, the way in which a child born into a given society becomes a social being - a productive member of that society, between the practices in the West and the practices in the USSR. In the West the family is viewed as having the principal responsibility for the upbringing of

children; in the USSR the principal responsibility lies with society and more specifically with the children's collective, the basic structural unit in all Soviet Programs designed for the care and education of children.⁹

The following two quotes trace the Soviet attitude towards the family role in education. The head of the Petrograd Education Department, Lilina, declared at a conference in 1918:

We must exempt children from the pernicious influence of the family. We have to take account of every child, we candidly say that we must nationalize them. From the first days of their life they will be under the beneficial influence of communistic kindergartens and schools. Here they shall learn the ABC of Communism. Here they shall grow up as real Communists. Our practical problem is to compel mothers to hand over their children to the Soviet government.¹⁰

That passage could have come out of Zamyatin's WE or Orwell's 1984. Admittedly, this is the extreme position, and it does not represent the Soviet view today. However, there remains traces of these sentiments even today in the Soviet Union, as we see in the following quote:

Our family is not a closed-in collective body, like the bourgeois family. It is an organic part of Soviet society, and every attempt it makes to build up its own experience independently of the moral demands of society is bound to result in a disproportion, discordant as an alarm bell.

Our parents are not without authority either, but this authority is only the reflection of social authority. In our country the duty of a father toward his children is a particular form of duty toward society. It is as if our society says to the parents:

You have joined together in goodwill and love, rejoice in your children, and expect to go on rejoicing in them. That is your personal affair and concerns your own personal happiness. But in this happy process you have given birth to new people. A time will come when these people will cease to be

only a joy to you and become independent members of society. It is not at all a matter of indifference to society what kind of people they will be. In handing over to you a certain measure of social authority, the Soviet state demands from you correct upbringing of future citizens. Particularly it relies on a certain circumstance arising naturally out of your union - on your parental love.

If you wish to give birth to a citizen and do without parental love, then be so kind as to warn society that you wish to play such an underhanded trick. People brought up without parental love are often deformed people. . . . 11

Differences in upbringing of Soviet and American children appear immediately in infancy. Soviet infants are, by our standards, overprotected and excessively restricted in their movements. Exploration and inquisitiveness are expressly discouraged. If, for example, a child in a park should wander too far from his parents, Soviet citizens of all ages will grasp the child and bring him back to his parents. This also highlights the readiness of other persons besides the child's mother to step into a maternal role. Not only adults but Soviet children of both sexes are willing to step in and assist in bringing up children.¹² The traits of obedience and self-discipline are constantly emphasized as paramount by the authorities, and the Soviet citizens do pay attention to the authorities. In Parents and Children, a volume prepared by specialists from the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences with the aim of "helping parents to bring up their children properly so that they can grow up to be worthy citizens of our socialist nation;"¹³ is the following:

What is necessary and possible to demand of young children? First of all, a child must be obedient toward his parents and other adults, and treat them with respect...The child must fulfill the demands that adults make of him - this is the first thing that the child must be taught. The child must fulfill the requests of his elders. In following the orders, instructions and advice of grownups, the child manifests obedience. By becoming accustomed to obey from early childhood, to react to the demands of adults as something compulsory, the child will begin successfully to fulfill later demands made of him in family and school.¹⁴

and

It is necessary as early as possible to develop in the young child an active, positive relation to the demands of adults, the desire to act in accordance with these demands, to do that which is necessary. Herein lies the great significance of our efforts in developing conscious self-discipline, indeed its very elements. Every person, including the young school-age child, will better, more quickly, and more joyously fulfill demands and rules once he has a desire to do so.¹⁵

It is not difficult to understand how this training exactly coincides with the demands of the state that are imposed on members of the Armed Forces. The military requirements of obedience, self-discipline, morale, patriotism, valor, love for the country, honor, bravery, and unfailing loyalty, ideally in the eyes of the Soviet government, are fulfilled by the individual in the form of "internalized obedience" - fulfilling the wishes of adults (read military superiors) not as commands from without but as internally motivated desires. Under any criteria of education, a system that is able to accomplish this internalized obedience is a successful system.

