On the surface, Soviet internal and external policies have appeared anything but consistent. Thus at the moment the principle of collective leadership has replaced the former idol cult. On the international level, the emphasis has shifted from “all power to the proletariat” to peaceful co-existence. But if Soviet policies are fluid, the same cannot be said for fundamental Soviet objectives. Old Bolshevik Kaganovich, as the main speaker on the occasion of last year’s October Revolution anniversary, pledged that the twentieth century would see the triumph of World Communism.

Similarly, educational policies in the Soviet Union have taken many sharp turns since the early days of the Revolution. But beginning with the first People’s Commissar for Public Instruction, Lunacharsky, a playwright and poet who translated Holderlin into Russian, to the present somewhat stereotyped bureaucrats in charge of education, the objectives have remained remarkably constant.

As early as 1923, the Soviet Education Law laid down the basic pattern and enunciated the objectives of the Soviet school. It stated: “All the work in the school and the whole organization of school life should promote proletarian class consciousness in the minds of pupils and create knowledge of the solidarity of Labor in its struggle with Capital as well as preparation for useful productive and political activity.”

In 1946, Pravda reported on an All-Union congress of educators which took place in Moscow. Their resolution, duly forwarded to Stalin, read: “We professors and instructors, obligate ourselves so to conduct our work that every day spent by a student in a higher educational institution will nurture in him Bolshevik ideology, broaden his political and cultural horizon, and enrich him with knowledge of his specialty.”

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More recently the minister of education of the Russian Republic outlined the achievements and the final objective of Soviet education: “By educating the young in the spirit of Communism, our Soviet school has become the instrument of a cultural revolution, a weapon for the rebirth of society. For the first time a great reformative function was imposed on the school. It was confronted with the task of the nurture of a new man, free from the slavish psychology of capitalist society.”

However, the young Soviet citizen is to be not only thoroughly indoctrinated in communist ideology and equipped “with knowledge of his specialty,” he is also the custodian of the World Revolution. In the presence of his comrades and Komsonol leaders, the Pioneer (Young Communist) solemnly pledges that he “will stand-steadfastly for the cause of the working class in its struggle for the liberation of the workers and peasants of the whole world.”

Educational Heritage of the Soviets

Communists like to leave the impression that they took over a country that was almost completely illiterate. This, of course, is not true. Watson Kirkconnell, in a series of articles which appeared (in the Winnipeg Free Press) in 1951, presented some interesting data on this point:

In 1915, the number of elementary and parochial schools in European Russia was 122,123, with an attendance of 8,146,632 pupils. In 1914, as reported later at the Tenth Congress of Soviets, the number of literate per thousand of school age was: urban boys 918, urban girls 899, rural boys 710, rural girls 516. Universal elementary education of all parts of the Empire by 1925 was in sight.

Russia, including the Ukraine, had great libraries distributed in urban and even some of the larger rural centers long before the Revolution of 1917. Czarist Russia had also a long list of distinguished universities. The University of Moscow dates back to the great Lomonosov (1711-1765), who was its founder. In 1912, Moscow University had 9,390 students, St. Petersburg (Leningrad) 7,282, Kiev 4,857. There were also universities at Kazan, Kharkov, Odessa, Tomsk, Perm, Saratov, Rostov-on-Don, and Vladivostok. To these could be added the universities in Finland, the Baltic States, and Poland.

In addition there were thirty institutions of higher learning. These included institutes of min-
The Soviet School System

The Soviet system has crystallized into three kinds of general schools: four years (primary) in all rural areas; seven years (incomplete secondary) in all smaller urban areas; and ten years (complete secondary) in all the larger industrial centers. Compulsory attendance was introduced in 1930 for the ages eight to twelve in rural areas and eight to fifteen in all industrial and urban districts.

In addition, there are the trade schools and technicums. In 1950, all the general and vocational schools had an enrollment of 36,500,000 students. In addition the USSR had a total of 1,132,000 college students (pop. of the USSR – 203,400,000). All the elementary, secondary, vocational schools, and universities had a total teaching staff of 1,300,000, averaging one teacher for every 30 students.

Then there are over 60 higher military colleges, like the Frunze Academy in Moscow. In fact, the syllabus of mathematics and physics for secondary schools includes the application of these subjects to military practice.

