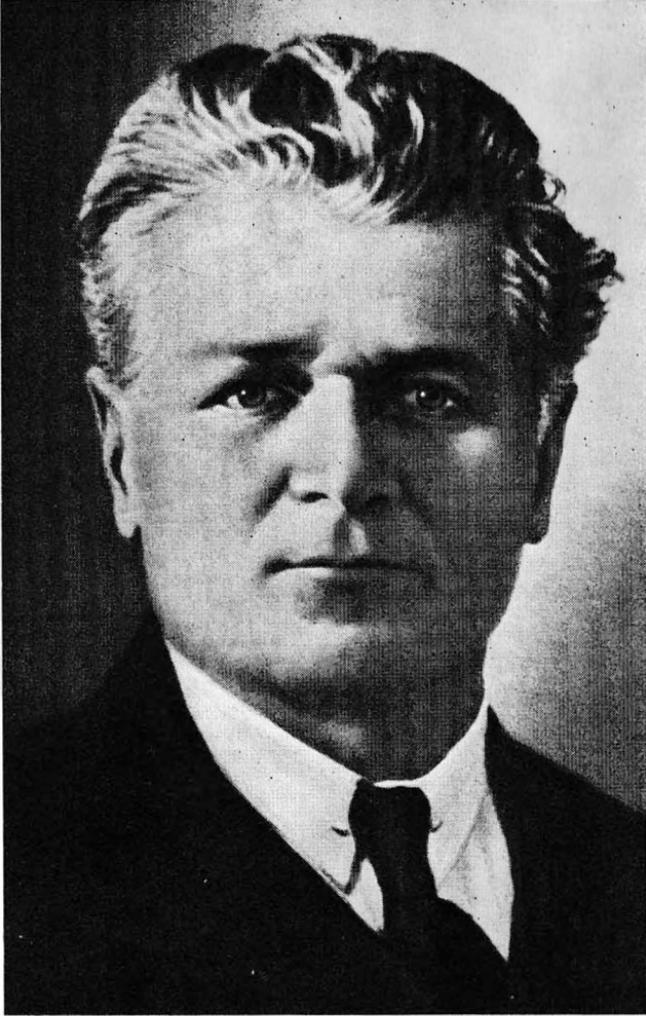


Stanislav Shatsky

A TEACHER'S
EXPERIENCE



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS



1878-1934

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A COLLECTION



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

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THE EDUCATIONAL LEGACY OF S. T. SHATSKY

This volume brings to the reader's attention the educational legacy of the eminent educationist Stanislav Teofilovich Shatsky (1878-1934), one of the founders of the Soviet school system.

Stanislav Shatsky's social and educational activity was wide-ranging and varied. His career as an educationist lasted for almost thirty years, beginning on the crest of the wave of revolutionary fervour in 1905 with the organization of summer camps and clubs for children and young people in the working-class suburbs of Moscow—the first ever to be set up in Russia. An exceptionally talented and widely educated man, he dedicated himself and all his knowledge entirely to the noble cause of the upbringing of the younger generation. If one turns to such a profoundly candid and truthful work of Stanislav Shatsky's as *The Searching Years*, extracts from which are included in the present volume, one can understand that his choice of path in life was not accidental. The classical gymnasium of the 1880's, in which Shatsky himself studied, was for its pupils a cold, lifeless institution. "When I was a schoolboy," reminisced Shatsky "I constantly felt that the way I was being taught was wrong, both from the teaching and the learning point of view. And my educational credo grew out of this negative evaluation of the teaching to which I myself had been subjected."

Shatsky's educational ideas, as formulated before the Great October Socialist Revolution, can be clearly and genetically traced back to the democratic social thinkers of Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century and

to the materialist views of such outstanding experimentors in the natural sciences as I. M. Sechenov, I. P. Pavlov and K. A. Timiryazev. S. T. Shatsky was a man of all-round erudition and as he penetrated more deeply into the sphere of educational activity, his interest in the theory of education also grew. He critically reinterpreted the legacy of classical Western European educational theory and was vitally interested in the ideas and activity of contemporary educationists abroad and in the experience of progressive educational establishments. Even before the October Socialist Revolution Shatsky made trips abroad, to Scandinavia, Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland, to study the problems of teaching and work education of children.

Shatsky was influenced to a certain extent by the educational ideas of L. N. Tolstoy. He was attracted by the great writer's integrated attitude to the upbringing of children, by the educational experiment in the school at Yasnaya Polyana, by the attention Tolstoy devoted to the child, to the development of children's creative powers, to his living educational experiment and to the role of the environment in a child's upbringing. Shatsky was deeply interested in the idea of creating rural schools based upon new educational principles. But being a materialist, Shatsky was far from Tolstoy's religious and philosophical *Weltanschauung*.

It is a well-known fact that Tolstoy's brilliant creative writing, which has made a great impact on world literature, reflected the contradictions of a whole era of Russian society (from 1861 to 1905). This accounts for the "blatant" contradictions in his views: on the one hand he was a merciless critic of capitalism, on the other he preached humility and "non-resistance to evil by force". Lenin gave an all-embracing, scientific evaluation of Tolstoy's work in his article "Lev Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution". Shatsky displayed an interest in Tolstoy's personality and in his educational ideas at different stages in his life. In 1928, in honour of the centenary of the brilliant Russian writer's birth, Shatsky published an article "Tolstoy the Educator", in which he clearly and precisely expressed his attitude to Tolstoy's educational legacy.

Following Lenin's characterisation of Tolstoy, Shatsky

affirmed that Tolstoy can only be understood in his contradictions. This is true both of his activity as a whole and of his educational ideas. "Tolstoy," wrote Shatsky, "has made a great impact on Russian educational ideas.

"However you may regard him, one thing will always remain true: Tolstoy rouses an enormous interest in educational theory and in children, and not only an interest, but also a desire to work. A great number of Russian and foreign teachers have experienced this for themselves." And again: "... we need, and will need for a long time, Tolstoy's critical power, in order to explain more and more to the masses all the hypocrisy of education under the capitalist system. And not so that millions of working-class children should become imbued with his gentleness and all-forgiveness, but in order to create a new type of young person who will be able to build a new society and fight strongly to implement it."

Shatsky's interest in the educational ideas of John Dewey is also well known. In his autobiographical notes relating to the year 1910, he noted "a certain influence of the ideas of John Dewey" in the development of his own educational theory. In particular Shatsky was for some time subject to certain illusions, sown by Dewey's works, that education stood outside the class structure in society. Once he adopted the Marxist position, Shatsky corrected this mistaken view. In many of his works of the 1920's Shatsky criticised American educational theory, including the works of Dewey, above all, as is well known, for setting up as the goals of education personal achievement and individual success in the competitive struggle for existence. It is no less well known that the American educationist himself displayed a keen interest in the experimental work of the First Experimental Station of the People's Commissariat for Education, which he visited in 1927. After becoming acquainted with it, Dewey noted that the schools here did indeed make a real impact on the social environment, assisted social progress and actively formed a new type of human being. "Russian school-children" he wrote, "are much more democratically organized than are our own ... they are receiving through the system of school administration a training that fits them, much more systematically than is attempted in our own professedly democratic country, for later active participa-

tion in the self-direction of both local communities and industries.”*

A lively exchange of views between American and Soviet educationists on the main problems of education revealed a fundamental difference in their positions and in particular between the views of Dewey and Shatsky, which is clearly expressed in Shatsky's work "A Visit from American Educationists".

It is well known that the theory of liberal education arose as a protest against authoritarian schools and an authoritarian educational system, and in this sense, if one considers it from the historical point of view, it played a definite positive role. But the anarchic principle of the organization of the educative process upon which the theory is based, in practice inevitably led to negative results. In Russia ideas of liberal education were supported by Lev Tolstoy, and a certain tribute to the theory of liberal education was also paid by Shatsky. However, the extreme individualism characteristic of this movement and its negation of the directing role of the teacher were unacceptable to Shatsky. "Here I recall the reasons why I could in no way reconcile myself to the so-called liberal education movement," said Shatsky. "From my own experience I could, of course, see that there was no such thing as a liberated child, there was just a child, who reflected all the possible educational influences of his environment, and that it was therefore essential to introduce significant social adjustments in everything relating to the child..."

Shatsky's path to Marxism-Leninism was not an easy one. Before the October Revolution he was attached to the radical petty-bourgeois circle of the Russian intelligentsia and emphasised his impartiality to any political party. By conviction, Shatsky was a democrat, a fundamental opponent of the autocracy in principle, whose sympathies lay on the side of the revolutionary forces. It is well known that Shatsky's attempt to occupy a position "outside the fray" of political struggle and to influence the development of society only by means of cultural and educational work with children and adults, did not, as was to be expected, meet with success. Soon life taught him an ob-

* John Dewey, *Impressions of Soviet Russia and Revolutionary World of Mexico-China-Turkey*, Columbia University, N. Y., 1964, p. 99.

ject-lesson, showing him that cultural and educational activity outside life and outside politics is impossible. The Settlement society, founded by S. T. Shatsky and A. Y. Zelenko in 1908, was closed down by the police for "inseminating children with socialism". The *Society for Children's Work and Recreation* which was formed later, worked under the constant threat of police intervention.

Shatsky's activities in the camp The Good Life, founded by him in 1911, was particularly valuable. This was a summer work camp and there was no teaching in the proper sense of the word. However, a great deal was done in The Good Life camp.

There Shatsky continued to elaborate his theory about children's communities and self-direction, and the exposition of "certain laws in the development of children's society", to carry out research into the inter-relationship between work, play and art and the child's intellectual and social development and to delineate the influence of physical labour on the life of a children's collective.

The book *The Good Life* by V. N. and S.T. Shatsky, reflected an innovatory experiment and at the same time was a kind of protest against the routine and scholasticism which prevailed in the official schools in pre-revolutionary Russia.

Of course, Shatsky's dream of "giving children back their childhood" could not be implemented under the conditions reigning in Russia of the capitalists and landowners. This only became possible after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

Shatsky did not immediately understand that the Great October Revolution signified a radical change in the fate of the whole of mankind. But his confusion did not last long. The whole of his forthcoming career in education was to be a negation of the old school, a search for new forms in the education of children, work with children and young people in the working-class suburbs of Moscow, the attempt to solve the problem of work education and the children's collective and this inevitably brought him to play an integral part in the building of a new type of school. Shatsky made a profound study of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin. He reconsidered all his previous experience in the light of the theory of scientific communism and on the basis of this found "the most sol-

id foundation for the development of the theory and practice of education in a new historical era”.

In the early years after the Great October Socialist Revolution the problems of defining the path of development of the new schools, of the formation of the ideological and theoretical bases of the Soviet education system and its practical implementation became some of the most important aspects of the political enlightenment programme of the Communist Party and the young Soviet state. Invaluable contributions to the development of socialist culture and education were made by the first People's Commissar for Education, A.V. Lunacharsky, and by Lenin's wife and comrade-in-arms, Nadezhda Krupskaya. They had a clear conception of the general line upon which the new schools should be founded and gave the utmost encouragement to concrete, practical steps towards the solution of the tasks which arose.

The creation by the People's Commissariat for Education of the RSFSR of a range of experimental model institutions serves as an example of their practical approach to the question of establishing Soviet school. Shatsky became the founder of the first experimental station of public education, which had branches in Moscow and in the Kaluga Province (1919). The First Experimental Station organised retraining courses and then refresher courses for in-service teachers. The station's Moscow branch became widely known for the activity of its educational museum-cum-exhibition and its department of teaching materials (reports from schools and individual teachers) which spread the progressive experience amongst wide circles of teachers. Seminars and courses were organised here for kindergarten teachers and in 1921 the Teacher Training College (with a two-year course of study) began its work in the preparation of teachers for primary schools and kindergartens. The students studied anatomy and physiology, nature study, the fundamentals of evolutionary teaching, economics, the fundamentals of educational theory, school administration, school hygiene, the theory and practice of the Pioneer movement and the history of educational trends. Serious attention was devoted to artistic, physical and work education. Seminars were held on the organization of clubs, choir management, the organization of school festivities and so on. A large part

of the time-table was taken up with teaching practice. Some of the refresher courses for in-service teachers took the form of so-called course-congresses. Shatsky was greatly influenced by his direct work with N. K. Krupskaya, whose pupil he considered himself. Having in the process of building a socialist society become a convinced Marxist-Leninist, Shatsky dedicated all his talent and all his enormous educational experience entirely to the cause of founding a new school system and educational theory. In the conditions prevailing in socialist society his talent as an innovatory educationist flourished to the greatest possible extent. He became a communist, an eminent figure in the field of public education and a member of the collegium of the People's Commissariat for Education.

The work of Shatsky and his colleagues was characterised by constant experimentation, searching and collective creative work. Shatsky prepared and gave a course of lectures on educational theory for students. Each proposition which he expounded was illustrated by the concrete experience of his own work. In these lectures Shatsky examined the basic questions of the theory of education and teaching, emphasised the class nature of education, and connected education with the social workers' and peasants' movements and with the practice of building socialism. An important place in his lectures on educational theory was devoted to the personality of the teacher, the methods he used and his teaching tact and expertise. Paying a great deal of attention to the formation of a scientific world outlook in his students, Shatsky strove to impart to them the fundamentals of Marxist theory, making wide use of the works of Lenin. He illuminated all educational phenomena from the position of dialectical and historical materialism, referring also to the work of the eminent Russian physiologist I. P. Pavlov on higher nervous activity in human beings. By the 20's and 30's Shatsky's experimental work was also well known in progressive circles abroad and Shatsky himself was a worthy representative of Soviet educational theory at international congresses.

From this point of view, Shatsky's article "The Soviet School in Theory and Practice" is characteristic. It was written in connection with the International Education Week held in Leipzig in April 1928 and clearly formulates

the basic principles of the structure of the new Soviet school, its goals and tasks. Here are some short extracts from this article.

“The grandiose revolution, which took place in our country, has radically changed not only the economic, social and political conditions of life in Soviet Russia, but has also brought about an enormous change in the field of education. This change is reflected above all in the formulation of the very goal of education. We think that we must above all educate our children to be Soviet citizens, that is citizens who are called upon to build socialism in our country. This task is one of the most important ones which the revolution has set itself. The fulfilment of these tasks means the strengthening of the Soviet system for many years, the strengthening of all the grandiose achievements which the revolution must attain, not only for our country, but for the whole world.

“How are these goals of bringing up Soviet citizens realised in educational theory and practice?

“On the basis of the experiment to which our schools have been subjected over the past ten years, we are convinced that these goals are best realised in the form of a unified Soviet work school, a school of socialist construction. The idea of a work school we understand in an essentially different way from the ideas which have been put forward up to now in other countries. When we talk about a work school, we mean not only a school of intellectual work, not only a school which uses physical labour as a method of teaching and which introduces workshops for different kinds of manual work, but a work school which must study and evaluate the work activities of people in the Soviet Union and abroad, and bring children, insofar as they are able to understand these questions, to participate as much as is within their power in the socialist working activity of the working population.

“...So that our children can participate as much as is within their power in the work activities of the workers and peasants, we must turn for help and cooperation to the working masses themselves. We think that the fulfilment of this task is only possible if the enormous masses of the working population participate in the work of building a new type of school.

“... The child must become conscious of the fact that he

is not only a pupil, but also a small citizen, who, insofar as his strength and capabilities permit, is also enlisted in the great social cause of building socialism. Since he is regularly enlisted in work of this kind and since the school incorporates this into its time-table, we consider that our pupils are being educated as future Soviet citizens. Consequently, the creation of an atmosphere of discipline, to which not only the teacher, but also the pupils are subjected, is our greatest task.

“From this it is clear why we have so emphatically brought up the question of self-direction in our schools, why we place such emphasis on the participation of our children in the general school council and why we so insistently put before our teaching staff the question of the role of the teacher in the class. We understand this role as one of organising the life, work and studies of the pupils, the teacher being the experienced, clever and authoritative friend who has a cause in common with his pupils. This cause is to help as much as one can in the construction of a new society which is flowing like a broad wave through our country, to cultivate one’s understanding of the significance of this construction, to be aware of the general responsibility which every citizen, great or small, holds in our country, a responsibility not only for what is happening at the present time, but also for the future work of our great country.”

Special emphasis should be placed upon the outstanding role played by Shatsky in the struggle for preserving the Soviet school system at the end of the 20’s, in particular in his arguments with the supporters of the so-called theory of the “withering away of the school”. Taking part in a discussion in 1928 on the problems of education, Shatsky was absolutely insistent that the school system should be strengthened and teachers armed with scientific teaching methods.

Of exceptional interest and benefit was Shatsky’s work during the period of the socialist reconstruction of the economy and the laying down of the foundations of socialism, connected as it was with the problem of didactics, education through work, the role of the school as an educating centre in the sphere of its activity and the principles of scientific generalisation and the spreading of teaching experiments. Shatsky was filled with a deep faith in the great

future of Soviet educational theory. He wrote: "To reveal new layers of educational thought and create a system of education required by the new social strata which are inevitably coming to replace the old ones—that is the work which falls to the lot of communist educational theory. To lay the educational foundation stones in the common task of building a socialist society is a great cause for the contemporary educationist. We shall participate in this to the end of our days."

Shatsky's talent in the field of education was very varied. It is difficult to name an area of educational theory or practice to which he did not make a contribution. He was involved in the problems of establishing and developing children's collectives, polytechnical education and education through work, didactics and social educational theory. Shatsky did a great deal in the field of teacher training and in the study and application of progressive experiments. Anyone who penetrates more deeply into his writings will see how relevant many of his conclusions and observations about education are even today. Let us stop to take a look at only a few aspects of his creative work.

Shatsky was the first person in Russia to set up clubs for the children of the Moscow working-class district of Maryina Roshcha. The educational principles applied by Shatsky in his work in these extra-curricular organizations relied upon broad initiative on the part of the children and the sensible and interesting organization of work as a means of education have not lost their significance even today.

Shatsky was the father of Russian and Soviet pre-school educational theory. Even before the revolution Shatsky and his closest colleagues elaborated an original and, as Shatsky called it, a uniquely Russian system of kindergarten education. After the October Revolution, when pre-school education became for the first time in the world part of the state system, Shatsky's ideas were developed even further. And today the educational work of kindergartens all over the Soviet Union is based upon an enriched version of Shatsky's ideas, in particular, occupying children with different forms of activities.

Shatsky attached particular importance to play as an important means of educating children. "Play," wrote Shatsky, "is the living laboratory of childhood which gives to

the young child that aroma and atmosphere of life without which this period would be useless for humanity. In play, in this special processing of life's material, is found the most healthy kernel of a sensible upbringing." (*Educational Works*, Vol. 2, p. 22.) The problem of play in the work of pre-school institutions, and not only in them, is given detailed attention by educationists today as well, and it is the object of scientific elaboration.

The educational question of the all-round development of the individual deeply interested the progressive representatives of social thought both in Russia and abroad. Questions of the all-round development of the child always occupied an important place in Shatsky's activity. An example of this is the experimental work described in the book *The Good Life*. And indeed all the living practice of the First Experimental Station at the People's Commissariat for Education is also a witness to this. The combination of intellectual activity with the physical development of children and various types of work experience according to their ability, and the many-sided aesthetic education encompassing a whole world of beauty, combined with active social work, allowed this collective to achieve great results. Special tribute must be paid to Shatsky for his theoretical and practical development of a system of aesthetic education as an organic part of a communist upbringing. The most important aspect of the work in the all-round development of the individual in the pupil was its ideological communist orientation, its close tie with real life and the perspectives of building a socialist society.

Of course Soviet schools today are working under different conditions. The material and social possibilities for raising the effectiveness of teaching have become immeasurably great. School education has indeed become the concern of the whole population. But in solving the practical tasks of the all-round development of the pupil's personality, even in our time it is extremely important to lean on the great examples of teaching experience of the past, one of which is undoubtedly the creative work of Shatsky.

A special place in the communist education of school-children is allocated to the role of out-of-school collective activities. Almost from the very beginning of his educational activity Shatsky was interested in the pedagogical as-

pects of children's collectives. His views on this problem evolved gradually. They are widely revealed in the book *The Good Life*, but Shatsky developed them with even more fullness and variety in the process of building up the Soviet school system.

The main factor which holds a children's collective together is, according to Shatsky, different kinds of work and above all production work connected with the work of the adult population. In the conditions of the socialist reconstruction of agriculture which began in the late 20's and 30's Shatsky considered it expedient to create special areas in collective and state farms which would be entirely worked by schoolchildren under the guidance of their teachers, as appropriate work experience. "We need to talk about organizing children's work," wrote Shatsky, "in such a way as to make it part of the work of the collective farm, a part which is within the limits and capabilities of children, but which must be serious. We must give our children work which is meaningful and uplifting."

At that time only the first shoots were beginning to appear of socially useful work performed by children in socialist agriculture, but the idea that the educationally sensible way in which to organize it by direct involvement in the productive process had already been quite definitely formulated by Shatsky. He particularly emphasised the necessity of varying the different types of work, insisting that it should be systematic and within the children's capabilities, that the work performed by the children should be organized in such a way as to arouse positive emotions and give them genuine pleasure. Shatsky considered that socially useful work performed by schoolchildren should be part of the common work of the Soviet people. The vigour of the children's collective, said Shatsky, is its constant activity and concern for the development of the collective, for its constant progress was the law of its life.

Shatsky attached enormous importance to the work of children in communist organizations and also to the question of pupils' self-direction. "Working with children," wrote Shatsky, "means acknowledging the enormous influence which children's society has on children. The school must encourage the development of children's organisations which participate in the building of their lives. Then it will be easier for the school itself to function. Our Pioneer

and Komsomol organizations, which unite the more energetic elements of our young people, can provide great support in this cause." Attaching great importance to self-direction, Shatsky strove to give children the possibility of participating themselves in different forms of government, to ensure that they consciously and responsibly carried out their instructions and, most importantly, that the schoolchildren were able to identify their own wishes and intentions with the affairs of the collective. Of course Shatsky was not alone in elaborating the various aspects of the problem of the children's collective and rationally organized work. In the course of the building up of the Soviet school system this was the cardinal task of all educationists, theoreticians and practicians alike. A truly colossal amount of work in its development was put in by N. K. Krupskaya and a great number of completely new ideas was added to the treasury of Soviet educational theory in the 30's by Anton Makarenko. In the post-war years V. A. Sukhomlinsky also worked on the problems of the children's collective and today these questions are the object of special attention in research by educationists, psychologists and sociologists.

I should like to emphasize the continuity in the elaboration of the main questions of Soviet educational theory. This continuity can be easily seen if one regards the question in its historical perspective. This in no way diminishes the individual and unique contribution of each of the remarkable figures in Soviet educational thought towards the elaboration of a theory of the collective and the role of socially useful productive work in the education of children and young people.

They are united by their common ideological views and their scientific conclusions are soundly supported by many years of living experience with specific children's and educationists' collectives.

Their creative work naturally reflects the searchings and findings of their contemporary educationists. Developing on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, Soviet educational theory encompasses a variety of collective experience accumulated in its historical development.

Shatsky's contribution to the elaboration of the problems of Soviet didactics is highly significant. Having been a member of the State Academic Council since 1921, he did

a great deal of fruitful work under the direct guidance of N. K. Krupskaya on the elaboration of the new school curriculum. In this field Shatsky made a number of significant achievements, but also some errors, as his uncritical attitude to the method of projects and a certain underestimation of the role of systematic knowledge in the teaching of schoolchildren. With time Shatsky decisively changed his views on these topics and in the last years of his life was engaged in fruitful work on the problems of strengthening the role of the lesson as the basic form of academic work. (See his article "Improving the Quality of Lessons".)

Shatsky considered that the school should always be interested in the life experience accumulated by the children themselves. In his opinion this allowed for the correct organization of both the academic process connected with the child's acquisition of new knowledge, and the physical work performed by the children and their aesthetic education. Moreover it is very important that knowledge should be accompanied by the development of the ability to work. Shatsky attached great importance to the fact that children should have a clear conception of the goal of education and the significance of the knowledge which they have acquired for participation in building a socialist society and in life around them. It is very important, according to Shatsky, to develop to the full the pupils' interest in learning. The child is by his very nature an investigator. Interest in lessons grows above all if they are within the scope of the pupils' ability.

But in the future this interest can weaken and even disappear altogether if it is not supported. Shatsky came to the following conclusion: pupils expend their energy in the course of their work, but the essence of study is such that the more energy they expend, the more they accumulate. Monotony in lessons creates amongst schoolchildren a special kind of hypnotic state, slows down the productivity of work and plunges the pupils into compulsory "educational sleep". Precious time is washed. Variety must be introduced into the methods of work and it is essential to pay attention to the emotional side of children's activity in the teaching process.

Shatsky attached tremendous importance to the organic combination of the realms of mind and emotion in the educational process. He wrote: "... We make little use of the

power of the emotional impact of the living word, we strive more than anything to get our audience to think, forgetting in the process about their feelings, experiences, psychological states We are not, of course, against educating the mind, we are all in favour of conscious knowledge, of encouraging pupils to think actively during lessons, but we are against one-sided 'intellectualism'—the teacher must be able not only to awaken 'the lofty flight of thoughts', but also to 'inflammé their hearts with words'. In other words, the pupils' minds and feelings must be in harmony and the intellectual and emotional spheres must complement one another." The significance of testing in education according to Shatsky, was that it helped pupils to work and developed in them a desire to check their progress, to reveal and eliminate any difficulties which may have arisen during the course of study. And one must evaluate a concrete piece of work which has been done and in doing so display the maximum amount of attention and benevolence towards the growing person. These questions have not lost their relevance even today.

Shatsky made a large contribution to the elaboration of the problem of social educational theory and above all to the educational theory of the social environment. Shatsky succeeded in setting up a wide-scale study with a really scientific approach to the social environment and its influence on the formation of children. Moreover, not only the environment and its influence on children was studied, but also the potential impact of the school on the environment for the purpose of a certain degree of improvement. This was the first time in the history of world educational practice that such an experiment had been carried out. It was essentially along these lines that all the educational work of the First Experimental Station of the People's Commissariat for Education was construed. It consisted of a number of both urban and rural educational establishments, from kindergartens and schools to schools for adults, clubs and teacher training and research institutions, working in close contact with local and social organisations. It was on the basis of this that Shatsky formulated his system of ideas about the school as the general educational centre for work with children in separate districts of a town or in the country. A great deal was achieved in this field. Of course one must take into consideration the concrete situa-

tion in the young Soviet state at the time when Shatsky and his colleagues were conducting their work in the country and in the town. Now that a developed socialist system has been constructed, the situation has changed radically. The environment is different, so are the family and the school. Marxist-Leninist ideology has taken a firm hold in people's consciousness and the material and cultural levels of the population have risen. The Soviet educational system has been much improved. But the educational approach to the coordination of the efforts of school, family and the general public in the upbringing of children and the search for the most effective forms of work remain relevant even today.

For Shatsky the teacher was always a very important figure in the educational process. This was why he made constant high demands upon the teacher and always paid him so much attention. Shatsky considered that an absolute prerequisite of a teacher should be his attentive and all-round study of the child. The child is a growing organism and the educationist himself cannot stop his own academic and professional growth either. The teacher, widening and deepening his knowledge, must combine within himself the qualities of an educationist and a research worker: he must be able not only to observe, but also to research, to generalize from his daily experience and to subject all the material which he intends to lay before the children to the scrutiny of his own consciousness and teaching ability. At the same time the teacher must take an active part in the life of the community and must be good-natured and attentive to children. "A teacher and community worker with wide horizons, an organizer of his own work, an organizer of children's lives, an educationist, a skilled observer and researcher—that is the type of person required by our new schools," wrote Shatsky. Hence Shatsky's demands of teacher training establishments: the students must be introduced as early as possible to direct work with children, the higher education teacher training institutes and colleges must establish many-sided ties with schools and other children's organizations, as much variety of combination as possible must be introduced to academic, research and practical work.

Shatsky considered that "young teachers should study in an environment imbued with lively, wide-ranging edu-

cational theory relevant to life The sooner the teacher feels himself to be a participant in the educational organization, the better." An academic institution preparing teachers must be a unique centre, uniting in the sphere of its activity scientific, academic and practical educational work.

Shatsky devoted a great deal of energy to systematic work with teachers. The regular so-called teachers' congresses organized by the First Experimental Station were a highly effective means of raising the teachers' qualifications and giving them an opportunity for living, creative contact. Shatsky was a true teacher of teachers. Later, when Shatsky was in charge of the Central Educational Laboratory of the People's Commissariat for Education, dealing with generalizations from the progressive experience of schools and teachers, he was especially thorough in considering the problems of raising the effectiveness of the lesson as the basic form of school work. But however capable and experienced the teacher might be, he does not achieve success on his own. The face of an academic-educational institution, Shatsky considered, is a harmonious, growing, creatively working teaching staff in which colleagues with the same views work side by side, each introducing his own individual stamp into his work, but understanding one another, people for whom the most important thing is the children, their joys and sorrows, children who have been entrusted to the teaching staff to be educated as worthy citizens of their country, the Soviet Union.

* * *

Shatsky's career in education was a path of searching which did not always immediately lead to a successful solution of a problem, but his searching was always sincere and honest. It was the searching of a citizen, a patriot of his country, who had dedicated his life to one of the most noble causes that exist on earth—the education of children.

Shatsky's works on the theory of education are characterized by clarity of thought, simplicity, sincerity of exposition and constant support from live experience. He had a deep and many-sided knowledge of the educational process, a fine understanding of child's psychology and could see very well both the strong and the weak points in the work of an educationist.

Shatsky was a brilliant educational experimenter. In analyzing educational phenomena, Shatsky displayed an organic combination of depth of approach, penetration to the heart of the matter and a constant search for something new, which would help to further the progress of such a complex and delicate cause as the teaching and bringing up of children and young people.

The development of the Soviet school system and educational theory has shown how significant was Shatsky's contribution to the establishment of a system of national education and educational science.

In 1978 the Soviet public widely celebrated the centenary of Shatsky's birth. His educational legacy still continues to be the object of study not only of Soviet, but also of foreign academics. It is thought that a creative use of this legacy could help to solve many contemporary educational problems and this is the main purpose of this volume.

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A TEACHER'S PATH

I spent my childhood amongst the relatives on my father's side of the family: he was a minor official in the army, clerk in a regimental office. Our family life was organized on somewhat strict lines. The military environment explained in large measure why respect for my elders, and every kind of authority, and punctiliousness in the performance of all my small duties became second nature to me. Our life was centred within a rather narrow family circle and family ties were very strong. The family had a narrow income and there were many mouths to feed; how to cope with the large number of children, whose care to put them in, what schooling to prepare them for and where to find the money for it were all burning problems.

One of the most vivid memories of my childhood was the constant awareness or fear of my guilt in the eyes of my elders. The fears that beset the family of a minor official during that grim age of reaction under Alexander III in the eighties were not without foundation: a minor bureaucrat such as my father had a good deal to fear.

School-work, it appears, came easily to me and with no particular difficulty I gained a place at the classical gymnasium. The training I had received within my patriarchal family was to stand me in good stead at school¹: I had been taught to attach great importance to success and to view the authorities with awe and respect. At school I encountered a good deal that was already familiar from my family setting and the military world in which I had grown up. At a fairly early stage I began to assess my teachers according to their approach to the pupils, most probably because I was an impressionable boy endowed with a fertile imagination. With rare exceptions all the teachers at the

school adopted the same approach to the children. I knew that they were in command and therefore knew and could do everything, yet I sensed that they did not know how to behave towards children. I clearly remember the first conclusion I reached concerning teachers: I realized that they were always forgetting that "they too had been young once" and therefore did not understand how cruel their kind of teaching was. Although my awareness of this should have made me rebel against the school authorities, nevertheless for the first four years I took my studies very conscientiously and enjoyed my teachers' approval. I remember well how by the end of the fourth year I began to find the teaching we received tedious in the extreme. I searched hard among my elders for someone who might understand me, someone I could rely upon. I was hoping that in the senior classes everything would somehow be different, but it was not to be. The protest I felt welling up inside me, and could see in my fellows, became ever more marked as we moved up the school.² The pupils made no bones about the need to battle it out with the teachers: pranks, tricks, deceit, all kinds of ruses to obtain good marks, without actually knowing anything, just became the order of the day. Minor victories, major defeats and all-out confrontation were all part and parcel of our relationships with the staff. School became a source of hatred, no less.

Taking part as I did in all aspects of life and work in the gymnasium I had ample opportunity to observe the methods employed by the teachers in their work with us and probably viewed these, as did almost all my fellow pupils, in a very negative light. I felt that my abilities and needs were totally ignored. I lived out each day and pursued my studies, all the time aware that the life we were leading and the way we acquired knowledge were all wrong: our way of life was taken up with an endless chain of trivialities. An inordinate amount of energy was spent on criticising it, it was the one thing we found interesting, and all too soon I quite lost the art of systematic, methodical study. Moreover the organization of our work programme was unimaginative in the extreme. Seeing that we spent at least five lessons a week learning Latin for eight years, and during the last six of these at least four lessons a week on Greek and another four divided between German and French, one would have expected the pupils, after all this,

to have a competent command of the languages concerned, yet with rare exceptions we left school hardly able to read them or to speak the latter two, knowing virtually nothing.³

This meant that my years at school left me with a good number of negative memories, and as the time for me to leave the gymnasium drew near, once again I began to hope that I might encounter quite a different atmosphere, this time at university. My final exams I passed with distinction, yet my scant store of knowledge was not even adequate to enable me to make an informed choice when selecting a university course: I had no reliable picture as to what science and scholarship as such really meant, or of the way in which professors and students worked.

At first the university⁴ setting did, indeed, seem different. In its outward details life at university was far freer than the life I had grown accustomed to at the gymnasium, yet the attitudes I had found common among my teachers there I was to encounter once more on closer acquaintance with the professors. The vast majority of those I met showed very little interest in the students and between the professors, on the one hand, and the students, on the other, there loomed the impenetrable barrier of tests and exams that were most formal in character. In short it soon became all too clear that I was not going to find at university any of the answers to the questions I was asking myself in relation to my life as a whole or to my studies. Everything would evidently have to be postponed until after university when I embarked on my real life and work. What caused me the most anxiety was the thought that I would not cope with my university studies, that the knowledge I had was far too insignificant, and that I was unaccustomed to systematic learning. It was essential that I find a way out of that situation.

At this stage I am bound to remember with gratitude Kliment Timiryazev⁵ under whom I studied during the latter part of my course. My first years as a student were a dismal failure: I groped my way from one subject to another until I settled for natural sciences, and even this decision, finally taken in my third year, was to a large extent coincidental.

Then as indeed earlier I found it impossible to content myself with what I had gleaned from my studies at the

gymnasium and now the university. In certain spheres I was by this time quite well informed, despite all the ups and downs along the way: I had at least acquired a good grounding in Russian and European literature, the latter being available in translation. My favourite authors were Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo and Lev Tolstoy. I had in the meantime also translated one of Emilé Zola's novels, *Madeleine Férat* for a local publishing house.

In my difficult and lengthy search for a way out of my dilemmas I started turning more and more often to the work of Tolstoy, who was to prove a strong influence in the years that followed. It was his protest against the stereotyped conventions of everyday life and his insistence that the individual needed to seek his true vocation amongst the wretched masses of the population that held a special attraction for me.

Here I cannot possibly pass over the unforgettable impression that Tolstoy's description of his school at Yasnaya Polyana⁶ made upon me. After reading it I thought back to my own life at home and school and then started pondering on how children ought to learn and be educated in the broad sense of the word and most important of all on how they should be treated. I remember how under the influence of his article ("So What's to be Done?") I decided to stop giving private lessons and cramming sessions for would-be university entrants, which at the time provided the main source of students' income. From a financial point of view this decision was a very hard one for me to make, but nevertheless I was firmly resolved to take this step and it was not until several years later, when I had already formed various ideas on how children should be taught that I undertook private lessons again. By then I always used to stipulate that I would never prepare anyone for a set goal or exam, but only concern myself with the all-round development of my pupils. I set out to make my lessons as stimulating as possible: I always took along with me all manner of books and apparatus and used to conduct a wide range of physiological, chemical and physics experiments with my pupils, and I set the greatest store of all on my pupils' independent thought. I seldom had the chance to carry through my plans, when exam-time came round either the parents put a stop to the lessons, seeing that I had gone off at a tangent too far, or they used all manner

of cunning arguments to persuade me to start cramming for exams as well: as a rule little good came of this endeavour and quite often my pupils failed.

So I cannot say my first efforts at teaching were particularly successful although in certain respects they were interesting experiments. I was already forming a picture of the type of education which ought to be put into practice, education that would embrace physical work, foster children's independence and close friendly contact between teacher and pupil, provide them with a source of help and moral support and do away with textbooks.⁷ I never thought about myself becoming a teacher in secondary school, it seemed a foregone conclusion that nothing would come of such a step.

Tolstoy influenced me in another direction as well. I showed little interest at that time in the student unrest and protests that were going on⁸ since I was taken up with the idea that the most important task was bringing education and culture to the broad masses of the population who were in those days denied even the first fruits of learning. To me then it seemed a waste of energy to attend political rallies and listen to speeches, in other words to spend time on "words". Yet at the same time I kept sensing that this approach was not quite right, and this vague awareness of my false path made me realize more and more as time went on, that I had to find and work out my own answers to the questions which by the end of the reign of Alexander III (1881-1894) were being raised by ever wider sections of the public, not just by the students in revolt but by the workers as well, whose strikes and demonstrations were becoming ever more frequent. A great deal was being read and discussed in connection with all this, and the nearer I came to completion of my university studies the more urgent became the task to find the answers and decide what I would do with my life.

I came under Tolstoy's influence in yet another, a third respect. Although I had visited the country many times in my childhood, like many a town-dweller of the period, I started making plans to go and work in the country. I imagined myself setting up a rural school based on radically new principles: I even thought about devising a whole new curriculum and method of teaching for such a school even before I went out into the Big Wide World. Of course as

I took a hard look at myself I realized that I was still profoundly ignorant and had no real right to embark upon such a responsible task as starting up a school of my own.

Feeling most dissatisfied with the years of university learning, I transferred to the agricultural institute⁹ where I studied from 1903 to 1905. In those days a lot of fresh blood was finding its way into that institute, and political activities were rapidly gaining momentum. The traditions of political commitment that had taken root at the Petrovskaya Academy of Agricultural Sciences were finding a new lease of life: the students rallied together in a number of political groups which engaged in open disputes one with another, that often became the subject of wide-scale public attention. Women students were also appearing on the scene for the first time.¹⁰ While taking a keen interest in the political activities of my fellow-students I did not however join any of the political groups and merely made a detailed study of these young people, so different from those I had encountered previously. Just as before at the university, so here I found myself inwardly protesting against the torrents of words this political commitment involved. I was particularly put out by the fact that the far-reaching social and political problems, which were being discussed at the time, seemed to have very little to do with the modest task, the work in a rural school, that I had decided to undertake: this led me to work out my plans quietly on my own, as I tried to glean all that I possibly could from the agricultural institute, both as far as academic and practical experience were concerned.

I focussed my attention in particular on one of the most original professors from the academy, Alexei Fortunatov,¹¹ who rejected exams out of hand and went out of his way to encourage students to carry out independent research work right from the commencement of their studies. Although his subject—agricultural statistics—was very far removed from my interests in education, nevertheless his working methods attracted my attention and proved fascinating. Indeed the Petrovskaya Academy at that time provided ample scope for all those interested to engage in academic research and gain experience in laboratory work. Professor Vasily Williams¹² was particularly helpful to me in this respect, as indeed to many of my fellow-students. I was already beginning to wonder whether I should per-

haps take up a career in research, but then I suddenly felt the urge to embark on something practical, especially in view of the political conditions obtaining in 1905, which made study at the academy almost impossible,¹³ and, when it turned out that work of the required variety might be available, I turned my back on the institute and began to concentrate all my energies on teaching.

The first work in this field that attracted my attention possessed almost all those features which I saw as necessary conditions. Social commitment was involved and it provided scope for the creative potential of all those taking part: I would be working with poor children from workers' families and have the opportunity to experiment with education through work, encouraging children to learn to run their own lives and develop their own interests. Such was my first undertaking as a teacher which strictly speaking represented the first step in my education career: the scheme went under the name of Settlement and meant a group of teachers and qualified specialists living and working among the children of the poor (the scheme was the offshoot of an American idea brought to Russia by the well-known educationist Alexander Zelenko¹⁴). I involved myself one hundred per cent in this scheme and devoted all my energies to it for a number of years. Initially it was the subject of fierce controversy of a kind difficult to imagine nowadays, while in other quarters it was regarded as out of keeping with the times, as placing too much emphasis on cultural, as opposed to political, considerations.

The Settlement scheme quickly attracted the attention of the radical intelligentsia of that period. It is interesting to recall that there were very few teachers among those engaged in the scheme. For our headquarters we chose an area between the workers' suburbs of Butyrki and Maryina Rosheha and embarked on a social survey of it. Then we started drawing up plans for our future scheme on the basis of our analysis of the social conditions. The majority of those working for the scheme had, as I did, a university education behind them. Our shortage of funds was more than compensated for by our tremendous energy and sense of commitment. It was decided that our main work should be concentrated on furthering the children's social education and, to this end, one of the first steps taken was to set up a children's work centre and get the children to run

it independently: children's clubs, a kindergarten and workshops for the older children in our care were also set up. Children came flocking to the Settlement from all sorts of places, both boys and girls, and their numbers were growing rapidly all the time. However as the size of the project grew, so too did the tremendous suspicion on the part of the clergy and the police on the one hand, and, more regretably, from teachers in the city schools on the other. Soon the Settlement scheme was leading an almost "underground" existence, and after three years it was listed as politically subversive and shut down on the instructions of the city authorities. The aims behind this education scheme in whose theoretical and practical elaboration I was closely involved reflect very clearly the atmosphere of those times. This project was to some extent an offshoot of the first Russian Revolution (1905), since at the time of its inception it received the enthusiastic support of the radical intelligentsia. It is worth noting that Settlement was financed by influential representatives of the bourgeoisie who saw nothing untoward about helping set up institutions outside the main stream of the existing school system. Indeed, certain of their number even gave funds to the Social-Democratic Party. At various stages in my work as a teacher I have known moments of great enthusiasm and inspiration, but none that can be compared with the mood in which I embarked on my work for Settlement. I brought to that project all those ideas which had been taking shape during my long twilight years spent in secondary school and university. It brought me into contact with a large circle of new, interesting friends. I was given invaluable assistance at that time by Alexander Zelenko, side by side with whom and at whose suggestion I embarked on something that was a new departure for us all. I launched a grim battle with that school of educationists whose work and methods were so familiar and hateful to me.

As I mentioned earlier, the idea of the Settlement scheme came originally from America. Typical of the work carried out by the American liberals of that period was their insistence on complete tolerance for the broadest possible range of opinions to be found in society and which clashed one with another. Naturally enough the idea of reconciliation of the classes that could stem from such social enlightenment was in no way new in American education:

Settlement was to be apolitical and non-partisan in its organization and thus serve the interests of the far-sighted circles in the bourgeoisie who supported it. In our undertaking that apolitical, non-partisan approach proved quite impracticable: although our staff embraced people belonging to various political parties who managed to get along with each other, our Settlement staff regarded in a very negative light such political organizations as the Union of the Russian People, the Octobrists¹⁵ and parties of the Right altogether. This meant that, to some extent, members of staff were selected on a political basis and this development stemmed from the nature of the social stratum, from which were drawn the young people we worked with. In that working-class environment no such apolitical principles could ever have been tolerated, but we were regularly visited by workers belonging to a variety of political parties. The police, who kept us under the closest possible surveillance, and the secret police¹⁶ which kept its mounted agents, and others on foot, around our base were far nearer the mark when they classified Settlement as one of the social groupings active at that time.

During the three years of its existence it became quite clear that all the staff were aspiring to set up an experimental teaching establishment, whose aim was to carry out a range of socially orientated educational experiments and at the same time the scheme's staff deliberately sought to avoid anything that might be reminiscent of ordinary school practice. This meant that everything Settlement achieved was essentially new in form in the context of education in Russia. Meanwhile the forces of reaction were drawing in the net tighter and tighter.¹⁷ After Settlement had been closed down it required a good deal of effort, tact and mental agility to carry on our work by whatever means were still open to us, albeit under a different banner. A year later the main core of the Settlement staff had started work again, this time as a society by the name of *Children's Work and Recreation*.

At about that time (1910) I began to be aware of the influence of John Dewey's¹⁸ writings on the development of my own views on education. My attention was attracted by Dewey's pragmatism: he insisted that men should put their ideas to the test in practice and also placed great emphasis on extremely detailed analysis of children's inte-

rests. By this stage I had even drawn up a whole plan and programme of work with children aimed at the satisfaction of their interests. The main topic that interested me then was the idea of education through work and I used the opportunity presented by my first journey abroad to study forms of education through work used in children's homes in Scandinavia, in 1910. On that occasion I was impressed by the skill and ease with which my foreign colleagues adapted to changing situations: they all appeared most practical in their approach to their work, and very good organizers, but at the same time rather narrow-minded. I kept on launching into major arguments with Scandinavian educationists on the subject of punishment, not merely the corporal variety, but punishment in general.

I brought back similar impressions from my second sojourn abroad (1913-14) when I visited Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland still investigating schemes designed to promote education through work. Everywhere I went I noticed what a one-sided view was taken of this issue and the enormous difference between schools of the old mould and schools where new ideas on education were starting to come into their own. Yet at the same time I was struck by the organizational ability of West European educationists and how well-equipped their schools were... although taken all in all I did not glean much that was of value from either the theoretical or practical angle during my travels in Western Europe. I did however find much that was of interest to me in the educational establishment set up by Ovide Decroly and also in the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute in Geneva. Something else which I found interesting, although it was not connected with the then current innovations and experiments in education, was the first-class organization of vocational schools. To cut a long story short the material which we were receiving about work in education in America seemed a good deal fresher and more relevant.

During the war years (1914-17) the question of education for the masses became a far more burning issue than it had ever been before, because of the vast numbers of children whose fathers had left for the front-line. I was faced then with a far more daunting task, which however I succeeded in carrying out despite numerous difficulties

encountered en route: it was my job to prevent children from being carried away by the chauvinist tide of anti-German feeling that had swept through fairly large sections of democratic public opinion. Our stand on this question served to a large extent to isolate me and my colleagues from the main stream of work then being carried out in the sphere of social enlightenment.

When Settlement had been closed down, it had been the Union of the Russian People, the monarchists and the secret police that had joined forces against us. Now there was considerable opposition to our work to be felt not only amongst those people who could have helped us with funds, but also among teachers with democratic sympathies. On a whole number of counts the stand we adopted met with no support from outside: with regard to the methods we used in the work of our experimental school, to the work in our kindergarten and with regard to the training of teachers (another task to which we were now fully committed). In fact it was extremely difficult to keep our experimental work going and to carry on research in that field, when war-time conditions made it more or less imperative to clamp down on all such lines of research in view of the now urgent need to attend to the provision of proper child care in the atmosphere of war fever. The main reproaches that were directed at us were precisely to the effect that we were opposed to work with the masses, i.e. work of a practical nature concentrated on children's immediate needs, and that we were only concerned in those grim times with work of a narrow theoretical nature, essentially experimental in character. What this really meant was that we were not prepared to be carried along by the general tide of war fever. Similar criticism was levelled against us in connection with our work for organizing teacher-training which was then being carried out at the Shanyavsky University.¹⁹ We were constantly being called upon to contribute to the teaching provided at those courses, but we kept on pointing out that the enormous number of would-be teachers attending those lectures, that run into several hundred, was unacceptable. We managed to hold some courses of lectures for smaller numbers at the Shanyavsky University in the end, and also at our own centre, using our own curriculum and methods. The new features of this curriculum lay in the

fact that to a large extent we used material which represented the finding obtained from practical work of the students themselves: the new aspect of our methods consisted in the fact that we encouraged the students to concentrate their energies on analysing those findings under our guidance, and then independently to arrive at the conclusion to which that practical work was bound to lead them. What we were really suggesting that our young friends should do was to work on themselves, to discover their own potential, in fact start doing what we ourselves had been aspiring after in our own work for many years already. This work brought us a large number of new colleagues with whom we were later able to work in our centres, and provided a useful network of contacts with education establishments in other parts of Moscow and the provinces.

This should not in any way imply that our main interests lay in teaching methods. It was imperative to go through some training in method and devise a work programme, but on the other hand the detailed elaboration of fundamental principles for the organization of our main project was something we viewed as a strictly defined objective to be completed within a set framework and timespan. We set out to reach this objective as quickly as possible by means of hard intensive work. To start with, it was clear to us all that we needed more than a few isolated experimental institutions and that they all needed to be drawn together within a single administrative scheme. This explains why as early as 1912 a project had already been drawn up providing for such an organization, in part at least: it was a plan for an experimental education centre catering for all age groups and one which outlined the main types of work to be carried out with the children right through from the kindergarten to the secondary stage integrated with sessions in special hobby groups, workshops and the children's library and work camp. The project was approved in 1915 when there was talk of a small subsidy which the Moscow City Duma might give our enterprise. In that same year experimental courses were also set up on a permanent basis. The scheme was then taken one stage further, for it emerged that we could not confine our work to children but would need to work with adults as well.

I should like to dwell for a moment on the reasons why I found it impossible at that stage to reconcile myself to the trend of so-called liberal education.²⁰ From my previous experience I could see that no such thing as a free child existed, but rather children who reflected all manner of formative influences exerted on them by their actual environment and that given this it was essential to introduce significant social modifications into all manifestations of child behaviour, precisely those modifications which I saw as essential additions to John Dewey's theory. If we can never isolate the child per se and if it is always difficult to decide where the child ends and the environment begins, then if we do not try and come to terms with these fundamental problems useful work with children is impossible.

This was why each succeeding project for an experimental education centre encompassed, as a rule, an ever wider range of social objectives: the projects gradually came to embrace the whole social environment within which our work with children was being carried out. These projects included a number of children's homes and vocational schools working under the general supervision of charitable trusts. Other projects consisted in the organization of a section of the work undertaken by a *Zemstvo*²¹ or district council in the Kaluga Province. Next came a project for the organization of schools for railway workers' children, district schools for the local poor and a children's work brigade—all as part of an overall plan. Over a period of several years these projects were modified and streamlined, finally to take shape as the project for experimental education centres adopted by the People's Commissariat for Education.

It was about 1917 that my first plan for a work-centre school started to take shape. I held that such a school should essentially be no more than a well-organized pattern for children's daily life, and that if such a goal could be achieved and we managed to cater for *all* children's needs—social needs, work opportunities, intellectual and emotional needs—then we should be able to provide the best possible model for running a work-centre school.

This means that by the time of the Revolution my friends and I had not yet amassed very wide experience, or had the chance to put all our ideas to the test in practice,

and modify them as circumstances dictated. Yet our hopes and aspirations at that time were boundless: one might almost say the large-scale range of our educational objectives was clear to us, while some of the detail still had to be worked out. No system had yet been devised and elaborated on the basis of the experience we had gleaned, and there was no definite theory behind it: our work had in fact been carried out via the study of numerous findings made in the course of our teaching work and carefully conducted educational experiments that various interim conclusions led us to carry out.

The main trends in educational literature both at home and abroad were of course familiar to me and my friends, yet there is no doubt but that they failed to satisfy us, for we were convinced that simply transplanting foreign models in Russian soil would not be very useful.

However I could say that the project for taking over part of the Zemstvo education work was a reflection of that trend in education theory that was later to find expression in the organization of experimental education centres. The ideas behind such centres can be summarized as follows: the aims of social enlightenment and education can only be clear and successful if work in this field is carefully integrated with the economic conditions and life-style obtaining in the region concerned. It was assumed that work in that part of the Kaluga Province should incorporate not merely schooling in the traditional sense but also the rudiments of agronomy and technology, as relevant to rural conditions, hygiene and health care and the organization of cultural activities.

From the political point of view our unit could be regarded as a small group from the radical intelligentsia which had taken shape in order to carry out projects that to a certain extent reflected the work of those forces, which were making themselves felt despite the wave of reaction after 1905 and despite the chauvinistic mood of the imperialist war. This meant that our group like all other radical groups welcomed with enthusiasm the February Revolution.²² Later, given that our group was drawn from the ranks of the petty-bourgeois radical intelligentsia, this also made it inevitable that it lost its bearings when overtaken by the October Revolution and was unable at first to find a proper channel for its energies.

Nevertheless it would be fair to say that a good deal of the findings drawn from our pre-revolutionary experience made the transition to participation in the building of revolutionary society far easier for us than it would otherwise have been. Indeed a fair number of my long-standing and closest colleagues began at once to work for the new Soviet government without the slightest hesitation. I was to follow in their footsteps somewhat later.

I was on fairly close terms with a number of workers (metal-workers and printers), many of whom had at some stage in the past visited the clubs that we had set up. I had not been concerned at that time with their political convictions and there had been Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries²³ among them. Together with them I had tried to find my bearings in relation to a number of topical social issues. The fluctuations and conflicting opinions—emerging from their discussions, albeit in a less extreme version in our clubs for young workers (although feelings began to run high there too in 1917-18), brought their influence to bear on my opinions as well. I remember insisting fervently on the importance of workers' unity, and nothing seemed more terrible to me than the civil war being fought out between workers of different persuasions. It was in an effort to put a stop to strife between different groups of workers that led me to take a more active part in political affairs in late 1917.

There was no doubt that the comrades who committed themselves after the Revolution to paving the way towards a reorganization of education were acquainted with our work and held it to be in large measure valuable. Moreover our group had as early as 1905 decided to exclude religious education from its programme: our memories of clashes with the clergy were far too vivid for us to have forgotten that religious issues could be fundamentally disruptive. On the other hand, after 1905 we had taken up the challenge of organizing schools for education through work. Although we had also striven to set ourselves apart from left party organizations, nevertheless all right groupings had by that time become anathema to us and between 1905 and 1917, without really noticing it, we had been moving further and further left.

The methods we had been using to elaborate our teach-

ing practice detailed study of conditions within the actual teaching context, of the conditions in which children lived and learnt and the actual endeavour to set up experimental educational establishments were all things that came to be developed apace in the first years of revolutionary reorganization. Moreover, the fundamental principle in our work—to encourage children's self-government—that we had almost begun to take for granted and as regards which we saw ourselves, and with ample justification, as pioneers, meant that the reappraisal of educational issues after 1917 was something very close to our hearts. At the same time the factors that initially held us back from whole-hearted commitment to involvement in the building of revolutionary society—our preoccupation with cultural issues, our apolitical stance, and our view of the Bolsheviks as a destructive force (common to many factions of the intelligentsia at that time)—soon faded in importance as soon as I and my colleagues reached a closer understanding of the plans and methods for their implementation that became the order of the day in the new post-1917 conditions.

As for me personally, an important milestone was my thorough study of Lenin's articles and speeches at the time which later were to lead me to a fundamental reappraisal of my previous practical experience in education and to my adopting a new view of the teacher's work as a whole. I reread the major works of Marx and Engels and gleaned from these then, and later on, ideas that were to prove of vital importance for the development of theory and practice in education in the new historical era that had just dawned. An occasion that made a powerful impression on me in that period was my first meeting with Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya,²⁴ in 1918. The work I was later to undertake side by side with her led us to raise a whole range of fundamental questions stemming from the need to review those conclusions and ideas arrived at by my colleagues and me over long years of practical experience. Eventually I came to add the names of Lenin and Krupskaya to my own all-important teachers, teachers who were to have a far greater influence on me than anyone else: to a considerable extent I see myself as Krupskaya's pupil.

It often seems that neither I nor all those of us se-

riously involved in education in the period immediately after the Revolution, recognize fully what great a role Krupskaya has played in twentieth-century education. During her long years of work for the revolutionary cause she mastered that method of work that we all could not fail later to regard as extremely valuable, or rather as something of unique value. It was her ability to see through a whole range of specific, at first glance unimportant and disconnected, details and facts to the motive forces behind them, and her ability quickly to find her bearings after the subtlest of changes in society, draw the necessary conclusions from the latter and decide what practical steps needed to be taken. This unusual talent is something one encounters rarely. Another important quality of Krupskaya's was her ability, whenever complex or involved questions were raised, giving rise to a whole range of diverse points of view, to define these in clear simple terms and discuss them in such precise, straightforward language that her conclusions and formulations provided an invaluable guide to action for enormous numbers of her co-workers. It is also worth remembering how Krupskaya always succeeded better than anyone in linking together all our efforts with the main goal pursued by the Communist Party, the cause of the working class, which made a new voice echo throughout the world.

* * *

I now have many years of work behind me and work which has left some mark on the development of social education: nevertheless all that I have achieved, regardless of how it has been evaluated I still see as a stage that belongs to the past. Perhaps my efforts aimed at constantly clarifying my ideas and improving my work in the field would have been more clear-cut and effective within a post-revolutionary context when a revolutionary society was being created by the proletariat: yet when I think back to the early years of my education and upbringing I feel as if I have torn free myself from an incredibly tight vice which served in large measure to make my work less dynamic and effective. That "vice" was, I suppose, inevitable, just as were those phenomena which I came up against in the periods immediately preceding the

first, second and third Russian revolutions. My early upbringing had been of a kind destined to keep me totally isolated from the social and political developments of that age. To a large extent I attribute my keen interest in new developments and innovations in education to the fact that the old education system born of the conditions peculiar to the tsarist regime and the bourgeois social order, was, insofar as I experienced it, stagnant and lacking any sense of direction. This was why it aroused such powerful opposition in the very class that it was designed to mould: hardly realizing what was happening to them at the time, sensitive impressionable boys and girls were being carried along by the current of their hostile reaction to this schooling, to involvement in opposition to the bourgeois social order. I am becoming more and more convinced that the role of the bourgeoisie in education is over, that it has nothing intrinsically new or useful to offer and can only concern itself with technical, administrative or methodological detail, while it now falls to communist educationists to probe new areas of educational theory and create the kind of education system required by the new social strata rising up to take the place of those previously at the helm.

The teacher and educationist of today is called upon to lay the education "bricks" in the common task of building a socialist society, and the calling is a noble one. It is to this goal that I shall aspire till the end of my days.

THE SEARCHING YEARS

(Extracts from the Book)

PART I

The Old School

Introduction

In my early years when called upon to state what I wished to be later in life, I never dreamt of becoming a teacher. I considered work as a doctor, engineer, scientist or musician, switching almost at random from one to the other but never really feeling seriously drawn to any of those professions. It was at a fairly late stage that the idea of work in education started to appeal to me, that the idea eventually took hold once and for all. That idea was to bring me an enthralling vocation, interesting colleagues and endless food for thought. Looking back over the years since spent in the profession I keep on asking myself what it was that led me to that particular line of work, that led me to devote all my energies to it? There must have been an initial impulse somewhere that made an indelible impression on my mind, something that drew me towards work in education, first without my noticing it and then ever more strongly and clearly, so that the first vague signs in that direction later developed into a signpost, and then a broad, clearly charted path.

