

JPRS: 2311

4 March 1960

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COMMUNIST MORAL EDUCATION

- USSR -

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20 APR 1960 FILE

19981016 039

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JPRS: 2311

CSO: 3517-N

SOME REMARKS APROPOS THE DRAFT PROGRAM OF
COMMUNIST MORAL EDUCATION

[This is a translation of an article written by
L. I. Uvarov in Radians'ka Shkola (The Soviet School), Vol
XXXVIII, No 6, Kiev, 1959, pages 84,85.]

The pedagogic community is deeply concerned with the problem of fostering moral convictions, sentiments and desires in students and of inculcating them with proper habits in the various stages of education. The fact, therefore, that, finally, serious scientific effort is being expended on the creation of a program for bringing up students possessing the traits of Communist morals cannot but gladden the heart of every pedagogue. Teachers have long been awaiting such a program and will be grateful to the scientific workers in the Ministry of Education for its creation. However, it would be desirable if it would completely conform to the demands which life makes on the school. There are a number of substantial shortcomings in the proposed plan for this program, in our opinion.

In the first place, one of these concerns the name itself: "Program of Communist Moral Education in Secondary School Students." But Communist moral education in a student is not limited to the period of his attendance in secondary school.

In his speech "Concerning Communist Education" at a meeting of the Moscow party aktiv on 2 October 1940, M. I. Kalinin stated: "The matter of education is one of the most important. The finest pedagogues consider it not only a problem of science, but also of art. They have in mind the fact that education in school is understandably relatively limited. For there is also the school of life in which there occurs a continual process of education of the masses, where the teacher is life itself, the State, and the Party,

while the students are millions of adults who differ in their living experience and political experience."

Therefore, if we can speak about education in the confines of an eight-year elementary or secondary school as a process which has been concluded to some degree, we cannot, however, speak in the same manner about Communist moral education. The question is not of all of the inculcation of Communist morality in the secondary school, but only of the inculcation of individual traits, habits and skills.

In an explanatory note to the [program] draft it is stated that a considerable portion of the tasks designated in the program should be included in the plan of activity of the class instructor. And prior to this there is a statement concerning the necessity for work by the entire pedagogic staff on the realization of the program of moral education. From this it is concluded that the program should primarily direct the work of all teachers and - only to some extent - the work of the class instructor. But is there a need for creating a special program of moral education for a teacher of any one subject?

We do not think so. The activity of the teacher is guided by educational programs and text books. However, if there is a doubt that educational demands are being satisfied by the existing educational programs and text books, then it is proper to raise the question of their improvement or their complete replacement. A class instructor is in a considerably worse position: he has neither a program nor a textbook, and often he is also lacking in education.

It is due expressly to the lack of at least an oriented plan of work with a class that situations occur such as when the instructor of the second grade is planning to acquaint his students with the works of V. I. Lenin, while the instructor of the 10th grade is planning to have an election of a trio for sanitation [inspections] and to make sure that the hands of the students are clean. Or sometimes it happens that the director of the school, in examining the work plan of a class instructor, recommends definite educational measures, while the inspector of the department of public education, after examining the plan, does not approve these measures. So, class instructor, you must try.

to decide which of them is right. Such situations, naturally, are rare, but they should not exist.

Therefore, it seems to us that programs of educational work are not necessary for all teachers in general, but for class instructors - from the first grade to the last secondary school grade.

We also cannot completely agree with the order of arrangement of various educational measures in the program. Even a partial analysis of them reveals the inadequacy of the system which was emphasized in the explanatory note of the draft. Thus, in the section "Love for the Fatherland" - in the first, second and fourth grades - there is a statement about the necessity for fostering "friendly relations toward children of other nationalities" but nothing is demanded of the third grade with regard to this matter. Why? A demand is made of the third graders "to study excellently," while of the first graders - to show interest in the progress of their classmates. Of the fourth graders is required a display of pride in progress in studies, while there is no requirement made of the second graders. The reason is incomprehensible. Only in the first grade program is there a requirement to foster in children a love for their native school, for members of their family - but it is completely absent in the second and fourth grade programs. The requirement to foster love and respect for their teacher has been completely deleted from the program.

In the section "Industriousness" it is noted that the students of the third grade should show a desire to help those who are not progressing, while this requirement is not made of the fifth grade, where progress is always considerably slower. No requirements on atheistic education are placed before the teachers of the first through eighth grades; however, the students of the ninth grade are immediately obliged to display "intolerance toward religious superstitions," while the students of the tenth grade are supposed to know how to conduct atheistic propaganda.

The draft does not foresee the inculcation of many necessary habits of cultural behavior in life. It is not indicated, for example, when and where a student will learn how to behave at the table, how to use the fork, knife, etc.; when and how schoolboys and girls are to be imbued with

aesthetic tastes; inadequate plans have been made for the fostering of sanitary-hygienic habits.

An important place in the program is devoted to the fostering of boldness and courage. Boldness is a wonderful trait in the character of a person. However, in our existence there are many facts which prove that courage is displayed not only by a bold person but, mainly, by one in whom the feeling of responsibility is highly developed. It is therefore desirable that the fostering of a feeling of responsibility be assigned a much greater place in the program than is now projected.

It would be more proper, in our opinion, to build the program in the following manner.

Concrete practices and habits, for whose inculcation less time is required, should be divided during the educational years; for example, in the first grade habits should be taught of using a handkerchief, washing daily, cleaning the teeth, keeping clothing clean, as well as shoes, books and work desk, not taking other people's property without their permission, etc. In the second grade, of participating in socially beneficial work, independently performing one's duties, small house chores, etc. And so on for every grade.

The inculcation of sentiments, desires, convictions, and character traits, for whose development a great deal more time is required, should be divided not according to educational grades, but according to types of school: primary, eight-year elementary, and secondary school. Such a division of program material will ensure greater possibilities for achieving the desired results. As a result of this, some changes must be made in the form of explanation of the program material: in the first column, educational tasks and measures for their achievement should be noted, in the second - as a guide - the results which should be demanded by the teacher.

END

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