At different stages of experimentation there was a movement to dissolve universities entirely (1922 in the Ukraine; 1930 in Russia) and break up the studies in separate special institutions, emphasizing the applied character of studies. This movement crystallized into policy. The USSR has no colleges of liberal arts. A. Pinkevitch, a leading Soviet educator, explained, "Each of the higher educational institutions exists for a definite object, and knows just what kind of specialists it has to train." This course generally lasts from four to five years and is attended by future managers.

Thus the Soviets are in a position to train specialists at an accelerated pace. In addition, this system has the advantage, for a totalitarian state, in that it groups people and isolates them from other groups. Like the hull of a ship which is partitioned into separate compartments so that if a leak develops that section of the ship can be sealed off, in the same way a state may safeguard its own future.

Recently the Soviet Zone of Germany followed this pattern and introduced the Einfachstudium. University students are thereby compelled to choose a one subject unit, around which their education and training will be centered.

There is no USSR ministry of education, but the School Department of the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party fulfills the function of such a ministry. It controls and coordinates all education throughout the Soviet Union. The central government also allocates from its budget the total funds to be spent on education each year by all the republics.

Theoretically, each constituent republic, and even the autonomous republics, have control of elementary education in their own domain. In practice, however, they are simply organs of the Education Department of the Central Committee. Thus we have reports from the education ministers of the three Baltic republics in the annual Year Book of Education, 1952 (published in London) in the following stereotyped, that is, Moscow dictated, form: "Little attention was paid to problems of education in bourgeois Lithuania." . . . "The rulers of bourgeois Estonia paid . . ." and "The bourgeois rulers of Latvia . . ." The contents of the reports, presumably written in three different capitals, are similarly uniform.

There is a central ministry which controls and maintains the higher institutions of learning. All vocational and technical schools of secondary level are controlled by their respective ministries. That is (since 1930), the ministry for heavy industry, timber, water transport, agriculture, etc., each administers and maintains its own schools.

Over and above the regular schools the Communist Party maintains its own system of higher education entirely separate from the schools operated by the various government departments. Communist schools of engineering, agriculture, banking, industrial administration, pedagogy, etc., train the persons who will be leaders in the most important professions and occupations. In their own way these schools could be compared to the Nazi Ordenburgen.

The Soviet Teacher and Curriculum

In paying tribute to the Soviet educators, the minister of higher education of the USSR, recently said: "The teachers occupy a forward position in the battle for the world, they are fighting on the ideological front in the first line of fire." The status of the teacher, "the engineer of the human soul," rates high, second only to the Party official. The "radishes" (red outside, white inside) of the early period have been largely replaced. Pioneers (young Communists) keep those teachers in check who may tire of the Party fine. Pioneers may report them to the chairman of the local soviet or to a Party official.

The post-revolutionary school curriculum could
best be described as confused experimentation. But out of it emerged, by 1924, the Complex Method, a variation of the Dalton Plan. The emphasis during this period was on self-management. Students were grouped into brigades of about five members. There would be the sanitary brigade, the library brigade, the census brigade.

The objectives were highly idealistic. Students promised to struggle for sanitary perfection at school and at home; they took a census of the village, the heads of cattle, number of laying hens, etc. If the village chairman was particularly interested in education, the parents were required to pledge to saw the wood for the school, or promise "within ten days to mend the school furniture, repair the windows and clean the floors."

The results of this program were disappointing. School plants deteriorated, school discipline grew lax, and progress was unsatisfactory. In 1931, experimentation in this field ceased. The Central Committee laid down the law: "Teaching in schools must rest on the basis of definite, carefully planned courses of study and teaching plans organized within the framework of a firm schedule of studies."

Sports, physical, and even military training, are important phases in the education of Soviet youth. Very great emphasis is placed on the political education of students of all ages. The Soviet calendar consists of one long series of patriotic holidays. The celebration of these invariably centers around the school, the Party and the army. In their compositions students write on Lenin, on Soviet railways, the Moscow subway, the Dnieper Dam.

The outside world is presented to the students as ugly and hostile. Children learn that in capitalist countries only the rich children go to school. Old, universal classics like *David Copperfield* or *Hard Times* and comics are introduced to show that juvenile delinquency is rampant in capitalist countries. In their own compositions, students describe the ideal life Soviet citizens will lead after all the Five Year Plans have been completed.