Even when I already felt a strong urge to take up work in education I had still read very few books on the subject. Even those I had read had left me more or less indifferent. I felt that my keenly felt personal experience from school, experience of teaching methods rather monotonous in character gave me the clear right to judge *how children should not be taught*, and this made me **anxious to**

start work myself in the field as soon as possible. This early response points to the source of my original interest in teaching. In the preface to my book *Children—the Workforce of the Future* (1922) I mentioned the deep mental trauma inflicted on children's minds during secondary and tertiary education. I had no doubts about this after looking back through the notes I made long ago when describing the early years of my own education. As I leafed through them, something occurred to me that I had not thought of before: when I myself had been at school I had been constantly aware that the way my teachers and fellow-pupils were going about teaching and learning was quite wrong. My principles on the subject of education had clearly evolved from my early rejection of the teaching methods to which I in my youth had been subjected.

Chapter One

1. The only emotions I remember from my early childhood are bewilderment and fear. These emotions I recall all too clearly. I remember how I felt over-awed by the houses, those tall O-so-tall stone houses in Smolensk where my family lived. I kept feeling that they were falling down at me and would crush me any moment.

Our house was on a hill. From upstairs we could see into the next-door garden. Yet it seemed like some foreign realm and highly dangerous: God forbid that we should find ourselves outside our own house and courtyard where everything was familiar and straightforward—the people, the dogs, the hens and all the paraphernalia. On one occasion, though, I failed to contain my curiosity (down in the next-door garden the game always looked such fun): I went out of our gate and down the steep hill to peer through the open gateway into that “other world”. Someone caught sight of me, cajoled me to come in, made a fuss of me and begged me to join in. I was thunderstruck. I realized that I was done for, that I was surrounded by hostile strangers and I was overcome by fear to the point of panic. All I could do was scream. Someone came hurrying over to fetch me and I felt quite sure that I had been rescued from some dire danger.

Opposite the house at the other side of the street stood an enormous cathedral surrounded by a stone wall. The other side of the wall was a garden in which there lived a bishop. There was something frightening and mysterious beyond my grasp about that bishop. He was invisible to the outside world but very tall and forbidding: he knew all and would without doubt carry you off if you were rash enough to climb into his garden. I linked him with the idea of God that I had been introduced to by this time: He too was threatening and able to see all, although no one could see Him, and ready to punish. Such were my childhood memories of Smolensk: enormous stone buildings ready to fall down on me at any moment, enemies in the next-door garden, the safe fortress of our own house and garden and the grim sorcerer-God in the garden beyond the stone wall opposite.

Out in the country things were quite different. I used to spend time in the country in spring, autumn and winter but it is the summers there which I remember best of all, the green sweet-smelling summers... I remember ponds overhung with sycamore trees, the brushwood dyke through which the water trickled, the wild strawberries near tree-stumps almost hidden in long-grass, rustling leaves and splendid mushrooms. The sparkling sky that I could not look at without blinking, the floating, scattering clouds: the heat would be so intense that I would lie down in the cool grass and peer skywards as I listened to the incessant rattlings, hummings and rustlings—all was serene, familiar and beautifully simple. Nowhere seemed frightening out in the country. Life was all a quiver, like the taut string of an instrument, and I could sense its boundless riches.

Another vivid memory from those years was the world of fairy-tales. There were two story-tellers in my young life—grandmother (whom for some reason we called Aunt) and a young nurse-maid bursting with health and possessed of a fine, resonant voice. She used to half sing her stories, she told them in a voice that flowed and more often than not in verse and embroidered with many a rhyming flourish. The steady rhythm and singing tone of her stories transported me to another world and filled me with delight, unlike anything I had known before. I remember nothing of their content, not even whether they

were quaint or frightening, I just remember the sweep of sound, their timbre and tone. Their hold on me was particularly powerful since the whole story would pass before my gaze incredibly real as the telling flowed on, yet the moment it stopped everything vanished, plunging me back into the cold everyday world . . .

2. After the country came the city and finally Moscow. I remember arriving there for the first time: the dirty, brittle, half-melting snow, the thaw and the flocks of jackdaws overhead circling with deafening caws. Then again those enormous stone houses, although by then I was older and they no longer seemed so precarious.

3. Few people realize how sensitively children react to quarrels between their parents.

You wake up in the night to hear loud angry voices in the next room. You lie frozen still, listening and not knowing whom to feel more sorry for, filled with pity at life itself, burying sobs in the pillow and moving your head to and fro so as not to hear the quarrel. Then you stop and listen, only to hear it all starting up again. I used to feel overwhelmed and frightened and kneel up in my bed, crying bitterly and whispering through my streaming salty tears: "God, make them be friends again!" I would then repeat the same prayer over and over again in a frenzy of despair until, worn out, I fell asleep to the quieter tones of the quarrel as it drew to a close. Through my fitful sleep I sensed my mother come in, stroke my forehead and kiss me. I did not dare to throw my arms around her neck and kiss her as I longed to, for I did not want her to know that I had heard it all.

4. There were visitors in the dining-room and it was tea time. I was summoned to appear, but having failed to go in with the rest of them I felt bashful about entering all on my own. It would mean everyone turning round to look at me as I stood on the threshold. I just could not summon up my courage. They were calling, and more and more insistently now: they must have realized I felt embarrassed and were laying it on purpose. That made the ordeal even worse.

I walked over to the mirror, and clambered up onto a chair to see what was on the dressing-table. I found a small bottle of glycerine within easy reach. I poured some out onto my hand and smeared it on my face. When

my face was well and truly covered I took another look into the mirror and saw that my face was now resplendent and shining. I could hear them calling me again. Petrified at the thought of what would "happen next" I set off towards the dining-room. A bright light that caught my face as I turned meant that there was no turning back. Everyone at the table, both family and strangers was staring at my gleaming face and they began laughing. I ran away and refused to show myself for a long time, feeling bitterly ashamed and sorry for myself.

It had been a mini-Golgotha! No one had realized what I had been through before I finally went into that dining-room. I sensed and was quite convinced that *I was not being treated fairly*.

5. Alone in the winter twilight at home... what a treat to be alone. I could do whatever I wished. I was in charge of the home, the room, everything around me. No one would be getting in my way. I sat down with my feet on the bed, curled up with a pillow at my back to dream and ponder. Snippets of ideas followed on one from another in colourful succession, vanishing as they were born. I began to feel that even the quiet was in my control.

All of a sudden the noise of voices in the street outside died down, the noise of steps and sledge runners in the snow faded, so that far away in the distance the long notes of a wistful song could be heard. There was a faint squeak from somewhere. I was listening as hard as I could and willing the quiet to be even more complete. It was still not quite dark: a ray of the setting sun traced a red stripe of light across the top of the wall and part of the ceiling. The dark lines of the top of the windowframe stood out sharply against it. The blanket of darkness further down the wall was growing, squeezing out the stripe of light which darkened to purple. It grew narrower and narrower until finally there was nothing but darkness left.

I pulled up my legs still tighter under me and sat with my chin pressed against my knees, and my arms wrapped round them. After all I was only a very little boy.... I collected up all the available pillows and piled them up all round me. It was dark and I was happy. I was in a pensive mood, not quite sure whether I was enjoying myself or sad. An hour or two passed like that, with me

still deep in my day-dreams. Suddenly there were foot-steps at the door and the noise of the key in the lock. I rose quietly, relishing the remnants of my reverie, as I put the pillows back in place and smoothed down the blanket. I rather regretted the interruption. The flat began to fill with noise and the lamps were lit one after the other. The every-day routine that had been interrupted for me was resumed. Yet I did have my "own world" to escape to when I was given the chance . . .

Chapter Two

1. A harsh whirr right inside my ear on a winter's morning. In my sleep I grasped that it must be the alarm clock at six o'clock. Time to get up. I shivered slightly on leaving the warm bed. After dressing as fast as I could, I lit the plain metal lamp and, filled with nagging worries, I sat down to swot up my homework.

In the near-by kitchen things were already moving. I heard water being poured into the samovar, the noise from the stream of water grew fainter and fainter and then the taper crackled and I could hear the flames in the chimney. The samovar's delicate purr grew noisier and noisier until the boiling water started to bubble over. That would be followed by the heavy, bustling steps of the cook, before she finally lifted it over on to the table.

I kept track of all the familiar sounds, whose inevitable sequence I found most alarming for each new one brought nearer the moment when I should have to rise, put on my outdoor clothes and make my way to the gymnasium. That was a moment I would have been only too happy to postpone. A sense of desolation came over me and I began to send up desperate prayers.

I made the sign of the cross and knelt down, lowered my head to the floor and repeated my prayers several times from beginning to end. No words were enough in that predicament. Looking straight ahead in numb silence I froze in desperate supplication. My whole being was gripped in the simple prayer that the hour of reckoning, when I should be called to the blackboard might be over and that if I did have to come forward with the answers I might withstand the test and obtain good marks.

Time to go. Realizing that I could not avoid my fate I stepped outside into the frost and mirky gloom. In the quiet of early morning I ran through in my mind all the homework we had been set for one last time. What was in store for me?

I pushed back the peak of my school-cap a fraction and began to whisper quickly through the words of the prayer again as I walked along. I made a point of crossing myself at every church, chapel or cross I passed on my way.

An old Moscow tram drawn by a single horse rattled past. I looked at its number hoping that if I added all the digits together it would come to a lucky multiple of five . . . At the corner of a house I came upon lamp-posts. I counted the steps I had to take to reach them. I needed the total to come to forty-five, fifty, fifty-five . . . anyway a multiple of five. It did not work out well, there were only forty-nine. That was not too bad, because nine take-away four left five, which left me with a concealed five.

I went on adding, taking away, multiplying and dividing in this way as I approached the seat of the Last Judgement. My pockets would be full of nails and old horse-shoes to bring me "luck". As I walked down the narrow street a few yards away from the gymnasium, the thought would flash through my mind: "What if it's burnt down all of a sudden? Buildings do burn sometimes, even stone ones . . ."

I pictured the charred windows and the broken panes to myself, the ring of sad-faced teachers round the building. I too should have assumed a sad expression and then walked away. Lessons would have to be postponed indefinitely.

But no. There it was standing firm, with its three floors, colonnade, and piles of firewood. There was nothing for it . . . I walked in, submitting to the general mood of "obedience to the service" which our schooling in point of fact had come to represent.

2. Dictation. "Near the former residence" intoned dour Nikolai Ivanovich for the first phrase.

"Residence . . ." Was it an *s* or a *c* at the end? I went cold from fright. That very morning I had been looking through the list of difficult words at the end of my grammar and although residence had been listed, now it had slipped my mind.

There was nothing for it. With my left hand I pulled the book out of my satchel, opened it with great care and continued to write with my right hand, my head bent low over the paper. There it was the vital page . . . and there was the wretched word. I slipped the book back into my satchel just as carefully, heaved a sigh of relief and went on writing. My neighbour saw me bring it off and attempted to do the same, but very clumsily.

"What have you got there under the desk?" The boy next to me stood up. "Nothing, Nikolai Ivanovich."

"Shatsky, have a look!"

I opened his desk and brought out the open grammar book.

"Well then. You'll stay behind for two hours after school today," said Nikolai Ivanovich to the unfortunate boy. "Class monitor, make a note of that. As for you Shatsky, you are to keep a careful check on his exercise books and homework record to make sure that he completes all his homework and does not copy from anyone. You'll report back to me . . ."

"Shatsky was doing it too," muttered the boy all of a sudden in a timid voice, indignant at the unfairness of it all. However Nikolai Ivanovich appeared not to hear and went on dictating. I was too ashamed to look up from my work but so very happy not to have been caught out myself.

I used to get good marks and my name went up onto the Board of Merit as a star pupil in the first form. My neighbour came right down near the bottom of the class.

3. I had a rival in the "service" and that was Nikolai Nikolsky. He was top of the class and I was second. We both had our names up on the Board of Merit, but his came above mine. I kept a close eye on his answers, marks, and held Nikolai Ivanovich to be guilty of favouritism, which I saw as completely unfounded. Yet I kept quiet about it all, and pretended to be the "best of friends" with my rival.

At home they kept asking: "What's up then. Can't you overtake him?"

I longed to do so and would dream of the term when Nikolai Ivanovich would read out class placing in which my name would come before Nikolsky's. Then I would pic-

ture the next step, my walking up to Nikolsky as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened and saying: "Don't worry about me coming first, it'll be you next term..."

What rapture that would have been!

4. "Mama, overseer Pozharsky tweaked my ears when he was on break duty today!"

"What for?"

"No reason," I went on casually. "I was wiping the board clean in break-time and he walked up to me, took hold of my ear and jerked my head up."

Mother heaved a sigh of relief and then asked: "What did he say though?"

"What did he say?—Grubby little Pole."

"That means he must have a soft spot for you."

"I wouldn't know," I answered trying to sound as casual as possible.

5. Off I set to "the service" once more. From force of habit I cross myself, contrive lucky numbers, and recite what I had had to learn for homework. Blocking the pavement stood a boy with a tub of water on a sledge. He had pulled the icy rope across his chest and tugging with his bare hands tried to move the sledge forward. The water was splashing out, but the sledge refused to budge. The pavement in front of the rich house, towards which he was heading, had been strewn with sand. The tub must have contained a good ten pailfuls of water, and the boy looked weak and undernourished. The gateway to the house was open and inside I could see a tidy courtyard and servants going to and fro. I walked on about a dozen steps; then something stopped me in my tracks. I turned round. By now the boy had turned round, put the rope round his back and was pushing with his feet to try and budge the barrel. I forgot about the gymnasium and the role I was expected to play in life. Without hesitating for even a moment or saying anything, but carried along on a wave of exhilaration I went over to the barrel and pushed it.... The sledge yielded at last and a moment later it was through the gateway and into the courtyard. I ran the rest of the way for fear of being late. I was filled with happy pride but hoped that no one had seen my heroic feat. I would have felt embarrassed. That had been *my* idea, *my* achieve-

ment. I had forgotten about whispering prayers, making the sign of the cross, even about the lessons to come.

6. I was walking home and tired out. There was someone trying to catch me up from behind. I looked round to see a fat, red-faced man in a fur coat. I took an instant dislike to his face and quickened my step. I did not want him to overtake me. The stranger noticed that, or so it seemed to me, and quickened his step too. I responded by striding even faster forward. The stranger started taking long steps and I could hear his rapid breathing over my shoulder. I strove to take as rapid steps as possible, although running was out of the question. My rival unbuttoned his coat, started breathing even more loudly than before, but did not fall behind. Keeping my position out in front had by now become a point of honour. Instead of giving in I took even more rapid steps than before. In the end I heard a deep sigh from behind and realized that the contest was over.

As I walked on I looked round just to make sure. The man was standing there, getting his breath back and wiping the perspiration from his face, forehead and neck. I was triumphant and could afford to slow down at last. That had been another idea and triumph of *my own*.

7. "Ante, apud, ad, adversus," I whispered to myself for the hundredth time. "Circum, circa, citra, cis . . . cis . . . No, it wasn't cis . . . Which of those wretched prepositions did come next?" I struggled to remember. At that moment a deathly hush fell over the class as Nikolai Ivanovich came in. I hastily opened the grammar.

"All books shut!" came the familiar voice through clenched teeth.

"Surely he couldn't have noticed!?" I thought to myself, as I quietly slipped the book back into the desk, convinced by this stage that *all was lost*.

I knew and was quite convinced that Nikolai Ivanovich knew what was happening to me. It was no surprise when he called out my surname first. Bewildered and helpless I stood before the teacher's desk, feeling as if I was balancing on a narrow plank across a stream, which I could fall into at any moment. Only pure luck could save me! I could hardly hear what the Judge demanded. I answered at

random and with each answer I could sense that I was sinking further and further into the abyss. Suddenly my mind went clear, the paralysis was over. All the questions fell into place and I knew what I had to answer. But it was too late. "Sit down!" With a merciless, all-too-familiar flourish the hand in the mark-book traced out D⁺. I was struck dumb, numbed with a sense of shame, anger and the unfairness of it all. The answers I needed to have given were all there now on the tip of my tongue. Yet the disaster was irretrievable, and how was I to cope?

I worked out that my term's average for the term in Latin would be C which would mean I'd no longer be anywhere near the top, my name would be rubbed off the Board of Merit by the school porter. And what would happen at home after that? I deliberately painted a black picture of the scene and set off home with a long face after lessons that day. The die was cast!

What did those marks really mean? I must admit that even now they loom very large in my memory. Of course I only remember a very small part of what I went through then. Yet even that small part enables me to conjure up that world, in which a highly important part of Master Shatsky's life was played out. He felt himself in the grip of all-powerful fate. The gymnasium, homework, the classroom, Nikolai Ivanovich—they were all part of the inexorable fate to which the helpless pawn had to submit.

Yet Master Shatsky was more than just a small pawn in a large game, he was a small clerk who joined the "service" on August 15, 1888. Work in the service was his whole life which absorbed all his interests: all the efforts of the young clerk were directed towards pleasing his superiors and the family, for he was most zealous and obedient. He was infected by the plague of competition within the "service", he feared those in high places, was filled with a sense of their unquestionable and unique authority and viewed their pronouncements as veritable laws of nature. The driving force behind his activities was the quest for promotion. His ambition in this respect soon exceeded the bounds of reason. Yet the ambition was constantly fanned at home and in school.

The humble clerk was devoured by envy, strove to conceal his failures, would sometimes sink to mean cunning and went out of his way to curry favour with the powers

that be. His was a pragmatic approach so he made himself appear religious and superstitious. He felt proud when any of the powers that be gave his ear an affectionate tweak, and longed for success, within, of course, the prescribed limits. *So far* the system was working perfectly.

There were of course his *own* little triumphs left over from his early childhood, triumphs of which he now felt slightly ashamed and saw as unnecessary, then there was his *own* unofficial hopes and fears, his poems, his aspirations. Where would life give him the chance to try his hand? Where would he be able to find an outlet for those talents which were the most precious gift Nature had bestowed on him? Who might show him any sympathetic interest?

The "system" had made Master Shatsky desperately ambitious.

Fear filled every fibre of his being and tortured him, yet it aroused no urge in him to break free from its grip.

Master Shatsky eagerly performed the tasks prescribed and sought after rewards for his zeal: sometimes he felt unfairly treated, was devoured by silent protest and the urge to criticize.

At the end of the school year he achieved considerable success: not only was he transferred to the second form, but his excellent marks and conduct were rewarded with a Certificate of Merit.

Small wonder!

Chapter Three

When I had reached the age of twelve and entered the second form, there was a new aspect to life in the "service". No longer was there a single overseer and wielder of fate in the person of Nikolai Ivanovich. His place was taken by several new teachers, lesser authorities. New activities were added to the old range: in addition to Latin (King among subjects), arithmetic and Russian, geography, religious instruction and calligraphy we were now exposed to French and German, and military drill complete with officer-in-charge and drum.

Instead of five teachers we now had nine—nine different temperaments and nine different methods of coercion.

There had also been a new change in the ranks of "junior clerks": in addition to the twenty-five coming up from Form I there were ten new class members from the year before, three or four of whom were a whole year older than the rest of us: they were highly critical, not only of the overall organization of our department in the "service", but also of the actual individuals in charge. These boys were the subject of general contempt in the school.

However they did play an undeniable part in our closed society: to some degree they undermined the authority of the teachers, which was beginning to appear somewhat hollow.

1. Our first German lesson. A middle-aged man of sanguine complexion appeared on the scene: we were all astonished by his amazingly pink cheeks and the red blotches above his eyebrows. He spoke very rapidly and at first we found him very difficult to understand. He seemed a very jolly character to begin with. His lively manner intrigued me and as I watched him, I put my elbows on the table and covered my mouth with the palm of my hand. I started wondering. Then I heard the hearty voice turning into an irritated one. My neighbour nudged me then, and as I looked up I saw the furious gaze of the "German" directed at me. In bewilderment I stared back and tried to decide whether I ought to rise. I stood up anxious to say what was expected of me. That made things worse for the teacher was by now almost beside himself with anger. I heard someone whisper: "Quiet!" I had realized myself by this time that it was best to say nothing. The "German" began to calm down. I sat down again but this obviously only served to work him up again: it started up all over again, the same furious stare and irritated voice. I stood up, listened in bewilderment to a new stream of wild reproaches, waited for his tone to calm down and then resumed my seat. The scene was repeated several times and gradually the fury of our "German" began to play itself out.

It later transpired that he had suspected me of trying to whistle behind my hand. He finally left the room still convinced of this, vowing that he would give me a bad conduct mark.

2. We spent a long time ploughing through the Latin passage starting. "*Gaius Julius Caesar, imperator romanorum clarissimus.*" The teacher for this subject Lavrenti Andreyevich who was fat and had copper-coloured hair suddenly, and without any warning commanded: "Shut your books!" We did so.

"Who can reproduce the whole passage by heart?" he then went on to ask. What on earth had given him that idea?

I rose to my feet and recited the whole passage from memory. It consisted of ten lines. The teacher heard me out with a most serious expression on his face and sending a very meaningful look in my direction he proceeded to trace out an A in the mark book.

3. I was walking home with a boy I knew from Form 8, a being of a superior order, or so I saw it. He used to talk to me in a rather patronizing tone. Once I addressed to him what from my point of view was a most serious question: "Do you remember what mark you had for Latin at the end of the second term in Form 2?"

He started to laugh and said: "How on earth could anyone remember such trifles?"

I said no more but was taken aback to observe this frivolity on the part of the superior being.

"It's something I'd never forget," I thought to myself.

4. The "German" set us a sentence to translate: "The ginger cow is sitting in the tree and twittering." Someone objected: "What on earth? That's impossible!" He in his turn retorted: "It makes no difference, it's not the sense that matters, but whether you know your words."

5. Our calligraphy teacher was a quiet kindly old man, extremely polite in his manner and with a rather harassed air about him. He would take great pains to trace out letters in chalk on the board—then stand back from his handiwork and admire it. Then a scrap of chewed blotting paper would fly through the air and land on an impeccably executed stroke. The old fellow walks up to the board and calmly restores the letter to its original state. A few more pieces of blotting paper follow the first one.

"Class monitor, are you forgetting your duties?" (I was the monitor).

"You gave me those lists to copy out, Sir. How could I be attending to other things?"

Then a veritable bombardment followed. Soon the windows, walls and ceiling were all covered with soggy blotting paper. All available blotting paper, old and new, was used up in an instant. The class was chewing, rolling paper blow-pipes, aiming, firing. One piece even landed on the old man's bald patch. He was unable to contain himself and left the room. We all felt ashamed and could not conceive how things had gone that far.

Then the discipline inspector appeared at the door asking: "Who's the monitor, here?"

"I am."

"Come here"

I went out into the corridor, trembling at the thought of what would happen next. Then I was asked straight to the point: "Who did it?"

"I didn't see: I was copying out lists," I muttered incoherently, as if to myself.

"You'll stay behind for three hours after lessons. Your conduct mark will be brought down accordingly."

I said nothing and was then told to go back to my place.

"Well, what did he say?" the others asked.

"He's keeping me in for three hours," I answered proudly.

6. I was no longer the shy little fellow of the year before. Some of the over-age boys from Forms 2 and 3 and I had formed a gang for the constant battles with the "town boys", the pupils from the town elementary schools. We had our "chieftain", took part in all manner of ambushed and organized genuine battles. Legends concerning the miracles of agility and strength accomplished by our ring-leaders grew up. Soon we had made a name for ourselves not just in the school but in the streets.

One day a real ambush was laid for us. We found ourselves surrounded by a great crowd of enemies and we suffered a complete rout. After that slaughter in which I lost my buckled belt that I had used as a weapon, I walked around for the next few days with a knife tucked into the top of my boot. This period of heroic adventures lasted

the whole winter. By the spring though the fighting only amounted to the occasional skirmish and then petered out completely.

7. I was given two or three D's and was too ashamed to let anyone at home know about them. Our marks were filled in in our homework books every day and had to be signed by our parents. I used to practise their signatures and when necessary fill them in myself.

8. There were plenty of nicknames used for the teachers that year: we called the discipline inspector Laurie-Law or Aunt Anna, the chaplain Father or Jesuit, the mathematics teacher Unitsson, the headmaster Charlie Whiskers and the calligraphy teacher Lame Alexei.

9. During the lessons in religious instruction all the non-Orthodox pupils had to leave the room. That was I the Catholic, two Jews, and a Lutheran, and we usually sat out the lesson in the school library. On one occasion I happened to peep into a dark gap behind some of the shelves. The whole back of the bookcase was covered with lurid portraits of almost all the teachers naked and in revoltingly obscene poses. Many of the drawings—executed in charcoal, ink and coloured crayon—were accompanied with captions in either prose or verse.

Other obscenities were to be found on various walls and in the school lavatories. Sometimes caricatures and captions appeared on the fence round the gymnasium yard.

It was astonishing that there had apparently been no attempt made to get rid of the pictures in the library, as was always the case elsewhere, although they clearly dated from a long time back.

10. During break-time the first form master, Nikolai Ivanovich, would inspect the corridors marching up and down them with a stony face. We used to feel ill-at-ease just walking past him. We were always seized by a sense of uneasy embarrassment: at each encounter it was essential to greet him, although there might be ten of these in a day. He always walked alone and only rarely was anyone seen talking to him.

At the end of break there would still be a buzz of noise

in the class rooms after the bell. Yet as soon as the figure of Nikolai Ivanovich appeared in the doorway the noise evaporated and twenty or thirty boys stood silent, weighed down with a sense of guilt. Nikolai Ivanovich would just stand there without saying a word and watch the rows of pupils writing miserably under his stare and then slowly walk away. Once he had gone, stifled laughter and the murmur of talk would surface once again. The same ritual would repeat itself in each of the four classes on the bottom corridor. He did not go into the senior classes upstairs.

We had our own scouts at the door, who while keeping well out of sight themselves, still managed to keep an eye on the enemy's movements. When he started to move in our direction, they would give the agreed warning signal.

11. Somewhere in the staff-room there lay a terrible book, known as the Conduct Register. To land on its pages was the ultimate danger. That was worse than having to report for detention on Sunday. It was that same Conduct Register with which our "German" had threatened me.

12. A shabby little piano was delivered to the house, costing all of twenty-five roubles. I would seize the moments when there was no one about to improvise and let my imagination roam. First of all I wanted to conjure up a storm with thunder down in the bass and the howl of the wind in trills of the top notes. I used to sing Alto in the gymnasium choir and would listen to the way my voice used to soar over the others, and it always gave me a special thrill to feel how I led the other singers. Music was yet another of my very *own* achievements, that came to play an ever greater part in my life.

13. I had become a passionate reader. It was only very seldom at the gymnasium that we were ever given books for grown-ups, or novels to read, and they were forbidden reading at home. I used to take advantage of the time when my father had a rest after dinner and hide behind the piano to read Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Gogol, whose works Papa used to purchase on an instalment plan.

14. A friend appeared on my horizon. He had to repeat a year and joined us in the second form when he was a whole two years older than I. He had attended a German school prior to that and for that reason enjoyed great favour from the "German". In the summer he had travelled to the Paris Exhibition and climbed up the Eiffel tower. In my eyes there was no doubt but that he was a superior being. He was honest, absent-minded, pensive, clumsy and was always missing the questions put to him by the teachers when they brought him down to earth with a bump from one of his many day-dreams. Then he would blush and sit there not knowing what to say, but never try and look for excuses. Of course he used to be given bad marks especially for arithmetic. His failures used to worry me even more than my own.

15. Old Unitsson the mathematician, a small skinny man with a kind face, had already tripped up one unfortunate and was now looking along the rows of boys all pretending they were not there. Whatever kind of teacher it might be--a "good" or a "bad" sort--at moments like those they always loom in one's memory as a bird of prey ready to pounce on its next victim. His gaze lighted on my absent-minded friend, whom he proceeded to call out to the front. He stood up, pulled down his jacket at back and front, shut the note-book in which I had tried to sketch out hastily the required answer, put it on top of his own carefully so as to keep the two edges even and made his way to the blackboard. He rubbed off everything already written up, drew an irrelevant line and stopped in his tracks; after a minute's awkward silence he was back in his place. With what seemed to me a malicious flourish the teacher traced out a mark in the class register. A whisper went round the class: "E!" I started to cry, and several boys jeered: "Shat-sky's blubbing." This made Unitsson even more angry than before and he remarked: "A lazy good-for-nothing deserves no tears, he can stay in for an hour after school for failing to pay attention. Class monitor, note that down please."

I stayed behind with my friend and tried to convince him that he knew how to solve any problems he might turn his hand to. Some of the other boys made some jibes about my staying behind to keep him company but I did

not care. I walked home with my friend and we lingered by the entrance to his house carrying on an animated conversation. His father worked in a bank somewhere and owned several houses. Soon after that I was invited round to visit him and it made me feel very happy and proud. The furnishings in their flat, where my friend had a room of his own, their library, the father's study, the sitting-room and dining-room where there stood the first grand piano I had ever laid eyes on all appeared unbelievably luxurious to me. Soon afterwards my family started letting me go and visit him regularly on Sundays. I used to arrive as early as possible and was always loath to leave.

16. My friend possessed an aquarium and a variety of pets. Yet animals always left me cold. Salamanders and tortoises, the frogs, spider crabs and goldfish seemed quite uncanny to me. My friend's father seemed far more interesting to me, when he used to shake hands with me as he said "Good Morning" and addressed me formerly as an adult: Stanislav Theophilovich. He used to talk to me as if he respected my opinions and furnish me with books that had a fascinating kind of smell about them. My friend could not stand the sight of books, a fact which often gave rise to arguments between him and his father.

My visits to that household were my favourite treats, really special occasions. I felt appreciated and was never treated there like a little boy. It was a clean, warm and welcoming world. I always had strict instructions to be home by six o'clock in the evening. I often used to put back our clock at home by half an hour, so as to extent my blissful treat by as much as I dared.

17. At home we often used to sing together in a family choir led by my father—Byelorussian, Polish and Lithuanian songs. My father was a hard taskmaster. Yet sometimes he would wax really enthusiastic as he played soldiers with us. He was very good at cutting out horses from old playing cards. We used to root their legs in sealing wax to make them stand up better. We would plant paper soldiers astride these mounts, and also cut out paper cannons with which to shoot down the ranks of the paper enemy. I was a dab hand at cutting out cardboard ships to which I attached an outer layer of oil-cloth. After the

spring thaw I used to launch my fleet in the puddles, after filling the holds with sand for ballast. The ships were even equipped with sails. It was my great dream to set up a puppet theatre. For the backcloths I used illustrations from old magazines that I coloured in. To enable the figures to move about the cardboard stage I cut slits in it along which I could move sticks with puppets attached with no trouble at all. I used to dream of a mechanized theatre in which everything would be set in motion by "springs". I used to devise all manner of things and was intrigued by any kind of machine or installation. My father liked working with a saw or a plane and making all sorts of articles: he was always getting hold of wired and wonderful equipment for his handiwork: universal tools, secret drawers, special glue and patent contraptions.

By the time such a man of the future as myself had reached his twelfth year he was exposed to many different influences, with school-life at the centre of them all. Furthermore that school remained one of the levers used by the state machine. We felt the full force of that lever only in the corridors—when the discipline inspector, with his stony stare only had to appear to make the hearts of us young citizens sink into our boots. That was his task, his direct assignment. Yet the classroom itself, unlike the one we had known the year before, began in the second year to represent something in the way of a refuge where another quite different set of laws held sway: this was what lay at the root of the struggle that went on, the war conquerors and conquered, with look-outs, warning signals, and as yet but small ripples of protest. Pressure from the state machine gave rise to counter-pressure. Waves of this counter-pressure were directed at the points of least resistance (such as the calligraphy teacher), and the poor old fellow had to suffer because of the system in which we all had to work. Yet it was not a system without weaknesses, and it relied mainly on outward appearances: it did not invade all corners and aspects of our lives, its inner core was weak: otherwise it would be impossible to explain the outbursts we were subjected to in the course of the eccentric teaching to which the "German" treated us (rumour had it that he had been a tutor in the household of Count Sheremetyev). However most of the teachers could be assigned to the neutral category (Russian, French, Geogra-

phy): no pressure was applied to them, nor did they apply any to others. In short the clumsy, uncontrolled behaviour of the secondary levers in direct contact with the pupils served to undermine it somewhat from within. No wonder after all, since it was an old-style Russian system that only went half-way and attached more importance to outward show and all the frills rather than to the essentials of the task in hand.

In the second form our class was joined by a new group of more critical, over-age pupils who had been made to repeat a year. These boys, who often used to roam the streets instead of appearing at lesson-time brought a breath of fresh air into the tedious atmosphere of the "service".

By this stage of a boy's life not everything was still concentrated within the narrow sphere of his studies, as had been the case before. He becomes involved in fights with the town lads as a representative of the privileged classes, and starts to experience ties of comradeship: these grow stronger all the time so that despite his still considerable fear of those in charge he would never dream of betraying any of his more mischievous friends. He starts to become a member of a group and his standing within his group is the decisive factor behind his actions.

He starts to feel less and less dependent on his family. He hopes for shared interests and relationships outside the family, he longs to be appreciated for himself. It was at this state that I found a true mentor in my friend's father, who satisfied my thirst for books. I gradually became aware of the difference between the "poverty" of my own family background and the "riches" my friend's home had to offer. I became a regular book-worm, devouring all the books I could lay my hands on: they were fine books I was given to read although there was a good deal in them that was beyond me at that stage. Those same books helped to sow the seeds of my future interests and bring me a little nearer to the world of art.

I usually obtained good marks, and sometimes scored veritable triumphs. I was keen to be at the top of the class and achieved this by various means. It would be wrong to say that I did not care whether my work was favourably viewed by the teachers, and if I did at times appear critical or dissatisfied, it was not with the whole atmosphere

at the gymnasium but with individual teachers. Yet if I was given a pat on the head and shown any encouragement, I was ready to throw my arms round the neck of any teacher, who might single me out in this way.

Yet the "service" remained the "service" and the established code of behaviour was an essential part of it. There was only one set of criteria by which progress was judged—the marks for conduct, attention in class, effort and attainment—and they occupied a crucial place in my life. At that age I was most anxious to avoid trouble, and ready to sink to forging signatures and doctoring the marks on my report card. I was also kept on my toes by other pupils' achievements and just as before it was a matter of life and death to me to find out who came where in the class placings.

Filth, cynicism and obscenities had appeared on my school horizon now but had not left any real mark on me and I was not obsessed with such things. I did not use foul language myself and was reluctant to listen to other people's: yet I was too timid to protest about it to my fellows. Taken all in all I had come a long way since my first year at the gymnasium and the changes that had taken place were by no means all of the superficial variety. As I came to understand more, so I began to be aware of the restrictions hemming in our far from easy life in the "service". Friendship had now come to play a central role in my life and led me to my first important discovery relating to education. I was coming slowly round to the realization that to "know" something by gymnasium standards and truly to know something were not one and the same thing. I came to sense how I "ought" and "ought not" to set about things. I could now compare two teacher figures—the teacher in the classroom and the polite father of my friend who treated me with respect, enjoyed talking to me and introduced me to the world of books. Those three main influences—my own family, my friend's family and school started to make me think for myself.

Chapter Four

By my third year the little fellow had turned into a fully-fledged gymnasium student, well-versed in the requirements of the "service" which constituted "real" life, while

everything else was considered in the light of its relevance to his studies. I had come to grips with the ins and outs of the "service" and sought after recognition for my service record was a good one and I endeavoured to ensure it remained so, not only for the sake of my family or teachers but for my own sake as well. I had become used to toeing the line but at the same time had begun to look down on those "beneath" me. First years were now regarded as very small fry. I had become most ambitious and enjoyed the class-room atmosphere, especially if I was being singled out for praise by a teacher. The original number had been swollen by additional three teachers for history, Greek and calligraphy, and all three subjects I took seriously so that poor marks in them distressed me.

A new subject which I found difficult to understand right from the outset was algebra. As the end of the school year drew nearer it gave me real cause for concern.

1. The new calligraphy teacher soon acquired the nickname of Ginger Goat. He spoke in a harsh clipped voice and was continually laying down the law. In the eyes of the pupils there was no justification at all for his telling us how to behave, for his subject was viewed as the least important of all. We saw it as beneath our dignity to take calligraphy seriously and regarded the subject as something we had grown out of. The teacher was well aware of our disdain for his subject and often reminded us: "You young fools you have no idea of what useful means!" The opening of his lesson was always predictable, for he was sure to begin with the inevitable refrain: "Sit properly. Hands on desks! Take up your pens--One!"

Thirty right hands slammed down on the desks.

"Take up your pens--Two!"

Thirty hands rose aloft and brandished pens.

"Be-e-e-e-gin! U-u-up, d-ow-ow-n, up down, one two . . ."

A rhythmic chant of a whisper then started up in time with the teacher's harsh commands: "Ginger! Goat, go-o-oat, left right, left right . . ."

"Silence. Idiots . . ."

"You have no idea of what useful means," prompted the class for the next admonition.

2. What a welcome arrival the new "Greek" was! He was tall, well-built, elegant and pale with large pensive eyes. I decided right from the start that I was going to like Greek better than any other subject. He was shy and often coughed in class. We found out from somewhere or other that he was going to get married and decided to write him a message of congratulation. I used to look hard in his direction all through the lesson trying to catch his eye. Sometimes he looked over in my direction and smiled, or so it seemed to me. I was almost sure that he had noticed me and singled me out.

3. It was the very beginning of a lesson on Russian history, a subject I had studied in detail: I had already read through a long volume entitled *Russian History* complete with numerous illustrations and a picture of the monument of Russia's thousand-year anniversary on the cover. I had, as I thought, nothing to fear. I was called to give my answer on Vladimir Monomakh, after which the teacher picked up his pen with a rather casual air.

"Your name is Stanislav?"

"Yes."

"You're not a member of the Orthodox Church then?"

"No, I'm a Catholic (for some reason I suddenly felt awkward about the fact that I was not a member of the Orthodox Church)."

"How do you go about praying in those churches of yours? Everyone carries on in Latin, don't they?"

"I understand the services, we have a Polish translation."

"So you speak Polish? Why don't you pray in Polish then?"

"I don't know" (I wished the floor would swallow me up by this time, I felt so hard done by).

"Sit down again! Strange goings on..." He gave me a B— and I sensed at once that I had made a new enemy. His B— was an insult but there was nothing I could do about it: "Might is right".

4. I used to feel very ashamed if any of my school-fellows came across me when I was out with my family, especially my sisters. One of my sisters used to go as a weekly boarder to the French school, where she had been given

a free place. It was a real torture to me to have to walk along with her on my way to the gymnasium and I was only prepared to walk at her side for the first half of the way. After that I insisted that she walk not beside me, but behind me or take a horse-drawn tram. She was very attached to me and would start crying but she did what I said nevertheless. I used to look round from one side of the street to the other hoping none of my school-fellows would appear. Then she would start trying to kiss me good-bye which made things even worse. Horrors!

5. Much to my chagrin my younger brother gained entry to the gymnasium. As a frightened and bewildered first-former he used any chance to see me and to that end he would often hang about the door into my classroom and tag along at my heels during break. On one occasion he was given a D and started traipsing along behind me, wiping a never-ending stream of tears away and gasping for breath. I ordered him to stop stand by one of the pillars in the main hall and leave me alone. He stood as commanded and followed me with his mournful gaze, while I strode up and down with my class-mates. I did not feel sorry for the poor wretch, only ashamed of him: my indignation made me really cruel.

On the way home I rubbed salt in his wounds. "You don't know anything."

"I do, it's just that Nikolai Ivanovich deliberately . . ."

"Well, all right then—tell me what a chair is."

"A chair, I know what that is, everyone does . . ."

"All right then, tell me in your own words."

"A chair's something you sit on . . ."

"What about an arm-chair or a settee—don't you sit on those?"

"Yes, but there's a difference between a settee and a chair. A chair's made of wood."

"So's a stool . . ."

My bewildered victim looked at me in despair.

"You see, you don't know," I gloated.

"Oh yes, I do. How could I not know, if I sit on one all the time?"

"Sitting's one thing, describing it's another, and you can't describe it, so it means you don't know . . ."

I went on torturing him with tables, lamps, partitions,

clocks demanding that he define them, till he at last dissolved in tears from my teasing. There was no getting away from the fact that I derived pleasure from the whole exercise.

6. That winter I fell ill with bronchitis and mumps both at once. For some reason two diseases at once seemed something to be proud of and it meant I was off school for three weeks. I caught up on all the work, but when I returned it turned out that I had missed out on some new material from the "German". I was surprised to see that after a pupil finished his answer the "German" would ask him some incomprehensible questions, which even the poor pupils managed to answer without the slightest hesitation.

I listened hard. In response to the teacher's incomprehensible question: "Sir, owhole yooby?" the answer came back: "Mein Herr (so far, so good), wie alt sind Sie" (that was all new to me). Then my turn came round. I answered the questions on the material set for homework and then he turned to me with the question already put to many other members of the class: "Sir, owhole yooby?" I mechanically reproduced the chant repeated by the others: "Mein Herr, wie alt sind Sie?" It proved worth an A. After that I could not possibly have asked what "Wie alt sind Sie?" actually meant.

7. A special church service, with bright lights, packed pews and a verger at the door with an enormous brass mace; the organ was thundering and a powerful woman's voice flew aloft from the flurry of noise beneath me. In my mind's eye I pictured a broad white staircase leading down from the choir gallery. I was right up at the top with a woman I did not know. I felt a thrill at the touch of her hand as we slowly made our way down, singing the while. I echoed her melody. All eyes from down below were pinned on us and I was revelling in it.

8. Sergei Zimin was crouched pathetically in front of Unitsson the mathematics teacher. He had just earned himself an E.

"Mikhail Fedorovich, forgive me."

"There's no question of forgiving here. You just don't

know anything. I can't give you an A. Otherwise everyone will start learning their work like you do."

"Mikhail Fedorovich, forgive me, I'll always learn my work for you from now on, Mikhail Fedorovich: it'll mean a thrashing at home, Sir, a terrible thrashing . . ."

"Forgive him, Sir," muttered the class as loud as it dared, "his mother's a real battle-axe . . ."

Zimin was sobbing by this time and then he grabbed hold of Unitsson's hand and tried to kiss it. The teacher pulled his hand away and then Zimin tried to kiss his sleeve.

"Go to your seat, Zimin, it's not my concern whether or not you have a thrashing coming to you. You have not learnt your work and I cannot give you anything but an E.

The class was thunderstruck. Then the bell went and the teacher left the room with Zimin at his heels. He followed him as far as the staff-room. When break came to an end Zimin sat down on the bottom step of the staircase leading down to the classrooms. The teachers started making their way down one after another. They made a point of ignoring Zimin, even stony faced Nikolai Ivanovich stepped round him without telling him to move on.

During the next lesson I sat there asking myself: "Surely he hasn't forgotten that he was young once himself?"

It brought back memories of a sad scene from my early childhood: I was kneeling on the floor of the room in which all my sins had just been brought to light. My mother left the room with the words: "Wait there, till I come back with a birch to give you a thrashing you won't forget in a hurry?"

I do not remember whether she really did thrash me or not, but I do remember the terror of anticipation, thinking: "It will begin any moment!"

9. Then I fell ill with typhoid. Six weeks later I returned to the classroom still weak and pale. I was well aware of the seriousness of what had happened to me and the fact that I had every justification for not knowing the work. My favourite teacher, the new "Greek" who at that time was teaching us Russian language as well, so as to jolly me along, asked me a question to do with familiar rules of syntax that we had repeated on countless occasions

before. I produced the answer and to my great delight was rewarded with an A.

I had missed a whole term but it so happened that my most serious rival Nikolai Nikolsky had also fallen sick. He was absent and was likely to be so for a long time to come. I worked away feverishly at the work set. My turns came up for answering in class and I was given good marks, so that by the end of the term I was top of the class again. What was more I succeeded in maintaining that position till the end of the school year. My rival only reappeared towards the end of the year and failed to catch up.

10. How I used to shine at geography! I could answer all the questions on physical geography in the first year, then those on countries outside Europe in the second year and now those on Europe itself: I knew the textbook from cover to cover. I could even answer them in random order and used to persuade my friends to examine me in that way, as I enjoyed the process so much.

11. I was reading all the Jules Verne I could lay my hands on and enjoying his books even more than those of Mayne Reid and James Fenimore Cooper. Many of my classmates had read and enjoyed numerous works of his as well. We were experts in the common thread linking the three novels *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant* and *The Mysterious Island*. The rumour was rife among us that Jules Verne was going to arrive in Moscow in a balloon and land in Theatre Square. We set out there several times to meet him and prepared a speech of welcome. Yet he never appeared

12. In the summer my friend and I set up something really spectacular in his garden—an erupting volcano! We built up a mountain in the centre of which we had placed a tin can containing damp powder, coal, sand and gravel. To the top of the tin through a hole in the mountain we had laid a powder trail. We lit the free end and waited to see what would happen. A few minutes later there was a cloud of thick smoke, small stones started to fly about and then flames appeared. The eruption was getting out of hand and we were no longer excited but rather frightened by it, afraid that we might be smothered. We took cover behind

a tree and watched half in fear, half in rapture, hoping against hope that everything would turn out for the best. Then at last our mountain collapsed, smouldering gently before it finally died. It had been a thrilling experience for us both.

13. The arithmetic and algebra exam. Try as I might I could not come to grips with the trifling algebra problem that Unitsson read out: "Half to the power of minus three."

Minus three! We had never done that power. . . . Minus three! Even if I had had to work out the power of nought that would have been simple, for "any number to the power of nought is equal to one". But minus three! I tried to remember how to calculate the wretched power myself, but nothing came of it. Yet everyone else, even the poor pupils, had finished the sum and they were all already handing in their exercise books. One sympathetic class-mate traced an eight on my desk with his finger, watching the teacher out of the corner of his eye as he did so. Not even the eight helped.

My look of desperation attracted the teacher's attention. Now he was standing over me and declaring: "So that's how far you've been deceiving your teacher! I trusted you, hoped you would go a long way, always gave you A's and it turns out that you don't even know numbers with negative indices!"

"Numbers with negative indices?!" I exclaimed. "Mikhail Fedorovich! I know that rule!" In a great hurry, before he could stop me, I blurted out like a well-rehearsed tongue-twister: "'A number with a negative index is equal to one, divided by the same number with a positive index.' I'll have it ready in a minute, Mikhail Fedorovich, I've worked everything out, I just need to fill in the answer."

"No, that's enough: hand in your answer paper as it stands. At least I'll know in future that you have been deceiving me for a whole year. Next year if you come up with a perfect answer I'll give you a B, and if your answer's worth a B, a C will go down in the book."

He took the wretched piece of paper away from me and walked off in indignation. I felt shattered, beat my forehead with my fist and tried to take in how that could possibly have happened. If anyone had told me that minus three was a negative index, I would have completed the

paper faster than *anyone else* in the class. I felt ashamed and furious.

Early in the chapter I remarked on the fact that the young slip of a boy had turned into a gymnasium pupil able to hold his own with the best and had succeeded in mastering not just the necessary syllabus but also the methods and approach of the individual teachers, thanks to hard thorough work. In coming to grips with that task he had come to an awareness of himself as an individual. Recognition and appreciation of his abilities were important to him: not only did he wait anxiously for the occasions when the odd crumb of official favour might come his way, but also strove to achieve recognition which he considered his due and grew indignant when treated with casual indifference, as if he hardly existed. He enjoyed being singled out with any teacher's favour, and in his turn had favourite teachers, the "Greek" and the geographer. The historian had insulted beyond measure this earnest pupil not so much by mocking at his religious beliefs, which by this stage were far from fervent, but by giving him that wretched B-- on the grounds that he was a Catholic. After all this particular Catholic sang in an Orthodox choir and was even regarded as a valuable member of it thanks to the quality of his voice. Yet he had achieved his ambition beyond a shadow of doubt in the third year, he had come out top of the class at the end of the year, albeit thanks to chance and the unexpected disease that befell his rival. Young Stanislav had not just turned into a typical gymnasium student but was also developing a personality and interests of his own. He was intrigued by travel books and geography, would pore over atlases and follow the routes taken by Jules Verne's heroes. To provide a real-life illustration for the final episode of *The Mysterious Island*, he had devised an erupting volcano with his friend. His imagination was filled with glimmers of proud dreams: he saw himself singled out above the crowd on a grand white staircase escorting a lady endowed with an exquisite voice. He knew all too well that he had been blessed with an unusually fine voice . . .

He was acquiring an ever more accurate grasp of the do's and don't's involved in his dealings with fellow-pupils and teachers. Guided by nothing other than instinct he had drawn the apt conclusion from the incident with Zimin

that the teacher, Unitsson "would not have behaved as he did, if he had remembered what it had been like to be young".

This realization was a crucial landmark in the formation of Stanislav's teacher's instinct which later was to make teaching his all-consuming adult interest. The vast majority of teachers would do well to look back to the years *when they were at school*, to remember what they were like as children, as recommended by young Stanislav.

It was not just the spirit of "the service" that the thirteen-year-old had mastered and come to grips with: his was a world of formulae but mastering formulae was by no means all that was required of him. In this situation, mastering a formula meant memorizing it by every means possible. Armed with this formal approach he memorized the geography textbook from cover to cover and with no trouble at all could name the page, the diagram where each town, cape, isthmus or the Hindu Kush mountains appeared and even whether they were at the top or bottom of the page in question. He applied the same approach to history and algebra. That was what had been his downfall in the exam: he had known the necessary formula by heart but when solving the problem set he had not realized that that particular formula had been the one he needed on that occasion. He had used that approach for Latin and Greek as well, at every turn the recital of rules in their exact wording had been the order of the day. Yet these formulae did not prove flexible or adaptable to life's requirements, they were difficult to apply in practice: after all for young Stanislav the real world was a most "alien" element. All he could hope for was that the right questions would come up and that his memory would not let him down: it was the ability to memorize that was cultivated above all else, and in the final analysis it was really only that talent for which pupils were given credit. This state of affairs gave rise to no end of inner conflict for the pupils and to confrontation with their "superiors". The young pedant then proceeded to apply this formal approach when taking his whipper-snapper of a brother through his paces. The formal interrogation turned into a cruel mockery.

Perhaps the young teacher was grasping at yet another fundamental truth as he took this method of his mentors to its logical conclusion?

CHILDREN AT WORK AND NEW DEPARTURES

At the present time the significance of childhood, child care and education is coming to preoccupy more and more people and frequently it turns out that those who are closely involved with children are gradually (albeit cautiously and timidly at first) coming to appreciate that not everything in the life of a child is simple and clear-cut, that what we know about children and try to do for them needs to be considered and thought through afresh. Through our joint efforts we need to evolve a new approach to children by the adult community, an approach that takes into account their needs and requirements.

There are at last emerging on our horizon from somewhere rights, hitherto unknown, for these weak almost unnoticed creatures: in Europe we are seeing the beginnings, albeit very modest, of a new kind of work with children, and in America, too, in unexpected corners we find schemes being conducted by various individuals, associations and societies which taken together represent an enormous social experiment aimed at introducing elements of freedom, independence, work experience and solidarity into children's lives.

When children are thinking, wishing and dreaming, it is important to provide an outlet for much of what is astir within them, so that it becomes part of their immediate life experience. They need help for there is nowhere for them to go, nothing to defend themselves with, since adults have claimed for themselves and themselves alone, and with no justification, the right to know precisely what a child needs, and also the right to ignore what children themselves really want.

These were the ideas taken up by two or three people

who set up a small children's colony not far from Moscow, a mere two years ago.

Since then the Settlement scheme (cf. Chapter I) has been set up to provide somewhere in Moscow, where children might have an outlet for their social and creative instincts and where adults might strive to help children to satisfy their desire to learn and work.

The men and women who set up the scheme regarded a direct sincere approach as fundamental to their dealings with children. As they saw it, if children were able to speak openly about what they want and what occupies their thoughts, then adults in their turn are able clearly and frankly to tell them their opinions, while at the same time honestly telling children and making them aware of the fact that they need not take the adults' advice if they do not agree with it. It is precisely this sincere frankness shown children by adults and children's realization that adults know more and are able to do more than children can, which should provide the basis for adults' influence upon children.

For two years all the activities carried on by our organization were confined to wretchedly inadequate rented premises. Now, however, a special house has been built, *our* house, where we all hope to provide more opportunities and happiness for children, more experience of learning and shared work. All that we are doing now in the new premises is a continuation, albeit on a much larger scale, of the work that was being carried out over the last two years.

We have rooms for budding artists, amateur photographers, a library and reading room, a large hall for meetings, concerts, plays, recitals and lectures, a museum, and workshop for visual aids, rooms for various children's clubs and societies, where children belonging to one and the same age-group, or who share interests and objectives, can come together. In the same building we have set up a kindergarten and school, courses in drawing, draughtsmanship, and workshops for young carpenters, locksmiths, cobblers, book-binders and seamstresses.

Activities start early in the morning and go on till evening. In each room opportunities are provided for care-free recreation, serious work sessions, reading periods and scientific experiments. Few corners of the building are emp-

ty at any time of day from nine in the morning until nine at night, when the Settlement centre is open.

We want the children themselves to help us in our work and to become closely involved in all aspects of the life we share with them at the centre.

The work and extension of this scheme has already been described in detail elsewhere. I should like to dwell in detail now upon some of the results achieved in our work with children, and to underline those important features of their life which enable us to look forward with every confidence to the future of our scheme. I should like to write of those interesting aspects of the life of those children, whom we had the chance to observe in our summer camp, that has been now held for three years in succession.

From the outset the camp was organized in such a way as to ensure complete independence for the children with regard to domestic and social arrangements and decisions of moral issues that might arise in their midst. The adults went out of their way wherever possible to act as the children's friends and helpers.

The camp was run by a general meeting or assembly of children in which all enjoyed equal rights--big and small, boys and girls. All questions were resolved on the basis of a straightforward majority vote. Meetings of this assembly were chaired by an elected representative. The secretary, also elected to his post, noted down all the decisions taken within this society in miniature.

In the course of three years the overall pattern of life in the summer camp was shaped by decisions of this general assembly. By the third year the routine was as follows: each day from nine o'clock all without exception were involved in community work for three hours in the allotment, the house, yard, etc. To ensure that the work tasks were allocated correctly a children's "work committee" was set up which drew up a list of essential work targets for the week to come. Five "foremen" were elected from the ranks of the children to keep an eye on things.

Each day while community work was in progress child cooks concocted their dishes, "cleaners" swept the floors and "messengers" set off to make various purchases. After midday everyone was allowed to do what they wished.

All children at the camp had to take their turn at cook-

ing or cleaning, etc., until the task was taken over by the next "shift". If anything was amiss, the shift which had been on duty at the time in question either had to put things right or continue with their duties for another day, if so decided by a general vote. The adult helpers at the camp took their turns at the various duties along with the children.

All the domestic arrangements—the purchase of food, allocation of funds for minor expenses and delivery of food items to the cooks—were the responsibility of the elected "steward". The steward was elected to the office for a week and if he or she managed domestic arrangements successfully remained at his post for longer, as in the case of a fifteen-year-old boy in the camp during our third summer.

The cooks had to note down the amounts and prices of all the items they required in the kitchen. The bills for their purchases had to be handed into the "steward". He, in his turn, had to account for his allocation of the funds issued to him by the "head book-keeper", one of the older girls, who had been elected to her post on a permanent basis. She kept the accounts and looked after all the funds for the camp.

The only punishment employed was the "reprimand" decreed by the general assembly for misdemeanours, in particular those against the interests of the community as a whole. After three reprimands an offender was obliged to leave the camp. This final measure however never had to be resorted to.

This whole system had been devised through the efforts of the children and the few adults who lived amongst them. The children, of course, had the biggest part to play, particularly latterly, since the adults made a point of having less and less to do with general supervision. Indeed there was nothing surprising about the fact that the children coped more or less satisfactorily with the running of a camp on their own, where a total of thirty-five children spent their summer that third year. There was nothing surprising about it for the organizational side of work at the camp had been evolving steadily over the two previous years and most of the children by the third summer were used to carrying out domestic duties in house and garden. It was something else which was surprising, and that was the sensible, thoughtful approach which the children devel-

oped with regard to the central aspect of life at the summer camp—work.

Our camp was only a summer affair, although by chance we were able to use one and the same premises for three consecutive years thanks to the kind owner. The premises could only be used in the summer, so we were only able to settle in once the warm weather had started around mid-May. We had to start work on the vegetable-garden at once, yet however quickly we got started, we could only count on being able to use our own produce for a relatively short time. This usually meant just the last two or three weeks before our departure, yet it would have been very difficult to entertain any idea of more sophisticated plans for growing our own food involving green-houses, or laying in pickled or bottled supplies for the winter, etc. Naturally the uncertainty with regard to the fruits of our labours meant that enthusiasm began to ebb somewhat by the middle of the summer.

This led one of the adult helpers to suggest by way of a joke at one of the general meetings that the community work sessions should be dropped. Almost unanimously, however, the children went on from there to adopt a decision to the effect that only those who wanted to should work, in other words that working should be a matter of conscience, not an instruction.

The next day work went ahead at full speed. All the children, apart from one, worked as a matter of conscience, even getting up at six o'clock in the morning to do so.

Soon afterwards a group emerged that went by the name of "labour alliance". The group was joined by all those who opted to "work, support the camp's interests and learn about agriculture". This new incentive served its purpose for no more than a few days. A week later, when the "alliance" held a general meeting, it was decided to exclude those who had not pulled their weight. There was no shortage of excluded members, but instead of accepting the situation, they immediately set up a "camp association" with the same objectives as the original "alliance".

From that moment on life in the camp became really interesting and exciting. The children started to work with feverish intensity. The rivalry between the two groups was such that on one occasion they worked through from six in the morning to nine in the evening with only short breaks

for meals. It was no wonder that in such conditions our work tasks, such as the hay harvest, were rapidly completed and without any promptings from outside, a new idea was brought forward by the children on which I should like to dwell in some detail.

They came to the conclusion that the camp we had all set up was inadequate, because its members were not engaged in real work and what we really needed was a camp with a wider range of work activities organized in such a way that each member or group of members, depending upon their potential, would be able to pay their own way without relying on funds from rich outsiders or allowances from parents. To a camp of that sort only those children would be invited who were prepared to work hard and contribute to the common cause.

This suggestion gave rise to animated discussions about the future, about the kind of preparations that were needed to mould a community suitable for this new enterprise, whose members would learn about agriculture and attend lectures in Moscow during the winter.

These ideas and aspirations lent a new, more positive air to efforts directed towards improving the less happy aspects of life at the camp. When some of the younger boys and girls started quarrelling, such developments were not viewed in the context of a personal feud as before, but rather as something detrimental to the common cause, since goings-on of that kind made the organization of any new scheme impossible.