The question of independent thought or action is brusquely swept aside in the following excerpt:

Obedience in young children provides the basis for developing the most precious of qualities: self-discipline. Obedience in adolescents and older school children - this is the effective expression of their love, trust, and respect towards parents and other adult family members, a conscious desire to acknowledge their experience and wisdom. This is an important aspect of preparing young people for life in a Communist society. We shall be asked: what about developing independence (samostoyatel'nost) in children? We shall answer: if a child does not obey and does not consider others, then his independence invariably (italics mine - RFC) takes ugly forms. Ordinarily this gives rise to anarchistic behavior, which can in no way be reconciled with laws of living in Soviet society. Where there is no obedience, there is no self-discipline; nor can there be normal development of independence. Training in obedience is an essential condition for developing the ability of self-discipline.¹⁶

In the Soviet Union, there exists a system of state run pre-school centers. The pre-school centers accommodate approximately 35% of the eligible children in the country (1 - 7 years) with a higher percentage of attendance in those cities where both parents are employed. These pre-school centers, with the stated aim to provide the child from early infancy onward with the physical, psychological, and social conditions regarded as needed for the betterment of the socialist state, employ the same techniques throughout the whole of the Soviet Union.¹⁷ As mentioned earlier, state control is all-encompassing; uniformity throughout the entire educational system is demanded - there is no deviation from the approved curricula, method and goals at any educational level. In pre-school, children receive their first experience in collective living. Infants are placed in group playpens with six to eight children in each. Each child is on a planned training

schedule even during the first year of life! Activities to introduce self-reliance are emphasized, stress is also placed on teaching children to engage in joint activity. Frequent reference is made to common ownership and collective play is emphasized. Not only group games, but special complex toys are designed which require the cooperation of two or three children to make them work. As soon as children are able to express themselves, they are given training in evaluating and criticizing each other's behavior from the point of view of the group. Gradually, the adult begins to withdraw from the role of leader or coordinator in order to forge a "self-reliant collective," in which the children cooperate and discipline themselves. This process continues with added responsibilities in communal activities, i. e., gardening, cleaning up, sewing at table, etc., and more role playing i.e. shopping, in the doctor's office, taking care of baby, all the way until the child enters school proper at the age of seven.¹⁸

Subject matter in all Soviet schools takes a back seat to the emphasis on inculcating the "Communist morality." Elaborate texts are published and followed on how to develop this morality with goals and recommended activities for developing the characteristics in each grade level. There are separate sections on the behavior at school, in the home, and in the community.¹⁹ Below is listed a sample program which is merely a continuation of the training started in pre-school:

Summary of Stated Objectives

Ages 7-11

Ages 16-18

Communist Morality

Sense of good and bad behavior
Truthfulness, honesty, kindness
Atheism: science vs. superstition
Self-discipline
Diligence in work and care of possessions
Friendship with classmates
Love of one's own locality and the Motherland

Collectivism, duty, honor, conscience
Development of will, patience and perseverance
A communist attitude toward work and public property
socialist humanism
Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism

Responsible Attitude Toward Learning

Interest and striving for knowledge and skill
Industry in study
Organizing intellectual and physical work
Striving to apply one's knowledge and ability in life and work

Understanding of the social significance of education
Perseverance and initiative in learning
Increasing one's power of intellectual work
(work habits, self-criticism, etc.)

Cultured Conduct

Care, accuracy and neatness
Courtesy and cordiality
Proper behavior on the street and public places
Cultured speech

Assimilation of norms of socialist community life
Good manners and standards of behavior

Bases of Esthetic Culture

Understanding of the beautiful in nature, in the conduct of people, and in creative art
Artistic creativity

Esthetic appreciation of nature, social life, and works of art
Artistic creativity

Physical Culture and Sport

Concern for strengthening and conditioning one's body
Sanitary-hygienic habits
Preparations for sport and athletics

Maximizing the development of physical skills
Mastering the rules of personal and social hygiene and sanitation
Training and participation in sports
Mastering hiking and camping skills.²⁰

Methods of collective upbringing are based primarily on the work and theories of A. S. Makarenko, a school teacher and devout Communist of the 1920's. His approach places major emphasis on work, group competitiveness, and collective discipline.²¹

Individual creativity and expression are wholly subordinated to the collective standard. Each school is divided into classes, then classrooms, and then further divided into *zvenya* (links) which correspond to the double seated school desks. It is this series of "nested" social units that constitutes the successive collectives of which each child is a member, and which carries primary responsibility for guiding his behavior and character development.²²

"Socialist competition" between successive levels of collectives, first between links, then classes, schools, and finally cities and regions is started in the first formal school years. The competition involves all phases of activity and behavior: sports, shop work, service projects, moral conduct, etc. The overall status of each pupil is evaluated weekly by his peers, following standards and procedures taught by the instructor. Since each child's status depends in part on the standing of the collective of which he is a member, it is to each pupil's enlightened self-interest to watch his neighbor, encourage the other's good performance and behavior, and help him when he is in difficulty. The individual is taught to set the judgement of the group above his own and to subordinate his interests to those of the collective.²³

Altruistic behavior and involvement are stressed not only in pre-school, but throughout the entire educational period.