Soviet Education Outside the Schools

In the early years of the Revolution, the government maintained nurseries in the industrial centers for children over three years of age, but under school age. Much later similar nurseries were established in rural centers. The nurseries had no definite hours, but would keep the children so long as the parents were working. Today the Soviets have nurseries and kindergartens, and parents pay for this service in proportion to their incomes.

A Soviet regulation outlines the purpose of a kindergarten:

It is a state institution for the Soviet civic education of children between the ages of three and seven, pursuing the aim of ensuring their all-round development and education. At the same time the kindergarten facilitates the participation of women in the work of the state and industry, (and) in cultural and social-political life. It promotes team work against the individualistic tendencies of young children and instils the love of their Soviet homeland and its leaders, especially Lenin and Stalin.

Children arrive at the kindergarten in the morning between the hours of 7:30 to 8:30 and leave at 5 or 6 in the evening. They spend about 10 hours a day, six days a week there.

Politically, the Soviet school population is organized into three groups. Ages 8-12 (more recently 7-12), who attend elementary school, join the Union of Little Octobrists, first organized in 1925. Ages 12-15, who attend secondary or vocational school, have been organized into The Children's Communist Organization of Young Pioneers in the Name of Comrade Lenin (since 1922). Ages 15 and over, who attend complete secondary schools or institutions of higher learning or have graduated, are grouped in the Young Communist League (Komsomol). Komsomols qualify for Party membership.

Anti-Religious Education in the Soviets

The old city hall in Moscow has engraved on it Lenin's words, "Religion is the opium of the people." A leading Russian philosopher has analyzed this phase of communism as follows:

The Russian Revolution has turned out just as Dostoevsky forecast it . . . he understood that socialism in Russia was a religious matter, a question of atheism, and that the real concern of the revolutionary intellectuals was not politics but the salvation of mankind without the help of God.

From the beginning anti-religious education has played a very important role inside and outside of Soviet schools.

Conflicting reports on the Soviet attitude toward religion, even if emanating from the highest authorities in Moscow, do not change the basic fact. Less than a year ago Moscow demanded a more militant and aggressive attack on religion. *Pravda* devoted a 1700-word front-page editorial to the subject and attacked Soviet leaders who were tolerant to religion. Three months later Krushchev signed a decree which was splashed across the front page of the same paper. In it party officials were warned to avoid offending the
feelings of churchgoers when they campaign against religion.

In a letter printed in a foreign-language Winnipeg newspaper and dated January, 1956, a writer reports that for one month families had gathered for religious services, but that these had been stopped at the beginning of the year. (The letter was addressed to a private individual who submitted it to the newspaper. The writer of the letter was a kolkhoz laborer in the Samara region.)

Legislation is based largely on a decree of 1925 which gave freedom for religious and anti-religious propaganda. The decree of 1929 granted freedom to worship but restricted freedom to propagandize faiths. It did permit anti-religious propaganda. This was largely in the hands of the League of Militant Atheists, a government agency.

Every school has its anti-religious circle (Group), and its anti-religious display corner. A typical exhortation to the teachers reads in part:

"Religion is diametrically opposed to our objectives. In all its forms it provides the nucleus of opposition to communist ideology. We work toward a world revolution when the proletariat will be in possession of the entire world. The enemies of the Soviets want to retain their control over the world, and attempt to direct the attention of the toilers to a heaven and away from the earth. They acclaim the poor in spirit, while we require intelligent scientists to direct successfully our Five Year Plan. They teach that the masses can be saved only by a Saviour. We know that the masses can save themselves under the leadership of the Party."

Printing of Bibles and religious literature was forbidden by law. Teachers and students were required to fill out questionnaires with questions asking: Do you believe in God? Do you know of classmates or colleagues who believe in God?, etc. The second World War brought some relief from all professions and better occupations. The young son of Rudolf Slansky, Czechoslovakia's Party secretary, is a tragic example of Soviet ruthlessness. Having been forced publicly to denounce his liquidated father as a traitor, the boy was jailed. In jail, the youth committed suicide.

A major problem of the post-Revolution period were the Bezprisorneye, the children left homeless because of the first World War, the epidemics, and the civil war. The wake of the second World War saw the ranks of the homeless again considerably swelled, and for two reasons. There were the war orphans, and the post-war introduction by Krushchev of the super-kolkhozes. Small kolkhozes were dissolved, and the peasants moved to areas where future agricultural cities were to be built. The kolkhoznike had to erect their own temporary living quarters, living in grass huts and dug-outs. At the same time they, unlike our Canadian and American pioneers, were required to meet their "norms" in production. Disease and epidemics decimated them, adding countless Bezprisorneye to the ranks of the war orphans. In 1953, the plans for agricultural cities were dropped.