If any of the children started shirking his duties he would be met with reproaches in the vein: "You're not really a camp member, you don't care about the new project."

Each quarrel, setback or instance of mismanagement was seen as a disaster, bound to deal harm to the common cause.

I can still remember the general mood of disappointment which reigned after a serious quarrel between the older and younger boys, who accused the former of setting themselves apart from the rest of the children instead of maintaining a spirit of comradeship. The children found it impossible to agree and in the end one of the elder boys, visibly upset and hurt by the whole affair, announced that he was going to leave the camp. I felt sorry both for him and the rest of the children. It was as if they had lost some-

thing worthwhile, something they would not be able to retrieve.

Perhaps those aspirations of the children anxious to establish their independence once and for all were only part of a passing mood: perhaps it was just another burst of childish enthusiasm: perhaps the children would not have proved equal to such a major undertaking, yet I feel that such aspirations will not disappear completely, that the idea of a work project enabling children to support themselves will not merely fade away, but will instead resurface with renewed force since such a scheme would fulfil some of those needs fundamental to a child's nature.

Such a project would make it possible to organize a new type of life for children rooted in work of an independent nature that would render the children concerned independent—not work indistinguishable from play, but the real thing, an essential feature of man's everyday existence.

The success of such a scheme would be invaluable in promoting the interests of children in general. Even at this stage children can be heard to say: "Perhaps others will start when they see what we're doing." Such notes of social awareness are latent in child groups anywhere.

I have only provided a narrow outline of our work here. Anyone who sincerely believes in the nature of these relationships we have been seeking to establish with children would be taking a positive step, if he puts this conviction into practice in his own dealings with the children he meets. If there are those to whom our ideas appear totally mistaken, let them convey their conviction to us in writing or in print, or come to discuss the issues in person.

With the support and understanding of the one group and the criticism of the other, and despite errors and false deeds on our way, our joint efforts may well bring to fruition the prospect of a new life for children, one that is active, industrious and joyful.

THE GOOD LIFE

(Extracts from the Work)

Dedicated to the memory of my friend
KONSTANTIN ALEXEYEVICH FORTUNATOV

PART I

Chapter One

The very word "children" always conjures up the idea of something noisy, irrepressibly energetic and full of the unexpected. So often they can prove tiresome, or cause us worry: they involve a great deal of work and their life hardly ever conforms to the patterns which we, out of affectionate concern, seek to impose upon it. Then there is no end to the "misdeeds" which we have to battle against!

Yet surely this all stems from the fact that those restless hands, often too restless hands, legs and heads are bursting with an inexhaustible supply of energy which demands at least some kind of outlet.

A child wants to be active, to discharge his energy, but the life around him often provides no opportunities for him to do so. Is it not important to concentrate our efforts, wherever possible, on providing suitable conditions for manifestations of children's vitality? This issue assumes particular significance in relation to children in our towns.

Within the complexities of urban life, with its enormous concentrations of men and women continually engaged in their own adult affairs, to ensure for better or worse the regular pattern of their own lives, there is very little room left over for children's life complete with its own special features. In the towns children tend to live very adult lives: without understanding adult life or finding their bearings within it, they adopt that life with all its good and bad sides. The bad sides of adult life, its most striking and blatant sides, soon find faithful followers among child-

ren— who by their very nature are mimics. It goes without saying that the more sordid the life led by the adults in a child's world, the more dangerous its influence upon the children concerned.

The authors of this book have had ample opportunities to observe children in Moscow's Butyrsky suburb. What they have seen had led them to conclude that the children there have no childhood. The hardships of life there have invaded their childhood and destroyed it. Hence the bitterness, foul language, thefts, gambling—even drunkenness and depravity.

We found ourselves face to face with all this, so it is no wonder that we were desperately anxious to seek for ways to help the children taste of a *child's* life as opposed to adult life, so alien to their nature. We wanted to help them be children. Naturally enough we came round to the idea that the children needed for a time at least to be wrenched away from the town, from that way of life, where everything was subordinated to adult purposes.¹

To carry out this task, in 1905 I and my co-workers started to spend the summers with some of these children out in the country in a dacha placed at our disposal on a temporary basis. It was a summer camp at which there were no domestic staff, so the children had to cope with all the housework themselves and tend the allotment and garden. A crucial feature of the camp was that it gave the children the chance to set up a children's community that evolved its own way of life, with special features adapted to suit the intrinsic nature of children. Much of our effort was concentrated on teaching children to live together, to work together, helping each other as they did so and to let them realize that they could accomplish far more when they joined forces than when they all worked on their own (cf. Chapter III, *Children at Work and New Departures*, pp. 72-78). After spending three summers in this camp we had the opportunity to develop and consolidate our ideas, and by then it was clear to us beyond any doubt that we needed to continue and extend our work. However, we also gradually came to realize that the scope for influencing the way of life that evolved within our summer camps was inadequate.

We had been given the temporary use of a dacha with a small plot attached, which was adequate for purposes of

summer recreation but which could not provide proper work facilities for the children. Nor did we know from one year to the next what the prospects for the future would be; we never knew whether we would still have the camp for the following year. Yet we were convinced by then that our work had to be organized on a permanent basis, so that we could be certain of the chance to run a summer camp and improve on what we had achieved the year before. There was not enough variety in the work we were able to arrange for the children: sometimes we started on various work tasks not because they were important to the camp as an economic unit but simply so that the children would not be sitting around doing nothing.

These shortcomings stood out particularly clearly when the children succeeded in consolidating various work habits and it became obvious that we could have done a great deal more for them, if it had not been for the uncertainty of our situation. What we needed was not just "any old dacha" but our own plot of land, where it would be possible, year in year out, to carry out our work without having to worry about what the future might hold. Yet it was to be three years before such an opportunity came our way.

In the winter of 1911 M. K. Morozova suggested that we might set up a permanent camp in her estate in the Kaluga province and provided the funds for putting up the necessary buildings and stocking and equipping the camp. We embarked energetically on preparations for the new scheme.

Chapter Two

Since we were at the time closely involved in the work of the Moscow Society for Children's Work and Recreation² we decided to invite children to the summer camp who attended our town centre in the winter months and whom we already knew quite well. The children concerned used to visit our centre for various games and study sessions that were organized by our centre in the evenings and at other times outside school hours. This centre, set up as a children's club, had started in 1905 and had been carried on in the town ever since in the autumn, winter and spring.

As we prepared for the new project, we decided it was very important to acquaint the children with our plans for life at the camp, so that our ideas, or at least their basic outline, should be understood by the children. This preliminary work with the children was carried on in two ways. We had long talks both with individual pairs of close friends among the children and also with much larger groups. A great number of matters were discussed but two subjects predominated on most occasions: life in the town and life in the country.

The children were dissatisfied with their life in the town: it was boring and they had nothing to do, there was much that was unpleasant, the air was polluted and there was nowhere to play or go for walks. Many of the children had never been outside the town and they were particularly curious to discover the countryside. Another side of the life we were telling them about that might well prove interesting was the baking, cooking and gardening that they would be doing. "So I'm going to be cook and you'll be gardener. Who'll sweep the yard?"

We also told the children about the life in the camps of previous years. On several occasions we read to them passages from the book *Children--the Workforce of the Future*, which contained descriptions of life at those camps. We stressed how pleasant it had been to do all the work ourselves and not just work, but also to make life at the camp more pleasant and interesting than it had been in Moscow.

Some of the children who had attended the original summer camps had kept in touch with us. To a good number of them the link meant a great deal and they continued to come and see me and my co-workers, whom they viewed as old friends, and they often sought advice from us in their personal affairs.

This also occurred when there was an enforced break in our work when the Settlement scheme (the work which was described in the book *Children--the Workforce of the Future*) was shut down in 1908 by the authorities "in view of the attempt by the organizers to introduce socialism into the lives of children" as worded in the official indictment. After the organization Work and Recreation for Children was set up the younger children began to enrol first of all for the new camp, while the older children used

to come and provide extra helpers from time to time. Whenever we were working on a concert or play with the children, that were organized from time to time in the Moscow centre, we could always rely on former members of the summer camps coming along to help make scenery, fix up the curtains, decorate the hall or help in the dressing rooms after their day in the work-shop or training school.

When the opportunity arose to set up the new permanent camp those young people greeted the idea with considerable enthusiasm, and those who were able to be free that first summer expressed the wish to come along too.

We were all touched by this interest although we did not deceive ourselves with regard to some of the difficulties that might involve. In general young children find it hard to get along with those in their late teens: they do not know whether to regard them as friends or elders, or how they would work alongside each other at the camp. A great deal, virtually everything in fact, depended upon the fact and commitment of the individual, on the faith and interest in the common task shown by those young people. In our conversations with them we made no secret of our misgivings with regard to how those difficulties might be overcome. We set great store anyway by their desire to take part and their undeniable sense of belonging.

The first year in the new camp there were five "old hands" aged between 15 and 19. One of them had only just been promoted from apprentice to foreman in one of the Moscow printing works, while the others were studying at various technical schools.

In Moscow they helped us a great deal in preparing the children for the new life that awaited them at the summer camp. They had witnessed and been involved in the work of a similar camp and naturally their tales and reminiscences loomed very large for the newcomers, and still more their happy enthusiasm in connection with the new camp.

They made it clear to the children that life at the camp would seem hard at first, that they would have to do a great deal of work, that the work might seem daunting and very difficult, but without that work the camp as we planned it could not have existed. The children were ready to accept everything, as long as they could have the chance to set out and try this new life. "They're probably just scaring us."

In March we started on the preparations. It was suggested that those who would like to could help make the beds out of wooden slats fixed to rectangular wooden frames each end instead of legs, sew sacks for stuffing as mattresses, to make drying-up cloths and to hem cotton blankets. This work provided a useful testing-ground: those who were unable to work hard in Moscow would find things difficult in the camp, for the preliminary work in Moscow was a mere game in comparison with the tasks that awaited us later on.

There was great enthusiasm for the project and the children used to come along twice a week for a two-hour session. They did not get tired of the work and they made quite good progress. There was no end to their plans and dreams.

Meanwhile work was proceeding with the utmost haste on the site of our new camp. It was in a beautiful spot among copses, gullies and springs of the Kaluga Province where the Maloyaroslavets and Borovsk districts meet. It was fairly isolated and yet man had left his mark there: part of the woods had been cleared although the clearing was now overgrown with thick bushes. The soil was clayey, the grasses were coarse, and as for the trees, the clumps of birch, ash, alder and willow-bush saplings made it obvious that much hard work would be in store for us and everything else would have to come later.

The hardest but nevertheless essential work such as rooting out tree stumps in the spot set aside for the vegetable garden, pulling up enormous quantities of weeds and clearing a small space in front of the actual house was carried out by the workmen before they left. It was important to have got that over quickly and before the children arrived. The basic conditions for a normal, every-day life had to be provided before children came rushing along to embark on their work which could sometimes be painfully slow.

Yet everyone was so keen to get started as soon as possible that the first year we decided not to wait till everything was ready, but just see that the essentials had been taken care of.

In view of this the carpenters began to build a large two-storied cabin complete with a wide verandah and two balconies on the north and south sides along the whole

width of the second floor. Out of the wood that was left over they knocked up a small hut where a cooking range was installed. It was our first kitchen, the first work-centre in the camp. There were various delays in the building schedule and in the middle of May things were still not ready. The organizers decided to set off all the same to spend a few days there without the children, to make sure all the basic essentials were in order while on their own and in peace and quiet, and so as to have the chance to think things through carefully once more.

The window-panes had not yet been put in, nor the doors hung, but the weather was beautiful that May and warm too. There was so much interesting work ahead to make our dream come true, so that these details seemed trifling to us.

Experience in previous summers had shown us that work in the kitchen was something that the children accepted right away, in view of its being indispensable. Without preparing food for themselves, life in the camp would be impossible: kitchen was just as vital a word for our life in the camp as lunch and supper. That was why we attached particular importance to that part of the camp, so as to make the children's first steps in this new field of activity as straightforward as possible. A large number of kitchen utensils was purchased for which proper places had to be found. Questions such as where shelves should be put up, where the samovar and table should go, and where the best place for the pantry was now assumed primary importance. We had to find out how provisions could be regularly obtained, where bread should be bought, and how the children should be accommodated, where the boys' and girls' sleeping quarters should be.

The whole of our first day at the camp was spent sorting out various domestic arrangements. It would be for the best if the children on arrival should feel not in the midst of chaos but rather that as soon as they came into the camp they should feel things were streamlined and organized. This would make the transition from life in Moscow less abrupt.

As we discussed these matters we resolved to resist the temptation to rush into things. The most important thing was to conduct our lives in such a way that the children should realize that we too felt closely involved with the

project and took it very much to heart. We needed not so much to talk about work as to join in the work and make it clear that the camp was not just to the children but for us as well. "Everything else will sort itself out!" was the constant refrain.

Chapter Three

The children were due to come on May 26th but not all of them at once. A group of twenty-five came first and the rest were to follow a few days later. The railway journey itself was a source of excitement: after their first impressions of open space and freedom that always take the town-dweller's breath away, the actual camp site and cabin so different from ordinary Moscow buildings were not to everyone's liking. Some of the younger girls felt quite disappointed. "So we're going to live out here all on our own then? Isn't it spooky? It's just like being lost in the middle of the forest!"

The first reactions did not last for long however and soon the children came to accept their new, unfamiliar setting. Some of them indeed had been in raptures right from the start. As soon as they arrived and had had a bite to eat they knuckled down to settling in: the beds, filling the sack mattresses with hay, while the most impulsive of all forgot about everything and rushed out into the wood and nearby gully to explore their surroundings. That evening the children took a long time to unwind: no sooner did the talking begin to die down, then someone started up again, and it was an uphill struggle to persuade them to quieten down and go to sleep. However that first night's sleep was all too short: a wild shriek at four o'clock in the morning had everyone on their feet: "Get up! Get up!" As it happened one of the boys on waking up and seeing that the sun was up had decided that everyone should leave their beds. Most of the boys had leapt at the suggestion with boundless delight and run out again to explore their new surroundings once more.

In the morning after their breakfast we asked all the children to come and discuss our life in the camp and the way it should be run. Naturally enough that first "meeting" had nothing very organized about it. The children

were waiting to see how things would develop. In Moscow they had discussed the camp at length, made detailed plans and dreamt of what it would be like--now was the time to put plans into practice.

They sat facing each other on benches and the adult helpers started the ball rolling by asking: "Everyone wants to eat, but who's going to cook? We'll do the cooking for today but what about after that?" A sheepish silence followed, interrupted by one child voicing the doubts of the whole group: "But . . . we don't know how?"

When we asked: "Surely some of the girls must have helped their mothers cook at some time or other?" Two or three of the girls agreed that they had, but the rest explained that their mothers never used to allow them into the kitchen saying that they would get in the way.

We explained: "There's nothing terrible about not knowing how to cook. You can learn, wanting to learn is all that matters. You can learn how here and then help your mothers at home later."

"Will there be any boys in the kitchen?"

"But of course, there are plenty of men chefs, aren't there. The boys will learn too. Look at Shurka over there, he learnt to cook lunch at one of our early camps and didn't know how before he came."

The children were cheering up by this time. One of the women helpers offered to be on kitchen duty to start with, until the children started to get used to the idea.

We then explained what work in the kitchen involved: it meant cooking lunch and supper, washing up all the kitchen utensils, wiping down the tables and sweeping the floor. The next task was to draw up a list of groups of children who would take turns at kitchen duty. Three people were needed for each shift and it was suggested that each shift should consist of one older person or at least someone with a little experience of cooking and two youngsters.

Amidst the lively discussion and jumping about that followed a rota of names for kitchen duty was drawn up.³ The children clustered round the person making out the list, looking for partners and then an older person to make up their shift. Making out that first list was quite an undertaking. Not everyone managed to land in the group

of their choice because there were not really enough adults or older children to go round.

Another question was then put to the children by one of the women helpers: "Who is going to light the samovar, pour out tea and wash the tea-cups? Three people will be needed for those jobs each day. I would suggest each group of cooks, after completing their kitchen duty, should then act as tea orderlies the next day? What about it?"

"That's a good idea?"

"But that's not all: so far we have a job to keep six people busy each day? What are the others going to do?"

This question was met with yet another baffled silence. "Do some work somewhere else." came at last a timid mumble of an answer.

"But where?" More silence.

"Just take a look round the house and especially near the verandah. Look how much rubbish, wood chips, planks and odd pieces of wood left around by the builders there is lying around! If we are all going to live here, let's start out by clearing the place up to show that people worthy of the name have settled in."

They all jumped up from the seats with the obvious intention of getting on with something or other as soon as they could.

"What kind of work is that?" some of the bolder ones could be heard inquiring.

"Just wait a bit, we haven't finished yet. I think everyone in the camp should get together for a meeting like today's twice a week. You'll soon see for yourselves that there's no end to the new jobs that lie ahead."

"All right, we're all agreed. What about now though, where should we collect up the rubbish?"

"Collect up the wood shavings in a pile some way from the house would be best, for we can burn those later but as for the chips and the planks and anything that can be used in the range, let's pile it up near the kitchen to use for firewood."

On that note the first discussion with the children came to an end. The first group of cooks and tea orderlies went with two women helpers to the kitchen and the scullery where the crockery was kept. The others rushed out eagerly to collect wood chips. It soon turned out that piling up

wood-chips and clearing rubbish just by hand was not very effective: what the children needed was hand-barrows, rakes and spades. They set about straight away knocking together hand-barrows: hammers, nails and saws were soon out and busy. Iron prongs had to be fixed to the end of wooden handles to make the rakes. Everyone enjoyed piling up wood shavings in anticipation of the bonfire that would follow. Soon a large pile of chips and scraps of wood had been collected. A little more thought and organization were however required when it came to raking up the rubbish and scraping over the loose earth, when the rake tines kept getting caught on roots, stacking the wood-chips in tidy piles that did not fall over, or repairing the hand-barrows that broke almost as soon as work started. Almost before anyone could look round the bonfire was alight and everyone was crowding up to admire the flames. Work came to a standstill... That was the way work went on in fits and starts almost everywhere except in the kitchen where everyone, even the least experienced children realized that the kitchen could not be abandoned, work could not be interrupted or slowed down, and all this despite the fact that work in the kitchen involved countless different, albeit small-scale jobs—fetching firewood, water, washing cereal grain, peeling and slicing potatoes or other vegetables, and so on and so forth. How could they possibly abandon their post and go off for a walk or to take a look around to see what the others were doing, when that would mean that everyone in the camp would have to go without lunch?

This meant that the success of the work the children carried out was closely linked with the significance which it had for the life of the camp as a whole.

The more time we spent with the children in these summer camps, the more we realized that teaching children proper work habits was a very gradual, intricate process⁴ even despite the undeniable willingness on the part of many of the children to “have a go”, even if only to please the adult helpers, as was the case at first.

When the ground adjacent to the house had been cleared it was time to start work on a vegetable garden. There was no question but that this task should take priority: it was the only one that was important not just for the current camp but it represented provision for the future

as well. There is, however, no getting away from the fact that the work was far from easy, and if it had not been for the older children we could not have coped.

The heavy clayey soil had already been ploughed over once and now had to be dug with spades to break up the large lumps which had dried hard in the hot weather that we were enjoying at the time. Although it was not yet too late to sow vegetables, the earth had to be loosened to make it ready for the following year. Moreover, that year as well, some parts of the vegetable garden which were easier to work had already been fertilized and sown with peas, radishes, lettuces: a few young cabbage plants had also been put out so that the children's work in the vegetable garden, that year too, should not be seen to yield no results.

In those early days the children soon saw that there was a great deal of work to be done. We suggested that there should be two periods set aside for work sessions: one should be in the morning, before the sun was too high in the sky, and the other in the evening when the heat of the day had passed. On the basis of the time that the children had been devoting to work so far it was decided that five hours be set aside for work - three before lunch and two afterwards. An overall timetable was also agreed: the children would rise at seven, breakfast at eight, then work until a midday break for lunch. There would be tea at four, followed by an afternoon work session and then finally supper at eight and lights-out at half past nine. In view of the great exertion work in the vegetable garden involved, it was decided that the children should have a ten-minute break after every twenty minutes at work.

During the various breaks and rest-periods the children used to sit down in the shade. Talk would then start up in which all the children would take a very active part: they would criticize certain of the arrangements or to be more exact discuss with great verve those sides of life in the camp which no amount of effort had as yet succeeded in placing on a well-organized footing. The adults present were very glad to witness these spontaneous discussions which started the children thinking hard and meant that little by little some kind of group thinking emerged. There were also some highly successful periods of cheerful work with every one pulling their weight. There were the first

signs or rather flickers of *happiness through work* to be observed. Most probably the discussions would not have been so lively if it had not been for the participation of adults in the work, for during the early days example had a very large part to play.

In certain cases it was particularly gratifying to note the development of the children's interest in, and perhaps even sense of responsibility for their work, primitive and undemanding though some of it was. Some of the children began to look upon their work as something important in itself and to carry it out properly for that reason, rather than just because there was a good deal of talk going on about work, or because the adults hoped they would get on with it.

Chapter Four

Very soon after our children arrived it became clear that the very nature of life at the camp made certain other work tasks imperative. To begin with one of the woman helpers made sure that the supply of food and other stocks was properly organized. At one of the general discussions it was proposed to the children that one of their number should be elected to supply the cooks with the required food items, work out how much the food cost each day and make sure that we did not run out of any basic foodstuffs. For this role of "housekeeper" a girl of eleven was chosen without objections from any quarter, since even during those first two weeks she had established a reputation for herself as an honest and painstaking member of the community. The young "housekeeper" carried out her duties impeccably and, by way of special recognition for her services, she was asked to continue in that office for an extra week. It was interesting to note how the children took pride in this, particularly the other girls. Her success led the boys to decide to show that one of them would be able to carry out the same duties just as well. By the time the girl's time as housekeeper was due to come to an end and a replacement needed to be chosen, the boys, and for the most part the younger ones, had agreed upon their candidate and put him up for general approval, after which he was duly elected, despite somewhat disdainful objections from the girls who considered that housework was their

domain. The boy turned out to be a most conscientious steward, who set himself very high standards.

In general it turned out that we had come to a stage where all sorts of new situations demanded new personnel. In general we found ourselves caught up in a "wave" of job-creations: the children invented the office of "bread-cutter" whose duty consisted in slicing the loaves at meal-times. Previously that job had been carried out on a random basis and had not always proved one of the easiest tasks. The bread had to be cut four times a day and a regular mountain of slices was required. A "tool-keeper" was then elected to see that proper care was taken of the tools, and a "clerk" or "secretary" was also elected to note down the decisions taken at camp meetings. The children never questioned the need for meetings for it was on those occasions that the affairs of the household now well within the children's grasp were discussed. They took perhaps even more seriously the allocation of duties which involved making sure that no one had more duty shifts than anyone else. They also enjoyed choosing their close friends to make up their particular work-group, and they also set store by the inclusion in their particular group of an "old-hand", since the experience of the elder children considerably lightened their own work-load. The elections themselves and the running of them also began to catch the children's interest.

In this way the children began to play an increasingly active part in the meetings. Later, in addition to purely domestic matters the children began to discuss relationships within the community, and to criticize behaviour on the part of certain individuals which they saw as contrary to the whole spirit of the camp. They also started coming forward with suggestions as to how life at the camp might be enhanced.

The most frequent question to be raised was the key one of work. When the first difficulties arose the older children started to lose heart and declare that "with lazy-bones like that, you can't make a go of things" and that the lazy children "had no idea how to go about work", spending more time playing about than carrying out their duties and that one of them had even made the most of a time, when he was meant to be working on his own away from the others, to have a quiet little nap—"a terrible check!"

They needed jollyng along and a reminder that these were only temporary setbacks and that everything would work out for the best. We recalled the early days they had spent at an earlier camp, when children were reluctant to join in the work at first, but got used to it and enjoyed it afterwards. As we saw it, the progress made at work was far from discouraging; indeed what was important was not the work itself so much as the attitudes to work, which were becoming more and more enthusiastic as time went on. However the more impatient among the older children felt that the newcomers had had enough time to settle down already and that they should have knuckled down to "real work" by then. Meanwhile it was heartening to note that many children began to adopt a more positive attitude to their work and themselves started to voice criticism about some of the work being carried out, so that it was no longer only the elder children who were concerned with progress in the work at the camp.

The explanations as to why work was not proceeding satisfactorily varied little and consisted mainly in complaints that there were not always adults present when work was going on, which meant that work was less well organized and not such fun. However there was a great deal of work to be done by the adults all over the camp and it was not always possible for them to work together with the children. A discussion began as to how this state of affairs could be put right.

The elder boys suggested that a "supervisor" be elected whose task would be "not to inspect or punish but to decide where and which tasks should be carried out, to advise how, to repair tools when necessary during work sessions and to join in the work himself of course at the same time." The adults did not object to this proposal to elect "supervisors" although they were sure such a step would fail. Meanwhile, however, they were keen for the children to work out things for themselves and find ways for improving the work programme. In fact they themselves said: "It probably won't work, but we can try, and perhaps it will improve things after all." It was in connection with this rather new step that major clashes with the girls began: two distinct groups of girls began to emerge, one consisting of the younger ones and the other of the older ones.

It was precisely this last group which began voicing more and more criticism of the camp. This came as a major blow to the camp organizers.

Chapter Five

We knew that group of elder girls well from Moscow days. They had been members of our children's clubs and had been interested in embroidery, made rugs out of various kinds of material and cushions. They often used to bring with them work they had done at home: such as blouses or dresses. We helped them cutting out, choosing material colours and using patterns. They had made Russian folk costumes for one of the plays we had put on and these costumes had been brought out to the camp and were worn on special occasions. Most of them were training to be dressmakers so their choice of activity at our clubs was quite natural. They worked well and with lively interest.

Many of them made a good impression and seemed sensible when one spoke to them on their own but watching them altogether was sometimes most distressing.

Without any visible cause, after some chance remark quarrels would flare up among them, into which the whole group was soon drawn. The hard life they were used to at home had left its mark on those unfortunate girls. As we listened to the cutting and unjust reproaches they used to address to each other, watched their tense faces and uncontrolled movements as we attempted to calm down the feuding girls and take their minds off the endless bickering we tried to find the reasons behind their mood. We felt it must lie in the conditions of life they were used to in Moscow: sometimes we used to picture to ourselves two families living on top of each other in a dark, dirty wooden house, in rooms leading off one and the same corridor, living lives every detail of which would be all too familiar to their neighbours, who like themselves would be devoured by the same never-ending struggle to see themselves through each new day as it dawned. They would be used to hearing people pouring out their bitterness and lamenting the burdensome and hopeless nature of their harrassed existence in a loud torrent of abuse and reproaches as they chewed over their own and other people's affairs.

Such would have been the daunting weight of experience stored in those young minds and hearts. It was experience from which there was no escape for a peaceful respite, experience that stunned and twisted a child's natural instincts and which would have had a particularly powerful effect upon girls rather than boys, since their ties and involvement with the family would normally be particularly close. We had hoped that our girls would have been able to relax in the camp, recover from the harsh experience of their day-to-day lives, and that their attitudes to life, hardened so early, might yield a little. We had realized of course that our work with them was not going to be easy, and that these girls required our special care.

Yet at the same time we had been carried away by the desire to give a large group of children the opportunity to live in the country and had thereby made our task of helping the girls still more difficult.

At the outset a great deal of work had been required at the camp to sort out the domestic arrangements and to make the pattern of our life interesting. We had been overwhelmed by a tide of new observations and ideas that we had not yet had time to analyse and think through. The children seemed to be convinced that nothing could proceed without the adults or older children, their routine for life at the camp had not yet assumed clear shape and this meant that they kept coming to seek advice on minor matters. These questions had been taking up a great deal of our time.

By concentrating our efforts on sorting out the new routine for the younger children, we had, without meaning to, rather ignored how things were going for the older children who were in the camp for the first time. It was this group of girls which found it harder than anyone else at the camp to grasp the implications of the new way of life and pattern of relationships at the camp, however gradually we tried to introduce the latter to the girls. The way of life at the camp contrasted too starkly with the urban life they had known before in a world where children quickly learnt to accept everything without any real criticism, as inevitable.

The young people who had attended previous camps were already familiar with the way of life. When it came to the older girls, who found themselves in an unfamiliar envi-

ronment for the first time, they were torn between their instinctive sense that the camp had something worthwhile to offer and their habitual mistrust of good intentions and kindness shown them. Their dilemma constantly made itself felt in their conversation and behaviour. They began to keep themselves apart from the rest, their attitude to the colony was that of the outsider or guest who had just come along for a peep. They took part in the work tasks set them insofar as others at the camp made direct demands upon them. Meanwhile life at the camp depended above all on the emergence of individual aspirations and initiative, whereas the girls' approach to life at the camp was totally passive. It was as if they were just sitting and waiting for commands from the adults present. This meant that the other children also came to regard them as a group apart, as indeed did the adults. The very way of life at the camp placed these girls in a *special* position.

One day this group of girls was working in front of the house. After patting down the turf which had just been put down along the paths we had marked out, they sat down in a circle and started off again with their usual chit-chat and jokes. The earnest "supervisor" came up to them and said they should get on with their work, but he received the off-hand reply: "What's it to do with you? If you're such a sucker for work, why don't you go and do some yourself!" The boy turned to one of the adults walking past at that moment for moral support but she recommended that he should leave the girls be: "We'll assume they've just come for the holiday, we can manage to feed the odd holiday-maker!" she added.

The girls, who had been well within ear-shot of that conversation, dropped their spades and rakes immediately and went off to their room. When lunch-time came round, the girls did not come down for a long while, until finally they appeared armed with towels and walked silently past the rest of the children who were sitting at the table.

The whisper went round: "They've gone for a swim: they don't want to eat or drink anything because they say they're not spongers."

"They may say that, but they've already had their milk pudding out in the kitchen and they've hidden big hunks of bread in their towels," someone pointed out with a sneer in his voice.

Some of the children started laughing, but the adult helpers asked the rest of the children not to tease the girls and to leave them alone. "Perhaps things will sort themselves out more quickly then: they'll go on putting on airs for a bit and then they'll see reason."

Outwardly life at the camp went on as usual: swimming, tea-time and the late work session. After the girls came back from their swim, they kept to their room.

This event was of course a major upset for our little world and made everyone very tense. The adults did not call the children together for a meeting to discuss the situation, because by this time feelings were running too high. Moreover in such situations children tend to see everything in terms of black and white and adopt a very stern line: and we were only too well aware of their very critical attitude to the girls' behaviour with regard to this incident. Yet we could not just sit back and wait till everything blew over, since it had all come about precisely because the girls had been left too much to their own devices, when everyone had been so busy.

One of the adults was given the job of talking to them, on their own without the other children. He put a number of questions to the girls: Did they think that everyone at the camp should be able to do whatever he or she liked? Did the adults all abide by the rules of the camp? Did they not think that the way they were behaving was making life difficult for everyone else? Did they find the work difficult? Did they feel tired and was that what made them object to the work?

The girls answered that they ought to abide by the rules, that the adult helpers joined in all the work with the others, that life at the camp was not tough and they did not find it tiring; yet at the same time they did not see why their behaviour should bother anyone else.

"But we don't like feeling we are living off other people and being resented by them. That's why we don't have any lunch."

"Why should people suddenly out of the blue start telling you that you were living at others' expense?"

"We were sitting down and resting, when . . ."

"D'you think you are working as you should be doing?"

"We didn't say that: what we don't like is when people go on at us."

"So you think that remarks about your laziness were unjustified?"

"No, they were justified, but we found them very hurtful."

"For myself I must say that when you're bustling about and working hard yourself, it's not very nice to see others sitting around and doing nothing. I've seen the work you've been doing and I must say that it's been very poor and that it has been rubbing lots of people up the wrong way."

"We'd get on with it, if the others didn't give us the cold shoulder all the time."

"I would beg you then to think back to the days in Moscow, when you were so eager to come to the camp: you were told there would be no one to wait on you here, and that you would have to do everything yourself. You asked us to talk to your parents who were anxious about letting you travel so far away and so we brought your parents round to the idea. You came of your own accord and agreed to everything we told you you'd find here. I and the other adult helpers were relying on you, seeing that you were older than most of the others, to help in the household and we thought that having you with us would make things easier. Yet it didn't turn out like that: you've caused hard feelings and gone against the tide so that by now even the young children have stopped taking you seriously. You came of your own accord, so you have no one to blame but yourselves for being here. The way you've been behaving has shown that you don't like the life here and that you don't want to join in everything here with the rest of us. Life here means sharing the work with every one else and sharing the recreation. Because of you everyone's morale is low, the adults are out of sorts too and the children keyed up waiting to know what will happen next. If you feel you've been treated unfairly, why don't you talk to the people you hold responsible. Have you done so?"

"No."

"Just stop and think for a minute: if the others, after watching you, stopped work, and the adult helpers, feeling let down, stopped caring as well, then the camp could not exist for even a day! If you find it so unpleasant here that you want to cut yourself from everyone else, then it would be better if you went back to Moscow, because the

way you're carrying on makes things difficult for everybody. What's more if you don't like people nagging you about work, it's better to show them that you know how to knuckle down to things properly, rather than doing nothing to get rid of your bad reputation by refusing to work at all. One way or the other please give some thought to what I've been saying. Come and tell me afterwards what you've decided: whether you're going to stay or go back because things are very difficult here as they stand. There are a lot of young children here and we have to think about the effect all this has on them."

The girls went back to their room and after discussing it all amongst themselves and with some of the other children who went in to see them, they came down to tea, behaving quite cheerfully as if nothing had happened. They announced that it was all over, that they did not want to go off and leave the camp, especially over trifling upsets, that it had all been a "silly mix-up".

After that incident there were no more differences with those girls and they worked away contentedly together with the other children, although it did not come easily to them. Eventually they managed to establish good relationships with almost everyone else in the camp.

This was the very moment for us to ask ourselves how misunderstandings, mistrust and lack of communication and even some degree of bitterness could come to pass in conditions like those, which evolved in our camp, where children and adults lived and worked side by side, and the adults approached the children in as frank and understanding a way as possible? Surely the children should have sensed the real nature of our approach to them by instinct, something which we ourselves set our hopes in so often, even if they had not devoted any thought to the question. How could their pure natures, albeit sometimes hidden beneath a rather off-hand outer mask, not come into their own and respond totally to the unmistakable love we tried to show them, and not just in words but actions as well?

Bereft as they had been at home of tenderness for which they had so profound a need, why did they not respond at once to our care that involved so much effort and commitment?

Why were their hearts not lit up by an emotion of na-

tural gratitude in answer to everything that we through our hard work had been able to provide for them?

A good deal of similar questions might also be asked, questions which in moments of despondency often besiege the hearts and minds of those working with children. Yet we must not forget that children cannot escape the influence of the tremendous power of life itself; that power is great, first and foremost because it hides under countless defensive layers a child's real emotions, far deeper than we can ever imagine. Life experience moulds children's characters with frightening speed, so that children become adults far too early. This means that the path towards a good and worthwhile life which requires so much emotional commitment is a very slow one: so it can sometimes take years of tender, constant care to enable a child to start appreciating the kindness he is shown. Instead of expecting gratitude from a child, should we not rather derive pleasure and satisfaction from seeing him, as he matures and becomes more aware reflecting through his own actions some of that kindness we have shown him.

Chapter Six

As is always the case, unusual events whether happy or sad always loomed very important at the camp. They made the whole experience more worthwhile: some served to boost our morale while others made our small community more close-knit, gave the children food for thought and made them feel more involved with our joint endeavours to build a new way of life in the camp. After the incident with the elder girls described in the last chapter the question of "freedom" in the camp came up for discussion, the fact that while living in the camp the children felt most seriously that they had to answer for their actions and that the behaviour of any individual child was the concern of the whole community. Not long afterwards two boys left the camp, despite efforts from many of the other children to dissuade them. They could not adapt to the work arrangements although they were physically stronger than many other children and also insisted that in Moscow life was much freer for them than in our midst where they had been given certain duties to perform.

Their departure led to long discussions on the subject of the work required of everyone in the camp: by this time the children had come to regard their various tasks (apart from cleaning and cooking work) as a duty they were bound to carry out in return for their chance to be at the summer camp. The pace of work was not very demanding, they could stop for breaks and talk away as they worked, yet the work tasks were still viewed as no more than a justified requirement on the part of the adult organizers. This "compulsory" work was even given a different name, to distinguish it from the "necessary" work of cleaning and cooking, and referred to as "community work".

The children were at the same time growing used to the regular meetings held twice a week, and they had begun to discuss at them not only household arrangements but also other matters concerning the relationships and mood within the camp. The meetings were still being led by the adults but the children were taking a more active part than before. Of course these meetings were not the only place where such subjects were aired: it may well be that the conversations in small groups of a spontaneous, almost random nature were far more significant in the long term. For conversations of this nature there were ample opportunities since both children and adults lived together in one house and, incidentally, in rather cramped conditions.

There were after all more children than we could comfortably accommodate and space for the adults was in still shorter supply. One woman helper's sleeping corner was only divided off from the younger boys' sleeping quarters by a canvas curtain. One man had to sleep on one of the balconies for quite some time, and the room where another two adults slept was the only one we were able to use when everyone had to assemble to sing, play games, read, hold meetings in bad weather or entertain guests.

Naturally in conditions such as these every moment of the adults' life was on view to the children, with whom we were together for every moment of the day. This was a very significant factor in view of the aims we had set ourselves in our work, particularly at the beginning when the children did not know us very well (the superficial acquaintance from Moscow days was of course inadequate in the camp setting). It meant that the children soon appreciated that, for better or worse, our life was a shared one

and this made for open frank relationships. A good time for talking to and getting to know the children better was during the walks down to the river for our daily swim. The river was quite a long way from the camp, well over a mile, and almost all the route was by way of a wood. By the time one had reached the river there had been plenty of time to talk over all manner of things and to hear so much from other people!

Chapter Seven.

... As explained earlier, work at the camp consisted of "vital" shifts for cleaning and cooking and other tasks that the children referred to as community work. While it was not difficult to find volunteers and arrange a rota for the first variety, since the children saw these tasks as essential and a natural part of camp life, the results of which could be appreciated immediately—meals and clean crockery—community work, in the plot of ground where the garden and vegetable patch were to be, did not generate anything like the same enthusiasm. This was why the shortcomings of the younger children with regard to their work were often brought up for discussion at meetings. Everyone admitted that work was not progressing as it should be, but that in itself did not improve things. As the adult helpers saw it, the children found it difficult to appreciate the long-term importance of the work in the garden and on the other hand they lacked motivation and went about that work in the wrong mood. They saw it as a duty which had to be carried out merely because the adults "said so".

One day at a meeting this problem was discussed in rather urgent tones and one woman helper announced sadly: "If things are going so badly then wouldn't it be better to drop compulsory gardening tasks so that just those who want take part in that work." That idea, much to our surprise, seemed to catch on with the children at once and it was accepted almost unanimously. That particular day the man who had been in charge of "community work" had been away in Moscow and the next morning when he came back to the camp, the children greeted him with the announcement: "We've dropped the rota for community tasks now, just the people who want to are working."

We all went off to bathe at the normal time. On the way a most interesting conversation developed between one of the adult helpers and the children.

"Well, what do you think: why were the compulsory duties dropped?"

"People were not working properly and the grown-ups got tired of for ever talking about it: so now it's just those who want to, who are doing the work."

"Are there many people who want to work?"

"We don't know. I'm going to do the work because it's useful, but the others may well point to me and say, he just wants to look special, and I can't decide what to do."

"How are we going to be able to keep things going here at the camp if everyone refuses to work: who will do the cooking, for instance?"

"That's different, no one objects to doing the cooking, but the community tasks, well those are a different matter."

"Well, what are the jobs then, that no one objects to?"

"Well, everyone joins in the cooking, that's taken for granted: the same goes for cleaning, sweeping the floors, fetching the milk, the butter, the potatoes."

"Well, and what doesn't seem important then?"

"The vegetable patch is a very different matter."

"But why?"

"We're not going to see any results this time round, and some of us may not get to the camp next year to see next year's, so what's the point..."

A silence followed and then the children began to discuss a new and much more complex problem--the right to come to the camp. It had come up before of course, and it was bound to have done, because all our talks about the future and a more concrete picture of what that future involved was quite definitely linked with the idea that the children in the camp should become a permanent part of the project, not just casual participants. The more a child entered into the life of the camp, the more he started to enjoy it, and the more urgent this new question became.

Children, whom life had not taught to expect that even a small part of their cherished dreams might come true, found it strange to think that they would be allowed to live at the camp several years in a row and that through their efforts and their work they might be able to assert

their right to that opportunity. It took them a long time to overcome their instinctive reluctance to believe in what they heard, and they took a good deal of persuading before they could accept that each child who involved himself in some way for the future of the camp would thereby become entitled to be a "regular" and go on coming summer after summer, for as long as circumstances might allow. Many were plagued by misgivings: "They're saying that to make sure we work, but come the winter and things will be very different."

Time and time again we found that those children's emotions had been given such a raw deal by life to date that a frank direct approach to them always used to lead to painful revelations that were often hard to listen to. What was particularly difficult to bear was the note of mistrust that showed through an outer layer of open friendliness which it was difficult to attribute to anything we had done at the camp but had to be seen as the result of a way of life the habits of which already had a firm grip on the child's mind and feelings.

The conversation resumed with the question: "All right then, what d'you think, whom is it better to take along to the camp, someone who pulls their weight or someone who, we are all sure, will do nothing?"

"That's obvious! The person who knows what work means, of course, he'll always be more useful."

"I think so too: if someone has shown that he really wants to stay at the camp, and not just one summer, he'll be like a friend of the camp, won't he, and it's always nice to be dealing with friends. What about you then, Fyodor, when it comes to you, do you want to work? You do. And you?—As for me I do too. . . . That's fine then: I suggest we get together after our swim in a separate room and talk about how things will look for those who want to work. We'll get a group of us together, find work to do, that will be useful to the camp and get on with it."

"What about the others?" someone asked.

"As for the others that's not our affair: let them look after themselves properly, even for that we should be thankful. If they don't want to belong to the camp, they can sort things out for themselves: after all it was decided at the meeting that only those who want to need work."

On our way to the river three or four boys were keen

to discuss what the future in the camp would hold. The others walked along ahead of us or trooped along behind! The boys who had been talking to the adults then ran up to the group out in front and soon a whole group was absorbed in animated discussion: first one, then another of the boys would run up to the adult who had been explaining the situation and announce in conspiratorial tones: "Kirill wants to work, Ivanov is coming along too!" When we reached the river the original "group" of four had already swollen to eight (the youngsters had obviously been somewhat selective in whom they had invited along and were attempting to build up a group of children they knew they could count on).

When they reached the camp again the children concerned all went up to the room set aside for this important discussion by the adult helper. Another four in addition to the eight we had expected came along, so that it meant we started off with a sizeable group of twelve, consisting mainly of the younger boys aged between ten and twelve. At the first discussion it was decided that we would start to prepare a patch of land down by the stream for soft fruit and that we would water the vegetable garden twice a week on a regular basis. It was also decided that the original twelve should invite others to join the original group, as long as everyone was agreed on their suitability.

As a sign that a new chapter in our work at the camp had begun all the boys shook each other by the hand: this made rather a solemn occasion of it all, but this atmosphere matched the prevailing mood. Before they all went off we found a piece of paper and issued the following "statement": "We wish to announce that a group of campers has been set up which takes upon itself the task of preparing a new bed for soft fruit and to water the vegetable garden twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays."

With due seriousness the "statement" was put up on one of the verandah shutters with a drawing pin and created something of a sensation. Soon all the other children were crowding round to read it. The elder boys and girls showed particular interest, turning to members of the new group and asking questions to which they were given the very briefest of secretive answers: "Wait and see!"

After tea with rather exhibitionist fervour the twelve

armed themselves with spades and pickaxes and set off to the soft-fruit bed. To start with the new group worked with unparalleled enthusiasm: they worked for two hours without stopping, red in the face and sweating away. Soon they started taking off their jackets and shirts and their exertions as they worked on, stripped to the waist, made a rather quaint spectacle for the onlooker. They also started singing, joking and day-dreaming out loud to while the time away. The next day the whole group got up at six o'clock to a man, and after quickly dressing and running down to the kitchen for some bread and salt they set off to work again with the same eager determination.

The working atmosphere in those early-morning sessions was something they all enjoyed: while the rest of the children were asleep and before the sun started to scorch down, it was quite cool. In the morning it was not a question of encouraging the workforce, but holding it back!

This militant enthusiasm lasted for about a week and had a marked influence on the rest of the children at the camp who could not fail to take an interest in this new work-drive. Other small groups started to take shape which the children christened "artels" and each of these selected a special task to take responsibility for—the approach-road, the vegetable garden, the cabbage beds and laying paths in the garden.

Finally all the groups joined forces to embark on the hardest task of all, rooting out the tree stumps and clearing a plot of nearly a third of an acre, that would be set aside for our future orchard. Three irrigation channels were dug and then thirty holes in which to plant trees and the turf from the whole areas was lifted and piled up at one edge of the plot. The holes for the fruit trees were particularly large ones because it had been decided that instead of putting back the same red clay to hold the new trees in place we would also put back the top-soil round them. This work was carried out just before the end of the summer and the children gave off their best.

It turned out that the decision to abandon any compulsory rota for work other than cleaning and cooking was a good idea which produced most positive results: the children had found some purpose relevant to them in the work,

what they had now come to appreciate was the pleasure to be derived from work effort and its all-absorbing intensity. There was another positive aspect to their new attitude, the fact that they had come to feel responsible for what they were doing. Individual groups of children now often would undertake not to work for a set period of time but to undertake a specific amount of work, so that they measure work not according to the time spent but to the amount achieved.

Work approached in this way--when children are clearly aware of what is expected from them, how much there is to be done and how it should be undertaken without reference to the time taken--was carried out with much more care and the children themselves would ask the adult helpers or more experienced camp-members to assess their work and check that it was up to standard. At the same time the newly acquired free time now available, thanks to the more intensive work effort, was enjoyed with especial relish. Life at the camp now seemed much more care-free.

This meant that as well as appreciation of the need for this or that work task the children were now taking an active interest in the work they were doing and were by now deriving real pleasure from their work. These new attitudes did not develop overnight and a great deal still needed to be done to maintain high morale, but nevertheless to see things progressing in this positive direction was a delight.

The children's new attitudes not only effected the way community work was carried out but also how work went on in the most vital centre of our work activity: the kitchen. There was many a day now when all the women helpers needed to do was to "peep" briefly into the kitchen to make sure things were all right: not even that was necessary when some of the older girls were getting on with the cooking or some of the "senior" helpers who had become experienced cooks for the simple camp meals in previous years. The children gradually began to feel responsible for the progress of various community tasks, and when it came to the cooking they always took their responsibilities particularly seriously. To leave forty people without a proper lunch would be a major catastrophe!

Chapter Eight

It gradually became clearer to the children that just as each child through his work was involved with the others, so in his actions he was not merely one isolated individual: he could not just live as he pleased, because he was part of a chain made up of all members of the camp, and if one person tugged the chain out of line at one spot it would cause unpleasantness for many others. While we were able to take heart from the glimpses of a new sense of responsibility shown by the children with respect to their work, so we also hoped that the children would gradually start to behave in such a way that showed they also felt responsible for their words and actions. There were already signs of this new kind of awareness starting to appear but it was important to make sure that the whole way of life at the camp be of such a kind as to foster that new sense of responsibility.

One of the first features of the children's behaviour that was brought up for discussion at the meetings was the rough and ready language that the children used with each other and the tough way many of them used to treat their fellows Quarrels and insults between the children were rarely mentioned at meetings: the children used to work things out for themselves and, after all, dramas die down just as quickly as they flare up in a child's world. If a quarrel was mentioned at a meeting then those concerned would be advised to make it up and only very rarely did they refuse. If a quarrel went on long enough to be mentioned at a meeting, by that time the first flush of anger, when reconciliation seemed impossible, would have long since died down.

There were cases when some incident or another served to give the progress of the general atmosphere and relationships within the camp a powerful push forward. I should like to dwell on one of these in detail.

One evening one of the adult helpers was walking past the boys' room and noticed some very noisy laughter and shouting were coming from it. One small figure slipped out of the room and set off down the path to the wood. The man stopped and waited to see what would happen next. A short while later the same figure came out from behind the bushes and started to creep quietly back tow-

ards the door. At that moment a white shape leapt out into the porch, that must have been a boy swathed in a sheet. The first dark figure ran back to hide in the bushes again and from the rustle of the twigs and leaves it was clear that someone was trying to escape as far as he could without really knowing where he were going. There then followed another burst of laughter from the boys' room. Soon everything was quiet again though worried tones could be heard amidst the merriment as a small group of boys came out of their room and went out into the wood, calling: "Misha, Misha, come back, nobody will try and hurt you!" But there was no answering call from the first boy. The man who had witnessed the whole scene then went into the room and asked what was going on.

"Misha took fright, ran out into the wood and now he won't come back to bed."

In a serious tone the boys were told to quieten down while the man went to look for Misha and make sure everything was all right. The boys were warned there and then that the matter would be brought up for discussion at the meeting the next day to establish what it was all about after the man who had seen all the toing-and-froing had given an account of the scene.

There was no more noise after that and soon afterwards Misha returned. He hugged the wall as he made his way upstairs, then quietly opened the door and crept past the other, somewhat chastened boys to reach his own bed.

Misha was a strange boy, very highly strung and all too often ready to play the fool to entertain the other children. He was always rather lazy about work and failed to pull his weight, but sometimes a wave of enthusiasm would come over him and then he would plunge into some task most earnestly, but usually when he was working on his own. However he never managed to get on with the other children. The meeting to discuss the incident was held the next day. The other children were in the picture by this time and all had plenty to say about the incident. The boys who had actually been involved were clearly all set for a serious talk.

The man who had come across the incident the previous evening started by asking them to explain to the rest of

the assembled company what had been going on in connection with Misha.

Timidly at first and then proffering more and more details as they went the boys came out with the following story: "Before we all went to sleep we had been talking about ghosts. Andrei (a very popular boy, albeit mischievous and a trouble-maker) got up on some stilts, wrapped himself in a sheet and started walking up and down. Misha took fright, and we all pretended that the rest of us were frightened as well. Then he went and ran away. After we looked out of the window we all shut up because we could see that Misha was creeping back. Then we suggested that Andrei should leap out at him in a sheet and scream. Misha, when he caught sight of Andrei's ghost, ran off as fast as his legs would carry him. Everyone started laughing but then we began to get worried at the thought that he might get lost in the woods and we began to call out to him, but he didn't answer. We didn't go very far out into the wood because we felt scared as well . . ."

Misha himself had not come to the meeting. He had refused.

"Just imagine for a moment what might have happened. You know Misha, how he gets funny ideas into his head. If he had got really frightened and ran off. Finding himself alone in the wood he got frightened there as well. He wanted to go back and thought everyone had gone to sleep, when suddenly someone jumps out and screams at him. He got frightened again and felt really alone and abandoned by everybody: it seemed as if everyone was against him making fun of him and out to make his life a misery. It was cold out there as well. He might have done lots of stupid things. He could have run away just following his nose and spent the whole night in the wood or done something really stupid out of sheer fear. You yourselves said that you felt scared in the wood, so you too probably realized that something bad could happen. It was a good thing he heard me, recognized me, realized there was someone to look after him and decided to come back. And if he hadn't?"

"Then everyone at the camp would have gone out to look for him."

"Think how we would have felt if Misha had ran as far

as the village and said that the camp was a horrible place. Whose fault would that have been? So you see it turns out that this prank involved us all, and that the people who started making fun of Misha, without thinking about what they were doing, could have made life difficult not just for him, but for all the rest of us as well. It's only a pure fluke that nothing serious happened. You see yesterday you were having your fun, but today everyone in the camp is out of sorts and you can sense in the air that a catastrophe had just erupted; I am sure that a good number of you can't imagine that everything will turn out all right in the end."

"Well we'll ask Misha to forgive us."

"What good will that do: you'll say sorry and then you'll start up again," declared an indignant little girl.

"No, this is not just a case for sorries, but we need to make a real effort to sort things out: Misha was on his own before and now we must make sure that he should be in with the rest of us. And those of you who were unkind to him and went on teasing and making fun of him should take him under your wing, so that he should feel he has friends around him with his interests at heart."

"But we can't just leave it as that: they all need to be told off properly!" insisted the same girl.

"Well, who thinks they should be reprimanded officially?"

Everyone put their hands up and the culprits first of all. Later it was touching to see how, when they knuckled down to work together, Misha's erstwhile torturers now stood by him at every turn. "You come and work with us, and then you'll see you'll have hard muscles like ours and you'll get really tough." Everyone was happy now.

Of course discussions like the one after that incident served mainly to encourage the children to give thought to serious matters they had not turned their attention to before. As time went on the memory of that incident became less disturbing but it could not help but leave its mark to some extent on all those concerned. The impressions it had left behind it lent new meaning to life within the camp and made the children take a new look at the relationships between them and the ways they were used to behaving towards other people. In conversations with individual children later further discussion of the issues

raised by the ghosts incident followed: sometimes we entered into serious arguments with the children in our efforts to demonstrate to them that life at the camp would only be its best when the children themselves started to think of the camp as "theirs".

Another major responsibility that I and the other adults at the camp had taken upon ourselves was to cater for both boys and girls at once. However it is worth noting that not once during the whole time the camp was in existence, despite all manner of doubts raised on other points did anyone object to the provision of a summer camp for boys and girls together as either dangerous or unnecessary. This was, I think, mainly because everything at the camp was very open, everything went on in full view of the community. Another important factor was the shared work that the boys and girls were engaged in. There was a great deal of work to be done at the camp which is generally thought of as "woman's work", such as cooking, washing, sewing, mending, tidying up and other tasks that required no physical strength. However in our camp everyone worked together everywhere. An important element in the overall success of the care provided at our mixed camp was the fact that girls were called upon to use spades, and boys needles and thread. As they grew used to working together so an uncomplicated friendship between the children developed. The more tasks there were that boys and girls could undertake together, the less aloof and inhibited they became in their dealings with each other. Shared games also had their part to play. The girls started joining in camp football, albeit less keenly than some of the boys.

So far we have confined ourselves to the lack of risks involved in caring for boys and girls together. At the same time it is necessary to stress the importance and benefit of caring for boys and girls together. There is a clearly defined difference to be observed in their characters: girls are always more passive, orderly, conformist, whereas boys are livelier, more adventurous, keen to try anything new, and untidy. Girls look for a figure of authority whereas boys only accept authority in strength: girls take pity on others more, but can be rather petty, whereas boys are more generous in spirit. In the right conditions both girls and boys can gain from mutual influence. We noticed on

more than one occasion that the emergence of even the slightest self-respect on the part of any of the girls was quickly accepted by the others as something fitting and natural, who accordingly started to take her more seriously.

That was precisely the direction in which our work should have been progressing. For this reason we always welcomed opportunities for uninhibited heart-felt talks with the individual children at the camp, particularly the girls.

Chapter Nine

The summer was over and it was time to look back over what we had accomplished. Had there been something important achieved at the camp that had left its mark on the children?

There is no doubt about the fact that the *work experience* had been the most important factor about the summer camp. The shared work had lent meaning and a sense of order to those children's lives. In some respects work had seemed straightforward and vital, the essential prerequisite of life in the camp, when it came to preparing food. Then came the work that followed on from the vital task of cooking, namely washing up and cleaning. Other types of work appeared essential to the adults, while the children carried them out in response to the authority, albeit gentle, of the adults present. Finally the *non-essential* work also began to hold out interest for the children, as was the case with clearing the soft fruit garden and laying paths.

The daily work tasks became a regular part of camp life, in fact the children felt something was wrong when there were none. Work lent the life at the camp a definite framework. Given that work was so important in the camp, it was imperative that the children should adopt a conscientious attitude to it, and that the children should be, by every possible means drawn into *discussion* of where and how they should work. The more aware they became of the importance of their work contribution the easier they would find their work. Hence the *practical importance* of our meetings.

However when they did come together for meetings the

children could not help raising questions of a *personal* or, in embryo, a *public* nature, even though the adult helpers' questions were mainly of a practical kind. They found it very difficult to formulate either questions concerning individuals or those reflecting any kind of group awareness.

The significance of these meetings made it clear to us that there existed a direct link between them and the children's attitudes to work. Gradually an ever broader range of questions came to be discussed at the meetings, which in their turn came to play an increasingly important role in the camp. Initially the meetings served to hold back children from negative behaviour, whereas later they came to exert a guiding influence in a positive direction on the evolution of the relationships between the children at the camp.

The nature of the communal atmosphere the children enjoyed was a direct fruit of the work atmosphere that had evolved. Were the children now aware of common interests and aspirations that linked them? What did in fact hold the children together?

Co-operation for work purposes was essential and the children were definitely aware of the shared interests and aims with regard to work: meanwhile few close personal friendships developed, for that more work with individual children would have been necessary and also more effort to modify the concept of freedom commonly found among children at the camp. They considered that *each person was free for as long as he did not upset the interests of others.*

So if we look back at the camp's first summer as an experiment, it became clear to us that there was scope for undertaking serious work with such children. Work might well provide the basis for the children's life in the camp, but to be more precise it should be work suited to children, work that should boost morale and be a source of happiness. Our future work should be directed towards this end.

While work would provide the outer framework and shape to the children's life in the camp it would be necessary to provide outlets not just for the children's physical but also for their mental and artistic abilities as well. That would be our next step.

PART II

Chapter One

When we arrived back in Moscow the children soon went their separate ways now that there was no shared work to hold them together. They used to come to our centre to take part in various activities with their Moscow school-friends, or their play-mates from the local street or yard, and they met, if at all, at the singing sessions organized by one of the women who had been at the camp. Although they enjoyed singing and it used to remind them of the sing-songs at the camp, yet there was still the feeling that the camp belonged to the "past" and that they were now caught up in another life, while the moods and atmosphere of the camp had been shelved for the time being.

However, as early as January a new wave of animation among the children began to make itself felt and some small groups started asking us questions as to how things were going to be that year in the camp, when preparations would begin and what needed to be done and how. It turned out that the children's attachment to the place where they had done so much hard work was stronger than we had thought at first.

One Sunday we invited all the children from the first camp to tea: on that occasion the reminiscences of our summer world proved somewhat more vivid. The children played and sang, lit the samovar and members of the "cleaners brigade" washed up: as a finishing touch a meeting was held and it was decided to start work at once preparing for the next camp. The girls started sewing again: it was important to see to it that there was enough bed linen, especially when it came to the boys, for whom it was important to keep some spare sheets in hand to make sure there were always enough spare ones to go round. Gradually we built up an adequate supply of sheets, pillow-cases, towels and mattress sacks. The sewing group also made shirts and shorts, and hemmed flanelette blankets. Some of the girls even took extra work home with them. The boys started work on making beds and they also made a table and some benches. A few of them helped the girls with the sewing.