Each class takes responsibility for a lower class; for example, a fourth grade class "adopts" a first grade class in the same school, plays with them in the school yard, teaches them new games, reads to them, helps them with schoolwork - in general acts as older brothers and sisters. Adult organizations, shops, factories, collectives, also "adopt" schools and the adult members then devote spare time in various school activities to help "our class."

Children are taught to evaluate and criticize their behavior from the group viewpoint. The next step is then to criticize the behavior of other students from the collective viewpoint. They are put into positions in which they feel responsible for the behavior of others, i.e., monitor of a link, class, etc. Individualism or behavior that deviates from the norm is discouraged and criticized by the rest of the collective. Peer pressure rather than adult guidance is the more powerful influence on the school child. As the children grow older, more sophisticated ideas growing out of these basic techniques appear: for example, there are student councils to judge and punish misbehavior or a fellow student, extension of the "socialist competition" idea to achieve better results over world countries, and repeated emphasis on the infallibility of the collective will and subsequently, the infallibility of the state. Again, we must notice that every step along the way is planned, documented, and checked upon by school authorities.

Another heavily emphasized aspect of the formative educational years, is the tremendous amount of military training included

in the curricula. Stress is put on rugged physical training with a compulsory one to three block per week on military subjects from grade four through high school. Marching, weapons training, first aid, civil defense, use of gas mask and nuclear training are all standard. An excerpt from a first grade reader is given below:

Little Gregory's brother is a tankist. He writes to Gregory: "Study, don't be lazy."

Gregory also wants to be a tankist. He will beat the enemy strongly. Gregory drew a tank and wrote: "Here is a tank! It smashes trees and bushes, walls, and poles."²⁴

Military service in the USSR, that is serving the Motherland, is generally regarded as an honor, and this indoctrination regarding military service starts in the pre-schools.

During several trips to the Soviet Union, I had the opportunity to observe a Soviet pre-school in Odessa, and I also had the opportunity to interview American parents in Moscow and Leningrad who had entered their children into the Soviet school system. Although I was primarily interested in the military significance of the pre-school programs, I was also interested in the educational techniques employed as well as ancilliary information about the system.

The most vivid memory I have about the pre-school in Odessa is that every single minute of the school day is structured for the schoolchild - in this case four and five year olds. A schedule was posted and strictly adhered to. The schedule ran from 0800 hours until 1700 hours - quite a day for a four year

old! Lessons, naps, playtime, meals, etc. are all included on the schedule - there is no deviation. There is no unsupervised activity on the schedule. All children participate in all activities together.

The second thing that struck me was that I was looking at "atypical" children. My basis of comparison was similar age children observed in other countries, and these Soviet children seemed unbelievably well disciplined and attentive to directions being given. The children sat and marched in perfect order and quiet - no extraneous whispering, shoving, etc. When the "upbringer" asked questions, the children automatically raised their hands to answer, and waited to be called upon before answering. But there was no "childish behavior." It actually was a frightening feeling when one considered the implications of this willing obedience transferred to the military arena. I do not mean to paint the situation in all black colors. The children seemed happy. During supervised playtime outside, the children ran, laughed, and smiled as we expect children to do. The interior of the pre-school was remarkably clean, airy, brightly painted and spacious. There was no noticeable dissension or even tension between children or between children and "upbringers." It was impressive.

The following is a summary of remarks made to me by several American parents who had enrolled their children in Soviet pre-schools: (1) no one experienced any difficulty in getting their children enrolled into all the Russian schools; the

parents did not feel their children were treated any differently than were the other children; (2) fees for each child averaged around 12 rubles per month (US @ \$16.00), (3) the schools are conducted in a more formal atmosphere than are American schools - no discipline problems or "aggressive" behavior had ever been noticed, (4) teachers seemed extremely competent, (5) there is an abundance of military plastic toys for the children to play with, military toys were by far the most numerous play objects, (6) parental participation in the running of the schools was non-existent, (7) all classrooms contain posters of Soviet heroes, slogans for good citizens, words of Lenin, etc., and (8) none of the children experienced any significant problems in adjusting to the Soviet schools.