Another phase of Soviet education is the maintenance of labor camps by the police for children.
between the ages of 10 to 16. These camps, distributed all over the Union, have for their inmates children serving up to ten year sentences, largely for petty thievery, but also for assault, participation in anti-Soviet activity, or vagrancy.

Finally, there is the problem of co-education. In Czarist Russia, elementary and secondary schools segregated boys and girls. Higher institutions were co-educational. This policy was strongly condemned by the Communists. They introduced co-education as a practical demonstration of the equality of the sexes. During World War II, after brief experimentation in Moscow schools, separate classes for boys and girls from kindergarten to high school were introduced on a nation-wide scale. The Pioneer Clubs were to take over the lost classroom liaison between boys and girls. The new plan was based on “the inevitable division of labor between men and women,” and was introduced in the fall of 1943.

A leading Soviet educator, S. Hessen, advanced the state’s reason for segregation, “Co-education was accepted as a principle so long as the struggle for power for the full social and political equality of women was going on. After it had been achieved, no reason was left for ignoring the difference in the psycho-physical development of boys and girls of the 11 to 18 age group.” In July, 1954 the Soviet government reversed its stand again and re-introduced co-education “at the request of parents and teachers.”

The New Soviet Man

It is difficult to assess the impact of Soviet education on the Soviet masses. André Gide was an early admirer of the Soviets. In 1936, at the funeral of Maxim Gorky, he faced the Soviet multitude on Moscow’s Red Square and said, “The fate of culture is bound up in our minds with the destiny of the Soviet Union.”

But in subsequent years, after he had spent more time in the USSR, he was to write: “Every morning Pravda teaches them exactly what they should know, and think and believe. Remember, this moulding of the spirit begins in earliest infancy. The type of criticism permitted is ‘Is the club room badly swept? Is the canteen soup badly cooked?’ The Soviet citizen is in an extraordinary state of ignorance concerning foreign countries. More than this, he has been persuaded that everything abroad and in every department is far less prosperous than in the USSR. This illusion is cleverly fostered, for it is important that everyone, even those who are ill satisfied, should be thankful for the regime which preserves them from worse ills.”

The Soviet schools have succeeded in educating a very large class of specialists, experts in their own narrow fields. It does not appear that this is a short-term policy in order to achieve technical parity with Western nations. On the contrary, it appears to be consistent with basic Soviet philosophy. It is too early to evaluate the effect of this narrow approach to education on the creative arts and sciences.

Despite the emphasis on sports and recreation, the new Soviet citizen is physically no superman. An American military analyst reported that in World War II the Germans frequently beat Russian forces larger and as well equipped as their own. The Russians, he said, scarcely ever won a battle without a numerical superiority ranging from 3-1 to 7-1. He maintains that this was due less to the morale of Soviet troops as to the fact that the Soviet soldier represented the famine-and-civil war-age group of 1917-23.

General J. F. C. Fuller, Britain’s outstanding military commentator, made an observation to the effect that for some time Soviet conscripts will be below par physically, mentally, and numerically because “they come from the small 1930-34 classes, the years of famine and the bitterness of collectivization.”

It appears certain, however, that the young Soviet citizen, regardless of his mental equipment and physical condition, is thoroughly imbued with the belief in the superiority of the Communist way of life. This belief can be sustained only if the Iron Curtain is solidly closed. It is the Soviets’ first line of defense.

Britain will produce nuclear-generated electricity for industrial and household use amounting to 100,000 kilowatts within the next two years, Dr. T. E. Tullibone, director of the central research laboratory of Great Britain’s largest electric power combine, predicts. “By 1970,” he says, “Britain must be able to produce, from atomic energy, electric power equivalent to 20 million tons of coal a year. It isn’t a matter of whether it can or cannot be done. It’s just got to be done.”

The University of Texas was host April 7-11 to an international meeting of the Society for Study of Evolution. Approximately 150 zoologists, botanists, bacteriologists, geologists, and other researchers heard reports on scientific investigations, took part in a Central Texas field trip, and planned society activities. The international meeting was the first ever held in Texas by the society, which has members in most nations of the world.