The nearer the summer came the more children came

along to see if they too could spend the summer at the camp. Some of them were particularly determined to come along. There was one small boy, well known for his quick temper and rather rough and ready manners, not to mention his mischievous pranks; when he came along to inquire: "Will you take me along with you to the camp?", he was told: "I think it's unlikely, there have been so many complaints about the way you've been behaving." Undaunted he went on to ask: "What do I have to do then to make sure of a place in the camp?" He was told that he would need to behave properly in future so that there should be no more complaints and then he would be taken along with the others. At that he walked off, only to return a few days later to make unexpected announcement to the effect that it would be better if he stopped coming to the centre at all so as to avoid any risks. However he was told that that would not be acceptable: "That's not the way to go about things. You keep on coming, don't get up to your old tricks and do some work." Coconut (as he was known by the other children) decided to "stick it out" and you could see him day after day standing out in the yard among the other children at play, his hands deep in his pockets so as not to be tempted to join in the games, and risk a dangerous reprimand. He resisted the temptation and went to the camp: everything turned out well and the summer went by without a single mishap.

That winter we were to confirm once more what had emerged at the first summer camp, namely that it was the shared work that brought the children together. Only more experience could teach us how to consolidate and extend the ties already achieved.

The experience of the first summer had shown us that the way of life that had taken shape at the camp was of a kind the children were able to understand and appreciate, and that so far they were capable of sustaining that way of life.

Now came the question as to how we should develop the work habits that had already taken root. It went without saying that the tasks with which the children were already familiar would be easier the second time round, thanks to the skills and knacks acquired the year before. It would be possible to introduce various refinements into some of those tasks. Yet we already felt it to be vital that the work

programme should be more varied and that the children's own inclinations should be accorded more attention, so that they might have the chance above all to show what they were capable of in those types of work they enjoyed most, or to which they saw themselves as particularly suited. In this way we hoped it would be possible to stimulate the children's own interests more in our every-day routine at the camp. However we had to be careful as we set about this for each innovation within our small community, however small it might seem at first glance, nevertheless represented a major event. It was important not to overload the children with work, or tire them out with too much variety, that might make them flit too quickly from one thing to another. This made it expedient to introduce innovations only when life at the camp itself might seem to demand it, or to bring the children to an awareness that it would be for the best. After involving ourselves in the work at the camp once more we should then be able to broaden our work programme. Only after the children should have become *aware* of the need for improvements in the life at the camp, would we embark on new ideas, new departures. The whole purpose of the way of life at the camp consisted, as we saw it, in *the children themselves experiencing*, albeit subconsciously, *these ideas and then participating in their practical implementation.*

Chapter Two

The original buildings we had used the first summer--the cabin and the cook-house--were naturally inadequate for the following year. Major improvements were required in the kitchen: it needed to be larger and lighter, to have a tiled stove in addition to the original range. There were also plans to extend the kitchen with a cellar and canteen since carrying large coppers containing up to five gallons over to the house had been a daunting task. The canteen was to incorporate a scullery where all the crockery would be kept so that it would be easily accessible. Those additions would have been sufficient for our purposes that second summer. However it turned out that all the domestic buildings required at the camp in the future as well would need to be built at once. So without being able to wait

to see what experience might dictate we embarked on the elaboration for a general plan of the workshops and out-buildings the camp might require in the long term.

We started out from the assumption that the foundation-stone of our life at the camp would be agricultural work. Agriculture involves a very wide range of tasks and that variety in itself was important as far as the children were concerned. However there were still more important reasons for regarding agricultural work as valuable training for children. As he digs the earth, plants, sews and spreads manure a child is no longer just an observer of Nature, but he himself, *through his work, becomes part of Nature's chain of cause and effect*. Warmth and cold, sun, wind, ripening ears of corn, the flowering of potato plants are no longer fleeting phenomena for the child, but he comes to appreciate the links between them. He too with his hands and his work comes to represent another link in the chain. Close acquaintance with animals, tending and feeding them surely help to foster a child's affection for other living creatures, and give a child the feeling that his life too can be useful. Caught up in this chain of interlinked tasks a child can surely not help but reach a heightened awareness of his environment through his work and take pleasure in the fact that he too is able to work. Gradually he must be finding his feet and through work he is bound to grow stronger, so that his new work habits are surely providing optimal training for the heavy work that his adult life may bring.

This meant that we needed not just a tiny flower-garden and a vegetable patch consisting of two or three beds just for show, nor should we content ourselves with a "pets' corner" where the children would see animals penned in or in cages. What we needed was a veritable farm with an orchard, a vegetable-garden, a cornfield, a cattle yard and a dairy. It was with all this in view that the new building plans were drawn up.

The focal point of the new domestic buildings was to be the new kitchen overlooking the gully and the spring on the plot that we had picked out and cleared that first summer. There was to be a large brick-built stove inside, that could be used for baking bread and next to it would stand the metal range used the year before. A scullery and large canteen, complete with verandah, were built next to the

kitchen. An ice-box was installed underneath the verandah. At the highest point within our 15-acre grounds an attractive bath-house complete with laundry and drying room, all built in North Russian style, was put up.

Near the plot set aside for an orchard a small quarantine block was built in case anyone came down suddenly with a serious illness. Another important group of domestic buildings were those facing on to the cattle-yard—the cow-house, stable, sheds and a watchman's hut, all with provision for heating. For the time being some of these buildings were not going to be used until the new work requirements of our extended camp demanded it.

That second spring work got under way, just as in the previous year, in May; however this time round small groups of children started arriving at the beginning of the month. Our cabin was also extended and thanks to its large new verandah and the new room above that, the new stone foundations, the new outer layer of plank-boarding and the newly installed stoves it seemed like a real house now.

Our work started that summer with a continuation of what we had organized the year before. This time round though working conditions were far easier. Work in the vegetable garden, which had been dug over and fertilized several times the year before, was far less taxing now. The earth was loose and in no time at all we had prepared and sown a number of beds. The kitchen was now fitted out with proper shelves and tables which made it easier to cope with larger numbers. (There were now 55 children at the camp.)

On the patch of ground, where we had been rooting out tree stumps the year before, there were now several dozen apple and cherry trees which, however, did not seem to be thriving yet. The children found it hard to believe that "twigs" like that would ever produce apples or cherries. In the autumn the whole compound had been cleared of alder, willow and ash thickets and now the necessary tracks and paths between the various outbuildings could be laid. The work programme for that summer consisted of the following: (1) vegetable garden; (2) clearing the compound of vast quantities of builders' rubble; (3) laying paths; (4) digging over the orchard; (5) extending the vegetable garden and soft-fruit plot; (6) washing with the help of

a new machine (this latter task was to be added to the list of those for which a compulsory rota was set up). By the middle of the summer a new task that could be undertaken on the premises was the baking of rye bread. It was too early to be thinking about cows and horses, for the cattle yard was only completed in the middle of July, so we were still fetching milk from the nearby village.

Everyone settled down easily to a daily routine such as the one we had known the previous year. Although many new children had come, this time they very quickly grew used to the established routine with the help and support of the older children. The eating arrangements were of course one of the main focusses of attention at first. By this time the standards expected of our cooks were far higher! Most of children had already worked in the kitchen themselves and so, if a lunch or supper had been spoilt through *carelessness* or *oversight*, there was no disguising it from them. Few of the cooks were seen as just plain incompetent.

Now the cooks were able to devise the menus themselves and it was their duty to make sure that their spending did not exceed the sum set aside for each day's meals. At times friendly competition started up between the various groups of cooks to see who could feed the camp with more tasty or more economical meals. Cooking enthusiasts and in particular two of the elder girls were by now competent enough to replace the adult helper who had in the past kept an eye how things were going in the kitchen. The cleaning was also being carried out more efficiently in this second camp. The main objective was to work out ways of making tedious cleaning work as easy as possible, so it could be completed quickly. Soon the more skilled of the "cleaners' brigade" could have the washing up out of the way within half an hour. They brought all the dirty crockery and cutlery over to a long bench where three children were waiting, each with a dish of hot water. Each article would be given three separate rinses and then left to dry. There was a great deal more to wash up the second summer because now each child had a separate plate for his soup and main course, yet the washing-up was carried out more rapidly and efficiently.

The washing was by this time also organized on a far more efficient basis. Previously the laundry had been taken

over to the village to be washed which had been a very cumbersome business. Now that the camp had acquired its own machine all the washing was carried out on the spot. It was no longer such an exhausting task, but still involved a good deal of care and patience, that not all the children could muster. Indeed the adult helpers themselves had to learn to cope with the new machine at first.

Chapter Three

The work routine at the camp was now in full swing. As always, careful organization of the work programme had brought new order and harmony into the lives and relationships of our children's society. The children were called upon to put more effort into their work than before: yet instead of feeling tired the children seemed to have more stamina, which found other outlets in addition to that provided by physical work. We also noticed that the relationships between the children were also improving, and this was reflected in the friendlier atmosphere of their games, group reading sessions and discussions, during their walks and in the new habit of collecting together in the evenings in the recently completed common room where one of the main activities was singing. It would not be right to say that life within the group was well-ordered and streamlined but it was lively and interesting. As the pace of work grew more dynamic so the group spirit grew stronger: this first made itself felt as certain of the children arrived at their own thoughts on the subject of the camp.

One splendid sunny day the children's work for some reason was going particularly well, so that despite the growing heat they had dug round all the black-currant bushes, prepared new beds for raspberries and planted raspberry canes. After that they sat down to rest.

One stout-hearted little gardener (who perhaps only now, after this task well done, had begun to feel a real gardener) commented: "If we were to give those black-currants a good dose of manure they could turn out really well. There should be enough for everyone."

"What d'you mean, for everyone: remember how many there are of us, now? It'll be about fifty, and later there'll

be sixty and even more. As soon as that lot get going on your black-currants, they'd be gone within the hour."

"But if we were to cultivate the whole slope, from here right down to the vegetable garden and plant raspberries, gooseberries and some more black-currants: then we'd have a real soft-fruit plot and there'd be enough for everyone."

"Why not?" commented the adult, who was working with them, in his turn. "And you could be the gardener-in-charge. You'd get up early in the morning and check the bushes to see if there were caterpillars in them. Then you'd call the others out to help save the soft-fruit crop. There's a big pile of manure for you over there. Take up a fork, load up a wheel-barrow and take it round to all the bushes."

The sun was shining down brightly into all the children's faces. The boy screwed up his eyes and stretched himself out in the grass, folding his hands beneath his head. He liked picturing to himself how he would stand armed with a pitchfork on top of the manure-heap.

"Off we go!" he mused. "Then afterwards down for a swim -or perhaps not!"

"What bliss!" thought my colleague to himself.

"What would there be in Moscow now," the keen young gardener went on: "It's stuffy, dusty, there's nowhere to go except noisy streets, and here you're as free as a bird!"

"What d'you mean free. You have to do your kitchen shift, willy-nilly!"

"Well, what of it?"

"Then there's the cleaning, the community jobs, the washing..."

"Well, what of it," the boy repeated. "When you've done your bit, then you can go wherever you like: to swim, pick berries, collect mushrooms. If I want to I can read. Of course you can't go idle."

A pause followed before the future head-gardener declared all of a sudden: "It would be nice if everyone was happy!" With no warning he then turned to the adult and asked: "You for one, are you happy?"

At first my colleague was lost for words but then replied: "What kind of happiness is this? Here I am sitting out here, working away with you, and with plenty to see to. We've brought you children out here, over ninety miles

from Moscow, and its our responsibility to see that nothing happens to you”

“But you’re lucky really and ought to be happy,” insisted the boy.

“Why?”

“That’s is why: *you’re done what you set out to do and that should make you happy.*”

The whole direction of the conversation had been most unexpected. The boy concerned had lived a hard life in Moscow: his home had been a single low-ceilinged room in a semi-basement that the whole family shared. His father was a cobbler, who made his living repairing shoes and the son left elementary school early at the age of eleven and ever since had been hanging round with no work or studies to keep him occupied. He was waiting till he was fifteen when he could start working with his father. He kept bad company, used foul language and was constantly involved in fights. His attitude to life around him had always been a cynical one but he was very fond of adventure, fairy stories and tales of horror. He had always had so little to say for himself and had been so secretive as to make contact with him extremely difficult.

How much warmth, sunlight, physical exercise and relaxed surroundings did it require to melt those young emotions that had been frozen stiff from such an early age!

Earlier the summer before he had commented: “Everyone starts saying—Oh, what a lovely view! As for me it makes no difference whether I’m looking at a river or a tree, one river’s the same as any other for me and the same goes for trees. What’s so special? Just rubbish, if you ask me!”

Yet now what he saw and experienced stirred him to *spontaneous reaction and an awareness*, if not of beauty, then of a *better life*. It showed that there had to exist within our camp a thread of some kind by which it was possible to pull out a child to a happier appreciation of life. That was what made everything at the camp worthwhile. It was very difficult to say what exactly that thread or life-line was, particularly when one was closely involved in the work oneself. Sometimes it was clear how things were moving and at others you could hardly tell.

It would be more accurate to say that *all the work in the camp was a gradual clarification of that path.*

Chapter Four

New ideas started bubbling in more than one head. This could be felt as the children started showing more initiative. They managed to think up and carry through small group projects on their own, as for example in the case of the playground.

Three girls who found themselves without a job one day thought up a new plan: they decided to lift the turf from a small area near the house where there were no trees, stumps and set up a playground there. The work proved difficult for them, as there were a great deal of roots in the earth there, yet the idea appealed to the other children. The girls' plan turned out not to be ambitious enough for the camp as a whole. It was decided at a camp meeting that all the children should join in and that the playground should be made as large as possible. The work soon caught on: the spot chosen was on a gentle slope that led down towards the spring, which meant that the lower end needed to be built up, while at the top end not only would the turf need to be lifted but some earth as well. A plank path was laid across the future playground and the children started to move earth from the top to the bottom of the playground in wheelbarrows. In the lower section of the playground the new earth had to be raked level, the roots removed and stumps uprooted: soon afterwards a heavy roller appeared which made it much easier to flatten down the earth, that was wet after the rainy weather. Three days later the playground was ready. A drain was dug round it to make sure it was drained as well as possible.

The work had proved so absorbing and interesting that it was decided to mark the opening of the playground with a theatrical performance and group entertainment. One end of the playground was picked out for a stage. Old cement barrels were arranged there in rows. Large boards from the cow-shed were laid across these and poles fixed to the corners. Between these were stretched sheeting to make walls for the stage and a large piece of canvas was used to make the curtain in front. The stage was ready.

The enthusiasm which accompanied all this activity was no chance phenomenon. By this time the children had begun to feel that the camp was something that belonged to "us" rather than "them", and indeed they had started to

pay more attention to the cleanliness and decoration of the main building than before. They did not show very much initiative in enhancing the camp's appearance, however suggestions to that end from adult helpers were now taken up far more successfully by the children than had been the case the year before. Moreover cleanliness was not something that came easily to those children who had not been trained to attach much importance to it by their life experience. A determined onslaught against untidiness led the children to start changing their bedlinen more often and at regular intervals: frequent septic cuts and splinters on the one hand and clean sheets on the other made the children wash their feet at night. The adults' concept of what clean meant became generally accepted as did the desirability of decorating the children's rooms. As the children began to look upon the camp as "ours" they began to see the premises not as a camp so much as a home. This idea had also been stimulated by the decoration of the common room. Even before they had left Moscow, some of the girls, knowing that there would be a common room this year, had started embroidering curtains and making wall-rugs out of various scraps of material. A grand piano had also been brought out to the camp and placed in one corner of that room. The end result was cheerful and attractive: the walls were lined with wide benches covered in the same thick cloth with which the walls themselves were lined as well. By the window was a table with a coloured cloth on it, and the walls were decorated with the wall-rugs the girls had made and bookshelves were put up in one corner for our modest library. There were always fresh wild flowers on the table and the piano. By this stage the adults' rooms had also acquired a more comfortable homely look. In this way the children gradually came to appreciate the cosiness and attractive appearance of their own rooms. It was soon clear for all to see that dirt and untidiness did not mix with decorations and as a result the children's rooms became a good deal tidier.

Chapter Five

The general enthusiasm and high morale of the children at the camp led the adults there to use the childrens' leisure time to a very special, new end.

At the first meeting held after the playground had been opened the suggestion was made that the children should keep a camp journal to which the children would contribute their poems and stories and thus later have something to look back to remind them of the times they had spent in the camp. The idea of a journal was greeted eagerly by the children, and they suggested that the person who had come up with the idea should be in charge. In the first few days the "editor" was inundated with material and after a week so many contributions had come in that he was in a position to put out the first eagerly awaited issue. It was to be a major event. The journal was read out loud to all the children and was a complete success. Yet later on in practice the editor's job did not prove a simple one: school-children are not great enthusiasts when it comes to creative writing and there was hot summer weather, interesting work that people wanted to get on with, football, swimming and lapta (a Russian ball game. *Tr.*) all getting in the way. The editor was hard-pressed and the issues did not come out every week as originally proposed but whenever he had collected sufficient material.

Below the reader will find some of the most typical contributions that reflect life at the camp in its everyday detail with its good and bad sides. The children were very forthcoming with suggestions and criticism for the journal. Some of the articles reflect problems they had to come to grips with. In short the journal provided a vivid record of life at the camp during more than half that particular summer.

ARTICLES FROM ISSUE NO. 1 OF *OUR LIFE* (7 July, 1912)

"Our life at the camp is fairly interesting and varied now, but if everyone here wanted to they could make it much more interesting. It will be pleasant and happy when we all start to feel that the camp is *ours* and belongs to all of us.⁵ That is bound to happen if we enter into all the activities energetically, grow attached to the camp and see it as a place where we all belong: a place where we are working for our own benefit, where thanks to our

efforts an orchard and a vegetable garden will flourish, bread will be baked, cows will be mooing and horses whinnying happily, and a place where as a result of our work more children will be able to spend time in the future. We shall be able to build up a life here, that people will find it hard to forget.

"It was precisely so that we should not forget that the idea of a camp newspaper or journal was raised. As we read the journal we shall recall how we lived, worked, enjoyed ourselves, the worthwhile, funny and sadder moments here. We shall enjoy recalling the good things and recalling the bad things will make us more determined to put them right. Then the camp will seem to belong to us more and be more like a second home.

"Everyone can write for the journal. Write about anything you like, the good things and the bad: think up ways of improving life in the camp, ask questions, publish announcements.

"Some people here make up fairy-tales and adventure stories to tell to two or three friends. Now everyone can enjoy your stories. There are poets, jokers, dreamers among you—you must not hide away your talents, write for the journal and give pleasure to us all!

"To make everyone feel more at home and more of a group we are going to bring out this journal, *Our Life*. Let us hope that it will help everyone here to think more about the work we are doing, and may it help to cement our happy working family of children and adults! That will be the key to success!"

Our Meetings

People take too long to turn up. There's always someone missing and then we all have to wait. Some people don't come along at all. Two kept on oversleeping and always turned up right at the end, still half asleep and dirty. Yet it's so important to take the meetings seriously! There's a chance for everything at those meetings: anyone can find help and support, justice is meted out when needed and everything can be discussed. If it wasn't for the meetings everything at the camp would be topsy-turvy within a week.

The children don't say much at the meetings and leave it up to the grown-ups. If they don't say anything then there are long silences. Voting is the only time when everyone joins in properly. The journal staff recommend that a spokesman from among the children be chosen.

A number of important things were discussed at the last meeting. Some of the Lushins' tuck started disappearing. What should be done in cases like that? Lying in wait and catching people out is a sordid business and we don't want to have to hide their tuck away. It's very sad to think that there are some people here who can't keep their hands off others' belongings. There is one way to make things simpler though and that is to share out tuck with your friends, as many have started doing already, and then there is less temptations around and there won't be so much chance of things disappearing.

I—v still can't get used to the idea that he's part of our camp. He is always shirking work and writing notes to the girls. What's he after? Why can't he understand that to join in camp-life wholeheartedly is far more fun than lord-ing it about as the idle lady-killer? He has already been given two reprimands, so things are starting to look dangerous.

Our special welcoming committee made everything ready for our recent guests: visitors were happy and so were we, at the chance to show someone how well things are run here! All of a sudden one of them got bored and ran off without saying anything; he left all the work to his partner and the responsible committee member turned into just another mischievous lad. But we were glad, we knew where we stood.

* * *

It was difficult to lay down a fixed time for meetings because the work in our part of the camp or another might get behind schedule and so this meant that the children had to be specially called together. We knew too that although the meetings were very important as regards theory, they did tend to be rather routine sometimes and not particularly jolly. Those were occasions when everyone was called upon to think and express their point of view. It goes without saying that when the topic to be discussed was very important, or one in which the children were par-

ticularly interested, then all the children would collect together in no time at all.

One of the interesting decisions taken at our meetings was that to set up a "welcoming committee", an idea that was so in tune with Russian traditions of hospitality. This committee usually consisted of two children—one boy and one girl. They usually divided up the duties between them: the boys used to take the visitors round and "entertain" them, while the girls saw to the eating and sleeping arrangements.

The boy who had been given two reprimands was given a third soon together with his friend, which meant that they had to leave the camp. The main reason why the others at the camp disapproved of them was the horrible language they kept using and which both boys refused to abandon despite frequent warnings. They did not join in the life at the camp, except perhaps the games.

The two boys were a major hindrance in that they did not take part in the work like everybody else. The adult staff did not take kindly to secretive, sneaky behaviour. There was a large number of young children at the camp that summer on whom they might well have had a really bad influence. The two boys who left were fourteen. One had come to the camp for the first time that year, and the other had been there the previous year as well.

Rights and Freedoms

"I should like to say a few words about the way some of the children here are using the rights they have been granted. This applies to the youngest boys and girls in particular.

"In the town and everywhere outside the camp they have to do what the older children tell them. In the camp they are allowed to be free and independent. Yet this is how people living here at the camp use that freedom and independence.

"In the first place they are not ready to take anyone's advice, except advice from the grown-ups. They don't even listen to instructions from the older boys elected to special duties by the general meeting, people like the first-aid orderly or the boy in charge of the laundry.... For some

reason a few people here seem to think that they have the right to do whatever comes into their heads, even though it might be a bad idea, not just for them, but for the whole camp as well. One of the boys for instance had a serious cut on his leg, the doctor said he had to keep his bandaged leg dry and should even avoid walking on it. Instead of doing what he was told, that boy disappeared for a good long time on one occasion and came back with his bandage all wet and dirty.

"Then there are others who were told they should not play football on health grounds and yet they won't pay any attention and just go on playing. There are plenty of other examples which show some people here are just letting themselves go downhill in general.

"It's clear from these examples how some people here have been using their rights. Given that the grown-ups have devised such good rules for the camp, they should now explain how and to what extent we should follow them. Otherwise the younger children are protected thereby from mistreatment by the older ones, while the older children are exposed to mistreatment by the younger ones."

That article was written by one of the older boys who was in charge of the laundry. It is worth pointing out in this context that when older and younger children are living under one and the same roof this nearly always results in a raw deal for the weakest: if things had developed in that direction at the camp life would have become impossible. It was therefore particularly gratifying to note that the older children at the camp, who had grown used to us and our principles from a very early age, fully justified the hopes we had placed in them. While there were cases when older children were unable to keep their tempers, such outbursts were always condemned most sternly at the meetings and the guilty party would be called upon to acknowledge his guilt before all the rest of the children. However cases of this kind were very rare indeed.

If such measures had not been taken then the wilder elements among the children, who respected strength above all else, would have felt there was nothing to stop them behaving as they felt inclined. The phrase referring to the strange "way some of the children here are using the rights they have been granted" is an indirect allusion to

this situation. The young writer was attempting to draw a distinction between *freedom* and *anarchy*.

The freedom which the adult helpers envisaged, and, given their influence on the children, later became an essential part of life at the camp, would have been unthinkable without the children showing a well-developed sense of responsibility for themselves and an awareness of the obligations they were taking on themselves. It would be natural for anyone to feel totally relaxed within our society if he or she enjoyed everybody's trust. This was why execution of *duties did not give anyone a right to anything*. The boy in charge of the laundry was a member of the camp like any other. An efficient and capable cook could, on his own initiative, give a good number of people errands to do in connection with the domestic running of the camp, relying on the trust in his capabilities which he sensed among the other children. Anyone wishing to improve a particular branch of the work at the camp and who took upon himself responsibility for the vegetable garden, orchard or horses, and who conscientiously carried out the additional work involved would meet with general sympathy and understanding. After all such behaviour reflected a deep sense of involvement with the progress of the camp's affairs, it was a manifestation of new personal initiative. These children's ideas were what came to circumscribe their freedom. Children who showed initiative in this way were respected by everyone, regardless of their age or strength.

However there would always be some children who found their work duties burdensome and who were reluctant to respect anything but their own or other people's strength. They found it impossible to settle down in the camp, which, although it confronted them with a different way of life, did not provide them with any of the manifestations of strength to which they were accustomed to accord their respect—no shouting, no threats, no punch-ups. This was the "weak" side of life at the camp, as they usually concluded after looking round cautiously for the first few days. After that their usual habits would assert themselves once more.

They made sure that they carried out as little work as possible, taking no active interest in what was going on, and their behaviour soon started to undermine the mood of

the more committed children in the camp: being the strong characters they very soon collected a group of followers around them which held itself aloof from everyone else.

Yet there were heartening moments in our life at the camp—happy games, the stage show, evening sing-songs. Many an evening Mendelssohn on the grand piano would be fighting to keep his end up in competition with raucous songs from one of the dormitories; there were days when work in the camp really went with a swing. Moments such as those were a frequent feature of camp life and of course left a deeper mark on all the children than the fly-by-night moods of the shouting brigade.

In most cases the camp won out in the end, the lads were particularly anxious to show that they too could work and if an interesting challenge came the children's way, then the "tough gang", as such, ceased to exist and its members began to take part in the general life of the camp. However there were also cases when a child found it impossible to abide by the demands of camp life, took no interest in group activities and had no desire at all to become involved in any way. That was the case with two lads aged about fourteen who found it extremely difficult to get used to our ways. They had to leave the camp like the other two boys mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Recommendations from the Editors of *Our Life*

- "1) Draw up a list of all decisions taken in the camp.
- "2) Ask the steward to give a fortnightly report on domestic arrangements.
- "3) Put up a weekly list of expenditure on food.
- "4) Fix up a notice board under glass."

Sports and Games ⁶

"Football: The teams are not playing together well. There is not enough discipline. The teams that already exist need captains. The balls are not being looked after properly, and a specific person should be put in charge of them. That was how it came about that both the balls were being dried off in the oven and punctured. Money has been col-

lected for new bladders but it has not been counted up yet. "Knucklebones: Recently the children have been very keen on this game. This is all well and good but it does lead to a lot of shouting.

"Running: Yesterday the children had some running practice out on the main road. Lavrov and Shirokov turned out to have a good deal of stamina, they ran for a distance of nearly six kilometres at an average speed of nearly ten kilometres. Sokologorsky also ran a long distance but his heart started playing him up, running is not a good idea for him obviously. Bogachov and Ivanov also got very out of breath. In order to make sure that the children do not do themselves any harm training should be gradual. It is useful to have a gentle run every day and develop the correct technique. Later we should be able to organize a proper competition to find the camp's champion runner."

Theatre and Music⁷

"Two stage productions have already been put on at the camp. The first time the children came up with just anything that came into their head—songs, dances, jokes. The second time everything went better—two plays in proper costumes were staged and the girls' was the most effective. The costumes were particularly impressive. There was a large audience. In the evening there was dancing and party lights were put up."

* * *

The appearance of the first issue of *Our Life* was a major sensation at the camp and in no time at all there was sufficient material collected for a second issue.

The journal served to add excitement to the life of the children. It was in great demand. The editor himself was very happy to have the forum for some of his ideas. All the children read the journal on their own without any adults around. They usually read it in small groups or individually. That was a particularly valuable exercise.

We were most anxious that as the work programme at the camp began to run more smoothly, which, as experience had shown, was quite within the bounds of possibility, so the children at the same time should achieve a clear

understanding of the purpose of their life in the camp and should start to involve themselves in shaping that life.

It is a moment precious beyond words to see a child experience and become familiar with some of the most wonderful things life can offer.

At other times in our frank and direct conversations with the children we could sense that this was possible and that what might appear inaccessible to adults, obscured by the sad lives they had led, could seem simple and straightforward to a child with his or her spontaneous approach to life. So too in the journal among the scenes from the children's day-to-day life, among their stories and dialogues, we come across ideas that have occurred to adults working among them as well, but which the children succeed in telling in a particularly direct way, in a great surge of sincere enthusiasm for the common task, that the children have to come to love and appreciate.

Chapter Six

ARTICLES FROM ISSUE No. 2 OF THE JOURNAL *OUR LIFE*

What Is Our Camp?

"Children of various age groups have been assembled in the camp; they are working, singing, playing and all discussing their particular affairs. Pleasant houses have been built for them, they live on someone else's land as if it was their own and whatever they get up to they can try out for as long as their energy lasts.

"To the outside observer the scene presented by our camp is a remarkable one: all those present were from Moscow and had come out here as if for a summer holiday, yet the very idea of dacha-life out here has a nasty ring about it. It has been said the children here enjoy far too much freedom, yet it turns out that to live as one pleases just does not work; that is a matter for the general meeting to give a lead on. The older children ought to be able to twist the little ones round their fingers, yet here they are instead mixing milk puddings in the kitchen, turning the handles of the washing boiler, or sweating away as they dig out a new road. In addition to all that there are stewards in the camp, foremen, committees and now even

a journal! For an outsider it would be impossible to take it at first.

"Yet even for the children who have grown used to camp-life, it is not always clear why the camp was set up and why it is run on the lines it is.

"I see the situation this way, we all came together here to build a worthwhile life or at least a life better than the one we were used to. This will not happen just because we have nice new living quarters, bath-house, laundry, cattle sheds, a cellar, a kitchen, and running water. If bee hives are set up there will be no life in them without any bees. We need to fill our camp with life, a bustle of friendly work so that everyone who comes to visit us should think: 'This isn't just a place to stay, people don't just take here, they're giving as well!'

"This place had been a wilderness. Now that we have settled in here though and are working, everything must be changed for the better: the wood, the earth, the roads, the springs, the meadows and the fields.

"A great source of strength for us must be the principle that each person helps the group and the group supports person.

"I sit down to the breakfast table today and the samovar is brought in, and I eat freshly baked bread but tomorrow it will be I who sees to the tea and carries in the wheelbarrow with woodchips to light the bread-oven. Today I found a clean shirt laid out ready, but tomorrow I shall be working in the wash-house. When we shall have a proper farm set up here with cows, horses, a large vegetable garden and when the rye and clover are in flower and the oats are ripening, then there will be interesting work to be done in every corner of the camp. Altogether we will carry out this work relying on ourselves and no one else—and that is vital in our work.

"Our camp is a place where we are building a fine life before our very eyes and where the longer we work the finer things will be. We must 'keep right on to the end of the road'

"This is a place where we work together, each for all and all for each, where children can be masters of their own lives and take seriously their responsibility for everything that they are doing like other men and women who know they have completed a proper day's work.

"Our camp should be a happy place, where people work together, giving of their best for the common good. May all these dreams come true!"

Our Farm

"As if in direct response to the comment in *Our Life* about the potato supplies, new potatoes arrived from Moscow on Monday brought by our visitor Alexandra Nikolayevna, although unfortunately only twenty pounds. The children were thrilled to have new potatoes and they polished off every drop of the soup we made from them.

"Bread-making out in the kitchen is well established now. There is even competition starting up between different baking squads. On Saturday Anna Fyodorova produced bread-rings, and then on Sunday Valentina Nikolayevna and her crew treated us to whole mountains of buns and three enormous pretzels. The first group used an open oven which meant building up the fire all the time, while the second insisted on keeping the oven closed. Yesterday we were even plied with puffs. At tea-time a vote was held to see whether everyone preferred the buns or the puffs. Buns topped the list. We can produce white bread, but the day when we can produce brown bread still seems a long way off. Yesterday and the day before we were treated to yoghurt with sweet rusks.

"The laundry functions as before but the boiler makes the floor underneath it very dirty with strange blue stains. We suggest lime should be sprinkled on that part of the floor.

"Work in the vegetable garden is progressing better now. The cucumber plants are a mass of flowers. The cabbages are coming along much better since we hoed round them. The 'head-gardener' informed our correspondent that there is a total of not 200 heads, as announced earlier, but 460, and even that was yesterday's figure while today the total comes to 464. Well, he should know, he's keeping count! As the time for harvesting the various vegetables comes round it's important to get the general meeting to decide that all vegetables must only be handed into the communal kitchen, and even then, only after the necessary instructions have been given by the 'head gardener'.

"The soft-fruit plot has already been dug over. All the berries from the currant bushes were lost in the process, although they were still green at the time and the fruit from the young raspberry bushes were lost as well. Obviously these plants have been hit by the disease 'keen-camper-itis'.

"The number of paths and tracks in the camp is growing. Yesterday a track leading to the cattle yard was laid. All that remains now is for the gravel to be spread and rolled. The drainage channels along the edges are too shallow though. The vegetable-garden brigade want to make a potato patch behind the cattle-yard".

Our Meetings

"An important innovation has been made: a domestic committee has been formed consisting of all those in charge of work teams and the steward. On Monday the committee held its first meeting after which all its members walked round the various buildings making an inventory of all the mugs, plates, bowls, spoons, jugs, basins etc. That was an important step, for we should do well to keep a check on how much crockery goes missing or broken. The editors give every support to all efforts to improve efficiency. Sasha Lushin has been elected to the welcoming committee in place of Penzura, who had run away."

New Blancmangé Recipe

"When Shura was acting cook he dropped a tomato in the blancmangé by mistake and I think he should be given the job more often, because it ended up tasting like raspberry blancmangé.

Ivan Ivanov."

Chapter Seven

ARTICLES FROM ISSUES NOS. 3 AND 4

OF OUR LIFE

Next Year

"It will soon be time for the children to set off back to Moscow and now is just the time to think about what awaits us here next year.

"There will be no new buildings next year and many people will be able to arrive earlier than in previous years. They will probably come in two groups, one at the beginning of May and the other during the second half of the month. The children will find cows here in the cattle-yard when they arrive. That will bring about important changes in the camp routine. The cows need very careful looking after. Their sheds need to be cleaned out, they have to be milked, fed and watered. A special group will have to be formed of children who are interested in animals and they will have to take on responsibility for all the work the new arrivals entail. The stables and hen-house also come into their domain. It is essential that the group working with animals learn to cope with these new, most important tasks on their own. For this reason people will not work out there on a shift system but one and the same group will be responsible for the animals over a long period.

"A second work team will probably be based in the kitchen and dairy (with cellar attached). That team will also be responsible for the bake-house. Work in the dairy and bakery will also be spread over a longer period now instead of being organized on the previous shift system.

"A third group will be in charge of the laundry, where a good deal of work has to be done each day.

"A fourth group will be in charge of the orchard and vegetable garden and will supply the camp with produce. Its work will make life at the camp much cheaper. Perhaps other tasks requiring special work-teams will crop up as well.

"This means that in the end we may well need to divide all those at the camp into separate work-teams, each will be responsible for a specific task, will learn how to carry it out properly, and will therefore come to find it easier and easier to cope with. In the course of the summer it will be possible for some of the work-teams to change places. Such changes could be arranged in the following way: in each team there are bound to be special enthusiasts who will be ready to help beginners learn their new job, and who would remain on the spot while others move around. The only work that would then still be arranged on a shift system will be the cleaning. Each work-

team will release some of its members according to a rota to take their turn in the cleaners' shift. This is how we envisage the work at the camp next year.

"The editors of *Our Life* recommend that these suggestions should be discussed at a meeting and that the details should be worked out in Moscow during the winter, when we decide who wants to enrol in which work-team. To this end the journal staff urge everyone from the camp not to lose touch over the winter and to make every effort to keep in contact. Some of the adults have already suggested that all of us could meet together in their flats, to drink tea, discuss next year's camp and have some games and songs."

* * *

It has also been decided to circulate a questionnaire of everyone from the camp to ask them questions about life at the camp. We need your answers in writing so that we can discuss the results of the questionnaire more easily with you all at a meeting later on.

Questionnaires have been circulated before but this time there have been far more clear-cut answers handed in, and this shows that the children have reached almost unanimous opinions about certain features of life at the camp.

Four children and one adult were elected to draw up the questionnaire. Questions were suggested by all five. The important thing was to decide whether all the questions were really clear for the younger children to grasp, for after all they did make up the majority at the camp. There was a great deal of discussion on that very subject and in the end it was decided to limit the questions to the following range:

- 1) Why do we live and work at the camp?
- 2) Is life at the camp hard?
- 3) What do you like and what do you not like at the camp?
- 4) What benefit do those who come to the camp have from it?
- 5) Do you spend the time at the camp interestingly?
- 6) What do you think is lacking at the camp?
- 7) Do you think the meetings are necessary?

- 8) Are punishments necessary? If not what should take their place?
- 9) Does the work progress well? If not, why not?
- 10) How do the children regard the adults at the camp?
- 11) What do you hope to glean from the camp in the future?
- 12) Are the older children a help to the camp?
- 13) What work would you like to do next summer?
- 14) Do the children at the camp get on well together?
- 15) Would you like to spend the winter in the camp as well?

Most of the children brought along their answers during the next two days but some delayed doing so for a week. Forty-seven answer sheets were brought along.

The main gist of the answers submitted was as follows: "We live and work at the camp in order to be useful to the camp as a whole and for our own good as well." One girl wrote: "We live at the camp so that later years from now we shall be able to come back here and feel it was home." One boy imagined the future of the camp to himself in more concrete terms: "Later on it will be our camp and we will be in charge of it." Another boy wrote that the way of life at the camp was important because it meant that the children "were keeping the camp going, if we didn't do that then it couldn't exist". One answer was particularly interesting: "In the camp we are training ourselves for heavy work in the future which lies ahead when we are grown up."⁸

The older children tried to define the social and technical goals of the camp: "Those who want to live at the camp, must work, because it would be unpleasant for anyone to live at the camp knowing that he was living off other people's work, not his own." "Life at the camp makes us stronger and healthier, however living just for yourself and thinking only about yourself, worrying only about one's daily needs is tedious and selfish. Apart from us older ones here at the camp, there is a large number of small children who must become our friends. There are some tough nuts among them but many nice ones as well. The purpose of our life here, when it comes to us older ones, is to help the younger children where and how we can, try to bring them to follow good moral principles, help them to find things to develop their minds here as well

and to build a way of life that satisfies the shared interests of everyone at the camp. As we work and play we can see our little friends and observe the way they go about things. We are always able to help them with advice or in practice. If someone at the camp makes kind of mistake then we must hurry to put right what has gone wrong, or draw the person's attention to it. We must always be ready to come to the help of the younger children and be useful to them in every way we can." That was how a group of older boys saw the purpose of their life in the camp.

By comparing all the children's answers it was possible to conclude that some kind of ideal picture of what life at the camp should be like was beginning to take shape in the minds of almost all the children. This ideal, as is always the case with ideals, was a long way from reality. How could it be achieved? Was the ideal just a paraphrase of what the children had heard from the adult helpers and believed in, or were the children aware of a guiding idea underlying all the work and activities of the camp?

The description of our life provided earlier in this book brings out the very gradual nature of the progress achieved by the children not only in their reasoning and discussion but also in their work habits.

If the children's ideas were progressing, this was because the ideas of the adults were reflected more or less clearly in their activities, in their direct involvement in the working life of the camp. In addition, the day-to-day life at the camp gave the children a great deal to talk about amongst each other, yet despite that it was after all a completely new life for them, and they were encountering relationships unlike any they had ever come across before and which did not fit into any of the categories their short life had introduced them to so far. During the summer there were many group discussions and talks, long and short, but all important, nevertheless, since they often made a deep impression on the children's minds, thanks to their uninhibited frankness, as for example the discussion as to what "happiness" was. The upshot of all this talk was the growth of "traditions" at the camp which were far more valuable than any of the "rules" we had. *The whole number of "traditions" provided the cornerstone for the*

children's group life and created that very atmosphere which required constant moment in a forwards direction if it was to be maintained. If the seeds of a group spirit exist, then shared ideas will emerge and at good moments each person can feel himself to be part of the whole. However ideas often move more quickly than real life and outstrip it, there is always a clash between ideals and reality. The children themselves were drawing attention to this when they made remarks such as: "When *we are grown up . . .*", or "in the *future* the camp will be ours".

In what at first seem very contradictory statements contained in some of the children's answers, it is possible to single out a somewhat vague but nevertheless discernible idea as to *what our camp should be like*.

It was generally accepted by the children that "the organization's fine and doesn't need changing" except for a few minor details: "there should be more cows and other animals", "more bread should be baked". It was difficult to accept that the overall organization really was good, if at the same time the children complained that "people are not working properly" and that "there were cases of down-right laziness", that people "used to get up late," "talked too much as they worked" and sometimes "shirked work altogether". Other cases were mentioned when "some people would start playing the fool, while others would stand around looking on, so that the work got behind". There were other more far-reaching reasons underlying this situation as well: "work is going badly because we aren't working together like proper friends", or because "there are quarrels going on between the younger boys", whereas it was pointed out that "when everyone works hard together and happily then the work goes well and quickly". Whereas some children mentioned the unfamiliarity of the work as part of the problem, one of the crucial factors holding back progress was "laziness". Another distinction was drawn between progress at the beginning and the end of the summer: "when people had only just arrived, work went badly, but later on it was better". The general conclusion with regard to work was that "everything would go much better, if people worked together better, in a friendlier spirit".

The question must be raised again as to what the chil-

dren really meant when praising the overall organization, if at the same time they wrote "life at the camp would be good and interesting, if people were friendlier and didn't quarrel". One of the girls pointed out "there are lots and lots of quarrels and we don't know why". Almost all the children drew attention to quarrels or a lack of real friendship. This regret was a constant refrain and it was clear that this side of life in the camp was something the children found very hard to cope with, "everything would be fine if it wasn't for the quarrelling".

Of course there is no reason to believe that there were more misunderstandings between the children at the camp than there were in Moscow, in the dusty streets or the stuffy classrooms where they had to sit still for so long, in Moscow where the children were left to their own devices for so much longer than out in the camp where they were living side by side with adults. What merits attention here is the children's readiness to point out the negative aspects of our way of life here at the camp, which they find particularly regrettable, since they are very much aware of how these clash with the generally accepted idea of what life in the camp should be like. If this quarrelling and lack of co-operation were seen as so hard to bear by literally all the children, even those who "shirked" work and sparked off quarrels, surely there must have been ways for putting things right.

It was in this spirit that we approached the question of "punishments". However there were only two boys (one of them was the stern character in charge of the laundry) and two girls who considered that punishments were necessary. All the others took a negative view of punishment. "Punishments aren't necessary; they should be replaced with reprimands", "punishments would be too strict, as if we were being watched all the time", "punishments aren't necessary but we do need all the rules", "punishments don't need to be replaced—they've already been replaced with reprimands" pointed out one of the boys, making it clear that there had not been any punishments previously, as an accepted "tradition" of camp life. So it was clear that punishments were not going to solve the problem of how to improve life at the camp. But what was the answer...?

Again we had to take a closer look at the "general or-

ganization" that the children had approved and that would no longer present such a puzzle. "Reprimands" had always been meted out in front of all the children during general meetings. It was important to find out what the children felt about those meetings, the ways things were discussed and the type of communication achieved there which was obviously of a type new, not just to the children, but would have been new to many adults engaged in child "care", and which was therefore the crucial factor. It is worth pointing out that the children grasped the whole point of those meetings better than many adults. The attitude to the meetings found in the children's answers were unanimous without any exceptions at all this time: "the meetings are necessary", "the meetings are needed to run things properly", "if there were no meetings then nothing could be arranged properly", "we discuss lots of different things at the meetings so as to make the camp better", "the whole camp would fall apart without them", "meetings are the most useful thing about camp life", "we decide important questions at the meetings all together", "we find sensible solutions for different kinds of problems".

One of the doubts sometimes voiced with regard to our meetings was the fear that perhaps all children learnt at them to talk more or less fluently and coherently, that the meetings represented for them little more than a conversation game, a means of training the children in public speaking.

A remark made by one of the children at the camp can perhaps most effectively refute those fears: "By no means everyone says all that they really think at the meetings, one feels shy of his friends, another because of the grown-ups, and he keeps looking at them as he speaks, as if they were some kind of overseer. You might think that it would be better not to hold any meetings, but just rely on the grown-ups to run things. Yet for some reason the people here want meetings. Why? I, for one, insist we should have them, they're our school—we work out what's right and what's wrong, we try and discuss what we should all be working for, how to set about things to make life at the camp better. Here everyone wants things to go well for others and for himself. This is already the first step towards the better life which we want to build here. To get there each of us needs to do not just what he himself

likes but what does not suit the others, but it's important to remember the others too. Apart from me myself, there are a lot of people living here, and I've got to remember their interests too; so I need to go about things in such a way as to make life better for everyone, and that's what we need to discuss at the meetings"

So now let us turn back for a final look at that "general organization" mentioned by the children. It is what they see as the basis of our life here. They see it as a good thing that a camp like this exists, that it is being built up and established, they like the idea of the shared work which they see as very important, and most important of all they approve of the "tradition" of our meetings. Those are the crucial features of our life in the camp as the children see it: that is the "proper organization" as they see it. However while they appreciate the aims of the meetings and work sessions and understand their importance, the children cannot help but acknowledge that the real picture, the efforts to put the ideas into practice are not as good as they should be; more diligence is required if the camp is to reach its work targets, and higher vitally important goals are only to be achieved, if the atmosphere and relationships within the camp are smooth. The children not only are aware of their own shortcomings, but they also notice the *subtle link between work and friendly co-operation*. This explains, as I see it, the complaints they make about quarrels, that often seem exaggerated.

Answers concerning the benefits of the camp for the children and whether or not life in the camp is interesting nearly always match up with each other in neat pairs, those who find the life interesting and jolly, think that life in the camp is of benefit to them. "It's useful that our muscles develop here", "that we get used to work", "everyone here learns about work at an early age", "we learn to run a household"; one of the girls wrote: "What is useful is that when I come back to Moscow I shall be able to do everything", "life in the camp is good for our health", "*people here learn to live together as friends*, get used to cooking and thinking about other people", "it is useful here to learn to cook, wash clothes and bake bread." Benefit of somewhat broader implications was also mentioned: "*We get used to being independent.*"

One of the older children wrote: "Life in the camp is

most interesting because it is so full. Here we do not spend our time aimlessly as do many friends of our age, who spend idle months in summer cottages, passing the time with various entertainments. Here we try to use every minute for something that is practical for us and useful for the camp." One small boy wrote that the camp was useful "for it helps develop your muscles, but there are too many quarrels and the smaller boys don't have enough common sense".

He found life in the camp dull, just as did five girls who maintained that life in the camp was only lively "on Saturdays when there is dancing and singing". All these children maintained that there was little benefit to be gleaned from camp life "because the boys don't try to be useful, they've let the side down".

As pointed out earlier, most of the children in the camp were unhappy about the relations between the various groups. However some of the children took a different view: "Some people get on well and others don't", while one boy took a far less serious view of the quarrelling: "The children get on well among themselves, but just like fighting."

The benefit derived from the presence of the older boys in the camp was acknowledged by almost everyone, although it was the strictly practical benefit that stressed: "The older boys are useful, they are stronger and they can cope in one day with work that would take us three", "many different jobs turn out easy with their help". Another opinion voiced was that "they do not get on very well but are a great help". It was also pointed out that "the older children are necessary to keep things in order". Only very few children came out with statements such as: "They are a help, but not a very big help and not all of them." One girl seemed quite indifferent about it all and merely wrote: "It's all the same to me, whether they're here or not."

Most of the children did not think the behaviour towards the adults at the camp was what it should be: "We don't behave very well towards the adults", even "down-right badly". Others wrote that the behaviour of the children towards the adults "varied" as "some behaved properly, but others downright badly."

It is interesting to analyse the implications of this "bad-

ly". The adults could not possibly complain that the children did not get on with them, or that the children did not feel drawn to them as friends. Rather the opposite would have been true, sometimes the adults were somewhat overwhelmed by the children's insistent requests that they should play with them, go for walks or work with them, or tell them stories. All that left the adults very little time for themselves.

Five of the children wrote that everyone "liked the adults very much and saw them as friends."

Meanwhile explanations were proffered for the assertion that the children's attitude towards the adults was not as it should be: "I look upon the adults as friends a bit older than me. We need them to teach us how to do everything and they do everything they possibly can, yet we don't respond properly, *we look upon them as overseers*", "or as bosses" added another child. One child took this explanation one stage further. "This only happens during work sessions, it must be because when we're working in the garden and see a grown-up coming in the distance we all start to work harder and then, when he goes away, we go back to our old pace—but the rest of the time we look upon them as teachers and friends."

So what is clearly meant by this wrong or "bad" approach to the adults is a lack of sincerity, which the children recognise as being out of place. *The children say that they ought to show complete trust towards the adults.* The very fact that "bad" behaviour towards the adults is noted mainly during the work sessions points to the children's correct attitude to work. They are well aware that they should be working in such a way as not to need supervision.

A rather special question was the one as to whether the children would want to stay in the camp in winter. In conversations about the future of the camp, about the time when we would have a farm and a flourishing dairy, there had always been the worry about what would happen in the winter, there would be cows, calves and hens that needed looking after and who would there be to do that?

The children often dreamt of that era and used to declare: "Well then, we'll spend the winter here too, if we can!" That time seemed a long way off but we were still

interested in the children's opinions in relation to that "distant time". Almost all the children answered in the affirmative except for one girl. This united front pointed of course more to the growing sense of attachment to the camp than to any committed response to the problems intrinsic to the very nature of our work.

Chapter Eight

Now is the time to sum up the findings from the questionnaire and to assess the life at the camp during that second summer.

The original idea common among the children that working at the camp was necessary because that was what the adults wanted gave way to the general acceptance of the fact that work formed the cornerstone of our life at the camp and was important for that reason. This idea of course continued to seem somewhat theoretical to the children, because it alone was insufficient to make the children always approach their work conscientiously.

The children also started to appreciate that continual quarrels between them also got in the way of their work. They might have thought that friendly relations were one thing and work something quite different, perhaps they would have assumed that differences within friendship groups were only hurtful to the individuals concerned. However the children were now starting to grasp the wider implications; there did indeed exist a link between friendship and work, which meant that quarrels were not just unpleasant but detrimental for the camp as a whole. That realization represented a major step forward.

As before, it was difficult to find any firm bond that brought the children together apart from the external one provided by their shared work. Yet this time the children saw it as something important and regarded the lack of such a bond as a shortcoming of their life at the camp. There is some sort of parallel to be observed between the development of the camp's work programme and that of the quality of life at the camp. Initially much effort was concentrated on improving the quality and type of work carried out. Now everyone was turning their thoughts to how relations within the camp might be improved. While

practical improvements were relatively easy to achieve, improvements in the atmosphere of the camp, in the relationships within it were a far more difficult matter. So far there were no obvious reasons for any of the quarrels or unpleasantness or clear indications as to how a better, more pleasant life and atmosphere at the camp might be brought about. However the children's minds had been set in motion: the children at the camp had begun to see themselves as a group, with shared goals, objectives, means for achieving the latter, with a shared life and a shared future. Far be it from me to say that the way ahead was now clear, straight forward, or that any decisions with regard to future courses of action had in fact been taken. All that was still a long way off, nor did we find particularly attractive the stipulation of any rigid inflexible principles for the ordering of life in the camp for the future, but rather favoured setting up the whole enterprise first and then letting the new way of life blossom, starting out from the very finest principles of child care. Yet what was encouraging at this stage was to note that progress was being made, and that the children had in the meantime learnt from their own experience that there were clearly defined tasks for them to face up to, the solution of which was a matter of vital importance for them. A turning point had been reached in the children's attitudes to the adult helpers at the camp. They now saw the words "chief or inspector" did not apply here. The older children suggested that the adults should be looked on as "comrades", or to use a word that came more easily to the younger children, "friends". This too represented a move in the right direction, a small step forward, but it was still a long way from what we wanted, because totally relaxed and frank interaction had not yet been achieved. There were moments when the contacts between children and adults were open and friendly, but the adults did not feel confident that their relationships with the children could remain at this level steadily, over any long period of time.

Considerable importance was attached to the children's own sense of responsibility in relation to the work they were doing. Whereas it had been a haphazard phenomenon before, now that the children had acknowledged work to be one of the most important "pillars" of camp life, their responsibility in relation to their work was something the

children had all come to appreciate. Volunteers were appearing ready to take charge of specific aspects of camp activities. It had emerged as useful to have someone permanently in charge of the vegetable garden, laundry, kitchen, stables or the hen-house instead of relying on rota systems. These tended to be from among the older children, acknowledged as the strongest and most competent. Meanwhile the post of steward was still often taken over by the younger children who acquitted themselves quite well in those duties, and this despite the fact that the steward's duties had recently been increased by the introduction of daily accounts and housekeeping records.

Was it feasible to introduce still more variety into the camp's work programme? Could we take on anything new? The children all agreed that the work was easy. We had in fact introduced new jobs at the end of that summer: bread-making was now on a larger scale, now that so many enthusiasts had come forward, and there were now horses to be looked after. These "innovations" did not produce any problems, so it seemed that there was still ample scope for extending the work programme.

There was one thing the camp organizers did fear, namely that life at the camp might be being arranged too much "along adult lines" and failing to take sufficiently into account children's likes and dislikes. However that might be, this life left its imprint on our meetings and our relations were often too dry and businesslike. Such developments would have seemed to us highly erroneous in any circumstances. We had always felt that children should live in an environment that entailed work designed to suit children's needs—interesting work, that would be a source of happiness, that they should live a child's life without so many restrictions, rules and conventions as those that beset an adult. In short it seemed most important to us to provide conditions in which a child might bring its strength and potential to fruition.

Our aim behind the work programme we provided was to give the children experience of the exhilaration of work, to ensure that they expended their energy in a regular, steady way towards the achievement of an objective easily understood by the children. Yet there is another side to the nature of children which is reflected in their charac-

teristic words, gestures and tastes, just as the extent of their physical strength is reflected in simple, sometimes quite spontaneous, movements as they run or play. Just as life in the camp gave the children work for their hands so too it should help the children to foster their other talents. This would make the camp not just a place where a youngster could proudly announce that he had done his share of the work, but also where he would have experienced the enchantment of art, and beauty and come to appreciate the reassuring attractions of close-knit group existence.

Mention was made earlier of the influence that the children's growing awareness of what was beautiful had had upon the state of tidiness in the dormitories, while to appreciate that cleanliness is necessary from the point of view of health is difficult, it is quite a different matter when we come to stress how nice a room looks because it is clean. No explanations were needed to point out that making the place look attractive meant first and foremost that it needed to be "tidied" and "cleaned out". Talk along those lines meant more to the children than lectures on hygiene from the local expert.

What was it that helped the children's taste develop? Yes, it must have been a result of our singing sessions, our art and craft work, our decoration of the common room, of our theatrical shows.

So the first task that the experience of the second summer led us to plan for was the introduction of art into the lives of our children on a larger scale than before. This development was by no means a chance affair.

It had also emerged that the more close-knit our children's community was the stronger would be the influence of the camp. This meant it was important not to interrupt or cut short the moods, enthusiasm and ties which had come into being that summer, it was important that the children should continue to benefit from the new experiences that they had been confronted with in the freedom of their summer world.

This meant that the organizers were faced by new tasks for the next year—the introduction of more artistic experiences and activities into the children's life at the camp and the setting up of work projects with the children in the winter.

PART III

Chapter One

Even before we had left the camp it had been suggested that the camp-members should not go to join different groups when the evening sessions started up again at the Moscow centre: instead we would be arranging a "camp" group that would come together twice a week for some joint project. Two of the women who had been living in the camp volunteered to take charge of the group.

The task proved rather difficult. The children's age and levels of mental development varied considerably. During the summer out in the camp they had been linked together by the bond of shared work, by the way of life that they shared, in the ordering of which they all had, to a greater or lesser extent, taken part. Then there had been enough room for everyone to work in and life had really been communal within a single framework constituted by the generally accepted code of behaviour and the group spirit. In the winter however each child had its own school and family concerns, perhaps even his or her own apprenticeship and of course the same community of interests did not exist. Shared work for the camp could not bring the children together any more, and all that would hold them together now was the thought of future plans and the desire to "keep in touch".

What had served to bring the children together in the camp after work had been the evenings when they all assembled in the common room. Singing enthusiasts would cluster round the piano while the others found themselves a seat where they could on the benches along the walls. It had been rather cramped but everyone had felt very much at home and relaxed.

We decided to give the children scope for a variety of artistic activities so that all the children might take part in a common project. This led naturally to the idea of producing a play that would involve a wide range of different skills, scenery would need painting, costumes and props would have to be made, frames for the backcloths would be needed and all this work would be carried out by the children themselves.

Our final choice was Grigoriev's musical version of the

fairy-tale *Sleeping Beauty*. At one of our gatherings the children read through the libretto, recalled the versions of the fairy-tale they remembered from their childhood and concluded that a great deal had been left out. There were more would-be actors than the play required so new parts were devised, new words written in and a few scenes added. The casting took place only after long discussion of whose characters and talents were best suited to which role. The children with good voices were given the singing parts.

There were some amusing incidents in the process. One boy with a good voice and a good ear for music was given the role of a nightingale singing off-stage. He wanted to sing very badly, but he was very disappointed that no one would see him. He found consolation finally in the additional role assigned to him as one of the good fairies.

After all the discussions it turned out in the end that there were parts for all those who wanted them. The children did not seem to worry about whether they had a large or a small part, since their attention was concentrated on whether their costume, lines and movements were "right". The children who did not take part in the show as actors made scenery, props and costumes. They used to work on the play in the large room where the piano stood. Work progressed happily and in a very animated fashion, for the children found the enterprise most interesting. The rehearsals for the musical items took place outside the group singing lessons, which all the children from the camp made a habit of attending as usual. Usually the "stars" stayed on after the singing lessons and rehearsed their parts with the woman who led the singing lessons.

On the day of the singing lessons the room revealed a small group clustered round the piano in the corner, as the choir rehearsed from half-past five till eight o'clock. The first group would be followed by another which would be engaged in a new task, painting goblets and gold or silver plates for the banquet scene. One enthusiast made a quiver and arrows. There was a good deal of work to be done when the quiver and arrows had to be painted. The good fairies set to work on their costumes (each of them had a special design), decorating them with flowers, and weird and wonderful stars and birds. Some grey muslin

was obtained for the costume of the wicked fairy. Then an argument started up as to what the wicked fairy should look like and how she should behave. The king trimmed his long beard and decorated the front of his cloak with gold and silver. The older girls started cutting out and fitting the fairies' costumes.