What can this brief look at the Soviet pre-school educational system tell us about the Soviet soldier? The entire Soviet educational system is geared to develop a specific type individual, and this desired individual is best characterized as one who will conform. An individual that will willingly conform is a great source of strength for the Soviet state and the Soviet military. This is not to say that today's Soviet soldier has not changed from the Soviet soldier of fifty years ago; indeed the change has been marked, the hopes and aspirations of today's soldier are different as well as their own "rising expectations." In a recent interview two top military leaders of the Soviet Union, Major-General Arkhripov and Rear Admiral Solovyov, gave their opinions on the quality of today's recruits in the Soviet Army and the Soviet Navy.²⁵ They made several

revealing statements about the recruits. Both men emphasized repeatedly the importance and value of education in preparing the recruits for military service. According to them today's recruits are more socially conscious, more adult, more familiar with military history; this is because they are better educated. Both men emphasized that today's recruits know that an undisciplined person will never be able to adjust to modern day demands. Both men stressed that today's recruits are proud to serve in the Soviet military. Both men blamed what few problems were encountered with the recruits on poor upbringing by the parents of these recruits. These few recruits are "spoiled" by their parents, and they are brought up in a "hothouse" environment. However, both military figures assured the interviewer that the military soon straightens out these few poorly motivated individuals. Both men stated that today's army and navy were stronger than ever.

The lessons for us are obvious. Today's Soviet soldier has indeed become an important and willing member of the Soviet state. The attitudes of love of country, obedience to authority, supremacy of the collective will to individual desires, and a genuine belief in the correctness of their action and thought are learned by the Soviet children in their pre-schools. The pre-school educational system is only the first step, but it is probably the most critical one. Education has not only strengthened the Soviet military, but it has strengthened the totalitarian regime as well. The Soviet soldier, fighting in defense of his

homeland, is the most highly motivated soldier in the world. In my opinion, theories that state the "Russian People" will welcome a "liberating army" because they have been so oppressed, suffered deprivation, intellectual smothering, lack of freedom, etc., etc. are completely groundless. The educational system, starting with the pre-school system, has solidified the Soviet military and the Soviet state.

FOOTNOTES

¹Raymond L. Garthoff, Soviet Military Doctrine (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950), p. 258.

²George S. Counts, Contemporary Soviet Education, Fred Ablin ed. (New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1969), p. x.

³Nigel Grant, Soviet Education (London, Cox and Wyman Ltd., 1964), p. 24.

⁴V. P. Yelyutin, Higher Education in the USSR (Moscow, The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1959), p. 41.

⁵Theses of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nov. 1958, (Moscow, Political Publishing House, 1959), p. xii.

⁶V. I. Lenin, State and Revolution, 1917 Quoted in "Soviet Pedagogy: Philosophy and Methods," Liberal Education, December 1969, pp. 482-483.

⁷Ibid., pp. 482-488.

⁸Urie Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1970), p. 11.

⁹Ibid., pp. 2, 4.

¹⁰James Bowen, Soviet Education (Madison, Wisconsin, University Press, 1962), p. 36.

¹¹A. S. Makarenko, A Book for Parents (Moscow, The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1961), p. 15.

¹²Two Worlds of Childhood, p. 8.

¹³E. I. Volkova (ed.) Parents and Children (Moscow, The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1961), p. 15.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 126.

¹⁶I. A. Pechernikova, The Development of Obedience and Diligence among Children in the Family (Moscow: Public Education, 1965), p. 7.

¹⁷Chauncey, Henry (ed.). Soviet PreSchool Education, Volume II. (Translation of operating instructions for all preschools in Soviet Union prepared by Ministry of Education). (New York: Educational Testing Service, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), p. xii-xiii.

- ¹⁸Two Worlds of Childhood, pp 17-23.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 27.
- ²⁰N. I. Boldyrev (ed.) Program of the Upbringing Work of the School (Moscow: Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1970), pp. 20-25, 110-118.
- ²¹Two Worlds of Childhood, p. 49.
- ²²Ibid., p. 38.
- ²³Ibid., p. 50.
- ²⁴Ellsworth Raymond, The Soviet State (New York, MacMillan Co., 1968), p. 285
- ²⁵Nedelya, Sunday Supplement from Izvestiia, 3 November 1974, Moscow, p. 12.

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