... Some of the children who caused us a good deal of worry because of their obstinate characters suddenly found a perfect outlet for their energies, became totally involved and felt on top of the world. The change that came over one boy was particularly interesting, he had actually left the camp that first summer after a mere two weeks, there had not seemed to be any solution to his problems. He had come again to the camp the second summer and that time settled in better, but fell ill with scarlet fever and for that reason only spent a short time at the camp that year as well. He was an inveterate sceptic. His usual comment on life was that "things are bad, there's no reason to try and forget the bad, nothing will come of it". Before the work on the play he used only to come to our gatherings very seldom and he always held himself aloof, as if he did not really belong. The play however fired his imagination. The singing teacher when she noticed his unusual animation asked him one day: "How d'you like it now? D'you like coming along here with the group?" "Of course," the boy answered, and that heartfelt "of course" spoke volumes.

... Despite various setbacks the play attracted everyone's interest and provided a focus for most energetic work. After intense work during the actual days of the performances it was back to the "ordinary routine". Most of the boys started working in the centre's carpentry workshop, while the girls took up their sewing again. The children from the camp decided to meet together once a month. Some of them suggested by way of a joke: "Why don't we set things up here like in the camp? We could start baking bread and making milk puddings again, the cleaners and cooks could knuckle down to work again!"

Soon afterwards the children had a much more serious matter to discuss at one of their meetings. One of the boys from among their number found himself in a very difficult position. His father, an old worker, who had barely made ends meet before, had now fallen sick and was not

even able to pay for the bed which he hires in a doss-house for the two of them. This meant that they both had nowhere to go. The boy's school-mates reported this to the meeting. All the children took this very seriously and decided to try and help out the boy. After a proposal by one of the girls which met with unanimous approval it was decided that each month the children would collect money amongst themselves to pay at least for the bed. The adults in charge of the group also contributed and three roubles were collected straight away. Then the group elected a boy who would be responsible for collecting money for this purpose every month. He would go to the sick man and pay for the bed. The group went on doing this for three months until the boy succeeded in making other arrangements.

After the winter holidays the lull in the activities of the children from the camp came to an abrupt end. It was now time to decide who should go to the camp, i.e. who wanted to go, who could not be included and how many empty places were still available and how many new children could be admitted.

All the discussion on this subject earlier had brought us round to the conclusion that *anyone who had lived and worked in the camp had thereby gained the right to go again the following year* and that right could only be lost if there was an abrupt change in the child's behaviour and he ceased to be a "friend" of the camp community. Some children, whose home circumstances had changed were no longer able to go. In addition, we were able to take along more children this time round, now that the domestic and farming arrangements had been smoothed out.

Heated arguments broke out at that meeting as to how best to acquaint children from our centre with the camp, how to find out who wanted to go and—as it was expected that there would be far more children anxious to go than we could possibly take—how to choose those for whom life at the camp would be particularly beneficial. Three children were selected to draw up a list of all those who wanted to go to the camp, and then after that the necessary selections would be made. It was also decided to hold a magic lantern show with a talk about the life and work at the camp. The slides for it had already been prepared. The commentary for the pictures was provided.

by the older girls who had been at the camp and one of the adults involved.

All these preparations leading up to the final choice of candidates for the camp caused great excitement amongst the children and the adult staff had to have long discussions with those who wanted to go to the camp. The staff put their point of view quite clearly. They considered it better to take a large proportion of "younger" children to the camp so that they could gradually get used to the norms of camp life and the work required of them and then be in a position to spend several summers in a row at the camp, since it was most important that there should be "old hands" at the camp who looked upon it as their "second home". If older children were taken along on the grounds that their strength might prove an asset, it had to be borne in mind that it was much harder for such children to get used to a new mode of life, and time and again one of the older boys would spend a random summer in the camp and then the year after start an apprenticeship. It was self-evident that a boy such as that could never have the chance to become a true member of the camp community and come to think of the place as his home.

The decisive factor in selecting older children for the camp was their capacity for work. A number of boys and girls aged between thirteen and fourteen were chosen, and this choice was to prove totally justified.

... While doubts sometimes arose with regard to inclusion of older children in the camp community, the selection of younger children proceeded without any objections. Most of these younger children were brothers and sisters of children who had been at the camp before, and this meant that the children's ties and loyalties to the camp became closer still.

That year the children went off to the camp particularly early: as early as Easter the older boys and girls set out for the camp with some of the adult helpers.

After the Easter break the children returned to Moscow, although a small number remained there for the rest of the spring and summer. This meant that work was being carried out in the camp for a much longer period that year, i.e. for anything up to five months, which meant virtually the whole growing season. During the two-week Easter

holiday the vegetable patch had been prepared, drains for the kitchen and cow shed had been laid.

... A very special undertaking that year was the technical work and a good deal of effort was required to develop the skills that these projects demanded. A task that presented a particular challenge was the project to make our own drainage system, lay water pipes and in general embark on building work.

The year before we had begun to draw up plans for laying the water pipes. In the gulley near our stream there was a number of small springs. The largest of these which the camp had used the first year supplied us with about 2,500 gallons a day. We decided to clean this spring, deepen it and instead of barrels use a brick tank to store the water we needed. So now we started work on this and deepened the channel down to the level where the spring bubbled up between the slabs of limestone.

The people from the adjacent estate made us a present of a pump, though of a good make it was old and some parts were missing. However one of the boys from the camp, an apprentice from the railway workshops, proved perfectly equal to the task. Together with another boy he took the pump to pieces, transferred them from the estate down to the spring, painted it up, changed the gasket in the valve, fixed on a handle and then attached the installation to a firm concrete foundation. In the autumn our carpenters made a casing to cover it from pieces of logs, planks and left-over wood, which meant that the pump would be well shielded from the elements. It was during the third summer that the children started work in earnest on the water pipes after the first urgent priorities had been seen to.

... We then started to give serious thought to landscaping the garden. The lawn in front of the house was cleared of tree stumps and bushes, neat paths were laid out, and along the edges of these were planted small fir trees and lilac bushes. The small yard was now replaced with a large round flower-bed edged with red and white bricks. Some small beds were made in other places. All the beds were planted with annuals—a wonderful present from the Botanical Gardens in Moscow and also from some other well-wishers.

In general the domestic arrangements were on the lines

suggested in the last issue of the camp journal brought out the previous summer. There were now people in charge of the various departments.

This innovation led some of the adults at the camp to have misgivings lest the children in charge might not take things too much into their own hands and start revelling in their new-found "power". However this did not happen. Just as in the first experiments with placing certain children in charge of work bases, the children concerned saw themselves as having been entrusted with a more difficult and responsible task: they saw it as their duty now to keep ahead of the others and lead them and give thought to ways in which their particular field of work might be carried out more efficiently. The children all held that there were practical advantages to be gleaned from this new system, because they now had a clearer understanding of what the purpose behind the camp really was and were quite willing to carry out the instructions issued by the work leaders they themselves had elected. They, for their part found it easier to work under these new arrangements, because it meant that everything was better prepared and organized.

A greater risk under the new system was that the camp might cease to be an integrated whole and exist rather as a group of separate cells in each of which there were "narrow specialists". However this fear also proved unfounded, since by now it had become a tradition in the camp for children to be ready to change places from one section to another, without trying to avoid any particular kind of work if it was really necessary. Usually those in charge of a particular work base would train their deputy in the necessary skills, after which he would leave his post to the latter, while he himself worked alongside the other members of that particular work team or learnt to be in charge of another section.

There was really a great deal of work to be carried out by those in charge of the various work bases, for instance, the child in charge of the kitchen was required to be on the spot all the time work was being done there; it was her job to teach those who could not yet cook, make sure enough provisions were delivered and that everything was kept clean, to help along any cooks who were behind schedule and if anything went wrong to take over the cook-

ing herself. Thanks to various improvements that had been made from time to time since the camp was first set up, work there was organized along the following lines: two of the older girls and one woman member of staff took it in turns, for a week at a time, to supervise the cooking, the baking of the white bread and the baking of brown bread. At the end of the second month the woman's place was taken by a young man on the staff, and then a girl who had been improving her skills throughout the previous four months was anxious to have the chance to see how she could manage on her own for the remainder of the summer. Each person in charge of the kitchen drew up a list of rules for work there and this was then discussed and approved at one of our meetings. This meant that the cooks' duties were defined in detail right from the start. The whole camp benefited from these arrangements, since it meant that meals became cheaper and more varied and the cooks learnt their skills more rapidly.

Baking bread was to prove a most popular activity and what the children enjoyed most of all was preparing the white bread.

Brown bread required more care and attention and the whole process of its preparation involved more time. Kneading it properly required a definite knack and a good deal of strength. It was nearly always the person in charge of baking bread who had to do this until other enthusiasts in the work-team learnt how. This work was not something for which a rota of shifts had been organized and the work was always carried out by volunteers.

The camp-member who had set up the laundry the year before was put in charge again for a time, but vacated the post as soon as a replacement had had time to acquaint herself with the work.

We also had a locksmith in the camp who held classes for those who wanted to work in the carpentry shop, and yet another camp-member was in charge of the vegetable garden. The elections of those in charge of all sections had to be approved at a general meeting.

This system meant that the adult members of staff were relieved of a considerable part of their domestic workload and were thus able to devote more time and energy to other sides of camp life. The need for this was felt

particularly keenly since the practical sides of camp life had now more or less been taken care of.

Offshoots of our progress to date were now to be observed, the children had scope now for a broader range of activities and were anxious to satisfy new needs. One highly interesting reaction on the part of the children that year, which pointed to their growing ability to ponder wider issues than those which concerned themselves as individuals, was their profound distress at having to bid farewell to two out of three boys, who in the spring had gone out of their way to obtain a place at the camp. They did not "keep" their places for long, however. All too soon we were to hear the familiar complaints of bad language, rough behaviour and quarrelling. When they sank as far as indulging in fights the adult member of staff who had originally sponsored them found himself no longer able to vouch for them and suggested at a meeting that two of the three trouble-makers leave the camp as they had failed to keep their promises. This announcement was immediately followed by promises of new leaves, tears and appeals to other members of staff: however once again the boys concerned resumed their provocative behaviour. They did not want to leave the camp at any price for they felt ashamed at being sent back to Moscow so soon. Nevertheless their sponsor insisted that they leave. The third culprit who to use the sponsor's words only kept his place "by the skin of his teeth" did however pull himself together and got through the rest of the summer without mishap, and very pleased he was about that too. This particular boy grew very attached to the horses and could be relied upon to be a useful assistant to the boy in charge of the "livestock", who in his turn helped the boy refrain from starting up any more of his "Moscow pranks".

Of course this incident was a major shock to the whole camp and it gave the adults present many bitter moments, confronting them as it did with a serious upheaval in life at the camp. However, at the same time, it gave the children much food for thought and in the end served to bring the other children closer together. Then again there were active efforts to foster group spirit within the various work-terms or peer groups of girls and boys, resulting in an ever stronger sense of solidarity among them. It would be as well here to mention in detail some of the

groups and the new features that were starting to make themselves felt in their daily activities.

The youngest children at the camp required constant attention and care from the adult staff and so one of us was assigned to work exclusively with them. The group of these youngsters stood out to some extent as a separate entity and was accorded special attention. The youngest children worked less than the others and got up an hour later than everyone else. This was accepted as something quite natural by the other children who pointed out: "They're still finding their feet".

In the group of younger children the boys and girls always worked together. It was never any problem finding work of a less taxing nature for these children.

... They had their own small lives to lead as well: keeping their own rooms neat, their games, their work, their own little differences. However all these were not discussed at general meetings; they had little "get-togethers" of their own where the work to be carried out by their group and the day-to-day incidents relating to them were discussed. The woman helper assigned to help introduce these youngsters to camp life was always present on such occasions. This meant that the atmosphere was that of an uninhibited family group, and it meant that they could keep to subjects which were of particular interest to this age-group.

In this small, close-knit group it was easier for the newcomers to develop an awareness of the group spirit so vital to life in the camp. The youngsters also came along to the general meetings and often raised matters for general discussion. If any of the older children was not satisfied with the way the "youngsters" were behaving or wanted to put a suggestion to them then such matters would be discussed at their special group meetings.

It was difficult for the woman doctor who worked with these smaller children to be present at their morning work sessions, very often there were other claims on her attention at that time. There was a constant stream of boils, splinters and bruises for her to see to and these minor ailments were very time-consuming. She persuaded some of the older girls to keep an eye on the youngsters at work and they very soon came to grips with their new duty. At one of the younger children's meetings it was decided that

they should choose a "mother" from among those older girls to supervise their work when the doctor had to be elsewhere. They chose a girl of fourteen, who used to decide with the doctor in advance what work needed to be done next and how best to go about it. On frequent occasions this girls had to carry out this work and take decisions independently.

It was not long before the children grew used not just to being responsible *for themselves and their own work, but also to feel responsible for the performance of their group as a whole.*

In their free time the youngest children would play either on their own or with the doctor looking on and encouraging them to play the kind of games that helped foster their initiative. Games based on fairy-tales were particularly popular. One of the first fairy-tales they decided to act out was *Snow White*, and this was a great success. It was decided that if this went well then they would prepare a performance for the rest of the camp. They set up a hut for the dwarfs who went off to work in the woods. Our main building provided the palace of the Wicked Queen. It was from the palace that the nurse, on the Queen's command, led Snow White out into the woods where she encountered the dwarfs. Later the Wicked Queen, on learning from her mirror that Snow White was still alive dressed herself up as an old beggar-woman and set off to find the princess. When she found Snow White in the wood she gave her an apple which sent her into a deep sleep, from which she was freed by the Prince.

The preparations for this performance were surrounded in a good deal of mystery and the other children were asked not to investigate what was going on. Gradually more detail was added to the story, costumes appeared, the children started learning set lines, and songs and dances for the dwarfs were devised. The doctor attempted to note down the gist of the children's parts but this was a difficult task because the children kept on adding new details at each new rehearsal.

Finally the children decided to dress all the players in costumes and to turn the hut into the dwarfs' house with the help of some coloured blankets. They took some plates and spoons from the kitchen for the dwarfs' feast and made a real festive occasion of it, to which all the other

children were invited. The small figures in white suits, red caps, the dwarfs' beards and working aprons made a very pretty picture among the young birch trees and fresh green grass in the sunlight. Everyone congratulated the youngsters who had set the ball rolling for most interesting subsequent theatrical efforts. At the end of the summer a performance of the fairy-tale *Vassilisa the Wise and Beautiful* was staged, this time with the participation of some of the older children as well.

The younger children made an important contribution to the general atmosphere at the camp with their happy games, their willingness to work and their close-knit group. They also served to bring out caring, unselfish attitudes in the older children who helped them to settle into life at the camp. Members of their group took its place in the cooking and cleaning rotas along with the other children, although they were of course given simpler tasks to do.

The second group consisted of twenty-five boys aged between twelve and fifteen, i.e. at that stage when "boys will be boys" and "proving your strength" is seen as something all-important, while outward manifestations of emotion reap little more than contempt from one's fellows. At this stage most boys have already been told on numerous occasions that they are no longer small, and ought to be taking life more seriously.

In general this group embraced a wide variety of characters, however two qualities were common to almost all its members: they were all very lively and happy-go-lucky. They were often the initiators of new projects, games, outings or pranks. Not only were these boys always on the move and making a good deal of cheerful noise at the same time but they became the real centre of the camp community, setting the tone of the general mood and appetite for work. Since there were a good number of them it meant that there were some boys from that group in all the kitchen and cleaners' shifts and most of the other work-teams. What they enjoyed most about the work was the physical exertion that like some sort of gymnastics served to "develop muscles" as most of them had pointed out when called upon to fill out the questionnaire with regard to the benefit from the work programme the previous year.

As was pointed out earlier we attached a great deal of importance to ensuring that the children did not work all the time in any one section of the camp but had a try at all the types of work available. It may be that because of this some work was not carried out as efficiently as it might have been, yet it did mean that the children took a more active part in all the work going on at the camp, were acquainted with most types of work essential to the attainment of our common goal.

... There was one time when some of the older children put on a satire of our life at the camp which proved a most amusing entertainment. It was then that the idea was hatched that we should make up a play ourselves for a performance at the camp. In an attempt to find a suitable subject one of my colleagues after suggesting to a group of twelve- to fifteen-year-old boys that they should take on this job, turned to his own memories of childhood, recalling how much focus there had always been on travel to foreign parts, Indians, savages etc., and other such things that so readily fire a child's imagination. All those interested in the new project were invited to come along to discuss it in the common room.

"What I would suggest," he began, "is that instead of my going back to Moscow to choose a suitable play we should make one up ourselves. For this we must all agree on what we're after and we must make sure that it will be of interest to everyone. We could do something about Indians, for instance."

"What do you mean?"

"We could show how they live, set up an Indian camp, dress up like Indians, have a war-dance round a fire and then have a captured pale-face turning up from somewhere, whose own comrades come to rescue him . . ."

The children started thinking about the suggestion, however it was too vague to arouse any enthusiastic response.

"Perhaps we could take an adventure from life at the camp?" suggested one of the boys.

"What's interesting about that, everybody knows it all," objected another.

"It doesn't matter what they know already, we could make up something new, something unusual."

The man who had arranged the discussion encouraged

that first timid suggestion: "Yes, you could do something set in the camp, you could have some boys setting off on a journey somewhere and the adventures that befall them on the way."

"Let them be captured by Indians!" pipes up one young cynic with a sneer.

Everyone started laughing, till the adult member of staff, whose ideas were already taking shape, stuck to his guns and went on: "Fine, let them encounter Indians."

"If the Indians eat them though, what happens to the rest of the show?"

That comment merely gave rise to a new wave of laughter and by this time the idea of bringing Indians into the performance was really starting to catch on. Another voice in their favour now came from skinny Sasha Lushin who was a real book-worm and expert in Indian ways, so much so that the other children used to call him "egg-head". "Indians are not cannibals, they only scalp their prisoners" he reminded everyone in most serious tones.

"Great fun that'd be too!"

A new wave of laughter led the man in their midst to call out: "Just a moment, lads! That's given me an idea! why don't we let Sasha who knows so much about them persuade some of you to set off to America—let's say to dig for gold."

"Yes, up in Alaska there's stacks of gold," the expert confirmed.

"You see . . . he could get a group together and then on the way his friend with whom he'd hatched up the whole idea could start up a fight with him. The friend could run off and get together a group of his mates, tell them about all the plans and then persuade them to dress up as Indians and lay an ambush for Sasha and his companions. Sasha and company in the panic and confusion would give up all their belongings to the false Indians and the whole enterprise would end as one big joke."

"I'm for it lads!" called out one of the boys, "I'm going to be an Indian. Who'll join me!"

"Me too, me too!" all of a sudden the place was alive with Indians.

Then Sasha broke in on a more serious note: "You can't all be Indians, you need some travellers as well. I'll be one of those and a few others as well. We'll get together

on our own and decide what we should do and you can do the same."

Group discussions of this nature were a well-established practice among the children thanks to the games they had played the previous year referred to as Apaches and Comanches, in which Sasha had always played a leading part.

"All right then. The most important thing though is how do we make the costumes?"

"That's easy," my colleague assured them. "It's hot weather at the moment so you can just strip to the waist, roll your trousers up as high as they will go, paint on tattoos, stick feathers into your hair and make necklaces out of pieces of coloured rag."

"We've got heaps of coloured paper! Could we use that?"

"That would do very nicely."

"Let's go and find someone to make the costumes!"

"Don't forget to make a list of everyone who'll be performing!" the group leader shouted after them.

"Sure, sure!" shouted the impatient Indians as they vanished from sight.

... The day of the eventual performance started with two rehearsals, which as far as the action was concerned were rather tame, but did help the actors to remember where they had to collect together, where the ambush had to be laid, which paths they had to run along so as to make sure the spectators could not see them coming.

The actual performance was far livelier than the rehearsals. The excitement made the actors bolder and they chattered away without stumbling over their words, although at times they started whispering or winking to each other to prompt people as to what to do next. The spectators did not complain about the inconvenience of having to move around to keep up with the plot, from the glade where the travellers stopped to set up camp, to the bushes behind which the colourfully attired Indians had laid their fire and who seemed to take particular delight in the whole proceedings.

The success of this first experiment led us to set the children a more demanding task next time and to ensure that the children took more initiative in the actual creation of the play. An interesting fact to emerge from this work was that to get the children into the right mood it was most important that they should be dressed in suit-

able costumes and made up, for all that helped them to get the feel of their parts. This amount of realism was most important for our young "stars".

... There are many sides of children's lives, significant and profound experiences, which demand an outlet, to come to the surface, and which, if denied one, cause mental suffering and become a source of unexpected whims, tempers and even inexplicable illnesses. This uninhibited play-acting providing scope for the imagination, mirrored the children's life experience. The way such acting develops depends not merely on the speed and agility of their movement and varying degrees of inventiveness but also on the richness of their evolving emotional life. We were not setting out to set up a children's theatre complete with "professional" authors, "stars" and an admiring audience. We were anxious for the play-acting to become an integral part of the children's lives, as just one form of creative activity for the children amongst many.

... While "shows" of this kind assumed great importance for the boys, it was another more intimate form of art—namely music—which caught the girls' imagination. It would be wrong of course to say that they showed more flair for music than the boys, yet, as far as we could judge, they were attracted by the actual atmosphere surrounding music sessions. Earlier reference was made to the conservative, rather narrow and trivial outlooks of some of the girls who found it so difficult to get used to the way of life that was entirely new to them. These traits of character may well be attributable to the fact that girls are called upon to be more involved in the daily routine of their family lives than boys, they spend more time at home and are more caught up in and worried by petty squabbles and neighbours' gossip. Yet at the same time they work more within the family, pick up more family habits and come to appreciate a certain degree of home comfort, albeit of the very humblest variety.

The girls were introduced more cautiously and slowly to take up the new interests. At first it was an achievement to get some of the girls to spend an hour or two at one of the work-tasks entrusted to them without quarrels or misunderstandings cropping. These girls needed a rest from their ordinary routine and egging them on too much at first was not the right way to set about things. It was

impossible to make the same demands on them as on the boys. The freedom that could be literally felt at the camp, the interesting games, the warmth of the summer sun, absorbing books and singing—all made them abandon their habits of hard work at first, as they were not used to all these distractions. Little by little however they began to join in the camp life more—the singing, the games of football, the swimming, which they enjoyed immensely as they did the sun-bathing on the hot sand, the celebrations for special occasions: yet they always remained somewhat passive and aloof, as if they had come to the camp for a holiday rather than as if they were part of the place.

Now however new attitudes had appeared. Some of them were truly interested in the domestic running of the camp, particularly the minor details. They expressed interest in making the kitchen and laundry more efficient and looking after the cows and hens. Once these interests had surfaced they grew rapidly and soon the girls had taken charge of the kitchen so that very little supervision from adult staff was required any more and even then only when new practical suggestions were called for.

Once these girls had begun to feel that they belonged to the camp they began to take an active interest in other aspects of camp life. They were the first for instance to start trying to make their rooms look more cosy, although the dormitories were not used for any group activities, merely as somewhere to sit when the weather was too wet for anyone to go outside. Now, one might often come across that group of girls reading in their dormitory; flowers appeared on the tables and pictures on the walls, and on the upstairs balcony a special play-corner was set up where the small girls were always engrossed in games of “dollies” or “tea-parties”, in which the elder children took a lively interest. While at first everything the adults had said about tact, respect for other people, about how futile idleness, spying on other people and eaves-dropping, reading other people’s letters undermined the general mood in the camp, had seemed alien and irrelevant to the girls, now they had started giving thought to such things and were themselves beginning to appreciate that such behaviour was out of place, and by no means only because the staff viewed it as negative.

Their response to the demands made on them in their

new, unfamiliar surroundings also became less cautious. Nor did they stand apart from the other children any longer—in fact they came to enter into the life of the camp more than all the rest of the children put together; they joined in the games of the small children in the balcony play-corner, the more nimble among them were a match for the boys in their games out in the yard and whenever a show was put on they joined forces with the older boys. It was singing however which they found the most absorbing of the group activities since it brought the children of all ages together.

There were only two of this group of girls who did not take part in the singing. After spending most of their day engaged in demanding work in the household they liked to spend almost all their time reading.

As far as the girls were concerned it was possible to generalize to the effect that it took them longer to acquire efficient working habits than the boys, and in the main they concentrated their efforts in the house-hold, cooking, baking, washing or looking after the cows and hens. The girls not only showed interest in these jobs but also set about them energetically. They were far less enthusiastic about any other tasks. They were always somewhat reluctant to join in group activities yet they started to seek satisfaction in personal relationships earlier than the boys, this was reflected in their initiative over the play-corner and in particular in the way they took the small girls under their wing. The exchanges within this group of older girls were gentler now and far fewer harsh remarks were to be heard passing between them than had been the case before. One girl expressed the new mood within that group in these words: "I think that we are all glad to have the chance to live differently here. I never used to believe anything anyone said here before . . ." A good deal of hard work over a period of several years was needed before those girls could bring themselves to start trusting other people, striving after a better life and setting store by what was good and kind.

* * *

Let us now turn to the *conclusions* to be drawn from our experience of the life we shared with the children in the camp. It is impossible to regard this work as completed

in any respect, in fact by its very nature it is something that will and can never be complete. Its very essence lies in the search of ways to educate children through their life experience, the search not for *form* but for *content* in the work of child-care. We did not set out to confine our work within the framework of any educational theories and we did not see ourselves as advocates of "liberal" or "community" education or "education through work", although various aspects of these theories were similar in spirit to the principles we set out to follow. We were guided more by instinct and experience, the likes and dislikes, the moods stemming from our *own life* amongst the children and from our observations of children's lives. The starting point for our work in the camp was the shared work, the organization of the domestic, strictly practical side of life there.

This beginning was no chance matter. This was a definite conclusion we drew from our three years' work in the colony (See: *Children—the Workforce of the Future.*) mentioned at the beginning of this volume. As we involved the children in the work which in the setting up of the camp was essential (cooking meals, washing up, cleaning), we realized that other forms of work required, could not be seen in this light (digging drains, laying paths, tending the vegetable garden and clearing new plots for cultivation). Here we set out to appeal to their *instinct for movement*, to provide scope for *flexing muscles*—in a word we tried to bring out the interest in those tasks as such, which at the same time were partly linked with the idea for the camp's "future". This was not a task we could rush at, we had to wait a long time until what were new impressions for the children had become familiar.

There was a good deal of friction as the children went about their work tasks. This stemmed both from the fact that the children were unused to the kind of work involved and that the way of life was new to them and also from the lack of proper organization. We had to make sure that things were arranged in such a way so that *work for the children was made easier*. This meant that children were drawn into discussion of the practical affairs of the camp first of all; indeed the children's meetings soon became essential to ensure that the whole life of the camp

ran smoothly. However these practical discussions still left us a long way to go before a real group spirit within the camp was achieved.

This meant that our first steps were aimed at *arranging a satisfactory domestic routine and organizing the work programme*. Our next objective was to make life in the camp more pleasant, comfortable and attractive. These were once again practical aims. Indeed if a group of people live together then they will sooner or later seek to enhance their shared way of life in order not to bore each other. An instinctive need for beauty can explain the appearance in our midst of artistic enterprises which became an accepted part of camp life, not by chance but as a result of the demands of life itself, acknowledged by all those concerned. This greatly facilitated our understanding of *happiness derived through work*. Indeed work and the need for it are most readily grasped by children precisely from this angle.

This was how our small "society" started to take shape at the outset. Yet there was still a long way to go before the children would start feeling they belonged to a group. The framework of our life at the camp needed extending a good deal further and the life itself needed to be richer, if we were to achieve results that might fulfil our original hopes.

It was interesting to note that each time that life in the camp became more closely defined, in any respect whatsoever, there would be certain children who could not reconcile themselves to the change and were obliged to leave. This was a natural state of affairs particularly in relation to the older children, whose habits acquired in the context of urban life were adult habits rather than children's habits. These cases were of course a setback for us, but at the same time they had their uses, for they prevented us from closing our eyes to reality.

We realized how much work still remained to be done if we were to create a way of life at the camp that would really attract the children to our project. We still had a long path to follow in our study of children's lives in order to establish *what children's work, children's art, children's intellectual and social life really involved*. Only then would it be possible to make plans for a truly fulfilling life at the camp, the further advancement of which would

lie in the attainment on our part of ever greater clarity and simplicity in the definition of our aims and methods.⁹

Meaningful objectives and simplicity of implementation was the key to progress at our camp. Yet we were only just beginning

Gradually we were progressing not towards the creation of a community of children but of *a community of children and adults*. The organizers had to be members of the camp community just like the children, yet at the same time they needed to mould the overall way of life while studying it, so as to make sure that all involved were not marking time, and to evolve more and more new ways of enhancing and perfecting life at the camp. This is why our camp, although it has not been in existence for very long, already has a long history of setbacks and successes.

The authors of this account firmly intend to go further than this description of the first three years of the camp's existence, it continues to live on and to grow. However the very idea that at some later date we might become the "experienced" organizers of this camp or indeed "camps" is not entertained by any of us. It is out of the question that the work described in these pages should be seen as the fruit of long experience in child care.

The upbringing and education of children is first and foremost a question of the life they lead, a many-faceted and diverse phenomenon. This means that it cannot be considered within any clearly defined framework, nor can anyone claim to be sufficiently experienced in life as such. Indeed the richer our experience of life the more clearly we come to appreciate how much more might still be achieved, indeed not just *might* but *should* be achieved. Otherwise the vitality of any effort in this field dries up and is undermined, work becomes stereotyped, a mere repetition of what has gone before, trapped within rigid inflexible boundaries.

In order to avoid this it was important to bring into play our own creative potential and that of the children. *It is our profound conviction that the seeds of creativity exist in almost everyone, young or old—all that is needed is conditions that foster the emergence of that creativity. It was after all to our endeavours to provide such conditions that the work described in this book was aimed.*

No reference has been made here to children's mental

and intellectual needs. This is not because we underestimate the latter, life at the camp raised a whole host of questions of a personal or group nature that were bound up with work in the camp and its organization. There was one place where the children engaged in intense mental activity and that was at the meetings. Questions requiring a solution were discussed, projects were proposed, the central principle underlying sensible communal life in the human context all featured. However there was no systematic organized study programme at the camp, the time was not yet ripe. One thing was clear though: the children's mental activity and progress depended to a great extent on how meaningful their life was. Scope for mental activity was provided by the very way of life at the camp. In our next book we shall attempt to show how gradually the idea for a school evolved from our study and observation of these children's lives, a school that would be part of life for them. We shall describe how opportunities unfolded for us to raise far-reaching educational questions and to resolve these on the basis of our achievements in the context of the as yet self-contained children's community discussed here.

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS EDUCATION THROUGH WORK

An old idea and a new reform. This paper deals in the main with education through work but I have deliberately included two other topics—work with children outside schools and the training of teachers. I am convinced that with social relations at their present level, when the question as to how work should be organized in such schools is only just being raised and no principles for the organization of such work have taken firm root or become familiar to broad strata of the population, it would be difficult to discuss the organization of education based on work in a broad context. One can only discuss possible guidelines for such development. The idea of education through work is not something our society is at present ready for, we need first of all to experience a great deal and to work to carry out even a small part of what seems so attractive to us now and is being so ardently propagated at the present time.¹

In actual fact the idea of practical education through work was expounded by Komenský, Locke, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi. These writers proved most influential and their works became widely known. Komenský and Pestalozzi even gained the approval of the establishment of their day. Nor would anyone deny the tremendous influence Rousseau has had upon ideas in education. However this idea was not put effectively into practice by these men and the actual work which Pestalozzi accomplished in practice cannot be seen as something that truly corresponds to his theories.

The case of Fröbel is particularly enlightening. He provided a vital basis for the idea of education through work and laid the foundation for practical implementation of that idea by setting up the kindergarten which incorporat-

ed many practical manifestations of his idea. When the society of the day adapted his idea to suit their purposes, it was the outward form of the idea that was taken up while the very essence of the real Fröbel was forgotten, and cast to one side.

The barrack-like kindergartens that now predominate in Germany and which stress physical exercise at the expense of vitality has led certain American educationists such as Stanley Hall to react by setting up so-called reformed kindergartens. The same fate befell (and with alarming speed) the most interesting ideas of Maria Montessori, who hastened to introduce her teaching aids to the world at large, as Fröbel had done with his "gifts". Public interest was focussed precisely on these external attributes of their work instead of its essential features.

In this way ideas can be distorted, even those that were put into practice most carefully. Cheap publicity can remould fresh ideas and experiments as it thinks fit. For this reason it is important now, as well, to be wary of any over-hasty definitions, compilation of programmes or declarations of principle. Successful reforms are always carried out by the voluntary, willing efforts of a group of people with a common aim.

We workers in the field must concern ourselves precisely with the implementation of ideas in practice. For it is we who are actually going to carry out the work. At the same time we are aware that some of the principles behind the proposed reform are somewhat vague, and at times open to question, and we are also anxious to compare the ideas for reform with the principles underlying our present school, its curriculum, its traditions, its organization. We are worried lest we might end up with nothing at all, if we apply the new reforms to what we already have. There are indeed definite grounds for such fears. Yet I should like to stress that we are concerned here, if we have in mind education through work in the real sense, not just with an approximation or the supplying of teachers with a new practical method that will reduce the minimum period within which his pupils can assimilate a certain range of knowledge, but with a true understanding of the goals and organization of such a school that involves a whole new departure, bringing in its wake its own revolution which for so long was smouldering

beneath the ashes, a radical reform that involves not just ideas but practice as well.

A new school has to be set up for this new work.

Prejudices in the way of setting up an education through work establishment. There are two deeply rooted social prejudices which stand in the way of our attaining this ultimate goal, these are, firstly, the idea that it is essential to train children for their future life, activity or career (the prejudice regarding social education) and, secondly, the belief in the indisputable existence of a well-defined volume of knowledge strictly laid down for each stage in life—for the small child, the adolescent, the youth—a volume of knowledge that can be controlled via exams and rewarded with a degree (the academic prejudice). These two parallel ideas which are mutually supporting have dealt and continue to deal great harm to children and they complicate efforts to think and analyse clearly and sensibly with regard to questions of child care. It is teachers whom these ideas impede most of all. I should like to elaborate this idea first of all in connection with the prejudice concerning social education.

The first prejudice. We are used to training for life and it is only rarely that we live in the real sense of the word. We of course acquire the habit of training ourselves for life with the help of certain exercises and procedures from early childhood—hence our very concept of the preparatory classes in school—the first, second and even third preparatory years of study leading up to the “full course of studies at the gymnasium or *Realschule*”, etc. We train ourselves for future careers as doctors, lawyers, engineers (this training does not only take place in establishments of higher education and universities but commences far earlier). Elementary schools prepare pupils for the gymnasium, gymnasiums train them for the university, the universities for their future professional service, for life itself and their eventual position within society. This underlies the detrimental utilitarian approach to science as a means to social status, status that is not truly earned. This whole system of training is endorsed at the end by the degree. This is what the talented educationist Professor Alexei Fortunatov referred to as “paperocracy”, the po-

wer of official papers on which are written unreal achievements and merits of the "mature" though young citizen. This whole process is so deeply engrained in our way of life that it is very difficult even for fresh young minds to reject it.

... However fine the goals for which children are being trained they are after all being trained. It is for this reason that an appropriate machine is set up and children rarely have the chance to live like children and to be children. They have to imitate adults, to perform their social duty, something accepted by adults (and not always even by them), to learn by heart what is necessary for the future, to torture themselves—it is not for nothing that the adage runs: "The root of learning is bitter"—and deprive themselves of those energies which seethe abundantly within them. Any life of their own is relegated to the backyard ("if time can be found"). This is why we find it so hard to come to terms with the question of children's needs, ("whims rather than anything serious"). Being pressed for time, over-burdened with work and unwilling to spend precious time on trying to understand children, instead, we force them, relying on our superiority, for the most part physical, to emulate an idealized abstract version of the Adult, that is nowhere to be found; this is why children indulge in dreams and feel themselves confined by goals imposed from without: "When I grow up..."

Slogans of the reformers. Meanwhile when we contemplate the life of children characterized by rapid movement, imagination, and the urge to represent the real world around them, one cannot but feel that we adults, during our own education and upbringing, if it was conducted in what is generally regarded as a strict and systematic manner, did not acquire so much as lose, that our development was very one-sided, that our success was bought at too high a price, namely unnecessary and detrimental stifling of the most vital and admirable qualities in our being.²

The shortcomings of existing schools are familiar to wide strata of the population, albeit without much precise detail. This accounts for the need for voluntary work outside school with children, for study sessions that would provide an extension of school, or a protest against it.

Each large-scale reform begins with a campaign to shake people up with new ideas, with preliminary work carried out by independent social groups interested in the new reform to a greater or lesser degree. Unfortunately society and public figures are not always moved by correct ideas, but rather ideas that merely appear as such. I would see the idea of training children for the future as just such an erroneous idea in the sphere of child-care.³ That goal for the teacher of today should be replaced by another: "Give children back their childhood."

Our mistakes. Any overall scheme in relation to teaching is based on the idea of training. Yet whichever one of the progressive thinkers in the field of education one chooses to turn to—Komenský, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbart, Fröbel, Tolstoy, Ellen Key, Stanley Hall, and John Dewey—they made an emphasis on something else, the endeavour to achieve as full as possible a life for the child now, without concern for what the future will bring. The threatening spectre of the future is removed, and before us there unfolds the actual life of a child with its incredibly rich and purposeful content.

Young human creatures must, in the biological sense, go through the whole cycle of their development. The experimental educationists of today, albeit with as yet unsure first steps, have clearly embarked on that path. It requires of us that we study and observe children. It raises countless questions, enables us to plot the laws underlying child development as we analyse in careful detail the dividing lines between the various stages of that development. In fact there soon comes a time when it becomes intolerable to work with children, knowing that you do not really understand those to whom you are so attached and realizing that you have in the meantime forgotten about yourself, your own background and roots to which you might so fruitfully have been referring. All these elements are important if one is anxious to attain a clear understanding of the goals and objectives one is pursuing in day-to-day work.

I still have vivid memories of those distant years I spent at the gymnasium, of the maths lesson during which the teacher was about to give my class-mate an E and of the boy's sobs as he kissed the teacher's sleeve and beg-

ged for mercy. Then too I had thought to myself: "Has he really forgotten what it was like when he was small?"

Nowadays too I often find myself failing to understand quite simple truths. One day I happened to be watching some children, who over three whole days had been busying themselves with washing the sand in a fish-tank. It seemed quite unnatural to me that the children should be taking so long to achieve their end and, putting this down to inadequate supervision from their teacher, I suggested that they should put a glass jar with the sand in it underneath a tap of running water and then they would have completed the task within half an hour.

"And what do you know about it?" objected a young philosopher among them. "Perhaps we're enjoying splashing in the water. It's warm."

Yes I had failed here to appreciate something quite simple, that in this instance the process is far more important than the result and that the children were playing with the water and enjoying the feel of the warm water in winter.

It is often the case that when chance visitors to children's homes or schools (and they can prove a great nuisance, to be honest!) appear on the scene they see themselves as entitled to help the children, to give them advice or actually do things for them like sawing, gluing, lifting heavy things, etc. They are overhasty in their efforts to show children "how", an instinct to be found in all of us, and this is combined with very little awareness of the effect they are producing. They fall prey to "education mania" which the composer Wagner wrote about with such irritation in his memoirs.

A child of five might be moulding a horse out of clay, and give it five legs. The visitor might ask: "What are you making? A horse? Would it really have five legs? You wouldn't find a horse like that now would you? Let me show you. You need to go about it like this..." She holds out her hand but the child turns away, squashes the horse with its fist and walks off. The kind lady is at a loss, she realises she has gone about things the wrong way, but she could not really have known that the number of legs his horse had was quite unimportant for the

child. The really important concern for the child had been his game, of which the horse had merely been the outer symbol. The whole game, excitement and interest in the work had been rudely interrupted by the adult, albeit with the best intentions. It would be easy to cite countless examples of this kind. The reason we commit such mistakes and errors of tact is that we do not understand the significance of children's work. Yet, for a child, the smaller he is the more his work, drawing or movement constitutes a game in which he feels he has to play. It is a symbol in which he sees a whole chain of at first blurred and then ever clearer impressions or experiences.

The examples I have mentioned concern the complex field of child psychology. It would also be easy to demonstrate how even in the field of children's physical development teachers all over the world are committing rudimentary, perhaps even irreparable mistakes.

There are two periods of transition in a child's life, the first being around eight years, when the first set of teeth are replaced by the second and the second at the age of fourteen to fifteen, the age of puberty. These periods are characterized by marked physical changes, when it is clearly important to do everything to ease and not impede the major physiological processes at work, processes that can often be painful ones, and ensure the best possible conditions to foster the child's physical growth. Yet it is precisely these difficult ages that coincide firstly with the overwhelming experience of entering school for the first time and secondly with the transition from the first half of the gymnasium course to the second which involves a far heavier work-load, and in the West the final exams for those leaving school after completing a basic secondary education, which of course require intensive preparation. We fortunately have at our disposal the admirable work by Pyotr Lesgaft on physical education, but who avails himself of it? Who pays heed to its warnings against overloading children with intellectual stimuli? We have school doctors, but are they made welcome? We have lecturers in personal hygiene, but how many of them are teachers and are there enough to meet the demand? It is difficult to work in this situation, where so many conflicting ideas and so much ignorance stand in our way.

Features of the child's mentality. Let us now return to the principle outlined at the outset: "Give children back their childhood!"

Despite the urgent need for this step it is by no means an easy one. It might seem that all that is required is to approach children with loving care and the rest will all fall into place of itself. Yet does not our love turn out to be blind in most cases? In addition to love for children we need to lace our guiding principles with profound and intelligent interest in children, with study and research into children's lives.

The most elementary analysis of these lives can reveal to us the essential difference between children and ourselves. The main difference lies in the fact that infancy, adolescence and youth are times of growth and development, whereas for us growth is a thing of the past. Instability is a fundamental feature of childhood, while it is seen as a shortcoming in adults. So we are confronted by two different psychologies that of a growing organism and that of an organism in which growth is over. This is what makes it difficult for us to understand children, lies behind our mistakes and gives rise to the false ideas to which we cling in our institutions for the education and care of children, in our schools, curricula and education theories.

The vast majority of people rely on intuition and sixth sense to fill the gaps in their knowledge of children. This is of course insufficient. We need to single out for ourselves those elements which constitute the life of a child as that life is perceived by children, i.e. muscular activity or the need for movement, play, art, mental activity and social life within the child's world.

Even if we take it for granted that characteristics intrinsic to children include the urge to move, play, and vividly depict their experiences, it soon emerges as well that when we concern ourselves with their intellectual activity (that which provides the closest link with adult life) children can lead us to the most intriguing of discoveries. In practice we come to appreciate that children investigate, contemplate, examine and test out all objects that come within their orbit with a striking degree of concentration and tenacity.

What is at the heart of this tenacity, that is just as im-

portant as their insuperable urge to move, play and use all possible means of self-expression? It would seem that in this very investigative spirit, this capacity which leads even very small infants to make their first attempts to adapt their sense organs to the natural world, this capacity which, if nurtured and kept alive, often with the utmost difficulty, through the experiences of family life, school and society at large, comes into its own on a mighty scale in the scientist, not the compiler assembling others' knowledge, but the independent investigator, the real man of learning, who is only seldom to be found. In him the two sides of the coin come together at last.

It is interesting to add that investigation and discovery are of vital necessity to a child, a powerful instinct that he inherits from previous generations: if a child does not feel, look over, lick and smell everything he meets, then he would surely meet his end among all the sharp, hard, hot, tall and heavy objects that threaten him with constant danger. However he possesses an effective weapon for his self-defence and the task of adapting to his environment—this is his exploratory instinct.

I would sum up the above points as follows: *our main effort should be aimed at nurturing and retaining all that children start out with.* This task however clearly emerges as exceedingly difficult by virtue of its very nature. We obstruct the preservation of those properties so useful to man that are to be found so early on in children through our educational organizations and in particular through our schools.

I deliberately introduced this idea rather early on and have concentrated first and foremost on the child's intellectual activity to demonstrate that in the sphere where the adult should reign supreme, in the sphere of reason, the child possesses an important advantage in his indomitable urge to explore.

If we turn to other aspects of life then we find a similar picture.

A feature common to most children is that they are always on the move. This irrepressible side of children adults often find irritating, and we seldom attach very much importance to it. Yet if we examine it more closely, then we come to appreciate its vital importance and what makes children execute all sorts of movements and their purpose.

We all know that to rob a child of movement is tantamount to damming a river. This very deprivation is what causes the vast majority of misdemeanours in school that sometimes seriously effect the whole of a child's future. The reasons behind this extreme activity on the part of children are the inner irritations of a growing body, the need to exercise muscles in some way or other (involuntary actions) and the child's instinctive urge to adapt to his environment, the urge quickly to reach one or other goal, the instincts to attack and defend, the play instinct and the ever-present process of exploring one's own movements, i.e. self-exploration and self-discovery, appreciation by the individual child of his own strength or various aspects of his own dexterity. Imitative movements also have a major part to play. This all serves to underline the tremendous significance of physical work providing muscular activity that enables children to achieve a more satisfactory balance between effort and results. Nothing is achieved at the first attempt and in all movements there is a large element of repetition or practice. Indeed the smaller the child the more pleasure he derives from the actual process, as opposed to the result of an activity. The educational value of physical activity lies in the fact that it helps the child to grow used to achieving goals, to practicing one particular line of effort again and again and to directing his effort to a more or less accessible, useful goal. If we rob a child of opportunities for physical work, then we are taking from him a powerful and vital means for his adaptation to his environment. For adults, particularly so-called educated adults, physical work loses its importance and comes to be regarded either as the lowest form of work for educated people to engage in, or as the wretched lot to which life has condemned the embittered masses of the working people. Both these attitudes to physical work reveal a failure to understand what such work really is by people who see it as a sad necessity which a man does well to avoid.⁴

No less typical a characteristic of children is their eagerness to play and to transform their experiences in everyday life into games. Once again this urge should be understood as a pressing need, of the kind I mentioned earlier. Children feel the need to examine life closely, to reproduce those processes going on before their very eyes,

to experience them in so doing, and thus after assimilating them in this way to add new experiences to the store of those already encountered and explored. This provides the source material for imaginative play, the use of symbols, the formation of children's ideas that provide such an important contributory factor to children's development. It can thus be seen that play involves energetic mental activity side by side with physical work often of a tiring kind. Skills inherited from previous generations provide the basis for traditional games which echo in a splendid sequence the various stages of man's adaptation to his environment: play with fire, with water, play-fights, play war and ambushes, bows and arrows, stone-throwing, cave and tunnel digging, hunting for food-scraps and playing at taming animals. Play constitutes the child's laboratory of life which lends the aura and atmosphere to a young life, which are essential to it if that period of childhood is to be useful for mankind in general. In play, in this particular means of processing experience drawn from life, there lies the truly positive nucleus of the child's mental growth.

Be it for better or worse, we adults are almost completely deprived of this laboratory and have nothing similar with which to replace it. We make do with ready-made, regurgitated material. We are used to using *results* and do not understand the pleasure to be derived from the active *process*. There is no denying that children are more richly endowed than we are in their ability to enjoy activity for its own sake.

There are however some aspects of our adult lives which reflect the fact that mankind is aware of this shortcoming, such as the revival and proliferation of play, albeit in its very narrow form of sport, and also the growing interest in the theatre—although within very narrow limits—and perhaps in theatre of the future where there will be less passive enjoyment of others' creativity.

Is there really such a thing as children's art? Insofar as we are dealing with the outward expression of the emotional workings of a child's mind—regardless or not of whether this takes the form of speech, gesture, colour, mime, musical sounds, drawing or modelling—then it does exist, both as pure and applied art. A crucial factor here is that the urge to lend external expression to emo-

tional processes, experiences and impressions is an intrinsic need in children and children's art is not simply an amusement or pastime incidentally, but in a great many cases it is a pressing need that forms an essential part of a child's emotional life. The roots of artistic expression clearly need less explanation for children, such spontaneous beings, than they do for us adults, and it is for this reason that there are far more child artists, genuine creators of a distinctive, as yet rough-hewn and almost always symbol-dominated art, around us than we realize. Adult painters, and creative artists from other fields, in their turn, often reveal childlike traits in their work that have survived relatively unscathed, of this there can be little doubt.

It is also interesting to note that for children, particularly small ones, elements of work, art and play are often so closely interwoven that it is almost impossible to decide where the dividing lines between them come and it is the greater or lesser emphasis on one element rather than the other two which points to a particular level of intellectual development on the one hand and social experience on the other. Children's work, if it is lively, also constitutes play. A child makes a game of whatever it is doing, there and then, it plays in the very process of its work, and thus brings to its work a whole series of further ideas and fantasies. Its work becomes a sort of symbol, representing a whole number of impressions and thus elements of art and brain work are combined. We adults are (in most cases) bereft of this ability to interweave these vital processes. This is why children achieve a better balance between the various parts of their lives, and fuller lives, and we need to work a great deal on ourselves not just to come nearer to that lost chapter of our lives, but in order even to remember what it was like. If we succeeded in doing this it would make the task for those working with children a great deal easier.

If we turn now to the social element in children's lives it is valid to note that in all probability the social instinct, in comparison with the others, is a phenomenon which develops late in a child's life. Strange though it may sound, a child is an involuntary egoist, the central focus of his own exploration, the centre of the universe, and it is precisely thanks to that degree of awareness

which egoism gives rise to that the child progresses easily by way of the clan social instinct (family) to the herd instinct (gangs, comradeship) and eventually to the highly interesting and developed forms of social life.

My observations have led me to conclude that the social life of children can reveal extremely advanced forms of community living that are perhaps difficult for adults to envisage and attain. This conclusion I was able to put to the test in the children's camp where I worked for eight years in succession. My impressions of that working community will be discussed in more detail later.

I should like to add that the principles I have outlined here are based mainly on my personal experience of interaction with children. Each idea, however paradoxical it may seem, is based on a whole series of incidents that I have personally observed and from which I have drawn specific conclusions. On this occasion it is impossible for me to list facts to illustrate my assertions for I would then have to write not an article but a book. I personally attach importance only to those ideas that are drawn from and borne out by some kind of actual experience. I strive to maintain this level of responsibility myself and shall subsequently try to describe those practical conclusions which fellow educationists expect from a worker in the field.

Free forms of work with children and the old school. The main elements that constitute a child's life have been outlined above. It emerged that the main thing setting us apart from children was the phenomenon of growth in the man-to-be, a phenomenon which now, at each given moment, reveals features of great interest unfortunately to be lost in the course of the child's later life.

This then raises the question if we can devise or pin down means or methods that would enable us to preserve those precious qualities of the young human being, and prevent him from losing them in the subsequent years of his education and upbringing? Perhaps if that could be we would not appear as "worn-out and past it", as, in all fairness, we must do at present. So as to avoid all misunderstandings I want to point out that children are not in a position to help themselves. Their wills are weak and they have insufficient resources at their disposal. Disco-

very of the child's individuality and ample scope for that individuality can only be achieved in the context of social education. If we think of the establishment of a children's commune as the ideal setting in which to bring up and care for children, it must be stressed that this has to be a commune of children participating on a voluntary basis and intelligent adults, sharing a clear understanding of their duties and commitment.

The advanced forces of society which came forward with these ideas also suggested forms this work might take and set up a number of establishments, which although still too untried for us to be entitled to talk of any clearly defined and well-developed methods soon showed that in some spheres their ideas did start to catch on on a fairly wide scale. Here I am referring to work with children outside school.⁵ A characteristic feature of this work was the wide variety of forms it took. Until comparatively recently such work was undertaken, particularly here in Russia, by amateurs moved more by their love for children and thirst for innovation than by a truly systematic understanding of what they were working towards.

I stress again that this work is undertaken to date by volunteer groups, and in many spheres the work constitutes a search rather than a journey towards a clearly defined goal. However the foundation for this work is a genuinely realistic one since the aim is to set up cells or children's centres that might serve adequately to satisfy the whole range of children's needs and requirements, to provide such outlets within an organized framework and thus do away with the misconceptions that have become rooted in society's attitudes to children. If we try and formulate progress in education within this sphere it must be sought after in keeping with the motto: "Give children back their childhood".

Anyone who does not appreciate this cannot possibly engage in caring for children. Nor can he engage in teaching them.

"All well and good. But what about school, where we have to teach the children, where we cannot opt out of teaching them all that is necessary for at least an ordinary basic education? It is our duty to see that does not happen. Where then can the time be found for all those

worthwhile things? There must be some minimum range of knowledge with reference to which we can judge the level of an individual's education. We must give all children that minimum. If we do not even provide that then there is no point in our schools at all"

We are all convinced that from the whole range of sciences it is possible to pick out special spheres of learning for school purposes. Into this category there land in particular grammar, geography, arithmetic, history. Yet in our schools they are only sciences or branches of learning in name, whereas in reality they represent the dregs or pale reflection of that living, searching, exploring science which is considered the province of exclusive "professors" or "serious" adults in general. Worse still, these "sciences" are seen as valuable merely thanks to the fact that they are "clearly defined" and "complete" and need never change; as a result of our being served up with a whole number of such "finished products" and being confined all the time to this mental diet, the idea takes root that all that exists is unshakeable and also that there are certain people who know everything and write books so that there is no need to trouble ourselves with what has been common knowledge for a long time. This gives birth to a faith in the results of other people's efforts and the reluctance to make any of our own.

Yet science, like life itself, is in a state of flux, suffers setbacks and develops. It is subject to flowering and decline, it too knows revolution and reaction. These truths are not what teachers concern themselves with. Instead they thrust a curriculum at a living, growing, thinking being, intimidate him with exams, beckon him with degree certificates so as to breed yet another member of our society who will actively support that society.

All in all we have a whole chain of delusions and superstitions!

An end must be put to all this and children in school must be given the chance to learn how to acquire knowledge, to practice the techniques of work itself, instead of acquainting themselves exclusively with the dubious results of other people's work. Why do we encourage anyone to turn his back upon himself? Without extra encouragement he will be doing so with considerable alacrity.

Furthermore no one knows why well-rehearsed and soon

forgotten knowledge of a certain number of grammatical rules, a few dozen historical dates, a series of towns, rivers, mountains and islands in different parts of the globe, proofs for a number of theories and of the techniques necessary to find one's way about in logarithm tables, all required to get us through exams, should serve as demonstration of a young person's suitability for university studies. This screen of required formulae makes us lose sight of the individual, both his mind and his development.

All we need to learn at school is how to work.

Starting out from this premise our conception of reasonable schooling might look something like this: *school is a place where the findings of our own personal experience are to be processed, systematized and compared with the findings drawn from the experience of others.* In this way scope is provided for lively and meaningful mental activity, and natural abilities are developed and exercised. Then school would regain the other half of the purpose attributed to it in ancient times, i.e. it would again become a centre of voluntarily organized life. The idea of school as a centre for study was added far later, in the Middle Ages.

It seems quite clear to me that the contention that knowledge is something finite is reflected in our school curricula, exams, and degrees. So much has been said by me and my colleagues and so much work has centred round this idea at our conferences and congresses that there is no need to treat the idea in more detail here.

I do not reject curricula out of hand; however I only recognize curricula for learning through action, not curricula that consist of nothing but a catalogue of items of knowledge, disjointed rather than connected and obsolete into the bargain, which in accordance with some strange misconception have to be mastered by children of one or another specific age.⁶

... Schooling through work is constantly extending the range of children's first-hand experience; yet at the same time through a whole range of activities it summarizes that experience, juxtaposing various minor facts of experience to provide an overall picture and thus bringing out the pattern underlying those facts. In time a more connected, logical picture of the overall life of Nature takes place

in the schoolchild's mind and he comes to appreciate the connections between the climatic, soil and biological processes, and eventually might even himself become an active contributor to that life in Nature, able to record and in part regulate some of the more accessible and comprehensible processes at work within it.

Mathematics also has a part to play in this work, given the relevance of the mathematician's calculations and correlations to all these processes at work within the natural world. No end of measurement, comparisons and cross-checkings is required and there are a great deal of really important problems to be solved.

School is unthinkable without practice and training; whether it is physical work that is being undertaken, particularly new elements in such work, or more orthodox school work, this must be preceded by practice aimed at facilitating children's grasp of the work process involved. The training of memory, skill and the powers of observation for clear writing, rapid calculation or rhythmic movements should without fail be accorded a place in a sensibly organized school, for dexterous, precise movements facilitate work discipline.

In short physical work of a type useful to children and within their capacity provides the material, discipline and experience patterns for their young lives: a practical system of group control over their day-to-day life facilitates it and lends it an organizational framework, while art enhances that life and fosters children's aesthetic sense. Play meanwhile echoes life and helps the child adapt to it at the same time lending a cheerful note to life as a whole. Mental work in its turn lends life direction and satisfies the child's urge to investigate and explore. The blending together of all these elements consolidates social skills. The vital foundation for this whole edifice is provided by constant and regular practice provided at the right time without obscuring the main purpose underlying the structuring of a child's life.

The difficulties besetting the reformer. It is important to make quite clear that we are discussing not individual reforms here but a major upheaval in the work of teachers. One of the most difficult tasks in the whole history of mankind has been the implementation of revolutionary

ideas with the hope that they will take fairly firm root. This has also been true in the case of education. The ideas for a new type of school date back a very long way, several centuries in fact. On more than one occasion these ideas have been experimented with by society and then shelved, despite a most sincere desire to pursue them. It would appear that many of the prerequisites for their implementation have been lacking. Society was insufficiently prepared. This meant that all that happened was talking, persuading, and rightful indignation, yet none of this led to any action or practical implementation of ideas. Many good ideas have lost their lustre when exposed to the harsh light of real life. Yet this should not lead us to infer that we should abandon these ideas altogether; on the contrary these ideas need to be nurtured, elaborated, examined in more detail and put to the test. Each new attempt fans the hope that an easier legacy has been passed down to the next generation. For this very reason it is important not to underestimate the difficulties involved in this task. Moreover their number is far from small.

The first of these lies in the fact that this work is being demanded of us that it might degenerate into an obligatory task. The work of real education, just as any fresh undertaking is only a vital activity for as long as it stems from men's freely given effort and thought. Even though it be difficult or an encumbrance, it is nevertheless possible and indeed necessary for man to rise beyond his personal disappointments.

The second difficulty stems from the overtones of current fashion that impose themselves these days on the idea of education through work. They hinder the cautious and impartial approach merited by the tender sprouts of this good idea.

The third difficulty lies in the fact that there is a contradiction between the skills fostered within the social structure familiar to us so far, particularly in connection with work, and the structure for a school that we envisage here. As far as I see it there is no reason to regard this contradiction as a serious obstacle. A properly organized school should always be in advance of society, constituting as it does the freshest, most vital part of that society's life. Nor would it be out of place to reiterate here that it is far easier to build up the pattern of relationships

ing of children in physical work, and in the skills required for communal living and overcoming the difficulties inherent in the latter. He needs together with his colleagues to understand and develop in himself the spirit of inquiry, to train himself in habits of close observation that will be invaluable to him in his work with children and learn to cater for himself completely and in all situations or, in a word, to acquire the callosities that our educated people so badly lack.

By way of conclusion I should like to stress once again that I am only writing here of goals that I know can be achieved in the light of my own personal experience on numerous occasions. I deliberately listed all the difficulties that stand in our way. One thing I myself do not know and indeed no one knows is whether or not these new ideas will take root in our lifetime, or whether we will reach that Promised Land. The one thing I do know is that even if we ourselves do not accomplish a great deal, we will be leaving behind us a useful legacy for our successors. There is firm hope that worthwhile work will be carried out and this can be done by our teachers, the most democratic, unpretentious and alive to new ideas to be found anywhere today. What better moment to begin than the present? As for the obstacles in our path—well it is apparently a law of Nature that these have always existed and will continue to do so

THE RUSSIAN KINDERGARTEN SYSTEM

In the Russia of today, in these difficult times we are going through, a large number of those working in pre-school education have been assigned to organizational work, as a result of which a definite movement has taken shape within teaching circles, and a Russian kindergarten system has emerged.¹

From our experience even when there are definite aims and objectives in view, a firm basis for some new project and methods already devised for it, but no organizational forms, it is still impossible to create a system, ideas cannot be translated into reality. This was what Fröbel and Montessori completely overlooked. For this reason we can assert that our Russian system is immeasurably more democratic, its organizational framework is sound and that it can be introduced on a broad mass scale.

The main principles underlying our system of kindergartens are as follows: the care and education of children consists in the structuring of children's lives, the object of this care and education is the child, and in the child we set greatest store of all by the fact that he is a growing organism. Then we stress that the child is an explorer and this idea of Fröbel's is the most sacred of all. A child cannot live without exploring, that is an intrinsic need. The exploratory act is a biological factor, which manifests itself whether or not the child wishes it to. Furthermore we see a community of children as a growing community. This approach to structuring the lives of children can also be applied in the case of children of school age, indeed even when we are working with adults.

What elements constitute a child's life? Physical devel-

opment, art, intellectual life, social life, play and physical work, by combining these elements we can achieve an atmosphere something akin to real life in our kindergartens and schools.

Yet what method should we follow in our work?

Three separate aims need to be dwelt on here: firstly bringing out the child's personal experience—a particularly crucial step for a child of pre-school age. Indeed we should ask ourselves why a child in the country develops fairly rapidly in its first years, while its mental and emotional development later more or less come to a standstill, in fact why is it that rural communities are backward? There can only be one answer to this question, and a scientific one moreover. A child lives, in the full sense of the word, as he explores his environment, he grows from within, he grows as an individual. He studies his environment because such investigation is essential to him, without it he would not survive. Then he reaches the limit for such exploration which has become established within the peasant world. Over the decades and centuries a specific range of discoveries necessary for adaptation to the environment has become established and once the child has covered that range he goes no further. This means that when we talk about the limits of natural development we are talking of a level of adaptive skills, which a specific milieu has mastered in order to be able to live in its particular environment. If these skills and needs are simple, then natural development will not continue for very long. From this we can appreciate that the low level of general development encountered in the broad masses of our people complicates the task of educators. The general inertia and undemanding outlook represent a formidable danger for us. The child of pre-school age is subject to these same laws as well.

For this reason it is vital to identify and study the child's experience. A child either speaks for himself (his play reflects his mood) or it is necessary to provide the proper conditions that bring the child to externalize the material that he has stored up in his mind.

Yet that is only the first step. The child's experience needs to be processed. A child not only gathers impressions but he also processes them, draws conclusions, and is able to develop thanks to these conclusions he draws.

A child's language and his skills all took shape on the basis of considerable work that goes on in the child's mind, only how and why we do not know. Schools should also process children's personal experience in this way. This applies in particular in the case of the new school. Schools should not leave a child in a chaotic state, when his crucial natural development has been accomplished and instincts no longer come to his rescue. It is our task to stimulate these instincts and rally them into action.

That is the first feature of our system of kindergartens. The second concerns practice and skills. These include the capacity intrinsic to the child to live, think, walk and the ability to abandon itself to strong impressions. These skills and their exercising can take place in the context of physical development, work, art, play, intellectual and social activity. Here it is important that we should encourage children to repeat and practice a whole range of actions which in the light of our experience we have judged as important. Such practice needs to be allocated in suitable doses in accordance with the child's growth periods, and varying from one age-group to another. If we took such a scheme as the basis for our work, then we would know at each specific stage what we should be doing.

The third is the structured experience provided at the kindergarten when children of different age-groups are presented with pictures or new material so that we can establish what a child learns to grasp when.

The fourth feature of the work in kindergartens is the presentation of new knowledge when we bring together the child's experience and outside experience. This of course accounts for only a minimal part of pre-school education and applies only to the older groups of children in kindergartens. Indeed the stage at which a child should best be taught to read and write is the subject of fierce controversy. Montessori puts it at four years.² The presentation of new knowledge must take place at a sensible speed after the necessary foundations have already been laid, when we have studied the child's own experience.

What kind of a teacher is needed to carry out all this work? He should be an observant collector of material il-

lustrating children's life. We all tend to do this with insufficient precision or objectivity. He also needs to explore and investigate those factors which bring influence to bear on children's life and finally he needs to be able to bring organization into that life. A teacher needs, without fail, to be an active doer and far more so than was the case in the past. Here it is important to stress a teacher's mental and emotional energy. The teacher, in his capacity as organizer of children's lives, needs to involve himself in the world of the children around him, so as to study it and even introduce some organization into it. Part of a teacher's role is to organize a society of children. The child's transition from an egocentric to a social existence is a very gradual one.

From the above it emerges clearly that we are faced with a most complex task. This article does not set out to lay down a set curriculum or set instructions recommending how a teacher should go about his work, not because this would be impossible but because we are against such a step in principle.³ This was precisely the false step that undermined Fröbel when he established "Fröbelism" or Montessori when she established "Montessorianism".

Any education system must be something alive and growing. It must involve tenacious hard work on the part of the individual to improve and enrich his life.

One of the features that characterizes the kindergarten system described here that we have chosen to name the Russian kindergarten system, or to be more precise the Moscow kindergarten system, is something not to be found in Fröbel but in Montessori. This feature, the "role of science" throughout the system is crucial. In order to link up mass-scale education work and meaningful methods and in order to maintain the inner dynamism of this work an organization must be set up to give substantial help to the teacher in developing habits of careful observation, rapid and accurate recording, analysis of material, etc.⁴ To sum up this is where the scientific approach is required. The system must possess at its centre a number of scientific establishments where work goes on to investigate various aspects of the child's life, establishments that select some of their own research projects and which take on other lines of research raised by work in the field

and life itself. When the work of the teacher will take place under the supervision of or with advice from the researcher, and when we feel encouragement and interest in our work from the world of the researchers and they in their turn will be working side by side with us, then we will be in sight of our goal.

WHICH COMES FIRST: THE CHILDREN OR THE SCHOOL?

Article One

I

Education in Russia is in dire straits at the moment, sufficiently so to arouse deep concern with regard to its future. This concern does not stem merely from the material situation. Its ideological aspect is no less shaky and I don't know which aspect ultimately proves the more serious. In public speeches, articles, discussions and plans for current social and educational development the captains of the ship seem to have lost their bearings and we all appear to be groping after a new course and timidly at that. Exhaustion, disappointment, a lack of hope and the temptation to give up are making themselves felt.¹ Yet this is not so everywhere or always. Side by side with this picture of decline that followed the wave of ardent enthusiasm there is so far but little call (perhaps a few ideas associated with the new school) for unity, for more thorough research, for crystallization of our ideas or insistence that we work on, come what may. It seems that now the time has come for new ideas on education to take shape. Let those who have abandoned hope, or washed their hands of the situation simply make themselves scarce. Then there will be left those who uphold and acknowledge the great and profound significance of the mighty school of life that we have all just experienced.

It will not be easy to work in the coming months or years. Tremendous sacrifice is required of us, the scale of which is difficult to imagine. Yet only if we overcome all the obstacles now in our path will it be possible to achieve our real aims. All that is new, far-reaching and enduring, that shall emerge in the wake of the enormous social cataclysm our country has experienced will be echoed in the education of the next generation.

It would be wrong of course to imagine that we shall create something that will be of value forever: we in our time can only be part of one step in the progress of education. After all the seeds of new ideas in education were planted a very long time ago. We are called upon to continue their work and so we should entertain no illusions as to the importance of our contribution or attribute to ourselves too crucial a role. Yet sometimes it is most useful to repeat something positive formulated in the past from a new angle, with new energy. Our revolution is doing so with great effect.

Yet, be this all as it may, I still feel clearly convinced that we stand at some kind of educational crossroads and here and now, rather than four years ago. Who knows? After four years of all kinds of experiments, large and small, talented and mediocre, serious and frivolous, and after a strange journey of disappointed men to the leaking trough of the old school system we have learnt a great deal and are beginning to understand. We have learnt much and need to go on learning. More clarity and precision when we commit our ideas to paper would not go amiss. The times are such as to make concentration difficult. Things appear to be moving in a haphazard way and in too many different directions at once. So while there is still so much to be clarified it is very difficult to express our ideas with precision, speaking "to the point" is very difficult in this situation even when the desire to talk out is very strong indeed. Only diagrams are clear at first glance, although at the same time it should be remembered that these can be used to conceal vagueness at the very heart of things.

II

The main question which should serve to get rid of the blurred ideas of present-day educationists is not what is the kind of school we need today, but what is a child's life, what are its characteristic features and in what way are they of value in relation to the work of the school.

The old theory, with every support from the ordinary man in the street, had us believe that the goal should be the best possible way of preparing children for their future life in the world outside school. All criteria for mo-

uling children's lives were drawn from adult life. Schools were designed to reproduce suitable fodder for the state machine, the "state child", they prepared him for his future career well in advance.²

We must direct our efforts instead at providing children with the opportunity to live now, to live the rich emotional and intellectual life of which they are capable. We were concerned on observing that children were making slow progress, for in the future we thought they would not be able to hold their own in the rat-race of adult life. So we used to introduce this competition into the children's world in plenty of time. We failed to appreciate the richness of children's own language, experience, their capacity to explore and investigate, their vivacity and their ability to derive interest from life. All we required of the children was that they should, within the shortest possible space of time, assimilate the widest possible collection of those slices of knowledge that made up the curricula we devised for them. All the while, what we should have been worried about, was that the children were living such unsatisfactory, i.e. such unchildish lives.

In short some of the most talented minds of the last forty years or so (doctors, psychologists, experimental research workers and teachers in the field) have been carrying out work designed to facilitate the attainment of this goal and are indeed still engaged in it.

Teachers of that generation set great store by the results of their labours. This was reflected in their demand that children should acquire specific amounts of knowledge in a whole range of topics that appeared to be selected more or less at random. It is with every justification that Stanley Hall refers to this as the school hotch-potch.

New education theories are centred round children's work with material that is essentially relevant to their life as children, rather than to any future career.

Teachers of the old generation sought to devise the best possible curricula, the best possible teaching methods, the best possible textbooks. They were concerned to cast their work in set, strictly prescribed moulds for shaping the children's lives and the children themselves.

Teachers of the new generation aim to ensure that our schools are constantly evolving, they focus their attention

on flexible methods that can be adapted to suit various circumstances in which the teaching process may be taking place.

As a result it hardly comes as a surprise if the question comes to mind: "What then after all is SCHOOL?" To give a proper answer to this question is no simple undertaking. What anyone would accept is that a school is a place where children are being brought up and educated. Yet does not "ordinary" life do this already?

III

If we approach the process of bringing up children as guidance in the gradual mastering of ways to adapt to their environment then it is clear that life itself, as it proceeds within a framework that has taken shape over a lengthy period, should have fostered well-defined means of adaptation. Over thousands of years certain firmly established skills have been evolved by each race³, skills whose number, level and scope are determined in their turn by the intrinsic requirements essential for the elementary maintenance of life in each specific environment.

Let us imagine to ourselves the simple pattern of village life and the knowledge which is necessary to understand it and then to find one's bearings within it. As presented in school this knowledge can easily be assimilated in the mind of a ten-year-old child. When it comes to urban life then the situation is far more complex and as a result we might do well to try and define the average level of a given race's skills required for its members' adaptation. To a certain extent elementary school provides the answer to that question. Yet in practice what is it that brings about such a sharp drop in regular school attendance during children's third year of schooling? It is most likely not just a question of material factors, but rather the fact that by then children have acquired perhaps enough basic knowledge to maintain their existence at the average level that has become generally established in the given environment. It is interesting to note that there is a sharp drop in school attendance a relatively long time before the official end of children's schooling. It is life itself not just the child's whim which has pronounced

"Enough!" If there were no school whatsoever the same factors would still be moulding the child and preparing it for life. The child's environment exerts a most powerful influence and fosters the characteristics of the race in question, those features which distinguish one race from another (the American from the Frenchman, the German from the Russian). The strength and durability of those influences is clear for all to see. It is therefore important to study these influences and learn how to make use of them.

So it would seem that it is life itself which really brings up the child. Given this we should no longer look upon "the street" in the way that is usually regarded. Out in "the street" the child is exposed to all manner of life's influences. In "the street" these influences are interwoven one with another and provide an endless variety of combinations that are subject to their own laws or patterns. The street provides a rich and varied picture, albeit incomplete, of men's various activities. As in every constant social phenomenon the street has its own norms that shape life within it, such as customs and fashions. The street has its own methods for bringing up children through environmental influences.⁴ It is not for nothing that "street urchins" possess considerable practical skills and are adept at finding their bearings within the complex conditions in which they live. The upbringing that Edison and Gorky received was by no means all bad.⁵

IV

Side by side with these inherited social characteristics⁶ maintained by the actual life of the particular race to which a child may belong which constitute a conservative yet profoundly important factor in the child's life there also develop those factors which move life forward. Life progresses forward thanks to the development of new needs concurrently with the individual's efforts to master vital adaptive skills: so naturally he soon finds he has broader scope in which to exercise these skills, and in their turn new interests and needs take shape for the satisfaction of which new skills are required. This progressive aspect of life's "school" is also mirrored in school work although not very clearly, often on a somewhat shaky foundation, and

sometimes distorted by a whole number of highly complex, apparently chance influences.

While it is still a question of a child acquiring of undeniably important skills of a basic variety, the child's development is proceeding rapidly. Then however comes the threshold when Life says "Enough!" after which a child is called upon to go further ahead of life, seek out the path forward, grope after a suitable path along which to direct his future efforts. In the life of a child in its capacity as an element of society moved forward by the overall current of life, this threshold on his natural path forward manifests itself in marking-time, inertia, a period of slowing-down, when what has been achieved so far needs to be consolidated, without any major upheavals or surges forward. It is quite unnecessary to do as Stanley Hall suggests, that is to see a genetic link between this age in mid-childhood and some distant period of peace and tranquility in the history of mankind. The phenomenon of the true flowering of childhood between the ages of nine and twelve—something which has in fact been duly observed and recorded—is the period when man comes nearest of all to harmonious development: this we would do well to refer to as the period of elementary school, a time in which children are gaining experience and training in the most diverse aspects of vitally important activities, protecting their health, keeping their spirits up, building up their strength. It is also a period of relatively slow development and a certain degree of intellectual conservatism. Indeed this period is the high point of childhood characterized by a healthy outlook on life, stability, hard work, agility and energy. The child is not yet capable of long periods of sustained work, but is ready to try his hand at many things. He experiments with something, sees how far he can go and then abandons it. This is a period of small-scale, short-lived achievements, actions rather than deliberations, a search for diversity and a thirst for new impressions and experiences to be quickly and eagerly assimilated and processed for later use. Yet at the same time the child is steadily trying out and training himself in all kinds of activities. Indeed during this period, side by side with practice and as a result of it, new needs take shape which in their turn give schools the opportunity to use them for the second part of their work, the forward-look-

ing part which will lead the child out beyond the tight framework of the mean level of man's adaptation to life.

The school creates its own special environment, its children's culture. It organizes children's lives, developing as it does so such needs and interests as life itself does not call forth.

The schools, working hand in hand with life and constituting an essential part of it, select, in the process of education, those factors of influence from the host of those available, which will be most beneficial in the life of the child. As the selection is made, so certain influences are consolidated and others weakened. In short the school sets out to provide conditions in which children's lives can develop along sensible lines. Elementary school, as part of the schooling process, provides a specific structure for children's lives (the high point of those lives) between the ages of eight and twelve, or thereabouts. It is impossible of course to lay down precise limits for this period.

The above is the most fruitful of the principles adhered to by teachers of the new generation. What we are concerned with is not improving methods for teaching any particular individual subjects, not dropping or adding to part of the curriculum, not disciplinary measures, not any such details, but rather radically changing our approach to children and what they need. Indeed given this new approach the child problem may well cease to exist as such.

Of course it would be wrong to single out elementary school separately from the overall chain of the teaching process. If we consider as parts of a single whole all the periods of schooling, they might be categorized in the following way:

Pre-school period (up until seven)—the period in which children exercise the skills of verbalizing emotions;

Elementary school (up until 12 or 13)—the period when children exercise their instincts and abilities;

Early youth (up until 17)—the period when a child's vocation emerges;

Youth (up until 24)—the period of broad specialization;

Tertiary Education—the period of narrow specialization.

Of course this short list does not incorporate all aspects of each age or period comprehensively; the central focus within each age-group has been singled out, the focus that is important and indispensable for that particular period of development in the life of the child, adolescent, youth, young man. It draws attention to the minimum which must at all account be practiced and mastered during the stage concerned. Around this focal point in each age span there may well unfold a whole wealth of experience and responses, if the sensitive teacher chooses to cast a closer look at the individual concerned. Montessori made the first step in that direction in her work relating to the young child of pre-school age. The narrowness of her pedagogical approach and the excessively gradual introduction of her modest achievements on a really wide scale prevented her from elaborating her work in detail and enriching it with the vivid colours drawn from everyday life. However her initial premise is valid and its central point was arrived at correctly.

I do not think that work to bring up and educate children can all be directed towards a single aim. It would be more accurate to imagine as many goals as there are age-groups of children.

Even within such an outline as this, which provides little more than a skeleton for the development of educational process, we cannot fail to notice the logical succession of the stages of growth, the evolution to which life, as it takes shape naturally, is subjected. A child passes through what are essentially indispensable metamorphoses. He is living, like any healthy member of the human race, possessed of blood, muscles and nerves. The enormous task facing any reasonable state lies not in moulding people of monotonous uniformity to carry out the functions required within that state, but in creating conditions as favourable as possible to the structuring of children's lives at any given time. To live now, this very minute, to master the art of living in such a way that the needs which each age brings to the surface might be satisfied, that is the best way to prepare someone through a series of imperceptible transitions for the form of vital activity peculiar to the mature adult. In this and only in this endeavour does the main task of the state lie when it comes to education.

V

Meanwhile can the idea of school as the life of children be incorporated into the framework of any programme, method or organization? I would maintain that this is indeed possible. Given this aim, where should we start out from in our work on curricula? Undoubtedly from the very nature of children's life at its various stages. The content of children's life is not something totally divorced from human life in general, after all it is rooted in that life, yet at the same time the common elements acquire new implications in the context of the children's needs. Children enjoy an art and science all of their own that possess their own significance and forms of expression. Among children we see emerging those forces which enable mankind to forge onwards. We should be constantly observing the nascent forms of various types of human activity, if we were capable of seeing what is actually there before us. However in practice we are blind and short-sighted, we have fallen victim to prejudiced points of view and we tend insensitively to view children as small adults and make excessive and inappropriate demands upon them. Our cardinal sin lies in our failure to understand the nature of children's growth.

Whatever the situation—in the long run numerous scientific observations and others drawn from everyday life and research into the lives children lead can help us to plot and at least attempt to define what really constitutes a child's life. Viewed broadly it consists of the following elements: (1) physical growth; (2) useful work; (3) play; (4) artistic activity; (5) mental activity; (6) social life; (7) emotional experience.

Strictly speaking such demarcations are artificial, as indeed are any applied to man, who is always the repository of an interconnected pattern of reactions. The younger a child, the harder it is to separate any one of these constituents from the others. When attempting to compile curricula actually based on the make-up of a child's life it is essential to bear in mind that these young creatures are constantly growing in all manner of directions. For this reason any such curriculum has to be of an evolutionary nature, or otherwise it will be totally unsuitable for children.

Of the seven constituent elements in each child's life it is the emotional experience which cannot be confined within anything like a set framework. It lends all-important colour to all other aspects of a child's life and in that way is an essential part of all the other elements mentioned.

1. For a teacher it is very important to know the rate and degree of development of a child's body at various stages. It is child anatomy and physiology which should in the final analysis provide the basis for our theory and practice in education. The splendid principles laid down by Lesgaft⁷ have not yet been implemented. What an attractive prospect that would be to work with and start out from precise scientific data, delineating the extent of the load which is placed upon a child's body through his work in school. The practical implementation of this knowledge via proper child health care could quite well be incorporated into the curriculum of a sensible and above all healthy school.

2. Physical work, house-work, work in laboratories, maintenance work, the extent to which all these are admissible, accessible and important for children, their role within the structure of the child's world, the part they play in helping a child keep fit, to maintain high morale and optimism is just as important as it is neglected by researchers. Work of these types does more than anything else to link schooling up with elements of primitive adaptation to the environment. In this connection we would do well to gain a closer understanding of the desirability of variety and change in forms of work, of gradual advancement in the use of ever more sophisticated tools—from bare hands, and hand-made tools through to precision tools.

3. Control of play would probably lead to most positive results in our schools. Ever since Karl Gross we cannot maintain that its importance has not been substantiated in principle. There can be no child's life without play and consequently there can be no serious method for a child to adapt to his environment. Nowadays it is no longer a difficult task to categorize modes of play in accordance with age-group. I recall a certain paper on juvenile delinquency in New York, in which the author explains the tremendous increase in this phenomenon within the

cities where children have no real scope for play. In his classification of juvenile crimes he calls attention to the emergence of the main types of juvenile crime as varieties or distortions of certain types of play on the development of which strict limits or brakes had been placed by the social context in which the young offenders lived. This does not of course mean that play should become a subject on the time-table or that any list of games which children ought to play should be drawn up. I refer specifically here to the evolution of play situations, the changing play-needs at different stages in a child's lives and a new positive approach to play that should be fostered by schools.

4. The importance of art in a child's life has already been widely acknowledged, yet so far only examined superficially. I should like to point out that we should concentrate our efforts not so much on teaching a child music, singing, eurythmics, drawing, dancing, but on children experiencing the world of art. Here the most difficult question is the nature of the material to be presented to children. I would tend naturally to envisage simple unsophisticated art that might encourage a child to take wholesome pleasure in art rather than opportunities for adults to please themselves in the presence of children. An aim that might well be incorporated into the school curriculum is the fostering of aesthetic sensitivity, of that there can be little doubt.

5. I would suggest that children's mental activity remains in large part a riddle for us. Adults more often than not attribute to children the mental skills and thought patterns, with which they themselves are so familiar. One of the main focusses which I would recommend for work in school and which quite properly is being examined by many teachers is that of the "child-explorer" or "child-researcher". It is important to study in detail the paradox singled out by John Dewey in the introduction to his book about the psychology and educational theory of thinking, which elucidates his conviction to the effect that the natural, unspoilt condition of the child, characterized by fervent curiosity, rich imagination and love of experimentation, is very close to the condition of academic thinking.⁸

Sechenov in his *Elements of Thought*⁹ approaches the question of children's thought processes from another angle. He underlines the importance of studying children's thought patterns. At the very outset of his book he points out that in the mental life of the human being it is only early childhood which provides us with an opportunity to consider the emergence of thoughts or ideas from the lowest form of psychological components. He regards the pattern according to which children's thoughts develop out of children's feelings and instincts as crucial for our understanding of mental processes in adults. It might well be still more interesting to come to grips with the patterns of children's logic, which, though it so often seems capricious, must nevertheless be very close to life. I would maintain most emphatically that we must, without fail, recognize the importance of children's thought processes. Insofar as a thought process, in one form or another, is involved in all types of activity, particularly unfamiliar types of activity or those which are fraught with difficulties of one sort or another, so our attention when compiling a programme for children's mental activities should be focussed on specific aspects of abstract thought progressing from imagery to ever more precise forms.

6. When it comes to the social life of children we ought to learn to examine any group of children working in the class-room or living in a children's home,¹⁰ as a community of children which lives and develops according to certain patterns that we have not as yet grasped. The spuriousness of our former conception of such groups or communities lay in the fact that we looked upon a class as a collection of isolated individuals each of whom came along with its specific study goals. Our successes and failures were often not the result of the way in which the teachers had been conducting the lessons but rather of the correlation between our teaching and the kind of life being experienced at the time by the class as a group. The life of such a group is shaped both by internal social factors (imitation, rivalry, domination, fashion) and also by external factors—the nature of the environment as a whole, in which the children find themselves, and the immediate environment effecting them directly (the level of material culture, the way of life experienced in that particular

school, the dominant group of teachers). All elements of life at school and pre-school life constitute the sum total of influences that make themselves felt within the children's group or community. Once we appreciate this the next step is to single out the links that exist between the life of the group and that of its individual components, i.e. the role of health, nutrition, work, play, etc. The closest link is that which exists between the form of material culture (types of school, domestic and maintenance work, and the general context) and the type of social relations obtaining. The social aspect of school life is always tangible, always influential, but it is always something of which teachers have no proper grasp.⁴¹ To come to grips with it properly would mean eliminating many of the barriers obstructing genuine communication with the children. Helping children live more purposeful lives means getting rid of a whole range of obstacles that prevent them from making productive use of their time in school, i.e. the time during which they experience a life that is structured.

VI

What should be at the basis of our method? If our curriculum is to be compiled to correspond to the nature of children's life then our method should be the means with which to implement such a curriculum in practice. If we set ourselves the goal of enabling children to live as children within a sensible, purposeful framework, then we shall at once be confronted by all the complex problems incumbent upon such a goal. That would be hardly surprising since very little has been discussed along these lines. Our knowledge of children abounds in gross mistakes and superstitions to which highly educated and cultivated men fall prey all too often.

Yet this is nevertheless the overall method of work we need to adopt. Usually it is one specific factor we examine, actual teaching methods, which have always occupied pride of place in ill-defined statements on matters relating to schools.

The above considerations lead one to appreciate the precious nature of the experience a child has accumulated,

experience which he has gleaned from life through his own efforts. We should also examine the store of concepts a child has already amassed and the way in which he has processed them thus transforming them into products of a higher order (Sechenov) and those forces which stimulate him to accumulate the latter, those means by which the inner processing of the concepts and ideas is effected and finally the actual organization of that processing work, those links which bring about the combined activity of the child's bodily systems—his nervous and muscular systems, etc. This means that our method should start out from identification of the experience children have accumulated and the deliberate processing of the same. Side by side with this personal experience we need to examine the school's organization of systematic experience and the comparison of the child's personal experience and the ready-made experience of other people (pre-processed knowledge). This particular comparison is forced upon the child by real life, by the real process of the child's development. There are no two ways about it: the development of the human intellect must be explained on a broader scale and in more detail than did Darwin in his day, albeit magnificently, with reference to something specific, to some mechanism. The crux of the matter lies, as I see it, in the fact that this process of comparison is only accomplished in real life with tremendous difficulties. School in providing a favourable environment for working on that comparison serves to remove many of those difficulties.

To sum up we can say that these three forms of experience—personal, structured and pre-processed—exert a somewhat intermittent spasmodic influence upon children. Our target with regard to method should be to link together in a single process and to analyze carefully the interdependence of these three types of experiential activity peculiar to the child, school and life itself. Yet in life we also come up against the process of the consolidation of findings drawn from experience. This process has an important role to play in what I referred to earlier as the supportive, conservative activity which takes place under the impact of social heredity over long periods of adaptation; in such activity specific practices took shape as a result of repeated practice. If schools wish to pass on

knowledge that will take root, without scattering their forces, then they need to introduce into their systematic practice activities aimed at consolidating useful changes in a child's physical and mental state which manifest themselves as a result of experiential activity. Experience is the point of departure outlined in this method, and practice is the follow-up needed to consolidate the former. The assimilation and processing of experience, the establishment of connections between the three types of experience and practice give rise to new needs, the satisfaction of which will add new depth and meaning to a young life.

What then should our next step be?

Valuing: 1) personal experience drawn from life (unstructured experience), 2) structured experience provided at school and 3) pre-processed experience (experience peculiar to the child's race, pre-processed knowledge), we are led to elaborate methods that serve to establish the correlation between the three. We must be able to identify the material drawn from personal experience, analyze it and then on the basis of the conclusions drawn from such analysis organize our lessons in school so that these serve to fill out the gaps in the child's personal activities to date, checking, refuting or affirming the correctness of observations made by children (whatever these might consist of), and then to establish analogies with ready-made experience of human activity (in art, work and science).

... This experience motivates a child and keeps his morale high. Such is the first aim of our method. The second aim should be to establish a proper correspondence between the child's potential, the capacities of his age-group and his individual inclinations and the work of the school. If we support the idea that the educative process evolves and eventually should come to embrace all life's riches, that might be made use of by a child at various periods of his growth, then it should be recognized that there also exist the science and art peculiar to the six-year-old, as indeed to the ten-year-old child. The difference between those and adult science and art lies in the cognitive **methods** employed and the degree of precision, and the **depth of the** activities engaged, which depend upon those **methods**. Precision of judgement, clarity of in-

ner experience and the wealth of their externalization are the main differences between the scientific researcher and artist on the one hand and the child on the other. The third part of the method is to cultivate all sorts of practice and training opportunities as a back-up to the rest of his work. It is a crucial aspect of our work to make sure that forms and methods of practice dovetail with the needs of the child at the particular stage in his growth that he may have reached. What Montessori achieved in one narrow sphere needs to be widely adopted as a principle that should underly the whole teaching process.

The fourth aim in our method should be to make use of the environment, material and social, meaning here the influences which both these factors bring to bear on a child. Indeed the whole teaching process, as a complex social phenomenon, is moving in one or another direction, is subject to qualitative or quantitative changes stemming from changes in the environment (in the broad sense of the term).

The fifth aim is self-improvement, efforts to glean more from life, to assume more stature as an individual, and enhance group teaching projects. This process must of necessity precede any truly worthwhile or vital work as a teacher. This idea brings to mind the maxim, so familiar yet still to be achieved: "As we teach we learn."

Parallel to a proper implementation of work to develop the child, the teacher's personality is also acquiring new depth. This aspect of the teaching process depends very much on the organization of a schools' overall teaching activity to which each individual teacher and specially organized teams of teachers have their contribution to make.

Thus we can envisage the teaching process as a whole embracing the environment, the school, the child and the teacher, work with the individual and the group, the nature methods and structuring of school activities.¹²

Further on, this question will be examined complete with its wide range of implications. Let it suffice now to point out that the main purport of the ideas outlined so far could well be expressed in a diagram embracing both curriculum and methods applicable to school work in the

strict sense of the word. This is how I should envisage such a diagram: ¹³

Method Content	Personal experience of children and its processing	Structured experience in school	Pre-processed experience (knowledge)	Practice
Useful Work Play Art Mental work Social activity Physical development				

In this article we have only sketched in a general outline the work which ought to be carried out and towards which at the present time we are advancing, I and my colleagues who set up the experimental children's camp and the experimental centre for public education. It is a highly complex work and we have been helped on in it by the meticulous collection of material on this subject that had been going on for many years behind the scenes (since 1905 in fact) before we started work on our present undertaking. This material is still being collected parallel to the course of our practical work.

All the points made in this article are the fruit of thorough consideration of practical teaching experience not merely with children but also with adults.

Article Two

I

School, in its work to lend shape to children's lives should be concerned with study of the elements (activities) which constitute that life. In order to carry out this task we need to turn our attention to the detailed aspects of children's lives as these unfold within the natural conditions of the child's environment. From this should ensue the link between work in the schools and the study of the child's environment as a whole without which we cannot understand children's lives.

In view of this we approach school not as a "general phenomenon" but as something that exists and functions "in specific conditions". The conditions, the environment determine the nature of the work to be carried on in any particular school.

a) We study an environment through its children, as the children see it. This is why we see the initial task in our work as teachers to be to examine the content of children's experience, the experience a child acquired, while it was learning to defend itself, to work, and was seeking means with which to externalize its emotional life and mental activity, as it was thinking and circulating within a society consisting of both children and adults.

Every teacher employed in the classroom has encountered those apparently chance moments, filled with a profound magic, when he senses that it is not necessary to "teach", but instead he is able simply to talk as a sincere friend with the children, when what the children have to say flows forth and there is no holding them back, when he would do anything to preserve the wonderful atmosphere that grips in equal measure both the children and himself. Those are the unforgettable moments to vividly described by Tolstoy in his articles about the school at Yasnaya Polyana. It is precisely then that the teacher has the opportunity to really learn his craft. It is in his interpretation of such moments and his sensitivity to what they hold that there lie tremendous opportunities to ensure success in his subsequent work. It is in them that the most worthwhile features of children's attitude to life unfold, attitudes that have taken shape on the basis of the experience they have acquired hitherto.

However it is not through conversation alone, whether of the structured or unstructured variety that we can attain a closer understanding of children's experience. This can also be obtained through our observation of children at work, at play, our observation of their expressive movement, the skills and habits they have acquired. If we take a large group of children and define the typical frequent phenomena to be observed in their lives in one form or another, then a general picture unfolds before us which presents us with the children's environment as seen by them. However there are also specific slants on that environment, peculiar to one particular child or another.

These make it possible for us to adopt an individualized approach to the individual child. Both pictures are most important for the teacher.

b) We must not of course confine ourselves to what we can glean from children. We ourselves must actively study the environment in which those phenomena in the children's lives of interest to us have emerged. We must involve ourselves in becoming more closely acquainted with the people, families and social groups around us. Starting out from simple observation and comparing our findings with what we hear from the children we shall gradually be drawn into more detailed, objective study of the environment. We shall gradually set ourselves more far reaching tasks and finally come to realize that our spasmodic effort is insufficient and we need to evolve for ourselves a regular method for this study of the environment in which our pupils live. This leads us to look for support and outside help, to turn to colleagues and to look for some sort of centre that might afford us assistance in our quest.

Both these points of view are of importance for the teacher—that of the particular individual child and the objective more or less scientific interpretation of the environment. One serves to complement the other. One serves to stimulate new ideas and arouse new interest, the other provides a check, embraces a wider range of detailed data and serves to explain.

II

A profoundly important task for the teacher is to understand and set store by the essence of children's lives. Before him there unfold often whimsical and as it were formless manifestations of children's personalities. He is able to penetrate the mainsprings of children's activity, to distinguish between random and crucial aspects of their behaviour, to single out what is important from the wealth of detail. He gradually becomes aware of inner patterns and direction behind what appears confused on the surface. This outward lack of "order" is the inevitable accompaniment of any animated human activity, particularly with regard to children. A teacher sometimes encourages, sometimes holds back, sometimes calms down; it is step

by step and only after great searching and numerous difficult experiences, that a teacher gains a clear idea of the goal he should aspire to in his work and the means by which he should set out to attain that goal. This involves a great deal of hard work.

It is only when he first starts work that a teacher can say: "I think, I feel that that is right." The outset of a teacher's career, particularly if this career is embarked upon with ardent dedication and a sense of inspiration, can often be on the right path thanks to his or her "teaching instinct". Sooner or later this instinct will become more subtle, will lead the young teacher to an understanding of sensible, positive principles, it will enable him to envisage the course his future work will take and then he will come not only to *feel*, but also to *find his bearings and to understand* and to mould his teaching deliberately on the basis of what he has come to understand.

The first stage in this new understanding is this study of children's experience. When studying this we must attach importance both to the sources of this experience and the way in which it is gleaned.

How do children in fact gain experience? Where do they find the bearings within their environment which enable them to exist? How is it that a child, long before he comes to school, can evaluate phenomena in the life around him and not just be overwhelmed by their sheer number?

There can only be one answer to this question: it is his own activity that has enabled him to do this, what he has already learnt, the knowledge that he has been acquiring at an intense rate and making good use of. He has been advancing along the right path despite the numerous obstacles standing in his way. The material that a child encounters and has been called upon to grasp in his early years is of enormous importance, i.e. those phenomena of life with which he came into direct contact.

At the outset life for a child is just a confusing maze in which it is frightening to lose one's way, chaos in which he cannot find his bearings. A child cannot take in the things around him, merely turns his gaze towards what is bright and colourful, and his ears respond to loud or strident noises. He stretches out towards anything that is striking to his sense organs, characteristic gestures develop that evolve as movements towards phenomena that con-

front him or away from them. All this indicates that evaluation and thinking processes are already at work. Even before a child starts to adapt to his environment he investigates himself, his movements, he becomes aware of obstacles, derives pleasure from overcoming the latter, responds to pain, repletion, thirst, warmth, cold. He trains himself in recognition of physical balance and wellbeing and as a result starts to walk, respond favourably or unfavourably to food, experiments with new-found capacities, in a world attitudes evolve to all that is going on in and immediately outside his body, he is starting to think.

This period of truly childlike learning is unfortunately the only one in a child's life when he actually needs to learn, when he himself is aware that learning is indispensable. This learning is the only learning that is a matter of life and death. Never from that point on, whether at school or university will a correct method of education be used to such effect. The impulse to learn out of pure necessity, is like the impulse which drove Lomonosov¹⁴ from Kholmogory to Moscow and it becomes ever more rare as the child grows older. At the same time the more talented the individual, the more likely it is to be found. This powerful urge to learn drives forward only the great men, the outstanding scholars of whom it can be said they are as much artists as scholars. This urge to learn drives forward true artists who are as much inspired thinkers as artists. They have retained the precious traits of childhood.

In general adults bear witness in far greater degree to what they have lost in the course of their lives, than to what they have gained. They are all too often "worn out and past it".

So we therefore must focus our attention on children's urge to learn. Our first advantage in this work is the rich store of children's experience that they have acquired as the result of various types of activities. The "advanced" education schools tend to provide is very like that dealt out to the young Oblomov¹⁵ at whose heels nannies were in constant attendance to prevent him from coming into contact with all the richest life had to offer and which he needed so badly. It is humiliating to have to acknowledge the truth in that comparison, yet at the same time there is no denying that our curricula and methods are tant-

amount to the decking out of children with intellectual and moral blinkers. We have made little progress since the era of Oblomov's nannies.

As a result our primary and elementary schools and universities are turning out young people unable to make adequate use of their abilities and talents.

Meanwhile it is important not merely to establish and identify the vital urges children experience to pursue positive learning, but to encourage these urges and make sure they last into later life. This is the awesome task facing the teacher. To this end it is necessary to make a detailed study of the actual content of learning, the curriculum and the methods used to implement the latter, and also to investigate why children soon lose interest in their studies and their taste for learning, for this development cannot appear anything but abnormal and dangerous.

The sole goal for schools and teachers should be to organize varied activities for children and to study them as they engage in these all the time. The curriculum needs to be organized not round "subjects" but round activities for the children.

III

It is not easy to enumerate all the conditions in which a new school, run on new principles might be set up.¹⁶ An isolated school, whatever resources it might have at its disposal, cannot undertake tasks that demand far more investment of both funds and teachers' time and energy than the now obsolete school of the old type.

One of the main problems lies in the evolutionary nature of the kind of school referred to earlier in this article, in the need to combine practical work with the study of those factors which bring an influence to bear on the development of such work.

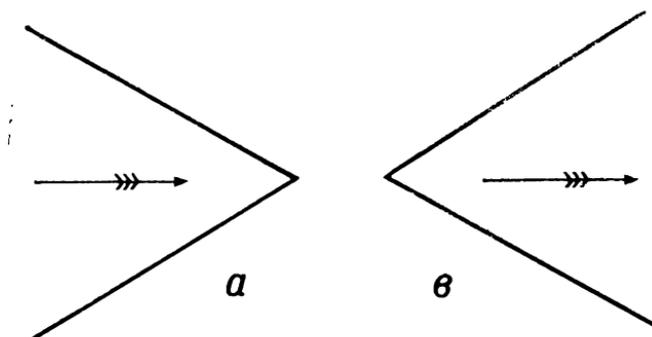
What we need at present is not only enthusiasm, fresh young minds thirsty for a challenge, or interest shown in the idea. We need to find a new role for schools to play in life in the broadest sense, and that could only be achieved by a careful perusal of that broader social context. That perusal is bound to lead to research, to scientific analysis. A new role also has to be found for the teacher as

a broad-profile social worker. The question of children and their needs will only then be given a comprehensive analysis. Meanwhile any individual school anxious to set out along a new path needs to concern itself not merely with how best to carry out its work, but also with the question as to how that task should be carried out side by side with other schools, in order to make use of all the resources that the school system, the school network might have at its disposal. This should make it clear that the idea of a school rooted in real life does not disregard the idea of group-work in respect of educational theory and practice.

An organizational outlet needs to be found within the school system. This could be no more than properly organized education courses concentrating on the actual process of the teacher's work and using the results of that work as course material.

1. If we view school as a growing organism, then it would be true to say that it could not grow if conditions were not provided that are essential for the teacher's growth. Two types of work are possible in such a school.

The first is when a teacher (usually a young one) starts out with ambitious plans, hopes, dreams and gradually as year succeeds year starts to lose his enthusiasm, the animation of his early days and months in the classroom. This type could be represented by two convergent lines (See Diagram *a*).



As time passes such a teacher will find his feet, evolve certain classroom habits and his work will then proceed in a monotonous straight line.

On the other hand, while eager to throw oneself into one's work it is possible that a new teacher of a more cautious type will start out more modestly and simply, from "Square 1". Yet later the modest straight line might branch out into two, like the two lines leading out from the point of departure in diagram (b).

Thus we can represent, using graphic means, the course of work carried out in school. If this work leads to an ever broadening range of tasks to be taken on, if a school's staff is not prepared to content itself with what has already been achieved but is anxious to use achievements made so far in order to break new ground, then this is expressed through two divergent lines starting out from one and the same point. If the staff's work is directed towards the elaboration of the "best possible curriculum", "optimum methods", which are then resolutely implemented, the school's ideal progress will be represented in a diagram of two straight and parallel lines. Thus it is possible to envisage two cases in which the character of work carried out by the staff as a whole and that of the individual teacher coincide.

This phenomenon always led to the emergence of rigid, clearly defined forms of teaching. The teacher would set great store by these. It would be comparatively easy for him to work as long as he conformed and adhered to the particular style of work required. Yet life, for which the school was to prepare children, was changing, and as a result schools would always become less relevant, falling to keep pace with life itself, like all state institutions endeavouring to uphold *unshakeable* principle.

2. It should be noted that while it may be possible to imagine steady growth within a school, for the teacher however inner growth has its limits. He is subject to the physiological law of fatigue: he loses the freshness of his early years. This law may not apply so much to a well-structured organization which can be constantly injecting new blood into its ranks. For this reason the evolution of the individual teacher is closely bound up with the educational environment in which he finds himself; this environment in its own turn, given certain conditions with regard to its internal structure, does possess the capacity to be constantly evolving, to extend in breadth and depth the framework of its practice. It is only an educational

organization of this type that would be able to pave the way to schools of the new type.

3. Reference was made earlier to courses for teachers (during their service) as a major force for structuring the educational environment. In order to be that major force in reality, they need to present unanimous ideas with regard to goals for teachers to aspire to and to the materials, methods and actual nature of their work.

The goal for such courses is to structure the educational aims of the school system. The materials (their origins) are a concern of no small importance as regards the attainment of the goal outlined above. This applies without doubt to the materials drawn from actual classroom practice. Indeed the teacher, in one way or another, gathers together a store of facts, incidents which he had occasion to come up against in the course of his work in school. Possessed of this knowledge he sets out to such courses knowing that it will prove useful to him there, that he will have the chance to put it to the test and be able to compare his experience with that gleaned by colleagues from other schools. There he comes across the theory he will have to rely on. The mere fact that he feels obliged to draw a connecting thread between the courses he is attending and the school where he works constitutes a structuring situation.

The same can be said with regard to method.

In what way can it contribute to the structuring of teaching work?

It can only do so when material drawn from practical experience and already subjected to processing leads us to draw certain conclusions on the basis of which tasks can be elaborated to be subsequently carried out in schools. Work to carry out this task in itself points the way to new material which will then again be analysed and processed and so on and so forth. To ensure that this method is as efficient as possible it is essential that the work be arranged in such a way that the theoretical part of the work (processing of material, analysis, checking) be carried out parallel with the practical work. Then the nature of the work as a whole will be imbued with the spirit of the new type of school, namely with the spirit of tireless searching and self-education. It demands more active involvement on the part of the teacher, who is called upon to inspire

similar heightened activity in his pupils. In essence, these courses constitute the New School, but for adults rather than for children.

Article Three

I am walking through a wood and find a mushroom. I pick it, look, bend down to rummage amongst the leaves that smell of mould, for I know that there are bound to be some others near-by. Sure enough I soon have a few more to put in my basket. I take pleasure in the find but do I at the same time give thought to the fact that all the soil around about is pervaded by countless tiny and delicate threads of mushroom spawn and that it is actually the plant which is producing the harvest—the mushrooms in my basket?

When I encounter phenomena of everyday life which in some way or another lead me to define my relationship to them, I become quite engrossed by them and am unable at first to appreciate clearly the idea that they are the result of interconnected phenomena unknown to me, thousands of threads all interwoven with each other; that they may be near in terms of both time and place to those phenomena of which I am aware, which I see, recognize, or alternatively very far removed from the latter. The link does really exist as in the case of the mushroom spawn. The necessary skills and sensitivity enable us to find both the ends and the beginnings, to evaluate a whole range or group of inter-related phenomena and the environment which gave rise to them. Without understanding the connecting links between phenomena it is impossible to find one's bearings in the field of education.

From the multicoloured tapestry of phenomena that go to make up the child's material and social environment, there takes shape one or another life pattern for the child which broadens out considerably in situations where children have the chance to communicate regularly one with another. We can obstruct that development for instance by not letting children out to play: "Sit at home and keep out of mischief!" in order to shield them from detrimental influences; we can underestimate communication and interaction between children, or on the other hand we can

deliberately encourage such interaction (in clubs, playgrounds, hobby circles, children's organizations of one kind or another).

Eventually, after the countless phenomena influencing the course of a child's life, comes School which brings children together on a regular basis and for a long period.

II.

To make good dough it needs to be thoroughly kneaded with good leaven. As I see it, in education children's lives, complete with all their familiar day-by-day routines, provide the flour that is to turn into dough, while school performs the function of the leaven. Mixing the dough and making sure that the grains of fresh flour are brought into as close contact as possible with flour that has had the leaven added—that is mixing together, welding together school with children's life. *Thus school represents the leaven, and the environment in which it causes leavening to take place is children's life in the broad sense.* Within that life one particular constituent stands out—a constituent of the whole—namely school, which if properly structured should carry out its leavening role. Herein is to be found the importance and purpose of school. It is with this in mind that I and my colleagues used to maintain that school should exist for children and not the other way round.

When we set up a school we must remember that we are preparing leaven that may well be absorbed in the broad medium of the nation's children's life. From this point of view it is clearly desirable to evaluate our every step as teachers, our every curriculum, or method of work regardless of whether this be in a kindergarten or in a school of any level.

It was no coincidence that we compared the school with leaven. Usually a school constitutes something that is separate to the lives of children, an institution designed to prepare children for the future that pays no heed to their real needs, either since it has no knowledge of those needs or because it attributes to children those needs that are convenient for academic success. Adults are most anxious to bring children into schools and to make school attendance compulsory. To this end children are wrested from

the important and necessary pattern of their daily life and then we create for them artificial, allegedly suitable conditions in which to foster learning, yet in practice we do not guarantee children conditions that are even tolerable as far as hygiene is concerned, with regard either to their physical health (all too often schools can be a rich source of infantile diseases), mental health (apathy, boredom, fatigue) or moral health (deception, fighting, rivalry, cunning, fears to which the community of children in a school is subject). All these shortcomings stem from the fact that the school is cut off from the main stream of children's lives. In this case in their most extreme, i.e. consistently applied methods, such schools become the setting for a distorted life meted out to children (just like that found in the old-style orphanages, boarding schools, military or reform schools). The state of affairs does not really improve from the fact that we proclaim the slogan: "Make school part of life!" It can hardly sound convincing to children. One might well ask whether the link between schools and life be necessary if it implies no link with children's life. This important word *children's* needs to be added to the slogan and then it could be accepted wholeheartedly. The mistake inherent in our understanding of the link between school and life lies in the fact that we lay down the link with life and with the activities of adult society either with reference to descriptions drawn from books (old method) or via excursions into that real life (new method), trying as we do so to instil into children *correct*, i.e. *our* view of the phenomena that constitute social and working life. Yet of their own accord children would gradually *come round* to our methods of assessment of their environment and what is in it, as they pass on from one age-group to the next. I, the *teacher*, resolve to talk to the children and teach them a correct appreciation of the various means of transport and draw them a diagram starting with a horse and carriage and following technological progress through to the tram, using a whole range of combined modern teaching methods as I go. If I were however to pause for a moment and think back to my childish view of transport, then I might remember how as a child I was deeply envious of the cab driver and the tramdriver who had the good fortune to be riding round the town all day! My approach was far nearer the

mark than that of the conscientious teacher who rewarded my enthusiasm with a condescending smile and continued to fill my small head with all manner of serious facts . . .

It is a fine thing to establish close links between school and work skills and processes. However it must be remembered that children live and act both inside and outside their schools. They take a keen interest in the joys and failures of their life. Schools, provided they structure their activities in an appropriate way, could prove vitally necessary to children. A child while working at school should feel that he is living a more purposeful, interesting and fruitful life. Before him are unfolding spheres of learning to which, without school, he would have had no access: how he should set about his study in these new fields of learning, what goals he should set himself, what he should focus his attention on—those questions will all be answered through the needs and opportunities that go hand in hand with the particular age or stage of development the child has reached . . .

HOW WE TEACH

While observing teachers in the classroom, we can pick out the main methods or techniques which he or she uses in the course of his or her work with pupils.

Broadly speaking these methods or techniques can be characterized as follows: to start with the teacher devotes a good deal of time to asking pupils questions and getting answers back to these questions. Then he spends considerable time explaining new material, putting questions to the pupils and then outlines to them one or another related work task; finally he checks through their work and assesses it, while constantly paying attention to overall organization and order within the class.

His direct and immediate contact with the children consists of these fundamental activities, but its essential features could be summarized as follows: the teacher makes an impact of one kind or another on the pupils with recourse to various methods, the pupils experience the results of that impact and react to it.

If we approach the teacher's work with pupils in the classroom from this particular angle, i.e. viewed as action and reaction, then we can observe the following: in pupils' reactions we are more likely to observe a whole series of problems than successes, i.e. more negative than positive reactions. The teacher is constantly encountering such problems, and as in the course of his work with children he comes across one or other particular kind of problem, then he will attempt in part to change his type of impact so as to make it more likely to stimulate positive reactions on the part of his pupils and to reduce the proportion of negative reactions. In other words, in the course of his practical work the teacher is always aware of a whole num-

ber of inhibitory factors or obstacles standing in his way and holding him back.

It can therefore prove most enlightening to assess the work of both teacher and pupils from the angle of these inhibitory factors or "brakes" which emerge in the course of that work and also that of the positive reactions achieved.

Let us try to analyse in detail individual operations or techniques which go to make up the work of the teacher, examine them on their own and try to assess their impact as a brake or stimulus for positive reaction as emerges in each given situation.

1. Questions and Answers. This is one of the most common methods encountered in classroom practice. One is always aware of a whole number of difficulties which prevent pupils from answering quickly, clearly and, what is still more important, from enjoying giving answers to our questions. Usually after asking a question we realize fairly quickly when pupils are having difficulty in answering. Then we attempt to frame the question somewhat differently and in such a way as to make it easier for the pupil to answer. However this does not always produce results and often enough the teacher is obliged to provide the answer himself.

Why does this happen?

As I see it the problem lies in the fact that teachers' questions differ considerably from the kind of questions asked in everyday life. The teacher knows the answer to his question and the pupil is also well aware that the teacher already knows the answer to the question which he has just asked. When we ask each other questions outside the classroom then we only ask for information which we do not yet have. This means that a teacher is usually asking his pupils about something he already knows, while anyone outside the classroom is asking about something with regard to which he is not yet informed.

In the pupil's mind there must then appear the idea that if the teacher already knows the answer and yet insists on asking a particular question, then the teacher's question must represent some kind of trap and this leads the pupil to attempt not to answer the question as it stands but to try and guess at the answer the teacher already has prepared.

Indeed with surprising frequency the pupils do come up with what is essentially the right answer, but in a form which the teacher from his professional standpoint finds unacceptable. I had occasion once to witness a lesson in a German school in which a teacher pointed to a picture of a hare and asked: "What's that?" The pupil then replied: "That's a hare" at which the teacher objected: "That's incorrect. How should he have answered?" More experienced members of the class raised their hands and answered in self-satisfied tones: "The answer should have been: Sir asked what was shown in the picture and I am to answer: The picture shows a hare!" This incident showed that the pupil should have answered not the question as such but should have provided the formula required by the teacher. Examples of this kind abound. All these questions which we put to our pupils give rise eventually to slack and meaningless relations between teacher and pupils. The teacher tries out a whole number of techniques and "traps", but the pupils meanwhile are aware of what he is up to and try to some extent to adopt a defensive stance. The importance of this attitude stands out particularly clearly when their answers provide a basis for their teacher's subsequent assessment of their characters.

We can remember all too clearly how in the "good old days"¹ our answers would be followed up by a mark in the class register. A good mark showed that we were good boys and an example to others, while bad marks led us and others to believe that there was some delinquent streak in us.

We know that those character assessments of pupils based on their answers in class and work in general were a very widespread practice and it is evident that these factors acted as brakes on pupils' initiative and progress in their work.

Yet how could work in the classroom be reorganized? Can question and answer exchanges be made meaningful and help create positive purposeful relations between pupils and teacher? How should the teacher set about asking questions? If he wishes to build up meaningful relationships of this kind then he needs to ask for information he does not already possess, information that he has not yet acquired in his work with the pupils concerned. He will not be acquainted with the problems which pupils were

confronting, with the doubts they were experiencing, with the interest they were deriving from their work, or with the antipathy they might feel for it. In other words, if the teacher wishes to ask his pupils about a subject, it would be more to the point to ask them about the conditions and atmosphere in which they were tackling it, i.e. to ask about the problems, doubts, interest it arouses.

If this approach were used I suggest that it would be possible to make it truly interesting for the pupil to answer the teacher's questions and he would be willing to answer such questions from the teacher as often as possible for they would help him tackle his work: that end is one that is always important to the pupil and after *that* kind of question-and-answer session pupils would find their work easier.

Reference has already been made to the assessment of pupils' character on the basis of their school-work. In future it would be possible to adopt that approach to literally all the work processes carried out by the teacher. No piece of work should in any way be seen as a reflection of a pupil's character, as is the common practice today. A sensible, earnest pupil may be producing bad work, but the work is bad because it contains his mistakes and if we the teachers bother to examine and probe those mistakes and the reasons as to why they were made, and how the said pupil could have achieved better results, without casting judgement on the pupil's character at the same time, then of course a large number of inhibitory factors could be eliminated.

It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that it is pupils' work we need to assess not their characters or personalities.

2. The largest share of classroom time is spent by teachers on explanations. In an attempt to give pupils the most detailed explanations possible we make the latter too long and drag them out longer than we should. Since teachers need to speak to their classes and usually do so frequently and at length, they tend to speak in even regular tones in order to economise their strength. This leads our pupils to adopt an even regular tone when they read or relate something they have seen or experienced.

At the same time the way a teacher speaks to his class has the following effect: his even regular voice after a mere

few minutes starts to exert a hypnotic influence on his pupils who are thus lulled to sleep. This type of aural hypnosis is all too widespread in our schools. Indeed we ourselves, if we think back to our years at school, can recall how often we "slept" through lessons and what a torture it was to sit through the tedious lessons of these "well-meaning" teachers.

There are also cases when the subject-matter of a lesson is interesting but it is presented so badly that it becomes tedious and lulls the children to sleep regardless. In fact classroom "sleep" is encountered so frequently that we sometimes cease to notice it, because it would require too much energy on our, the teachers', part to wake the pupils out of it.

We are always appealing to the pupil's conscience, reproaching him for inattentiveness and saying: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for going to sleep in lesson-time!" We expose a pupil to the derision of his class-mates but in actual fact all such misdeeds point all too clearly to the negative aspects of our teaching methods.

This hypnotic state we can assess as an inhibited state and in such classroom conditions there can be no question of productive work. Yet that is not all. Sleep in class is not just the sleep of a person relaxing, it is rather a restless sleep: the pupil is sleeping and yet at the same time he is not sleeping, he feels guilty and he has to be ready for the eventuality that the teacher might focus his attention on him. So there is the conflict within him between the inhibited state and the positive reaction and this conflict, according to Professor Pavlov², is what always lies at the root of nervous disorders.

As I see it if this phenomenon is widespread in classrooms today, if millions of children are reduced to this classroom "sleep" during one or more of their lessons every day, to this sleep that is brought on as a result of our teaching methods, then there is no doubt that this phenomenon needs to be thoroughly examined and that we as teachers must begin to appreciate that the outward form or presentation of our lessons is not something to which children remain indifferent: particularly important in relation to the overall aims of school education is the way in which teachers actually speak to their pupils. At any rate we should acknowledge that monotonous harangues

from the teacher are not going to stimulate active response on the part of the pupil. They will always have a distinctly hypnotic effect and in order to avoid this a teacher must without fail work on his voice, i.e. make sure that he varies its pitch and lends it a wealth of modulations.

Meanwhile we can imagine to ourselves an effective, interesting explanation from a teacher, that is rich in modulations but at the same time drawn out for too long. If I am explaining something well and am anxious for my pupils to understand me, then it is important to pass on as quickly as possible to some kind of activity, for what the children have just understood to be translated in some way or other into a reading or writing task, a calculation, drawing, some physical activity, singing or play, etc. If I explain something well and the pupils have understood what it is necessary to do next, then the time devoted to explanations should not extend beyond the moment when a child's interest in the ensuing task or activity has been aroused: as soon as that stage has been reached explanations should come to an end.

Usually we explain things that are too complex, i.e. which require a large number of operations if they are to be carried out in practice. It is essential to break up into digestible parts any explanation of a complicated undertaking, as indeed most tasks asked of schoolchildren are, i.e. into a number of simple straightforward operations each of which should be explained separately. Then if we intersperse explanations with periods of practical activity, we shall succeed in large degree in maintaining pupils' interest in their work, and in such working conditions there will be a marked reduction in the number of inhibitory factors which effect their reactions.

3. After explanations we proceed to set pupils various work tasks. While carrying these out, regardless of the operations they involve, a pupil encounters certain problems, which hinder him in his work.

Usually we assess the results of children's work, but fail adequately to keep track of the way in which they carry out their work, although the actual process leading up to the results is the most interesting component of children's work. There is no denying that if a pupil sets about his work properly, then this helps him to master the

material he is working on and he will gain a thorough knowledge of it. If we see that a pupil is giving correct answers to questions leading up to the solution of a particular problem, this does not necessarily mean that his results have been arrived at properly. A pupil may be good at coming up with the right answers but be failing to work them out in a rational or effective way. Often we can come across well written essays or correctly answered sums, but it is quite possible that the composition was drawn from class-mates' ideas or that the sums were simply copied, in other words that the work handed in had little value of its own.

So *how* a pupil actually sets about his work can be of tremendous importance for a teacher.

Moreover any work-task, regardless of its nature or level is usually a highly complex undertaking, i.e. something that involves a series of separate operations. Tasks of this sort may well prove too much for pupils, but if they are broken down into the individual components, which in their turn are arranged in a logical sequence so that each one facilitates completion of the next, then the presentation of the task could help the pupil carry out what is required of him. It is therefore essential that we teachers examine carefully the tasks we set and present them in such a way that the consecutive operations required of a child should not be too difficult and within his grasp.

This does not of course mean that all our efforts should be directed towards making pupils' work easier; however their tasks should be presented in such a way as to ensure that difficulties are in moderation, of a kind that pupils might overcome with relatively little trouble.

The second consideration we need to bear in mind is the need to make sure that pupils get into the habit of turning to the teacher for help and advice when they come up against difficulties, which they cannot come to grips with. It is a bad thing of course if a pupil starts turning to the teacher every single time he encounters a small difficulty. If this policy is resorted to then we need to point out that instead of just asking for help all the time he could cope on his own. Yet it is at the same time most unfortunate if a pupil never turns to the teacher for help. In short, we need to avoid both extremes. We must try to ensure that

a purposeful and constructive working relationship grows up between teacher and pupil.

At this stage I should like to make reference to frequent observations drawn from pupils' work in the classroom. We know all too well that pupils can be encouraged to take an interest in any subject, that it does not really matter whether they are being taught physics, geography, natural history, grammar or sociology, but what *does* matter is whether they are being given work that interests them. Yet we need to remember that pupils' interest in their work depends on whether or not they can feel they are progressing, moving forward, whether they know that they are capable of mastering a particular subject, that they will be able to put their ability to the test. If work is carried out against this background, i.e. if pupils derive interest and pleasure from it, we cannot fail to respect and approve of such work. If a pupil is interested in moving forward and learning more, if he wishes to put his ability to the test, if he comes to the teacher with relevant questions, then he is coming to master such work skills as will enable him in the future to widen the range of his interests.

There is another most important point that should be borne in mind here.

Any assessment of a pupil's character as opposed to his work serves to inhibit his work. If a piece of work has been done badly, if it contains a large number of mistakes this does not by any means necessarily reveal that the pupil concerned is a bad pupil; on the other hand if a piece of work has been done well, this should never be interpreted as a sure sign that the pupil concerned set about the work in the proper way.

When we start failing to separate a pupil's work from his character this to a very large degree prevents us from establishing a positive working relationship with him or her.

4. As we go about our work with pupils in the classroom we strive for obvious reasons to establish and maintain discipline in that classroom. Any noise or disruption in the class makes a teacher nervous or edgy. Yet is it only we, the teachers, who are put out by noise, disruption or chaos? How do the pupils view them? Every interruption or noise disturbs the equilibrium of the group and

inflicts considerable tension upon it. Things sometimes go so far that teachers find it really difficult to control groups of children, and this then leads to a tense atmosphere. Children become more and more on edge and with all the will in the world could not put a stop to the noise and restlessness which make work so difficult for all concerned.

That this is actually happening can be seen from the following example.

I once saw a teacher who was organizing games for children, games of a kind which made the children very excited, and after which the children found it most difficult to settle down again.

When I came into the room where he was supervising this games session, I was met by the following scene: he was standing in the middle of a large room holding a stick in his hand, while a pupil was holding on to the other end of the stick. The teacher was beginning to turn the stick round and round at mounting speed and the pupil holding on to the other end was eventually thrown to one side by the gathering momentum, crashed into a side wall, fell down and then grabbed hold of the stick again. The other children individually or in small groups were shouting, cheering, jumping up and down, clambering up the pillars further down the classroom, or on to the windowsills and crowding round the doors. The noise in the room was deafening.

I asked the teacher whether he had deliberately planned such a classroom activity or whether he was just finding the class more than he could manage. He held that games were destined to make children use all their energies and so he used to go out of his way to get his pupils excited, this being as he saw it the most significant aspect of play. He aimed to bring the children to a state of ecstatic excitement, feeling it was important for them to experience this.

As I see it, if he had wanted to keep such excitement under control he would of course have failed and he would have failed precisely because once the children had been worked up into a state of extreme excitement, pure inertia would make it impossible to hold that excitement in check by any artificial means from outside.

I studied the relationship between these children and

their teacher. They did not like him or his games but when called upon to play them they were infected with great excitement and found it impossible to calm down.

Any excitement takes up a considerable amount of strength, and rest and calm are needed afterwards so that those involved can recover. Therefore there is no doubt that noise, chaos, undue excitement are not something pleasant for either adults or children: the disrupted equilibrium is to some degree a sick state and the re-establishment of that equilibrium cannot help but seem attractive.

From the above it follows that rather than talk about discipline it would be more apt to talk about the establishment of equilibrium within children's working groups. Moreover, we all know from our own experience what an interesting atmosphere can evolve within a group of children if they all feel involved in interesting work. There is nothing new about this idea but it is something of which we constantly need to remind ourselves.

To sum up there are no end of factors that can explain breaches of discipline among children, but by far the most important is a lack of work or tasks that they find interesting. If a teacher can present children with interesting work and structure it properly he will have little discipline trouble. If he fails in this, and periods of work are interspersed with periods of idleness in his lessons then the level of discipline is bound to slip. An industrious atmosphere when the children are really occupied, and particularly if occupied with an interesting task, will make for a good working environment in which every lapse in the direction of disorder will be unwelcome even for the children themselves.

The third point worth dwelling on in this context is the way teachers usually set about maintaining discipline. We address a child's mind and try to make him feel ashamed: "You should be ashamed at your age, and with your brain to be fooling about like an infant."

Yet at the same time we often lose sight of the actual movements or properly developed skills the children have succeeded so far in mastering.

In many cases where discipline is lax this stems not so much from the fact that children are malicious or aggressive, that they do not want to work properly and take an interest in what they are doing, but quite simply from the

fact that what we are asking from them is beyond their skills and capacities. Time and time again proper results are not achieved because children have poor control of their own movements. We see young toddlers walking past a table inadvertently catch the tablecloth and bringing things that were on it down onto the floor. This only occurs because the child cannot walk properly yet, has not yet mastered the skill of walking along without bumping into things on either side of him.

When we talk to children about breaches of discipline we always give them to understand, inadvertently at least, that they are either criminals already or well on the way to becoming criminals. Here it is we who must take all or most of the blame, since we have failed to foster and train in the children proper responses and habits of behaviour.

This gives rise to a whole range of further questions connected with essential skills for living, the training of children in physical deftness and agility, that will help them cope with the demands of their everyday life.

We need to talk about the working environment in which children are placed, on the one hand, and the friendly tone a teacher needs to adopt towards his pupils free of any condescension, on the other. In order to create a proper working atmosphere children must be engaged in work they find interesting; so that they can find their work interesting as opposed to frustrating children must be helped to develop essential work skills both physical and mental; and in order that they should develop the latter systematic practice must be provided.

The final question in this context which we need to consider very seriously is the need for teachers to take an interest in children's lives and understand them. Then **many** of the negative features that characterize teachers' efforts to establish and maintain discipline could be eliminated.

RATIONALIZING LESSONS IN SCHOOL

When we have occasion to observe how work in the classroom proceeds and begin to ponder what is going on before us, then we are bound to come to the conclusion that in the course of lessons there gradually emerges a whole number of obstacles which the teacher and pupils are trying to overcome. There are of course bound to be obstacles in every undertaking and the actual overcoming of these obstacles is what constitutes work; yet unfortunately we also cannot help but notice that such obstacles are piled up largely by the teachers themselves and that they stem from the very teaching methods employed. This is the case not just in ordinary schools. Even in the more advanced schools we can observe how both teacher and pupils spend too much time and effort on their work while they could actually have avoided a whole number of the unnecessary difficulties, if certain other approaches, even very simple ones at first, were tried.

It is sad to have to acknowledge this but many of the problems and difficulties encountered in the classroom centre round the paramount question of children's capacity to work in the classroom. To a very large extent we are empiricists and adopt an intuitive approach to our work, and the results we obtain are sometimes good, yet we have not availed ourselves of a whole range of basic didactic techniques. Indeed for all intents and purposes didactics is not something that has been discussed at all in the context of the new work-based schools in Russia. So I should recommend that we start out by considering these most complex questions connected with the organization of lessons in schools.

First of all we need to examine the basic point of de-

parture: what should our goal be and what has it been so far in our lessons? When it comes to the point, what we are all trying to do is to fill the children's heads with knowledge, i.e. certain formulae which they will at certain times remember either deliberately or involuntarily. In practice this is what brings us satisfaction. If a pupil is able clearly and coherently to answer a whole chain of questions in writing or orally without stuttering as he goes about it, then all is well. Yet we do not ask ourselves whether our pupils know how to set about their work properly and whether we are teaching them to do so. We do not usually concern ourselves with this skill or think about it. To me this is a very wrong state of affairs and even represents a dangerous one-sided approach. It is vital that we teachers in the schools should raise the question as to how pupils should be taught to set about their work properly and only then can we speak about teachers as such, about rationalization and about the factors which determine the success of their work, i.e. the criteria of success. These factors should be understood properly so that we know how to rationalize and improve both our own work and that of the pupils, and to make it easier. As I see it there is still a great deal to be done in respect of this fundamental question and it should perhaps be a matter for debate on a wider scale.

Yet why should such a matter require discussion? Quite simply, because we ourselves do not know how to work as well as we should. We do not prepare ourselves for work as we should. We fail to devise a practical, effective plan for our work or to make proper use of the results so far achieved in it.

Let us imagine the following classroom situation:

At the beginning of the lesson the teacher comes into the room and attempts after looking at the expressions on the children's faces to make up his mind how he should commence the lesson and in that way his creative activity begins. Some colleagues even maintain quite categorically that if they have worked out beforehand the methods of presentation, diagrams, and exercises the children have to carry, this seriously inhibits them in their work. They would have us believe that the teacher needs to be sensitive to the whole group of children in his class and after quickly finding his bearings right on the spot he will be

able to start the lesson in the optimal way. Teaching children is creative work. On occasions this intuitive unplanned approach can be effective but all too often a teacher starts out with a piece of creative inspiration which is followed by another one, so that he might suggest to the children: "Instead of drawing now, let's have a talk." Then the children will have the impression that the teacher has no clear idea of what he is setting out to do, and they accordingly will lose interest in the lesson.

I should imagine that if we started analysing any lesson and examined it so as to assess whether everything was prepared in advance and all contingencies were catered for so as to avoid technical mishaps, then many oversights would be revealed. If practical details have not been thought through in advance then all sorts of problems and amendments occur which obstruct the creation of a real working atmosphere. I am sure that the beginning, middle and end of a lesson can all be thought through with regard to techniques, so that the teacher's work is made as productive as possible.

Let us consider a specific example: the pupils arrive before the teacher in the classroom as a rule. Is this point significant in regard to the rest of the lesson? To me it is, because if the children come into a school that has been set ready for a lesson then it is easy to foster a workman-like atmosphere: the children will set off on the course their work should be following. What principle needs to be followed here? The principle of initial chaos, albeit on a small scale, and eventual order

The chaos principle was that adopted by Lev Tolstoy in his school at Yasnaya Polyana. A free-for-all to start with and then this is followed by the interesting spectacle of order developing from chaos. Yet this technique requires the infinite skill and perception of a genius like Tolstoy. We usually feel helpless, swim with the tide and in doing so we hold back our own work that we are unable to set about properly from the start. In order to overcome that, we need to develop in ourselves the capacity to find our bearings within a classful of children and to organize our lessons. We still have a lot to learn about understanding children. This comes particularly clearly to the fore when we start talking about homogenous groups, because in actual fact such classes do not exist. There are always

a number of groups in a class, even when we are dealing with children of the same age, and these groups will differ according to the level of development they have reached, their methods of work, the rate at which they work, according to their social background and interests. There are for example children who work slowly but thoroughly, and others who catch on to new material quickly, but forget it quickly too. We tend to rate more highly a group of pupils that work quickly, and show less understanding for those who work more slowly. We find it difficult to plot a speed of work with which different groups of children can cope. I am sure that ultimately we shall have to reckon with specific characteristics of individual pupils. The individualization of our work in the classroom will of course be a gradual process, yet we should never say that there is but one homogeneous group in the classroom: there are always a number of different groups and this is most important since we need to elaborate a particularized approach to each.

In American writing on education the question as to whether a teacher knows how to allocate his time fairly between pupils is frequently discussed. The teacher is said often to opt for the line of least resistance when structuring his lessons. Go to a classroom and watch how many children a teacher actually works with, and you will notice that he works meaningfully with about five or six, while there may be anything up to forty pupils in the class: in other words he works with those who put up their hands earliest, who participate most actively in the lesson and are ready to answer his questions. The rest are passive and sit there thinking to themselves: "Let others put their hands up and I shall just sit here." If a teacher arranges his lessons in such a way, it is hard to raise the children's activity. Once I was present at a lesson in which teacher and pupils were discussing methods of work. One of the pupils made a most perceptive comment: "Your lessons are very interesting but you work with Vanya, Petya and Vasya, and forget about the rest of us." The Americans insist that each pupil should be accorded a set amount of the teacher's time, in each lesson, day and week. The way in which a teacher allocates his attention during a lesson reflects how well or otherwise he organizes his lesson. This would seem a self-evident truth, but

large numbers of teachers fail to allocate their time fairly because their lessons are insufficiently prepared.

Another factor which I see as most important for the improvement of lessons is maintaining a cheerful, dynamic atmosphere in the classroom. Rationalizing the conduct of tedious lessons is a pointless exercise. It could only affect external features of the lesson whereas the dynamic essence of the lesson would still be missing, because rationalization must provide additional stimulus, rise children's motivation which always emerges as a result of worthwhile lessons, while in a boring atmosphere when the children are sleeping and yawning there cannot be any rationalization. We therefore should discuss the teacher as organizer of lessons and treat this as a very important matter. Study of teachers taking a particular interest in lesson organization can be most helpful to this end. An American Professor by the name of Curtis has written a book about the ways the teacher's methods can be classified. Starting out from his premise I began to analyse what goes on in the Russian classroom and found that there are several types of lesson-planners at work in our schools. First, there is the authoritarian type who can be recognized from the way he instructs, disciplines, presents his material, sets exercises, etc., and it is possible to discern each of the aspects in his lessons. Pupils during the lessons of these teachers behave accordingly. One can sum up the authoritarian approach in the maxim: "Get on and do as you are told with no questions asked." There is no shortage of authoritarian teachers of this mould in our schools.

We also find teachers who not only make pupils do what they are told but also explain to them what they are doing and why. This type of teacher I would refer to as motivator. He is not categorical in his approach but meets the pupil halfway, explaining to him why such and such an exercise is being set, but at the same time the pupil is obliged to complete it. In my opinion, this type of teacher is the most common in our schools. The third type of teacher is the "supporter" who shows the children what is to be done and helps the pupils to set about their work while leaving them scope to bring their own initiative into play. The strings are still being pulled by the teacher. The fourth type of teacher is a most interesting one: the "co-

worker" teacher works side by side with the pupils at a task devised by their joint effort. This type is encountered very rarely and teaching of this variety requires great skill, highly adjusted techniques and it is the most effective. There are of course a large number of variations on these four types and within one and the same bracket individual approaches to discipline, lesson-planning and preparation, pupil improvisation and participation, precision in answers and assessment will be found. At the same time it should be remembered that there are organizers among the pupils as well. There are despots among the pupils, comrades and helpers, passive acquiescent pupils and individualists, loners who find it difficult to work together as part of a group.

Let us now turn to the system of links and brigades¹. In that system one can come across organizers of the authoritarian type. What does authoritarian mean here? It means in practice that the capable pupil will be doing all the work and the others are only too happy with this state of affairs. The capable ones will be doing the work for everyone. The result is a class in which everyone else just "treads water". Definitions of different types of organizing teachers and pupils can be an important step towards the correct organization of lessons.

Indeed if we work out what category the teacher's work basically falls into this can shed light on a number of other questions. If we are asked for instance: "The children are paying no attention—how could discipline be restored here?" Then I would reply, "What kind of teacher does the class have? An authoritarian? What kind of discipline is he trying to establish? What kinds of pupil is he dealing with?" It emerges all too often in such cases that the problems relating to discipline are stemming from the behaviour of the teacher. In addition to these questions connected with the teacher's behaviour there arise others, connected with the materials and tools we are using, in other words with class equipment. It is futile to talk about any kind of rationalization if on the one hand teachers are not well-versed in their craft and secondly if we do not have the proper materials and tools at our disposal. Let us take the question of exercise books. Their rough-surfaced pages with ink blurring on them, the lines and squares and the margins that all must be observed in

writing, all force pupils to adapt their working habits and in the process of that adaptation they develop the appropriate skills and dexterity. The actual type of exercise book used needs to be given careful consideration so that it might contain features such as would help pupils work more independently. Didactic material in all shapes and forms, its operation and the capacity to make proper use of it are all most important. It is important to make a habit of ensuring that pupils have everything they need ready, before they embark on a piece of work, and time has to be set aside for training pupils in the skill of making ready to start work. I always say to pupils: "Let's first fill up the inkwells, sharpen pencils and make sure that exercise books are in order." This avoids unnecessary interruptions in the course of their work later on. After that the lesson is bound to proceed successfully. Rationalization techniques of this sort need to be cultivated by teachers and pupils alike. When we proceed to the question of didactic materials then of course the question as to their optimal employment has to be raised and we have to ask which lessons they should be used to supplement, which methods and which specific aspects of our work in schools. That is only the beginning. It is essential to examine the actual work of the teacher, to elaborate a system with which to do this and to assess individual teaching methods. It is necessary to start out from an assessment of broad-scale teaching experience and studies of the practical work which the teacher carries out and to take note of the methods and aspects of classroom practice which have proved successful. Every teacher will have known moments of success, no teacher's experience is always negative and his past habits can always be modified somewhat, improved upon, polished and made more generally applicable. In order to study the work of an individual teacher it is essential to single out the main elements of his classroom practice, the components of each teaching operation and then evaluate their significance in the context of his teaching practice as a whole. In this way we can hope to achieve an analysis of a teacher's work of such a kind that will be enormously useful to him. It seems to me that experimentation is perfectly justified in this type of work. By way of an initial plan or diagram classroom practice might be divided up into the following

operations: (1) lesson preparation; (2) exposition; (3) elicitation; (4) exercise; (5) assessment; (6) disciplining.

The subject of lesson preparation has been dealt with earlier in this article. Let us now consider how the teacher tackles the task of exposition, from certain particular aspects—such as its duration, for a start at least. Here we are up against the question: how long should the classroom exposition last? Even a good, effective teacher tends to spend quite a long time on exposition. Is this correct? What does a lengthy, albeit well delivered exposition result in? Let us view the situation with regard to its external features first of all: what does the teacher's voice sound like? Often enough teachers talk in a monotonous voice. Why? This is because they are called upon to talk a good deal and need to preserve their energies. The steady measured tones of a subdued variety have an undeniable effect upon the pupils: they begin to fall asleep under the physiological impact of such speech. What conclusion should we draw from this? It is essential that a teacher should speak with a lively voice, possessing a wide range of inflections. After all it does sometimes happen that pupils start yawning as soon as a particular teacher shows himself in the doorway. Can this state of affairs be altered, and should it be? Of course it should be: just rationalizing tedious lessons is doomed to failure. And what next? How much time can a pupil be keyed up to concentrate really hard to listen carefully? There is no doubt that it is not more than a few minutes. As soon as a child grows tired of really exerting himself so as to understand an exposition, that can on occasion be rather tedious, he stops working and our long-drawn out talks and expositions cease to be just useful but become even harmful. Why do we explain material to the pupils? It is in the hope that the pupils themselves will do something later on: we hope that pupils will understand and after that carry out the relevant work tasks that have been explained. However, we pay little attention to the fact that we have been explaining fairly complex matters to the pupils, which means that they are immediately called upon to understand and define a whole range of operations. To understand them in general is not difficult but when things are left to the pupils then the logical chain of operations is interrupted, they start to feel bewildered, asking ques-

tions to reassure themselves, then the teacher explains again, becomes irritated and worked up and the downward spiral has begun. Let us imagine that I need to explain ten operations for a pupil to carry out the following task: "Go out of the room, turn right, stop, have a drink of water, go into another room, come back", etc. All those instructions are simple enough in themselves. I ask: "Have you understood", and the question is quite superfluous.

There are no problems involved. Then the pupil is called upon to carry out the instructions he has understood. He sets off, turns right out of the door and forgets what he is to do next. What should the teacher have done in this situation? He needs apparently to break down his exposition into short simple operations, each of which can be not only understood but also carried out with no difficulty. If an exposition is broken down in this way then it will not last long enough to tire either teacher or pupil. After each piece of the exposition it is important that there follow the appropriate action or operation, before the group then moves on to the next part, etc.

In this way theory alternates with practice, it is quickly tested out in practice and the pupil soon learns to make the transition from an idea to its implementation: work organized on this basis is sure to go smoothly and the children's success and interest in their work are bound to increase. I recall a lesson I witnessed in a Munich school in 1914, a craft lesson. In the course of a twenty-five minute lesson a teacher explained to six-year olds what clocks consisted of and how they were put together. Everything had been prepared in advance: tables, chairs, paper, scissors, awls, hands, pencils. The teacher began his lesson by picking up the paper circle in front of him like that each pupil had on his desk and asking: "What are we going to make?" "Clocks." "What is this circle called?" "The clock-face." Then the teacher explained that they needed to find the centre and explained how. The pupils carried out his instructions. "Has everyone managed?" One boy replied that his clock was not yet complete, so the class waited briefly while he was put back on course. The teacher then went on: "Now I shall explain how to make the hole in the centre. Watch and now make yours." The pupils made the holes in their clock-faces, inserted the hands, marked off the clock-face with hour and

minute divisions and put the hands in the position of those on the classroom clock. In the same way this teacher had set about explaining each operation, taking it on its own and introducing it with a short explanation. The exercise went well: in the course of a mere half hour all the operations had been successfully completed, although the task was fairly complicated consisting of a whole series of operations, and by no means a short one. As I watched the German pupils, to my Russian eyes it seemed that they were behaving in a strange way: they seemed over-excited and anxious to rush things. How did the teacher conduct himself in the circumstances? He was speaking quietly, almost whispering, holding the children in check all the time while they were straining at the leash: yet within half an hour the children had become totally absorbed in their work, because everything had been prepared and rationalized down to the last detail in advance. And yet, the technique was hardly sophisticated. When we talk about children's interests we often comment: "He likes this or that subject, that teacher makes the work interesting." Yet the child's interest can be aroused not merely by the content of the work he is doing but by his actual progress in it. From this point of view every subject can be interesting for a pupil. This is why it is important to move on from talk to action as quickly as possible, not to spin out our explanations, to break down complex tasks into a number of simple steps each of which only requires a short exposition. Conducting lessons in this way helps to train a pupil in good work habits, to stimulate his interest and to make lessons lively and absorbing.

And now to the matter of questions and answers. When we ask questions we hardly notice that questions always unnerve pupils: they are often either overwhelmed or do not know how they should give their answer, and frequently they are thrown off balance by the actual tone in which the question is asked. More often than not questions are asked in such a way that children are obliged to do no more than guess at the answer. Our questions are like riddles and the children are placed in the role of riddle-crackers. They rack their brains wondering, "What should I say? How can I pick the right answer?" In the course of a whole year a pupil might provide all sorts of answers to various questions without thinking about the actual

content of his replies, but rather by selecting the form of reply which appeared to him most appropriate for a given teacher. Therefore it is vital that the teacher should know how to devise meaningful questions. Within the American system I came across detailed books on such topics as: "How not to ask question", "How to elicit good answers", etc. Questions that already contain their own answers should be avoided and likewise questions that elicit no more than a Yes/No answer, because then the pupil is not required to think enough, and after all questions should be designed to make him think a little. Is there room for improvement here, too, in our schools? A good deal. All too often I ask a question and then feel that it is quite inappropriate. My pupils feel bewildered. Then I begin to try and make amends. I turn to one or other individual pupil and attempt to win him round: "But you know the answer, just think a bit. It's simple." In other words I start putting my own mistake right. What is the overall physiological impact? Through the original form of my question I have produced an inhibited state in my pupil, but then have sought to remove that inhibition by undoing my mistakes, until I obtain the answer I have been looking for.

It is important to pay close attention to the matter of questions and answers, and the theory elucidating inhibitory processes in the classroom can be most useful to this end.

A similar approach as that discussed in relation to exposition is required, in my view, when it comes to the various tasks and exercises which we set our pupils. Usually they are too complex and not broken down enough into their component parts, so that each can be executed with relative ease in a way that is well within the grasp of the pupil concerned.

Then comes the question of assessment. Here I would stress that the teacher needs to develop the pupils' capacity to work and take into account the whole process that this capacity involves, i.e. take into account all the problems and queries which the children may experience in the course of the work itself and the actual conditions in which the children are working.

Although in the good old days I used to make a habit of writing my compositions at night after a day's work,

when I ought to have been resting, thanks to my excitement in my work I could produce good pieces and my teachers were satisfied with my work, this did not, however, mean that I learned how to work properly. If the teacher had known in what conditions my compositions had been written, he would probably have been far from happy about it. However, he did not concern himself with such details. When a young person gains a place at university, we do not ask whether he has learned proper work habits and that factor is not regarded as important. We assess his knowledge in its formal aspect and we do not take into account whether or not he has acquired proper work habits. In my view the pupil who knows how to set about his work sensibly, albeit slowly, even when engaged in small tasks, is to be valued far more highly than the pupil who is able to come up immediately with all the right answers to all manner of questions, quickly grasp the essential gist of new material and memorize formulations accurately.

Now I should like to refer again to the question of maintaining discipline which is an operation of crucial importance to work in the classroom. I should like to refer to a common disciplinary technique which is linked to one of our occupational diseases—"Teacher's Throat". A teacher comes up to me and begins to talk quietly. "What's the matter?" and the reply is: "Today I had to do an awful lot of talking in class." This explanation will be followed by coughs, wheezes and an anxious clutch at the throat. What is it that teachers shout more than anything else? "Quiet!" If a teacher has shouted the word "Quiet!" it means that he was in agitated state as he shouted and was of necessity working up his pupils into a similar state, which makes of the word something of a paradox. If pupils hold themselves in check (while feeling worked up inside) then it will only be for a short time. Noise will break out again, and "Quiet!" again, and the situation is all too familiar.

We tend to hurl our disciplinary measures like so many explosives at the class and we must always be prepared to find our lessons in ruins after that. In order to rationalize this aspect of our lessons we need to analyze as thoroughly as possible which factors contribute to good discipline in the classroom, and which serve to excite and agitate pu-

pils, etc. It is worth pointing out that the pupils themselves do not derive much pleasure from this tense, excited atmosphere. They shout, but they do so because they are becoming more and more worked up and if they stop shouting it is because they have got worked up to the point where they cannot shout any more. If instead of the term *disciplining*, we refer to the *restoration of equilibrium* we will come nearer to the heart of the matter. An undisciplined class is a class in which equilibrium has been lost. What causes this to happen? On the one hand life itself is not in a state of calm equilibrium, especially now when the conditions that prevail are not of a kind to foster equilibrium. This situation of course affects the children in our schools as well. On the other hand the teachers are feeling uncertain and far from calm. The situation speaks for itself.

We need to consider how best to establish a workmanlike atmosphere, to analyze those periods in lessons, during which children are absorbed in their work, and then the question of discipline will appear less crucial and we shall be able to concentrate on individual cases of unsuitable behaviour which need to be examined separately each one for itself. After all there are teachers in whose classes our undisciplined pupils work well. Those are bound to be calm teachers, masters of their craft, who are able to ensure that the children are interested to make headway in what they are doing. It is important to study the work of these teachers.

Now, the last point to which I shall draw your attention in the course of this report which was designed to outline the issues before us. There is no doubt about the fact that the methods and art of teaching need to be studied carefully. We must appreciate that the work of the teacher, work going on in groups of children and that carried out by the child as an individual need to be studied and that such a study is a vital task. In order to collect and systematize findings in such research we need to mould specialists in the field who would be well suited to this task and to turn our thoughts first and foremost to the school inspectorate. It is vital that inspectors should take on the role of instructor and advisor in addition to their present one, but this involves the creation of a whole new theory. An immediate objective should be the set-

ting up of courses in the rationalization of the teaching process and the training of specialists in this line of work. Where should this work be initiated? We should start with our experimental schools and carry out a number of experiments all aimed at defining and rationalizing teaching methods. For a start we could concentrate on rationalizing time allocation and establish whether time is used effectively in the course of various classroom operations. For example, if in the course of a lesson in a group of thirty children the teacher puts a question to each individual pupil, this would take a total of thirty minutes which would have meant that the last pupil was not working, but just waiting all that time. Many such examples would be observed and these would require analysis, on which a new system for the structuring of lesson-time might be based.

These questions need to be taken up thoroughly. Instruction in class management and the training of specialists in this field are of the most crucial and immediate importance. Once this problem is solved we would come closely to the teacher himself and provide him with the utmost possible assistance in his difficult work. He is hoping for such assistance from us, the men and women in charge of central and local educational authorities, and it is our duty to provide it.

SOVIET TEACHING AND TEACHING AIDS

At the present time large numbers of teachers are acutely aware that it is highly important, now in particular, that they should master the skills of their craft. While understanding what is required in schools in general each teacher also sets himself the task of examining in detail how he ought to work.

When I meet individual teachers in the schools or talk with groups of teachers I am always hearing them mention what they refer to as the "weak spots" in our school system. This shows that day-to-day work in our schools is still no easy task and therefore every attempt to make this work easier and to help teachers and pupils to understand their objectives more easily is welcomed with the greatest enthusiasm. Indeed, if we imagine to ourselves a teacher who is anxious to prepare for his lessons conscientiously and who is anxious to obtain all the materials he requires for his work with his pupils, then there is no denying that in the path of such a serious and conscientious school teacher there will be an enormous number of obstacles to be overcome and that it will require a certain amount of time for him to do so. It is not for nothing that the word "overworked" is often to be encountered on the pages of our teachers' periodicals.

We cannot come empty-handed to our children, we cannot come to the classroom armed with nothing but words and merely compel children to learn by heart the material to be found in textbooks, nor should we make children sit quietly for long periods, motionless at their desks. The teacher is aware of all those "Don'ts" but it requires of a teacher that he be well armed with a wide variety of equipment and materials in order to transform his class

into an animated, purposeful workshop. The first question that arises when we consider this goal is what are the materials that children should be working with, materials which are assembled with such difficulty by the teachers of today, who have to devote so much time to that task?

There is no doubt that teachers in the field make numerous attempts, often very painstaking ones, to gather together the materials essential for their pupils' work, yet these interesting attempts are not assessed by anyone, or checked through, they are never systematized and so in the end teachers find themselves obliged to use materials not properly suited to their purposes, merely those which happen to be available. It goes without saying that no one who takes a serious interest in his work could be satisfied with such a state of affairs. After all we devote an enormous amount of effort to compiling curricula, to editing and amending them so that they might fit the work of both teacher and pupil. However, we shall only be in a position to test out in practice the effectiveness of these curricula when we equip the schools with all those materials which are necessary for their work, or when we are able to help teachers so that without undue effort they will be in a position to collect the materials that should be fairly easily accessible.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that when we consider our school system we extend our concept of the school significantly. It is common knowledge that the purely academic school is a thing of the past, whereas the school rooted in the day-to-day life of society is what we are moving towards. This new approach is bound to affect the nature of the materials that schools will in the future be called upon to use. The materials of the old system, i.e. textbooks designed to foster children's academic work skills can of course no longer fulfil all our requirements, and we shall have to take a much broader view of the school's goals and consequently of the materials that children will be using in our schools. The didactic approach used in Soviet schools will of necessity differ widely from that used in the past in its vitality and breadth of vision. The art of teaching in Soviet schools is inextricably linked with the tasks of socialist education in the broad sense and it will therefore be a new art demanding animated individuals, animated skilled teachers. If teaching mate-

rials are carefully selected -then a wide variety of skills can of course be developed- academic, organizational, social.

Broadly speaking we might well regard everything with which a child comes into contact or experiments, everything which he masters or lends form to, as potential teaching material. If we make a systematic selection of diverse materials, objects, tools which children are to encounter, we should be able to develop some sort of system of skills relevant to the goals which we as teachers set ourselves and the pupils. Every single object which finds its way into the hands of a child requires of him that he adapt his actions or behaviour in some degree; every tool which a child uses helps him acquire the relevant working movements; every material to which a child with his own hands is able to lend some kind of form, gives him a certain range of sensations which in their turn will arouse in him certain reactions. In other words, and to use more scientific terms, any specific teaching material in the framework of a deliberately devised system constitutes for the child part of a system of irritants that produce in him corresponding reactions.

The art of selecting materials for pupils to work with is of tremendous importance for the teacher's craft and it is quite understandable that at the present time we should be observing wide interest in the art of teaching, although this needs to be an art which meets the needs of our new, socially aware Soviet schools where work and links with life outside school are given considerable emphasis.

What is the situation we actually find in practice? It would appear that as far as pre-school education is concerned the current situation is a healthy one. Thanks to the joint efforts of educators and teachers a whole range of materials suitable for use in kindergartens has been devised and provided, including building materials, drawing equipment, special furniture and special diet sheets. Although some vitally important things have not been properly supplied such as paper, cardboard, cloth, toys, and far too little attention has as yet been paid to the question of providing materials for training small children in work skills, nevertheless it can be said that provision of materials for this age-range is nearing completion. At any rate

basic ideas for the kind of teaching materials that are required in kindergartens in the Soviet context have been formulated. Since small children receive far more immediate care than older children from mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and friends it is therefore the prime task of the kindergartens to enhance and rationalize the life of pre-school children within the environment in which they live and are brought up. This in its turn means that teaching materials used in kindergartens need to be thought through so that they can become an integral part of the child's immediate environment whether it be family, housing community or factory club.

The debate on this issue is playing a prominent part in propaganda concerned with pre-school education, but it would mean using designs of sufficient simplicity and materials sufficiently cheap for them to be within the reach of workers' and peasants' families where they would constitute essential supplements to everyday life. In other words it would be necessary to take under the immediate control a well-known, albeit insignificant sphere of life in the child's environment, initially at least, a sphere of that life with which small children are in contact. Viewed in this light it becomes clear that the elaboration of teaching material and equipment of this broadly accessible nature is an important social objective.

To me a far more complex task is the provision of teaching manuals and materials for first-stage schools¹ which will be the focus of our attention for many years since we are anxious to move on to setting up a system of universal elementary education.

First-stage schools constitute precisely that part of our education system which from the point of view of curriculum represents our major achievement so far. If we consider Soviet schools in which work skills play an important part, then we should speak first and foremost of first-stage schools since it is in these that the vast mass of the younger generation is now being educated. It is these schools which for a good time to come will be almost the only source of properly organized Soviet education. As for the teaching materials available in first-stage schools it has to be said that these are in very short supply and what there is can only be adapted to the requirements intrinsic to our new social and educational goals after a

great deal of hard work. We have elaborated a wide-ranging curriculum for our schools but the materials, albeit very meagre ones, which we have for the first-stage schools are materials relating to specific academic subjects such as languages, mathematics, and to a much smaller extent natural sciences. If articles of school equipment are issued, or materials devised then it is often materials that relate to specific established subjects, for instance we are sent tables that are often no more than copies of old models. Indeed for all intents and purposes Soviet schools are continuing the work of the old-style schools and there has as yet been no selection of teaching materials for integrated teaching; as far as I know, nothing has yet been attempted in this direction. This means that the most important task in the selection of teaching materials for first-stage schools at the moment is to find materials suitable for work on the themes and topics which Soviet schools are setting out to introduce and establish. If materials were selected with this end in view they would be enormously useful to the teachers of today in their extremely demanding work.

Furthermore we should do well to bear in mind the basic requirements which teaching materials should meet. We all make constant reference to independence, to independent work carried out by pupils, and therefore teaching materials should be of a kind to encourage that independence and help teachers to organize work tasks that can be carried out independently. This means in its turn that such material needs to be accessible to pupils in adequate supply, in other words that very large quantities are required. It goes without saying that ready-made materials being produced now will not be available on a satisfactory scale and that at the present time far less attention will be paid to visual aids at the expense of other teaching aids. Incidentally, the habit we have acquired of referring to teachers' materials as visual aids is to be regretted since visual aids often lead us to employ purely illustrative techniques, a point worth remembering.

Of course when we are selecting a range of materials relating to specific topics we should at the same time not reject systematic lessons in languages, mathematics, etc., but rather insist that the practice of devising and circulating specific teaching aids at random should give way

to proper systematic use of a whole range of teaching aids.

If we take a look at the teaching materials which are available for our first-stage schools we have to admit that very little work has been done to date. While a certain amount of such materials is to be found for languages or mathematics teaching, when it comes to natural sciences or manual skills we have only just begun. Moreover, lessons in PE, drawing, art and games still have to be structured properly, and all these activities have to be taken into account while we discuss the provision of first-stage schools with proper teaching materials.

What was pointed out in relation to kindergartens also applies in the case of first-stage schools. We cannot of course confine ourselves to what children do and how they live in our schools. We need to organize our teaching in such a way as to ensure that it exert a considerable influence on the children's life and work outside school as well. Thus if teaching aids are distributed over a wide range of locations within the children's environment—whether urban or rural—this can prove most useful; the organization of children's centres in village houses, urban flats and housing communities is a most important feature of our work. In view of this, the question of teaching aids and materials is a very far-ranging one.

Particular attention needs to be paid to our efforts to ensure that teaching aids provided for first-stage schools should not appear as ready-made equipment for the pursuit of those goals which we set ourselves in the context of the lessons at those schools. We must leave considerable time and effort for independent work on the part of the pupils and the teaching materials we are going to make and provide must really serve to stimulate such independent work. Viewed from this angle elaboration of classroom materials by teachers stands out in its full significance. I think that to achieve this end is no easy task, but we have before us impressive examples of achievements in this field which at the present time are both widely known and available. I have in mind radio sets. In our country in addition to ready-made receivers we also have on sale all the components required to assemble any kind of wireless apparatus, even the most complex. We know full well that there are large numbers of children who have already learnt to assemble such apparatus and,

after observing how successfully young amateurs are able to assemble such apparatus, it becomes clear that independent production of the most complex components and independent assembly of these can absorb children no less, and probably more, than actually listening to a ready-made set.

I think that it is in this specific direction that we should seek to move forward, because it is only in this way that we shall be able to achieve a significant cut in costs as we build up stocks of teaching materials, for it is precisely the assembly costs that constitute the largest share in the cost of manufactured articles.

Let us take scales by way of an example: it goes without saying that scales are important for school work. Schools throughout the country only need to be provided with the beams, while the pans and the base could easily and usefully be made by the pupils themselves from their own materials which would reduce the cost of the scales three or four times over. Another essential piece of equipment the optimal provision of which demands a good deal of careful deliberation is a simple clock. The clocks that can be bought at local markets and which in view of their relative cheapness might be used for school purposes cannot stand being taken apart and put together again. This means that they would not provide teaching material but just part of the classroom environment of little practical use for teaching purposes. In Switzerland on the other hand I have seen on sale the components for simple clocks of this type, worked by weights, pre-packed complete with instructions. While assembling such a clock any school-child would be able to learn as much about the basic laws of mechanics, as he can about the laws of electricity when assembling a simple wireless.

In second-stage schools no changes in the old stocks of teaching materials have yet been made. All our physics, and chemistry and biology laboratories, all the visual aids, tables and classroom exhibits, far from being relevant for the methods we are now trying to introduce in Soviet schools, often undermine the latter. It would appear that all the creative imagination of those who devised that apparatus and equipment was aimed at making the latter as static as possible and thus conceal from the attention of the interested pupil their most absorbing fea-

ture: he is only able to study the equipment as it operates while he is robbed of any opportunity to discover how it is put together.

If we turn our attention to the purpose underlying teaching materials provided for second-stage schools then the constructivist ideal comes into its own and I am sure that the society *Technology for the Masses*² achieves a great deal more for the enlightenment of the younger generation than any of our methodological commissions. This simple slogan could, if followed through, be immensely rich in potential and it should constitute the underlying principle for the provision of teaching materials for second-stage school pupils: the constructivist principle should be our lodestar.

Then again there arises the question as to how we can help the hosts of young people, eager to study and investigate the world they live in, to satisfy their needs, pursue their interests, find scope for their creative imagination and inventiveness with the kind of equipment and materials which ought to be accessible to all anxious to avail themselves of them. Instead of providing them with ready-made static equipment and apparatus we should see it as natural and proper to provide them with components out of which they might be able to construct objects and installations serving to illustrate the laws they are studying and coming to understand.

I would suggest that everything written so far here in relation to second-stage schools can apply just as well to factory workshop-schools and schools for young peasants. In some respects it is also relevant to the work which is now attracting more and more attention throughout society, namely work with children carried on *outside* the schools. The whole value of this latter type of work lies in its flexibility, in its potential for fulfilling all kinds of our children's needs and interests. At the same time however we should be wrong to assume that this work does not involve any didactic element. However freely the various forms of contact between youth leaders and children might develop in the context of these out-of-school activities, nevertheless those in charge need to organize their work in accordance with some kind of system: they need to make sure they are using the most suitable, carefully selected material which will enable the children to carry

on with their work sessions, sports, excursions, hikes, play and recreational activities as effectively and fruitfully as possible. If efforts directed towards this end are properly thought through, this will be reflected in the equipment, tools and materials that children are provided with.

What the need to provide for the broad masses of the nation's children really involves is organizing their social routine: of this there can be little doubt.

This means that there are still tremendous fields to explore that have never been the object of systematic work but would prove of great interest to large numbers of children. Here we need to adopt the same approach that is being used in other spheres of social activity. When we speak of rationalization and of saving time or productivity, we are in effect working towards teaching materials that will be useful in the context of mass education. Just as in the sphere of industry we speak of cutting down costs, maintaining standards, raising productivity and establishing organized market outlets, so too in the sphere of teaching materials—interpreted in the broadest sense—we need to set ourselves the same targets.

... Once again I should like to stress the importance of providing for schools not just isolated unconnected articles, but an interconnected range of articles linked by a common goal and theme. This would make it possible to a large degree to consolidate in our schools those teaching methods which correspond to the present requirements of our new Soviet schools that are closely linked with the world of work.

I would suggest that one of the first tasks is to collect the material which is being used in our schools, not just the materials that have been purchased but also those made either by pupils or teachers themselves. We need to collect together all the things that reflect the material provision available at present for ordinary schools throughout the country. An exhibition of those materials needs to be organized in Moscow for all to see and it would also prove most useful from an administrative point of view for the Moscow education department as well. An exhibition of that sort should be arranged in such a way as would correspond appropriately to the system of teaching used in our schools: materials used in first-stage schools should be arranged according to themes or subject matter

and those for second-stage schools according to learning tasks. Then as teachers analyze the materials relating to each theme or task they can appreciate for themselves quite clearly which materials are unnecessary or irrelevant and what changes should be made in the materials. After that work has been carried out it will be necessary for the specimens of teaching materials to be assessed by technical experts in order to make them, where possible, simpler and cheaper, after which the materials can be adopted as articles for mass production and distribution nation-wide.

Yet even if we had properly selected materials for the various aspects of our work I should still regard it as necessary to raise a further question, that of the distribution of such materials and detailed study of these by teachers across the country.

...What we need to advocate at the present time is the widespread instruction of teachers in how to use the new materials in the classroom. Mass-scale training of teachers of the kind outlined is necessary so that they might learn to operate the equipment that will be required in the classroom, since in the course of such work they will reach a clear understanding of the methods which ought to be used in their classroom contact with pupils. To this end I would suggest that the Central Pedagogical Museum, otherwise known as the Museum of Visual Aids, or as it might well be renamed, the Central Museum and Research Laboratory for Teaching Materials, should set up a training centre where teaching materials be studied as thoroughly as possible, so that all available materials and research connected with them be made known to teachers all over the country.

...Properly organized work relating to teaching materials, initially of the experimental variety in research laboratories, then work from the design and technical angle will help us to make teaching materials cheap and accessible and thus an invaluable asset. In short we would have made another enormous step forward on the path towards the establishment of Soviet socialist schools.

THE WORK OF THE FIRST EXPERIMENTAL CENTRE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The organization of the centre affiliated to the People's Commissariat for Education. In May 1919 a *Resolution Concerning the First Experimental Centre for Education Research* was ratified by a board of the People's Commissariat for Education. The resolution had initially been drafted by the main nucleus of staff working in the Society for Children's Work and Recreation.

Initially the staff at the centre were set most wide-ranging tasks. They were formulated in the Resolution as follows: "The First Experimental Centre for Education Research will aim to further cultural progress in the republic by organizing and conducting all manner of experiments and research projects in all spheres of cultural activity" (and this included technological advance—*Auth.*).

Work at the centre was first organized to pursue these wide-ranging objectives, however the introduction of the New Economic Policy¹ effected the work at the centre. Part of its work--the economic research into ways of developing agriculture and technology in rural areas (the setting up of experimental farms, brickworks, etc.)--was removed from the centre's jurisdiction and made over to the agricultural cooperatives.

This meant the work at the centre had to be concentrated on strictly educational matters. From research into the structuring of children's lives within a small self-contained collective set up by the Society for Children's Work and Recreation the staff at the First Experimental Centre now turned their attention to the question as to how best to organize a network of establishments designed to carry out coordinated work on public education and social upbringing in both urban and rural conditions. After

the campaign against the detrimental influences to which children were subjected through "street" life that had been carried out in the context of the Settlement scheme, the First Experimental Centre went one stage further, to the idea of working *together* with the local population in the common cause of children's socialist education, making use in their new drive of the experience gleaned earlier by the Society for Children's Work and Recreation.

The elements which together go to make up the work carried out by the centre's various departments are as follows: teaching children of various age-groups at first hand and paying particular attention to their social education, i.e. *class-room practice*; constant provision of refresher *courses* enabling the teacher during his career to examine and test out experience already gained, and to supplement his knowledge with new elements that class-room experience has shown to be lacking or that stem from new advances in science and technology, etc.: work to assess and analyze classroom experience, to prepare materials for scientific analysis, study of the environment, and finally study of children's psychological and physiological responses as manifested in the classroom and outside--*research*; and finally *propaganda*--organizational work to ensure that the research findings at the centre be made known and available on a wide scale, and that effective liaison be maintained between the centre on the one hand and teachers and the public in all parts of the country on the other.

In what way does the organization of this Experimental Centre contribute to the elaboration of the fundamental issues in education?

The centre has at its disposal a relatively large site on which are now being set up a number of establishments catering for both adults and children: kindergartens, schools, recreation centres, reading-rooms, premises for musical and theatrical activities and in conjunction with all these establishments for practical teaching, a training school for adults, i.e. a college of education.

At the present time there already exist two similar education complexes: a rural centre in the Kaluga Province and an urban one in Moscow.

In these conditions which approximate to a normal tea-

ching context and which provide scope for establishing those links and ties which exist between the economics, life-style and natural conditions that constitute the social environment on the one hand, and the educational work and cultural activities going on within that environment on the other, there are ample opportunities for formulating and carrying out cultural tasks and projects of major importance. Insofar as we are now confronted in both town and country by major technical advance, industrialization and the reorganization of the economy in accordance with new socialist principles, opportunities abound for devising and testing out in practice plans providing for highly productive work in our country's educational establishments, work that is aimed at furthering the cause of socialist construction.

We then need to ask what advantages can be gained from the mass-scale propagation of new teaching goals and methods? A large amount of practical and theoretical material is being put together as a result of the work being carried out at the Experimental Centre. This material is designed to enhance teaching work throughout our schools, but for this purpose it needs to be processed in some degree and this processing in the final outcome has to be so simple and so precise that it might even be used effectively by the average teacher. The centre, which of course has a staff of more than average ability and resources which enable it to develop its work on a large scale, is in a position, after identifying vital problems and shortages, to put them right for all intents and purposes: it is able to keep somewhat ahead of the general level of progress in our schools. Even if we were to imagine that the calibre of the staff at the centre was nothing out of the ordinary, nevertheless the centre's organizational framework, that allows it to afford teachers in the field major assistance, would enable its staff, even were they run-of-the-mill, to resolve more complex tasks than those which any ordinary school might tackle.

What we are concerned with at the moment, strictly speaking, is the normal every-day situation obtaining in our kindergartens and schools, i.e. the level of their equipment and supplies, the buildings in which their work is being conducted. All these requirements will seem perfectly natural if later on the resources made available for

education come to meet the demands put forward by the worker and peasant masses. However there is still a significant gap between "normal" conditions of the type outlined and the situation found in our schools at present. This makes it particularly important to devote especial attention to the processing of materials collected at the Experimental Centre. It cannot be stressed too often that this processing should be fairly simple and elementary, but at the same time adequately reflect the main educational path which our schools should be following. If these conditions are met then these materials can make an important contribution towards the improvement of our schools throughout the country. At the present time efforts in this important direction are already being made. All the materials that researchers at the centre have been working on in its various establishments over the last few years have been adapted so that they might be used for instruction on a mass-scale, and at the present time it could well be made available as a basic plan for wide-scale adoption in schools with an integrated work programme. This plan proposes that educational establishments throughout the country should undertake work to examine methods for setting work tasks, using the carefully processed materials put together at the research centre.

Without giving a detailed assessment of the results achieved by the centre it can be said that work of an educational organization like this one, engaged in studying education as a whole, can, to a large extent, contribute to an important undertaking, namely the provision of special instruction for teachers in the field right across the country.

I would submit that at the moment despite the numerous shortcomings in its complex and difficult work, despite the great diversity of the detailed tasks that the staff at the centre are taking on, nevertheless there are ample grounds for stating at this time that there are good prospects for the present objectives to be attained and that in this way the practical importance of the establishment will be seen to have been adequately borne out.

Now I should like to turn to those questions which are being raised in the course of the Experimental Centre's practical work.

First there is a problem of a general nature—how best to study the teaching process as a whole and also how best to establish the relationship which exists between the teaching process being conducted among the masses of the working population and that being organized in the schools. All the observations made by staff from the research centre during the whole period of their class-room practice have served to convince me that the resolution of this problem is in fact the crucial task now facing our teachers.

... We have now collected a wealth of material relating to the way of life typical for our children in both villages and towns, yet not enough work has been carried out to date to enable us to carry out the task of such central importance to our education system. It is so far in the kindergartens that the most detailed theoretical and practical work has been carried out.

The kindergarten in the towns constitutes one of the most interesting educational establishments in our country; overall we have good reason to believe that work in this sphere has reached a stage where it now requires considerable corroboration and reinforcement in the form of scientific research. Indeed the time has come for a scientific establishment to be set up precisely for this purpose.

In elementary and secondary schools in both town and country the time has now come when we need to elaborate a structuring of lessons that would serve dramatically to raise the rate and tempo of work achieved by our pupils. We need to examine with reference to many examples the work of teacher and pupils and from there proceed to restructure lessons so that each pupil might have the chance to work productively and independently, and each teacher might be helped through provision of the manuals and special training necessary to enable him to prove equal to this at first glance daunting task.

The second task to be undertaken in our schools is the introduction of training through work, the setting up of school workshops, so valuable in their social implications. While to date the research centre has been concerned with formulating an ever clearer and precise picture of the type of school our society needs and how it should be organized, now we need to progress to formulate the main component elements of the new Soviet school and first

and foremost to focus our attention on the methods to be used in this work and how it should be organized.

The third problem which is part and parcel of the previous two is one relating to both methods and general organization--namely the question of assessment. The research centre has taken upon itself the task of devising forms of assessment which might give pupils maximum help in their work and which might make it possible to identify the main inhibitory factors that at present are holding us back from achieving that aim, i.e. from teaching pupils how to work, the skill without which no knowledge can take firm root.

As for the college of education, the centre has resolved to reorganize it so that students might be able first of all to spend the maximum time available on first-hand practice in schools or kindergartens and thus be in a position to gather the material which they could then investigate and so enable themselves to progress as they learn from experience. On the other hand it is essential that an appropriate structuring of lessons in the college be devised as well.

Starting out from the fact that our students have very little preliminary training in methodology and that the teaching methods in college of education that are now widely practiced do not give students the chance to master that crucial side of the teacher's craft, the research centre has started elaborating ways in which lessons might be organized when actual lessons are used as material for methodological analysis.

These are the main avenues of research now being followed by the staff at the Experimental Research Centre.

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... Our Soviet Republic is now propagating the idea of building socialism and of course such a course inevitably raises the question of what socialist education should involve. The real situation in our schools reveals a dearth of ideas and initiative when it comes to methodology, yet a proper understanding of correctly selected materials relating to methods is crucial and this task is directly linked with that of teaching materials. The third question--

that of supplementary training for teachers in the field is the most urgent of all and it is our failure to provide such training that accounts for major setbacks in our organization of education facilities today. It is from this angle that we need to view our work and its usefulness.

Let us start with the question of the socialist upbringing we seek to provide for our children. What can we do to supply this? We can only raise issues and elaborate possible plans for action. We can try and find our bearings within the conditions of our immediate surroundings, through our study of the economy and social habits pertaining to our environment: we can study and assess the kind of teaching that is going on within our immediate environment. It is within these very conditions, of which we have a clear understanding that we need to think out how socialist education might be provided. It will at first be provided within a petty-bourgeois environment, and for that reason we need to make a careful study of that particular environment. It might seem that our knowledge of this environment is sufficient since we ourselves are part of it, thanks to the fact that teachers are in a large degree involved in social enlightenment. However this fact is insufficient to enable us to consolidate our work on a correct basis, since we have so far failed to appreciate the essence of those far-reaching consequences that stem from the establishment of our peasant holdings as small economic units. We underestimate the harm that we are confronted by the obstacle of the "landowner-peasant"² in his capacity as educator of our pupils. This of course has endless consequences effecting our practical teaching and it is most important that we should appreciate the implications of various economic factors and their importance. To this end we assess peasant family budgets and the economic position of the urban population. Work in this direction has provided us with new materials that were not available before. Last year we started examining the budget not just of the peasants with average means, but those of the poor peasants as well.

From the materials collected so far a proportion we can already use and some materials are being regularly used in our class-room practice. Our economics section for instance has been called upon to examine whether certain conclusions already drawn might be used in relation to

mathematics or language teaching, i.e. to our curriculum development as a whole.

In addition it is very important that we should know the subsistence wage that the mass of peasants can aspire to, in order that we might be able to evaluate the economic situation in the rural areas at least in broad outline. We do not have this material yet and I consider this to be a major shortcoming which has resulted from the excessively slow pace of our work's progress. It is therefore imperative that this year the work be accelerated. After all a fairly large amount of material has been collected and processed in sufficient detail as to make it suitable not just for research purposes, but also for classroom practice. Now various collections of articles relating to this material have started to appear and I for one recently received such a collection of articles complete with properly classified and processed data.

The next stage in our work--study of social habits and the way of life in our immediate environment has only just formulated, and as yet we have not completed anything. In fact group of researchers who will be engaged in this work has not yet been formed. A whole number of proposals have been made which might provide a framework for this study but it has not yet been organized on a proper footing. This delay also merits reproach since the findings of such a study would place a powerful weapon in our hands for future campaigns. Our only study of the social habits and way of life in our immediate surroundings so far has been through our direct contact with pupils of a wide variety of age ranges.

Do we know for instance how many people in the country cannot read or write? What have we done to help eliminate illiteracy? Yet this is a proposal we put forward and there has even been a meeting held to discuss how such a campaign should be planned and coordinated, but this work has not in effect been thought through or organized. The minimal facts we have at our disposal show that there is a great deal of work still to be done and that it has to be reorganized as I shall point out again at the end of this report.

The same could also be said of investigation of urban conditions. The living conditions in the Moscow district of Maryina Roshcha were investigated and this included

a detailed study of a number of houses there. A good deal of material was collected, for instance on the work of the kindergarten there, which should be considered exemplary. In fact the whole range of studies that have been carried out in the Moscow kindergarten have been of painstaking thoroughness.

Admittedly there are 75 children in the Maryina Roshcha kindergarten and a staff of 9, but the workload demanded of them is enormous; to be precise they have registered all pre-school children from a large group of blocks of flats housing several thousands, involving the local people in their work to a large degree. Thanks to this work they now have an effective weapon in their hands when calling for more staff and resources and their work is proceeding on a very wide scale.

Now I should like to pass on to the question of socialist education, the formula for which is already familiar: socialist education in the true sense only begins when children start to play a real part in socialist construction. The same could also be said with regard to the education and forging of the adult citizen. With this principle in mind a strong organization has been set up which has already accomplished a major step forward in the work to involve children in socialist construction on a broad scale. The success so far achieved was particularly evident this summer. Considerable funds were collected and an exchange between town and village was initiated. It goes without saying that this work has to be taken further. Last year we came to the conclusion that the work should be carried on without interruption all the year round. In Moscow this kind of work in the secondary schools was interrupted in the summer, but in the schools at the centre (whether these schools at the centre are well or poorly organized is another matter) we managed to keep the work going through the summer and saw that as a result the enormous effort that has been put into that exchange had not slackened off anything like as much by the end of the year. It meant that far more children were drawn into the work and that very close liaison with the local authorities was maintained, both these facts representing major achievements.

It should then be pointed out that in the villages the work of the Komsomol and Young Pioneer organizations³

is only in its infancy, whereas these organizations are well-established in the towns. In the towns there are now firm links between these youth organizations and industry, and the former have attained a high degree of social commitment which is an important step forward.

It is therefore quite clear that only a little progress has been made both in our scientific research and practical teaching, and our whole undertaking needs to be reorganized radically, so that we might tackle the question of socialist education both in our research and teaching practice. So far it has emerged that the work is going slowly despite considerable effort and the results have been insignificant to date. This is because the task we are facing here—the introduction of socialist education into a petty-bourgeois environment and in still more backward rural conditions—is so enormous and far-reaching that nothing is going to be accomplished within the framework of our very ordinary organization.

The second part of our work was concerned with questions of curriculum and methods and teaching materials designed to facilitate and promote the instruction and education of the country's children. With regard to teaching materials we went by the principle that teaching materials are not just books, pens, paper, ink, etc., but the school environment and life itself which through diverse means help to shape children's education. This point of view is quite correct but in fact we do not really know how to set about things at all. What is more we here in the towns assert one thing and in the country quite different ideas are being voiced which accounts in large measure for the poor results achieved so far. What is the solution? It can be summed up in one word—collectivization. Collectivization of the countryside would do much to facilitate the work of educators in the villages: collective farms, children's artels, social labour—all this would make it far easier for us to move in this direction.

... Apart from the description of our work relating to methods there is another question which has to be discussed and resolved,—that of personnel and the retraining of experienced teachers in new methods. Our education network on the whole is staffed by highly qualified teachers; in the Moscow kindergarten for example there is a group of skilled and well-known methodologists who are able by

this time to concern themselves with, as it were, the icing on the cake. If we turn to the staff in other sections of the education network then we find men and women who are studying questions of method, but who are only now seeking and gaining experience in this sphere. Of course our colleagues with more years in teaching behind them have acquired experience while the relative newcomers are still floundering along in a rather amateurish fashion; most of us are to some extent still amateurs, not true craftsmen or masters of our trade, and it goes without saying that there must be any number of gaps or shortcomings in the methods we use.

I would call upon my colleagues now to urge them to direct all their efforts towards a campaign for a single administrative body to lead our work in education. We need to shed the habit of disregarding central leadership, plans and control. This is what all teachers in the field must press for.

... One should not start trying to convert people to socialism without providing them with any equipment with which to go about their work. We need to create working conditions in which our teachers today can become "educational ice-breakers", true trail-blazers; we need to become a major cultural force capable of drawing into socialist construction large numbers of the urban and peasant population. Without the masses, without their participation we will be as helpless as fishes floundering on the ice, however generous the resources made available to us. Our crucial objective now is to ensure that the peasant masses take part in this work to extend and improve educational facilities, because what we are working towards here is a radical transformation of human relations, of people's attitudes. This is the most noble cause that it has ever been man's lot to embrace.

So what we need to think about first of all is the kind of cadres in the teaching profession, about our own fitness for the profession; it would be unforgivable if we omitted to acknowledge that a good deal of strenuous work is required of us as we apply ourselves to our own political self-education. We all need to concern ourselves with this, for teachers must be in the vanguard when it comes to political education, and this work must be taken through to a satisfactory conclusion under the leadership of the Com-

munist Party and the working class. The working class has placed these tasks on our agenda and is helping to carry them out. It is up to all of us to rebuild our ranks, to remould our attitudes, to rekindle enthusiasm for new socialist forms in sensible active support for socialist policies, so that eventually there will be no divisions separating the teaching profession, the main source of enlightenment in the villages, and the party. Then our work will be part of the common cause and each one of us will feel that between the intelligentsia, the working class and the peasantry there is no gulf, but on the contrary they make up a united army

There is no denying that at the present time we live in a revolutionary era. The revolutionary plough is cutting exceptionally deep furrows, for the new edifice is to have firm foundations. This revolutionary age has dawned, we must recognize this, enter into the spirit of this new age and develop the skills to work in the specific way now called for.

. . . After our discussion of some of these basic issues let us now embark together on the new tasks before us, embrace the new tasks before us, embrace the new cause without reservations and take part in the awe-inspiring task before us, led forward by the working class and the Communist Party.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LESSONS

...The central issue in determining the quality of a lesson is the nature of the teacher: the quality of the lesson, its productivity depend undeniably on the quality of the teacher and this truth must be faced. When analyzing lessons in schools I and my colleagues ascertained that the way a teacher formulates his questions is of tremendous importance. One of the materials collected was the shorthand report of a lesson in which a teacher asked three questions on one and the same topic one after the other. He asks his first question and realizes that the pupils are not able to answer it properly. Then he presents it in a second form and finally a third, after which he eventually elicits from some of the pupils a more or less satisfactory answer. This sequence of events is one to be encountered frequently. Clarity and precision in what a teacher says to his class is of inestimable importance.

We need to prepare our lessons somewhat differently than has been the practice to date. Not only do we need to enter the class-room with a good grasp of the material to be studied and able to present its various components in clear logical sequence but we also need to work on our own teaching skills, decide how we ought best to speak and move, etc.

One of the most important criteria of a successful lesson is the degree of clarity in the children's understanding of the subject matter at the end. If we have made it possible for the pupils to understand us clearly this means they have been working well. Unfortunately many lessons leave much to be desired in this respect.

Back in the 1880s Dostoyevsky wrote in his *Writer's Diary*,¹ when considering the new paths schools were ex-

ploring, that the issue being debated was how to make lessons in school easier for children, whereas he thought it more to the point to confront them not with easier work but with a challenge they might be able to surmount. When we think of textbook exercises devised to be executed by pupils in school they do in fact represent difficulties which children can surmount. We deliberately confront them with such problems. What our goal should be now is not to free children from such problems altogether: if they never come up against problems or difficulties where will all our efforts to encourage them to work independently and to develop their thought processes lead? All that there would then be left for us to do is to spoon-feed pupils with the pre-digested fare, no more no less. That is not what lessons in our schools are designed to do. Every problem, every question represents a difficulty to be surmounted. Viewed from this angle difficulties should clearly not be removed from lessons, on the contrary we should be turning our energies to making the best possible use of the difficulties or problems with which we confront the children in our schools.

Be that as it may, what we must concentrate our attention on is proper structuring of our lessons. In each lesson there is a section devoted to exposition, in which the teacher explains something, gives the pupils various instructions, sets them a task. Then there follows the part of the lesson when the pupils are carrying out the teacher's instructions. This part of the lesson should proceed with the teacher's immediate control, he should be watching each step the pupils take or checking each one once it has been executed. The final "product" of a lesson represents the sum of the exposition, execution and control.

A fundamental requirement of a good lesson is that the children have a clear mental picture and understanding of the task they are sooner or later asked to execute. Children need to be motivated to engage in mental activity and it is from this springboard of stimulation to engage in mental activity that they then proceed to carry out one or the other class-room task. This is why it is vitally important that a teacher should have a clear grasp of certain techniques which can be of considerable help to him in helping pupils towards just such an understanding.

If we are considering mental activity which is directed

towards cognition of the real world then theory of knowledge can be most relevant to a correct understanding of the teaching process. Thirty years ago scholars such as Mach maintained that sensations exist but nothing else does. For us the point at issue is that outside ourselves there also exist things--of this there can be no doubt and we know that we shall depart, die but that they will continue to exist. Our ideas and concepts are reflections of these things or objects, or images of them. Yet we are up against the problem as to whether we perceive them correctly or not, as they really are? Fierce controversy has raged on this subject and it has absorbed great minds over the centuries. It is practical experience which will confirm or refute the correctness of the pictures of the real world in man's mind in the long run.

It is perfectly clear that these matters need to be mentioned because we are concerned here not just with the straightforward process of teaching, but with a world outlook of paramount importance for us at this time--the materialist world outlook.

There exist different levels of knowledge and understanding: an understanding of an object or phenomenon is something we acquire gradually. These levels or stages can be grouped into three main types as is constantly borne out in class-room contact with children. Children come to understand things as they observe them at first hand, they appreciate them at their "face value" and nothing more.

The second level is when, after gaining a certain degree of experience, children come to distinguish between various groups of objects which have features in common and can be distinguished or set apart from others.

Lastly there is the final stage when common features are summarized and brought together and some sort of general law is formulated. By way of an illustration for this I should like to cite the following passage from Engels' *Dialectics of Nature*: "That friction produces heat was already known practically to prehistoric man, who discovered the making of fire by friction perhaps more than 100,000 years ago, and who still earlier warmed cold parts of his body by rubbing them. But from that to the discovery that friction is in general a source of heat who knows how many thousands of years elapsed? Enough that

the time came when the human brain was sufficiently developed to be able to formulate the judgement: *friction is a source of heat*, a judgement of inference and indeed a positive one.”*

Further thousands of years elapsed between the establishment of that principle and the moment when in 1842 Mayer, Colding and Joule investigated that particular process by comparing it with other processes of a similar type which had been discovered by then, in other words with other sets of conditions as close as possible to the set they started out with, and formulated the principle that *every mechanical movement can, through friction, be transformed into heat*. No end of time and an enormous wealth of empirical knowledge was required for man to advance in his understanding of a phenomenon, from the positive discovery quoted above to this universal principle of reflection.

Yet after that things progressed quickly: a mere three years later Mayer could raise the principle of reflection to the level at which it now operates and is generally accepted: *every form of motion can be and in conditions specific to each case is bound to be transformed directly or indirectly into another form of motion*. That principle represents a concept judgement and moreover an apodictic one—the highest form of judgement.

Here we are dealing with the general principle or law. The attainment of the latter was of tremendous practical importance. What infinite scope for human thought is opened up, if we are convinced that every form of motion can be transformed into any other. This principle is also of tremendous importance for our economic development. The narrower the theoretical proposition, the smaller the ground it covers, the smaller its practical significance. If there are no theoretical propositions to go with it then a proposition's practical significance is negligible.

We teachers are working with children and they in their understanding of things and phenomena that they work with pass through the various stages of cognition not all at once, but gradually, as they come to master them. Ini-

* Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 224.

tially a child goes up to a person as if he represents nothing more than just another person, or to an animal as just another animal, etc. Then after complex mental activity the child starts to pick out special features and eventually proceeds to the generalized principle. The essential criterion of progress is that man can now bring these stages nearer together. Yet all too often we tend to approach children with generalized formulae. This is what makes it hard for children to understand us and work productively. This is why the question of the stages of cognition is very important.

Now I should like to move on to the way in which children accumulate knowledge and skills. Does this mean that while today a child has 100 skills and items of knowledge at his command, tomorrow that figure will have risen to 121? We must reject any such mechanical approach to this question, although regrettably it is a widespread one. It is quite alien to the process of understanding. When a child acquires knowledge he begins to reappraise one or other point of view. A child undergoes a qualitative change while we are inclined to opine that he remains the same as he was before. We often underestimate children's growth and progress and as a result may often inhibit to a serious degree a child's development. This explains the frequency of children's lack of interest in their lessons. We have failed adequately to stimulate children to acquire knowledge.

Our task is not merely to enable a child to acquire knowledge of the things and phenomena around him but also to teach him to restructure, amend and enhance that environment, making it better than it was before. This second objective must accompany the first. When they carry out practical tasks children are participating in the grandiose work of socialist construction that is proceeding in our country. Everything is carried out in our country for an obvious reason: all our efforts are directed towards the enhancement of the people's way of life. We debate such questions as shock-work, socialist emulation campaigns: we need to probe more deeply to the heart of things and in that way develop a more advanced technology. Meanwhile the mass of the country's children need to be trained to follow this path. Yet with our present methods of teaching we are equipping children most

inadequately for this task. They are not being encouraged to gain a true picture of things around them.

Therefore, while bourgeois philosophers set out to explain the world, Marxist philosophy sets out not only to explain but also to remake it. This difference is highly significant with regard to the stimulation of children's thought processes. And could not such stimulation take place if teachers were trained to foster it?

In the philosophy of the past we can also find the conviction that making the world was not the thing to be doing and what philosophers should keep to was philosophizing. Other philosophers would argue that making the world was what needed doing but in such a way as to consolidate the existing order in which they lived. Various bourgeois civil servants and politicians do remake the world they live in but in such a way as to reinforce their own position and power.

A great deal is being said about revolution in all its forms. As I see it if we can only see training children to think as the all-important task, then and then alone will we be able to arrive at the most effective methods of working with children. In the process of their instruction children acquire new knowledge. Yet this knowledge is closely linked with what is familiar, with what they know already. The question of children's experience already accumulated, of what they know already is very important. If a child's knowledge represents little more than a series of superstitions, then his knowledge accumulated so far will obstruct his acquisition of new knowledge. If a pupil has forgotten what he was taught previously or his command of it is weak, then he will find it difficult to master new knowledge properly. All too often as the end of the school year approaches a teacher realizes that a considerable part of the syllabus has not yet been covered and hurries to complete it, foisting upon the pupils no more than superficial knowledge which the pupils are called upon to assimilate while there is no time available for checks or controls. In this way we are inflicting considerable harm on our pupils' minds. This is not just frivolous behaviour on our part, but criminal. Yet this is a practice to be encountered all too often. This is why in each lesson the material a teacher puts before his pupils must have some kind of foundation. How can we base a child's subsequent studies

on a foundation of incomplete, inadequate knowledge that we have not had time to check and double-check. This is alas what all too often actually happens.

I am quite convinced that if we examined such questions thoroughly in both their theoretical and practical aspects we would be making a major contribution to the work of teaching because we would have done a great deal to make children's mental activity more productive and thus raise the quality and output of teaching.

A teacher must not adopt a narrow approach to his lessons, viewing them as no more than a question-and-answer session: we need to analyse what takes place during a lesson in far greater detail. Only teaching that starts out from carefully deliberated principles is going to enable us to place instruction in our schools on a proper footing. We must have a proper understanding of the structure of a lesson, and its component stages if we hope to be able to plan them correctly.

We are well aware of the fact that when a teacher walks into a classroom wearing a bewildered expression, being unprepared, the pupils notice this at once and react accordingly. They are very astute mind-readers. They will soon be tripping up the teacher in his tracks and the lesson is in pieces.

How much disruption and mischief can result from the ensuing break-down of discipline! Yet it is highly unlikely that a teacher who really knows what he is setting out to do in his lessons will experience problems with discipline. If he knows where he is going then a teacher will be able to keep his pupils under control.

We make frequent references to independence, yet this is something pupils have to be trained to practice. Independence in the classroom should not be equated with anarchy: pupils are not doing just what they choose.

The question of proper structuring of lessons is most important: how we should start a lesson, how much time we should devote to exposition, what explanations and instructions need to be given; we must be careful not to devote too much of a lesson to explanations, since these can then become boring, particularly if what is being explained is something the children understand anyway.

All these questions can only be properly resolved if a teacher has close knowledge of his pupils.

I would advocate that lessons be prepared in such a way that the material to be worked through be of a kind that all the children in the room might understand; in other words, that the teacher start out from the minimum that can be offered to pupils. To be able to do this a teacher needs to know his pupils well. A teacher should set himself the following objective: if this minimum is being offered to the pupils then the teacher must make sure that he completes that minimum. To be able to do that he needs to know his class really well. To achieve that goal would be a most useful step. What kind of approach to his work must a teacher have if he knows in advance that at the end of a lesson seventy per cent of his pupils will not have grasped the material that he had prepared for them?

In a certain school pupils were set some problems and it emerged later that the eighth groups had not completed some of those which the first had succeeded in solving. This means that there was a breach that remained unfilled. This example underlines the significance of leading groups in a class. If the majority of the children in a class have failed to grasp important points in their syllabus then it will be impossible for the teacher to prepare and conduct his lessons properly.

So when we talk about children's backwardness or low ability, in actual fact this backwardness is something that is created artificially: it means that the teacher at crucial moments failed to come to a child's assistance in time or from the angle which would have proved most appropriate in his or her particular case.

In the good old-days there was always a dunce's corner in a classroom. That was the rightful place of all the real "idiots", but also of some highly intelligent pupils who did not conform as required. They sat in that corner all the time and were continually playing around. On one occasion in my school a woman teacher came into the class and moved all those sitting at the back to the front. To be seated at the front meant that the teacher would be devoting more than average attention to you. This was welcomed by the pupils concerned because it meant that attention was being paid to them and after that they started working properly.

One of our most important professional duties is to no-

lice in good time when a pupil begins to lag behind the rest of his class.

In any lesson there is a whole range of highly significant details that it is vital not to overlook. If I am explaining something fairly complicated to the pupils, I may have done my job of exposition quite effectively speaking clearly, logically without swallowing my words and holding the pupils' attention, and when I come to ask: "Have you understood?" receive a unanimous Yes, only to be inundated with questions when the pupils are asked to carry out the subsequent work-task.

I once noted down during a lesson the questions which were put to a good teacher. There had been a good number of them because the pupils had failed to understand a number of details in the original exposition.

I often cite the following example: "Take an empty glass, go out of this room into the next, go over to the water jug, fill the glass half full, then come back and on entering this room take X number of steps to one side in the direction of the water jug in this room and then fill the glass to the top. Have you understood?"

"Yes". Nothing it seems could be simpler.

Yet once the pupils set about that task, after their first steps, they will forget how they should continue. This example I always use to stress how important it is to break down any assignment or work-task into its component parts. Is it not possible, given patient and straightforward explanations that almost all undertakings put to a group of children can eventually be completed? Of course this is so if we break down assignments into their separate components that children need to execute.

Now I should like to pass on to the question of teaching methods. If we approach the concept of a lesson as a form utilized to structure classroom instruction, then methodology will be the system of means by which this work in the classroom is structured. It is precisely the word *system*, on which we need to focus our attention here. We need to examine all the separate elements that go to make up a lesson and prepare them thoroughly—be it assessment, control, etc.—and we need to appreciate which are the most productive methods of working, in other words to concern ourselves with questions of rationalization. As I see it the question of rationalization is most important

when we are striving to master the craft of teaching. Each school needs to have available a whole range of proposals for such rationalization. We need to make maximum use of pupils' time, to make rational use of materials, otherwise our work as teachers will be impossible.

The question of what a lesson and what a good lesson constitute can thus be seen to represent a major theoretical and practical consideration. The more we come to understand the implications of this question the sooner we will acquire the teaching skills that are bound to elude us if we have not turned our attention to the theoretical background previously.

By way of conclusion I should like to formulate some general principles and findings. Here we need to single out some kind of common, generally acceptable approach from amidst the diversity. I would not deprecate each school having its own face so to speak, nor each teacher having his own face. Our education authorities should insist that teachers should not become faceless, should not hide their individual personalities, that they should develop their individual potential talents. This directive would serve to raise the quality of work in our schools substantially.

On the other hand we need to take certain generally accepted norms and recommendations as a guide. For example, the teachers at our experimental schools must study the proper structure and planning of lessons.

The tasks which teachers are expected to take upon themselves can and should be substantially reduced, for they are more than the individual teacher can be expected to carry out. Once we start to transpose these work tasks into the form of lessons it will be clear that so many lessons would be required that they could not possibly be fitted into the school year. A teacher should make careful preparations for each lesson, analyze its effectiveness and draw conclusions from it for future reference. That in itself is no simple undertaking.

In order to carry out several tasks of this sort we must decide what we can do in the space of a school term. We are not engaged in experimental research work, but when it comes to the elaboration of lesson material of high quality that has been carefully thought through then preparing such material suitable for publication might well be

recommended. There is no reason why a teacher might not present his colleagues with a number of model lessons and then embark on a certain amount of experimentation within that framework. Individual teachers could make a significant contribution to the school network as a whole by publishing a number of lesson plans previously devised and conducted on specific lines in the classroom. This would be a perfectly possible undertaking for teachers in our schools if interested and would be a useful contribution for their colleagues.

Where should such material be printed? It should be submitted initially for consultation purpose to our Experimental Research Centre. This would not mean that the material would lose its impact but rather it would help teachers in the long run to unfold their individual potential.

It is in ways such as these that we should seek the "unity of diversity". There must be diversity, but at the same time there are certain fields where the pace is set by experienced specialists who are undeniable experts. This we should respect. Just as the composition of the teaching profession is highly varied so should the tasks to which teachers turn their attention be diverse. Yet the tasks embarked upon should be concentrated within the framework of actual school lessons.

This is why it is so important that there should be a place to which teachers can come and seek information and assistance when necessary. We truly need a methodological base to be built not just by those workers specially selected for this purpose by a special commission but also by additional cadres. If the qualifications of the staff at this new centre will gradually rise, so too will the quality of the work they are able to carry out.

A number of plans are being drawn up here relating to the actual conduct of lessons. We start out not with the task of planning any particular lesson on its own but a whole system of integrated lessons, perhaps ten to take place during the school year, which will be linked together by a common theme. Of course there will be variations on the original plan but this is not regrettable but rather necessary so that the progress of the plan can be recorded and checked and so as to enable us to undertake subsequent projects from a more informed standpoint.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1st June 1878—S.T. Shatsky was born in Smolensk into the family of a poor clerk.

1888-1896—Studied at the gymnasium in Moscow. During these years Shatsky devoted a great deal of time to his self-education—to music, singing, studying the works of Russian and foreign writers. From the age of 15 (until 1908) he gave private lessons because of financial difficulties in his family. The formal, conventional teaching in the gymnasium convinced the youth that this was the wrong way to teach and educate children.

1896-1903—Student of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics in the Natural Sciences Department of Moscow University. At the time Shatsky studied the pianoforte at a music school and then entered the Moscow Conservatoire to study singing. He developed a fascination for studying the classics of educational theory, philosophy and psychology. Came to the conclusion that the struggle with social evils, injustice, violence and poverty must begin with the improvement of the education of the younger generation.

1903-1908—Student at agricultural institute. After graduating from university decided to create a school in the country, incorporating into it one of the most important media of education—agricultural work. For the implementation of this decision, considered it essential to acquire knowledge of agronomy in agricultural institute.

1905-1908—Work in the society Settlement and in children's summer camp. Shatsky's first experiments in educating children. A small sum of money collected by the organizers of the society, a circle of educationists an-

ongst his acquaintances, allowed him in the summer of 1905 to take fourteen children to the village of Schelkovo (near Moscow). These were poor urban children. The children's life in the summer camp consisted of community work, lessons in different academic subjects, plays, singing in a choir, reading books, excursions and walks. The experiment was a success and its positive results were obvious. This inspired Shatsky to continue the work. In Moscow in the autumn of 1905, together with people who shared his views, Shatsky organized the first club ever to exist in Russia for children and young people, supporting it from private donations. Work in the club was carried out by educational enthusiasts who organized circles to study physics, chemistry, literature, drawing, singing, handicrafts, etc. They arranged group visits for the children to theatres, art galleries, museums and walks around the town.

1906—Shatsky and his fellow-workers organized a kindergarten for children under school age. In the flat of one of the women who worked with him a doctor's surgery was opened. From 1906 the complex of all these institutions began to be called the Settlement society.

1906—Shatsky married Valentina Nikolayevna Demyanova, a graduate of the Moscow Conservatoire who was one of the educational enthusiasts working in Shatsky's club and who dedicated her whole life to working together with him. In the Soviet period V. N. Shatskaya became a member of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and a professor. She was for many years the director of the Scientific Research Institute for Artistic Education.

1907—By now Settlement accommodated 250 children and young people and the summer camp was attended by eighty. By this time the material basis of these children's organizations had been improved thanks to the participation of the local working population. In 1908 the Settlement society was closed down by the police.

1907-1908—Publication of Shatsky's works *Children—the Workforce of the Future* and *Children at Work and New Departures*.

1909-1917—Shatsky was the leader of the Society for Children's Work and Recreation. In 1909 the work of the educationalists' circles was renewed comprising a

- kindergarten, primary school and evening club. The educational tasks were the same as the previous ones (until 1908). By 1912 the Society for Children's Work and Recreation involved 300 children and young people.
- 1910—First trip abroad (Denmark, Sweden, Norway) undertaken with the aim of studying the experimental work of children's institutions in other countries. In 1910 published brochure "New Socio-Educational Work for Children, the Workers of the Future".
- 1911—Organization of children's summer camp The Good Life. From 1918 the camp began to function all year round and a school was opened in it. From 1930 The Good Life became the school for young people on the collective farm. From 1934 it became a ten-year school named after Shatsky. The story of the camp is told in S. T. Shatsky's and V. N. Shatskaya's book *The Good Life*.
- 1913-1914—Second trip abroad (Switzerland, France, Belgium, Germany). Its goal was to study experiments in education through work. During this trip abroad Shatsky wrote the book *The Good Life* (in collaboration with V. N. Shatskaya).
- 1917-1918—Participation in a seminar for workers in children's clubs. Gave paper "What is a Club?", 1918. Published article "First Steps Towards Education Through Work".
- 1919-1932—S. T. Shatsky was director of First Experimental Station for Public Education set up by the People's Commissariat for Education. In pre-revolutionary Russia Shatsky was unable to realize all his dreams about education, despite the fact that his authority was great and his work had become widely known. Only after the October Revolution in 1917 did Shatsky get a real chance to implement his idea of creating a system of experimental institutions. He was commissioned by the People's Commissariat for Education of the Russian Federation to draw up a project for the First Experimental Station. The aims of its work were the study and generalizations of experimental work with children and cultural education work with adults, familiarization with the life of the population, helping local organs in the task of developing agriculture, spreading information about sanitation and hygiene and teaching illiterates. The work of the First

Experimental Station is described by Shatsky in his articles and illuminated in his reports.

During this period he published amongst other things the following works: "The Russian Kindergarten System" (1921); "Which Comes First: The Children or the School" (1922); "The School of the Future" (1923); "Acute Questions of Teacher Training" (1923); "The School and Life in the Country" (1924); "The School and the Building of Life" (1925); "Great and Delicate Questions about Contemporary Schools" (1926); "How We Taught and How We Ought to Teach" (1926); "Living Work" (1927); "The Soviet School in Theory and Practice" (1928); "How We Teach" (1928); "The Work of a Village Teacher" (1928); "Tolstoy the Educator" (1928); "The Rationalization of School Work" (1929); "Results of the Work of the First Experimental Station of the People's Commissariat for Education" (1929); "Results of the Sixteenth Party Congress" (1930); a course of lectures "The School and the Building of Collective Farms" (1930); "Teaching Methods and the Quality of Work in Schools" (1931); "Improving the Quality of Lessons" (1932).

1926—S. T. Shatsky became a candidate member of the Communist Party.

1928—Became member of the Communist Party.

1929-1934—Shatsky was member of Collegium of People's Commissariat for Education of the Russian Federation.

1932-1934—Shatsky was Director of Moscow State Conservatoire and Director of the Central Educational Laboratory of the People's Commissariat for Education. In 1932 the First Experimental Station was reorganized and became part of the system of experimental institutions of the Central Education Laboratory which studied and made generalizations from the work of experimental institutions and also helped teachers to improve the organization of their teaching.

1934—Report "Results of Investigation into the Work of Leningrad Model Schools".

30th October 1934—Death of S. T. Shatsky.

FROM THE COMPILER

The aim of this book is to cast light on the activity of one of the most interesting representatives of Russian and Soviet educational theory—S. T. Shatsky, an outstanding representative of Russian educational theory before the Revolution and an active participant in the building up of the Soviet school system. The book contains twelve works by Shatsky, which forms a very modest part of his educational legacy, which has been published in the Soviet Union in four volumes. I have tried in the works presented here to select those which reveal S. T. Shatsky's basic educational ideas and trace the evolution of his views, and to acquaint the reader with his educational experience.

Jointly performed socially useful work, the organization and educational direction of work, children's self-direction, the organization of a children's community, the use of work and art as educational media—this is the sphere of educational problems which Shatsky elaborated in theory and in practice in the pre-revolutionary period of his social and educational activity. The works *The Good Life* and *Children at Work and New Departures* illuminate this period of his creative work.

After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917, during the early years of Soviet power, Shatsky actively joined in the building up of a new school system, elaborating with particular attention the problems of children's socially useful work. Shatsky considered this work a fundamental educational medium and an essential contribution by schoolchildren to the building of a new society. In his system of educational institutions—kindergarten, school, club—Shatsky picked out the school as the main link. The articles "Which Comes First: the Child-

ren or the School" and "On the Way to a Labour School" are devoted to the establishment of the Soviet school system.

In the 20's and 30's Shatsky worked a great deal on the problem of didactics—increasing the effectiveness of the lesson, activizing pupil participation in lessons, the educating and developing functions of the lesson, and demands on the teacher. In the articles "How We Teach", "Soviet Teaching and Teaching Aids", "Rationalizing Lessons in School" and "Improving the Quality of Lessons", the author points the way to a solution of didactic problems.

The living unity of educational theory and practice is a characteristic trait of Shatsky's educational ideas. He thought of the daily work of teachers and educators as being imbued with deep significance and Party spirit. He always drew his scientific conclusions above all from true and tested experience. The works *A Teacher's Path*, *The Good Life*, "The Activity of the First Experimental Centre for Public Education" give the reader an idea of Shatsky's educational laboratory and his innovatory, practical activities.

The close link between education and the social environment and the preparation of children for active participation in the construction of a new life is an idea which runs through many of Shatsky's works.

In trying to find a solution to current contemporary educational problems, it is interesting to consider Shatsky's experience in the field of all-round education of the younger generation, and the connection between learning and life, on the basis of which the child's moral and aesthetic development, education through work and polytechnical education is built.

In his articles Shatsky raises both cardinal problems of education and teaching and individual questions which are relevant only to a particular historical moment. In this book some of Shatsky's works are published in an abridged form, leaving out what was relevant only during the early years of establishing the Soviet school system. The works are arranged in chronological order, with the exception of the autobiographical writings *A Teacher's Path* and *The Searching Years*, with which the collection begins.

The commentaries to Shatsky's published works are in two parts--historical and educational commentaries and notes.

The historical and educational commentaries are essential in order to introduce the reader to the historical situation existing at the time the works presented in this book were written, to show the concrete reasons behind certain things which Shatsky said or did and to reveal the basic ideas of individual works, their significance in the history of Soviet educational theory and their role and place in a range of problems being discussed in contemporary educational theory and practice.

Shatsky's speeches reflected the vital demands of education and served as a live comment on the needs of the time. Therefore in the articles in this book the reader will find a large number of statements which can only be understood if he knows the details of historical development of Russia and the USSR.

Shatsky constantly studied the educational experience and theoretical works of the classics of educational theory and his contemporaries in the field, both in Russia and abroad; he had a good knowledge of literature and was an accomplished musician. This all-round knowledge and wide erudition was reflected in his articles and speeches. References to well-known thinkers and writers and comparisons between different ideas are often to be encountered in his works. The notes will help the reader to become acquainted with the public figures and academics mentioned by Shatsky, and with the concrete facts and circumstances which are cited in the book.

COMMENTARIES

A Teacher's Path

Article written in 1928

All of S. T. Shatsky's social and educational activity was directed towards a search for new content, methods and organization in education and teaching. In this article Shatsky describes his path in education and gives a clear picture of Russian reality before the Revolution. He shows the motives for his activity and analyzes the evolution of his views on education. The article was written at a time when Shatsky already had a considerable amount of experience in creative educational work behind him, and this allowed him to formulate his conclusions about the basic tasks of Soviet education. The central idea of this article, the idea of education through work, is still a current theme in Soviet educational theory today.

1. Until the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917 the Russian state school system was as follows:

I. Elementary schools—three or four years of study (Zemstvo schools, parish schools, ministerial colleges). The elementary school curriculum was: Bible classes, Russian language, (reading, writing, grammar), arithmetic, singing. The teaching methods were: conversation, teacher's exposition, work with textbooks, written work. The elementary schools had no direct links with the secondary schools.

The state allocated a negligible sum of money to the elementary schools and therefore they existed mainly on donation from the church, the community and private individuals.

II. Secondary schools: state classical gymnasium (boys—8 years, girls—7 years), *Realschule* and commercial schools (7-8 years) and others. To enter them it was neces-

sary to pass an entrance examination, preparation for which took place either in preparatory classes at the gymnasium or at home. Since education had to be paid for, the majority of children in secondary educational establishments were from families of the nobility or government officials. At the beginning of the twentieth century the class distribution of pupils at classical gymnasia was as follows:

Nobility—57 per cent, Clergy—3.5 per cent, Urban classes (merchants, government officials etc.)—31 per cent

Peasants—5.5 per cent

Others—3 per cent

The basic subjects in the curriculum at the classical gymnasia were: Bible classes, Russian language, Latin, French and others.

In the *Realschule* and commercial schools more attention was paid to practical subjects; Latin was not studied.

There were also upper-class secondary educational establishments—institutes for young ladies of the nobility, Cadets' colleges, lycees and others, in which only children of the nobility were accepted.

The right of university entrance was given only to graduates from boys' classical gymnasia, although some university faculties accepted candidates from *Realschule* and commercial schools on condition that they passed an examination in Latin. Higher education for women was represented in pre-revolutionary Russia by Higher Courses for Women (4-5 years of study).

Higher education, as secondary, also had to be paid for.

Thus in tsarist Russia only the children of the nobility and well-to-do parents were able to receive education. The children of workers, peasants and the poor urban classes were deprived of this opportunity. It was only after the Great October Socialist Revolution that the real right to be educated was granted to the whole population.

In 1918 the Soviet Union introduced a unified state system of free education and public education came under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros), the first commissar of which was Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky (1875-1933).

In the USSR at the present time there is general compulsory secondary education which is given in the follow-

ing institutions: 1) secondary schools (10-11 years of study); 2) vocational schools (3-4 years of study) which give a comprehensive preparation equivalent to a secondary school; 3) other secondary special educational institutions. All schools are state schools and free of charge. They work according to a single programme, recognized by the particular Union Republic in which they are. They give pupils a general polytechnical education and labour education. The general direction of public education is carried out by the Ministry of Education of the USSR and in individual regions by the ministries of education of the Union republics.

2. At the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, a movement of schoolchildren and young people developed which was directed against the existing school system and against the political regime. Illegal circles, societies and organizations of gymnasium pupils were created, secret congresses were held and illegal student newspapers published.

There were groups of young students which allied themselves to the workers' movement. Pupils' societies and circles published proclamations and pamphlets, and gymnasium students took part in revolutionary workers' assemblies. "Industrial development in Russia is inevitably summoning up, and has already summoned up, those very forces which are destined to put an end to the autocracy and release our country from heavy slavery. This invincible force is the Russian working-class. . . . Following the example of the Russian working class which has engaged in battle with the autocracy, we must also repeat: 'Down with the autocracy! Down with despotism!' and crossing the threshold of our accursed school, we must enter the struggle against the enemy of all Russians." This is taken from one of the schoolchildren's proclamations of the time.

3. In pre-revolutionary Russia in the classical gymnasium 18 per cent of study time was given to mathematics, physics, geography, natural science, whereas 41.2 per cent of the time was devoted to classical languages. (The remainder of the study time was devoted to religion, Russian language, history, a foreign language). The main core of the gymnasium course was the study of the classical lan-

guages, which meant doing grammar exercises, learning Latin and Greek texts by heart, and the mechanical learning of translations. In other subjects the approach was similar.

The aim of such education was formulated by the Ministry of Education—to distract young people from revolutionary ideas, materialism, political free-thinking.

4. What is meant is Moscow University, which was founded in 1755 by the great Russian academic Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov (1711-1765), the founder of Russian science.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century this was the only university in Russia. It was a centre of culture, science and education. In the 1840's-1860's the democratic materialist tendency in social thought was clearly expressed here. Eminent figures in Russian culture and science studied and taught at the university and at the end of the nineteenth century the first revolutionary groups were formed in it. In connection with this the tsarist government strengthened the police surveillance of universities. In selecting teaching staff, political views were taken into consideration and progressively minded professors were removed from their posts. By far the greatest amount of time on the time-table was devoted to studying such disciplines as ancient philosophy, Greek and Roman history and literature and so on. All this caused dissatisfaction amongst a great many students, as Shatsky writes.

Despite the reactionary politics of the autocracy, which strove to suppress progressive thought, at the end of the nineteenth century, Russian science was accorded worldwide recognition. Russian academics, including some who worked in the university, attained great achievements in natural science and in the field of the social sciences.

After the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 Moscow University made a great contribution to the cause of the cultural revolution and the building of socialism in the USSR. In 1940 it was named after M. V. Lomonosov. In the academic year 1977/78 there were 28,833 students and 3,700 teachers in its 16 faculties. As in all other academic institutions of the USSR, study in the university is free of charge and students with satisfactory academic re-

cords receive a state grant (77 per cent of the students), students from other towns are provided with hostel accommodation.

5. Kliment Arkadyevich Timiryazev (1843-1920)—eminent Russian academic, experimenter in the natural sciences, materialist, one of the founders of the Russian school of plant physiology. From 1878 to 1911 he was a professor at Moscow University. He fought for wide educational development in the country. He was a talented populariser of science, who considered that science must serve the people and that the duty of the scientist is to carry knowledge to the people. His widely known works *The Life of Plants*, *Sun, Life and Chlorophyll*, *Why Plants Are Green* and others were distinguished by their academic innovativeness and served as an example of how to propagate scientific knowledge.

Timiryazev made a great contribution to world science with his discovery of the energy patterns of photosynthesis in the physiology of plants. His services to science received world-wide recognition. Timiryazev was a member of the London Royal Academy (1911), honorary doctor of the universities of Glasgow (1901), Cambridge (1909), Geneva (1909), corresponding member of the Edinburgh Botanical Society and honorary member of many Russian universities and scientific societies.

6. Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1910)—great Russian writer, enthusiastically engaged in educational activity. On his estate at Yasnaya Polyana he opened a school for the village children at his own expense and compiled primers and children's readers. In 1862 Tolstoy published an educational journal *Yasnaya Polyana* in which he included a number of educational articles. He was an outspoken and convinced critic of the vices of contemporary schools and fought against rote and routine in the teaching of children. Tolstoy insisted that schools should give children a wide range of knowledge, develop their artistic ability and encourage the pupil's independence and enthusiasm in the learning process. He considered that all children were endowed from birth with different capabilities which it was the task of the school to develop. In his school Tolstoy established a relaxed, trusting relationship with the chil-

dren; they studied willingly because the school fascinated them. The children were not given ready-made conclusions, but independently formed them themselves from observing facts and carrying out experiments. Tolstoy was against cramming, formalism and coaching for examinations. He considered that the teacher's main task was to develop the child's personality, to equip him with knowledge he would need in life and to stimulate children's creative powers.

By his experience of work in the school at Yasnaya Polyana Tolstoy demonstrated that learning must be a process of children's conscious and creative acquisition of knowledge.

Tolstoy's main works on education are *On Public Education*, *The Yasnaya Polyana School in November and December*, "Upbringing and Education", "Who Should Teach Whom to Write—We the Peasant Children, or They Us?", *ABC* and others. Tolstoy's educational views are also characterized by some contradictions. For example, as a protagonist of "liberal education", he considered that the teacher did not have the right "coercively to influence" the formation of his pupils' views, however in practice he strove to influence his pupils to accept his own outlook on life.

Being profoundly democratic, Tolstoy's educational ideas had a great influence on progressive Russian and foreign educationists.

Shatsky was deeply interested in Tolstoy's educational theory. His attitude to the great writer and pedagogue's educational legacy is most fully expressed in his article "Tolstoy the Educator", written in 1928 for the centenary of L. N. Tolstoy's birth.

7. The principles of the educational system at which Shatsky arrived during these years were new to Russian educational theory, and, as the author himself explains, arose from a protest against mechanical rote learning, corporal punishment and the alienation of the teacher from his pupils. Physical work was not yet recognized as a means of education by official Russian educational theory. Shatsky was one of the first educators in Russia to see the enormous possibilities of education based on new principles: the use of work and play as a means of education, the or-

ganization of children's self-government and the all-round development of their capabilities.

8. This period was characterized by the expansion of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in Russia and under its influence, the awakening of political activity amongst students. Some of the students limited themselves to putting forward demands about the academic system, but the overwhelming mass of the student population was inclined to revolution. In the beginning of the 1890's, the students of Moscow University held strikes, demonstrations and meetings. The police carried out massive student arrests and enlisted students who had taken part in the strikes in the army, which aroused a new wave of student protests. The progressive students actively expanded their revolutionary work amongst the proletariat.

9. Moscow agricultural institute (Academy of Peter the Great) is one of the oldest agricultural academic institutions in Russia. It is the leading institute with which are connected the development and many great achievements of Russian agricultural science. It was founded in 1865. Since 1923 it has been called the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy and deals not only with the preparation of specialists, but also engages in various kinds of scientific activity.

In the academic year 1977/78 there were 7 faculties with a total of 31 thousand students.

10. The development of higher education for women in Russia, as in many countries in Europe dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. The tsarist government allowed women to study only at special courses opened for them, which were similar in curriculum to courses at higher educational establishments (in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev and a few other towns). In 1900 women's agricultural courses were opened under the auspices of Moscow Agricultural Institute. All these courses were private and did not give graduates any rights. They existed mainly on charity and the fees paid by the students. Girls were not allowed to attend universities in Russia. It was only after the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917 that women received an equal right to education as men. At

the present time half of the total number of students at higher educational establishments in the USSR are women.

11. Alexei Fyodorovich Fortunatov (1856-1925)—Russian statistician and economic geographer. In 1885-1902 he taught agricultural statistics at the Agricultural Academy. He sharply criticised the system of higher education in Russia.

12. Vasili Robertovich Williams (1863-1939)—eminent Soviet academic, soil scientist, academician of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. From 1894 was head of the department of soil science at the Agricultural Academy and was one of the leading professors of the Academy. The founder of agronomical soil science. His services to science include the creation of the theory of the lesser biological rotation of substances as the basis of soil development, the foundation of agronomic measures for soil conservation and increased fertility, the elaboration of the grassland crop rotation system. During the Soviet period his services were highly recognised.

13. 1905-1907—the time of the first bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. Its goal was the overthrow of the autocracy and the main motive force behind it was the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry.

In the course of the revolution Soviets of Workers' Deputies were established—the elected political organizations of the Russian working class, which were the prototype for Soviet power. The revolutionary movement took in the peasantry, certain sections of the army, the progressive intelligentsia and the students. For the first time in history the revolution was led by the proletariat, headed by the Marxist party.

The revolution was defeated for a number of reasons: there was not a strong enough alliance between workers and peasants, the peasants were politically immature, the army did not go over onto the side of the revolutionaries, the liberal bourgeoisie played a treacherous role, etc. But the 1905 revolution aroused millions of workers and peasants in Russia to political action and was the dress-rehearsal for the October Revolution in 1917.

14. Alexandr Ustinovich Zelenko (1871-1953)—architect, educationist, the organizer of extra-mural children's organizations, clubs, libraries, etc. Taught in working-class schools. With S. T. Shatsky organized society for working-class children The Settlement. After the October Revolution carried out research and educational work.

15. Union of the Russian People, Octobrists—reactionary monarchist political organizations in tsarist Russia.

Union of the Russian People—reactionary organization in Russia founded in 1905 to combat revolution. United reactionary representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, land-owners and clergy. The programme of the Union included the preservation of the autocracy, chauvinism, anti-Semitism. Ceased to exist after February 1917.

The Octobrists were members of the Union of the 17th of October (founded in 1905), a counter-revolutionary party of land-owners and bourgeois merchants in Russia. The Octobrists stood for the power of the monarchy, the repression of revolution and supported the great-power chauvinist politics of the tsarist government.

16. Secret Police Department—the local body of political investigation in Russia under police control. The basic task of the secret police department was to seek out revolutionary inclined organizations and individual revolutionaries. The police carried out arrests and interrogations of revolutionaries on evidence collected by the secret police department which was abolished after the February Revolution in 1917.

17. The reaction in Russia which Shatsky is writing about began in 1907 after the suppression of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Tsarism began to take cruel reprisals on revolutionaries who were exterminated often without trial or investigation; hundreds of thousands of people were arrested or incarcerated in prison, sentenced to exile or hard labour.

Legal workers' organizations, trade unions, clubs, were also subjected to persecution. During these years part of the intelligentsia was in a state of depression. The organizers of The Settlement did not cease their activity during these difficult years of repression.

18. John Dewey (1859-1952)—American philosopher and educational theorist, representative of pragmatism in educational theory. The aim of Dewey's educational theory was "the harmonization of class interests" with the help of education, the reconciliation of classes, i.e. the negation of the class struggle for changing a society of exploiters. However, Dewey's protest against formalism and dogmatism in teaching was in keeping with the demands of progressive educational circles in pre-revolutionary Russia. In Soviet educational circles in the 1920's there was an attempt to put some of J. Dewey's ideas into practice. This attempt was unsuccessful as the admiration for the child's personal experience which Dewey preached had a sharply negative effect on the level of schoolchildren's academic preparation.

In 1928 Dewey visited the Soviet Union and in the course of several days became acquainted with the work of the First Experimental Centre. Dewey wrote in the visitors' book that he was leaving with a feeling of great sympathy for the country where such profound educational work is possible.

19. Shanyavsky's University (1906-1918)—a popular university in Moscow founded on the funds of the liberal A. L. Shanyavsky. The university had a popular science and an academic department with faculties of natural science and social science and philosophy. It was very popular as a progressive academic institution, eminent academics and professors, many of whom had been dismissed from the state universities for their liberal-democratic views, taught there. Many different kinds of courses were organized under the auspices of the university, as Shatsky writes.

20. Liberal education—a bourgeois educational theory of upbringing prevalent in the second half of the nineteenth century which idealized the child and pre-supposed his self-development. Characteristic of this theory were a highly individualized approach to education and a categorical rejection of systematic teaching. It arose as a protest against schools which depersonalized the child and did not take into account his needs and possibilities. In its extreme form, this theory denies the adult's right to direct a

child's upbringing, considering guidance an assault upon the child's personality, and rejects the necessity for an academic curriculum and syllabus, which reduces the teacher's activity to educational improvization and uncontrolled creative work.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century this theory was wide-spread in Russia.

From 1905-1917 S. T. Shatsky and A. U. Zelenko were protagonists of this theory. The basic principles of education to which they subscribed in those years were: pupils and their parents should participate in school organization, lessons should be constructed according to the children's interests and should be completely individualized, teacher-pupil relations should be based upon mutual trust and sympathy, teachers should be free to choose and apply any teaching methods they wished. Subsequently, after the October Revolution, Shatsky's activity took up the Marxist-Leninist educational position which rejected both authoritarian and liberal education and regarded education as a process of the purposeful and systematic formation of an all-round, developed individual.

21. Zemstvo—an elective local self-government body, introduced in Russia under the 1864 reform, with election procedures ensuring predominance on it of the landed gentry. Within its competence were education and health (e.g. organization of schools and hospitals), road-building, and the like. Its prerogatives were continually impinged upon by the tsarist government. The institution was abolished by decree of the Soviet Government in 1917.

22. The February bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia—the second Russian revolution—took place in February 1917 and as a result of it the autocracy was overthrown and conditions were created for the transition to the socialist stage of the revolution.

23. In 1903 the workers' political party was formed—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). During the period of the party's formation, there was a sharp dispute about the Programme to be adopted and the Rules of the party. The supporters of V. I. Lenin, the founder and leader of the party, who were in the majority, began to be

called Bolsheviks. Their programme was: the overthrow of the autocracy, the bringing about of a socialist revolution, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The petty-bourgeois, opportunist element in the RSDLP was in the minority and representatives of this faction were known as Mensheviks. They advocated a programme of gradual reform.

Uniting in one revolutionary stream the wide-spread popular movement for peace, the peasants' fight for land, the fight of the working class for socialism, the struggle of the oppressed national minorities in Russia, the party of the Bolsheviks directed these forces in 1917 towards a socialist revolution and brought them to the establishment of the first socialist state in the world. "We, the Bolshevik Party, have *convinced* Russia. We have won Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the working people," wrote V. I. Lenin. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 242.)

The Bolsheviks were at the head of the revolutionary movement in the international workers' movement.

From 1918 the party began to be called the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)—RCP(B) and from 1952--the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the vanguard of the Soviet people, uniting on a voluntary basis the progressive, most conscious part of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia. It guides the whole activity of the Soviet people and elaborates the internal and foreign policy of the Soviet state.

The Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs)—a petty-bourgeois party in Russia (1902-1922). Its original programme was: the establishment of a democratic republic, the introduction of universal franchise, freedom of speech, press, etc. After October 1917 the SR party turned into a counter-revolutionary party of prosperous peasants which actively fought against Soviet power. The SRs organized counter-revolutionary uprisings and acts of terrorism.

24. Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya (1869-1939)—one of the oldest workers of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the wife and comrade-in-arms of V. I. Lenin. N. K. Krupskaya was an outstanding organizer of Soviet education and a theoretician of Communist upbringing.

She was born and brought up in a family which had revolutionary tendencies. After graduating from the gymnasium she attended Higher Courses for Women in St. Petersburg and worked as a teacher. From the beginning of the 1890's, as a professional revolutionary, she took an active part in the work of Marxist circles and carried out revolutionary propaganda.

Alongside her extensive party work, she studied the provision for popular education in different countries and the works of classical educational theorists. She began to publish articles on education before the Revolution.

After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution and to the end of her life N. K. Krupskaya was active in work directing public education, she was an initiator, inspirer and organizer of extremely important changes in the field of public education in the USSR.

In her works N. K. Krupskaya paid particular attention to a communist upbringing, teaching methods and the Pioneer movement. Between 1957 and 1959 N. K. Krupskaya's works were published in ten volumes.

THE SEARCHING YEARS

(Extracts from the Book)

The book was first published in 1924.

In Part I Stanislav Shatsky concentrated his attention mainly on the failings of the old school system and did not set himself any other task than this.

This book of Shatsky's serves as a clear illustration of the failings of the old school system, about which Lenin said in a speech at the 3rd Congress of the Komsomol in October 1920: "...the old school was a school of purely book knowledge, of ceaseless drilling and grinding." "...they compelled their pupils assimilate a mass of useless, superfluous and barren knowledge, which cluttered up the brain and turned the younger generation into bureaucrats regimented according to a single pattern." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 286).

Children at Work and New Departures

The article was first published in 1908.

This article was the first in the literature of educational theory to look at children's work not as a means of achieving personal gain, but as a means of ensuring the well-being of the collective. Socially significant work, as the author proves, is the only possible means of educating a spirit of collectivism and mutual assistance and of getting children to realize the social importance of work. Work of this kind develops social activity and initiative. These ideas of Shatsky's were further profoundly developed and implemented in Soviet educational theory.

The Good Life

The book bearing this title was written in conjunction with his wife, V. N. Shatskaya, a well-known educationist, in 1913-14, and was first published in 1915.

From 1911 to 1931 the camp *The Good Life* (which afterwards became a school-cum-camp) was the place where Shatsky carried out various educational experiments, first of all in the field of work and aesthetic education and the organization of children's collectives, and later in the field of the academic school curriculum and teaching methods.

The Good Life clearly illuminates the beginning of Shatsky's educational activity: in it the authors explain the reasons which led them to undertake such activity and reveal the principles and content of their work in the education of children. In this book, for the first time in Russian educational theory, Shatsky elaborated a methodological approach to the organization and guidance by the teacher of a children's collective, on the basis of self-assistance, self-direction and self-organization. "Work can become the basis of a child's life, but it must be work appropriate for a child—happy and cheerful", writes Shatsky. Socially useful work is a powerful medium of education and through it such qualities as friendship, unity and concern for one's fellows are developed.

This work also considers another question equally new to Russian educational theory—that of a child's aesthetic education, by means of giving him a broad introduction to art, developing his artistic capabilities and talent through involvement in literary, musical and dramatic activities. On the basis of analysis of his experience in clubs, societies and camps, Shatsky comes to the conclusion that a child's life is composed of four basic elements: productive work, art, play and social life.

Beginning his experiments in pre-revolutionary Russia, Shatsky was possessed by a fervent desire to give working-class children a happy childhood, of which they were deprived by hardship. But although he was able to make these children's lives bright and interesting for a short period of time, Shatsky could not substantially alter the circumstances of their everyday lives which remained just as hard under the conditions of the severe exploitation of the working class which prevailed in Russia at the time.

Shatsky did not then understand the class nature of social evils and it was only some time later, after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, that he came to the conclusion that a revolutionary reorganization of society was the only possible way of bringing about radical changes in the lives of the workers, their children and consequently transformations in the system of upbringing.

1. The industrial boom in Russia in the 1890's led to the growth of the working class at the expense of the unfortunate peasantry who fled from the country to the towns to escape hunger and poverty. Proletarian and semi-proletarian sectors in Russia accounted for 63.7 million out of a total population of 125 million (figures taken from the 1897 census). But in the towns conditions for the workers were also very bad and child labour for a lower rate of pay was a wide-spread practice.

Hunger, unhygienic conditions and epidemics were constant factors in the life of the working class. In Moscow during those years 70 per cent of the population lived in conditions which did not come up to the norms of hygiene. The children's entire day was taken up with work which resembled slave-labour and in the evenings or on holidays they poured out onto the street and for lack of anything better to do, began to fight and engage in acts of vandalism. The infantile delinquency rose from year to year.

There were no special children's summer organizations in pre-revolutionary Russia. S. T. Shatsky and his fellow educationists were the first to organize summer recreation camps for working-class children. However, enthusiasts like Shatsky were able to provide summer holidays for only a few children.

This health-giving work amongst children began to be organized on a large-scale basis only after the Revolution.

At the present time in the USSR schoolchildren between the ages of seven and fifteen can spend their summer or winter holidays in special Young Pioneer camps in the country where attention is given both to their educational and physical needs. These camps are organized by the trade unions in conjunction with economic organizations. For older schoolchildren there are health, sports and tourist camps. They are all maintained out of the social security

budget, the budgets of the trade unions and economic organizations. Parents pay approximately 1/3 of the cost of such a holiday. The children's life in a Young Pioneer camp is occupied by performing various tasks for themselves, play, sport and different kinds of festivities.

In the Crimea there is a large All-Union Young Pioneer Camp Artek, which functions all year round and where foreign schoolchildren also come to spend their holidays with Soviet children. In 1976 a total of 10,405,800 children attended Young Pioneer camps.

2. Cultural societies, unions and clubs, including the club organized by Shatsky and his colleagues, were banned in Russia during the period of political reaction which came into being after 1907. It was only in 1909 that Shatsky managed to obtain permission to open his Society for Children's Work and Recreation. The rules of the society laid out its goals and the type of work it was to carry out.

"§ 1. The goal of the Society for Children's Work and Recreation is to render assistance to children living in Moscow by a) providing them with all kinds of sensible tasks and amusements and b) improving their health and providing medical assistance.

"§ 2. To attain the above-mentioned goals, the society offers: a) gymnasiums for physical exercise, sports' pitches, skating-rinks and skiing excursions, b) classes in handicrafts, elocution, music and singing, c) excursions, d) magic lantern readings, e) concerts and performances with the participation of the children, f) a doctor's surgery with free medical assistance, g) children's libraries and reading-rooms.

"§ 3. Membership of the society is open to children between the ages of 5 and 15."

The Society for Children's Work and Recreation was supported by private donations and Shatsky and his colleagues worked without pay. They had to work under exceptionally difficult circumstances as police surveillance was extremely strict and the organization was subjected to frequent searches and was under constant threat of closure. In 1911, on the basis of this society, the summer camp The Good Life was set up.

Similar societies concerned with children's welfare and children's clubs began to be founded along the lines of

this society in Moscow and in other towns. But these initial manifestations of social activity met with no support from the government and came into existence solely as the result of the personal initiative of enthusiasts.

3. This episode of camp life described by Shatsky reveals an essentially new element in educational practice—children's self-direction. In itself the idea of children's self-direction was not a new one in educational theory; by this time a certain amount of experience in this sphere had been accumulated by Western European, American and Russian schools. But it was organized as an imitation of adult forms of self-direction. Moreover, the main thing was that the overall mass of the children remained passive; only a few select individuals, the leaders, were socially active.

Shatsky was the first educationist to set new tasks before children's self-direction: the active participation of each member of the children's community in the organization and direction of the work of the camp, by means of participation in discussions at general meetings, of the joint assigning of tasks to each person and checking that they had been carried out. This concept of children's self-direction later became very wide-spread in Soviet schools.

4. In Russia at that time the significance of work as a medium of education was not recognized by a great number of parents. Lessons of work experience in schools were confined to the narrow goal of preparing children for a specific profession. Progressive educational theory in the nineteenth century, in particular the ideas of the well-known Russian educationist Konstantin Dmitriyevich Ushinsky (1824-1870), showed that freely-undertaken work was what made man a human being and that his inner, spiritual powers could be neither inherited, nor bought. However, these ideas on education were very seldom realized in practice.

In this connection, the attempt of Shatsky and his colleagues to make work a means of developing the child's sense of responsibility, discipline and other personal qualities is of great interest. In his conception of the educative significance of work, Shatsky even in those years ca-

me close to the Marxist-Leninist theory of a communist education.

One of the basic features of a communist education in Soviet society is the formation in schoolchildren of a communist attitude towards work. The main conditions which help to form this attitude are: 1) the pupils' understanding of the social significance of work fulfilment and the high value society attaches to it; 2) giving pupils of any specific age-group work which is commensurable with their abilities; 3) the inclusion of the intellectual aspect in work experience and the importance of solving technical, organizational and other problems which require knowledge and thought; 4) the possibility for the pupils to display their initiative and creativeness; 5) the introduction of competition in work experience; 6) the accurate organization of collective work.

N. K. Krupskaya, remarking upon the special features of the new Soviet school, wrote: "...the school prepares the pupils for work. But it must prepare young people to be able not only to work individually, but also educate them to be able to work together as a collective."

5. From the child's essay published here, it is clear that the children had acquired a sense of belonging to the collective. Here, in embryo form, is the ideal of education in a future socialist society—the education of person aware of himself as part of a collective. This experiment of Shatsky's had enormous significance since it was the first attempt to create a children's collective and served as a graphic example of such work. During these years N. K. Krupskaya also raised the question of the absolute importance of making children aware of the collective; after the October Revolution A. S. Makarenko laid down a methodological approach to the organization and teacher's guidance of the collective, as the basic cell of a new socialist society.

In his practical activity in the Gorky camp and the Dzerzhinsky Commune (1920-36), A. S. Makarenko brilliantly demonstrated the educative role of the collective and the inexhaustible possibilities of educating a new type of person with the help of the collective. In the process of education in the collective, each person is formed as a unique individual, the collective allows the talents and

capacities of each of its members to be revealed and developed—that was the conclusion reached by both of these outstanding educationists, Shatsky and Makarenko, as a result of their work in organizing children's collectives, albeit at different times and under different conditions.

6. Despite the fact that as far back as the beginning of the eighteenth century attempts were made to introduce physical education lessons in academic institutions in Russia, progress in this sphere was slow. At the beginning of the twentieth century compulsory physical education was introduced, but only in boys' gymnasia and military academies, whereas in other schools it was generally not included in the curriculum. Sometimes enthusiastic volunteers would organize physical education classes for children out of school hours.

In Soviet schools since 1918 physical education has been compulsory for all healthy children and classes (two hours a week) are conducted by specialist teachers. Schools organize campaigns of physical fitness—morning exercises, games and physical jerks during breaks, days of physical culture and sport (in a park or a wood); and the programme of extra-curricular activities includes walks, hikes, sports competitions, games etc.

Extra-curricular physical education lessons are organized in the following way: classes are given in sports sections and clubs set up in the school and sports competitions are organized. Outside school, children can practise sports in sports clubs, Young Pioneer palaces, outdoor activity centres, children's sports schools, etc. (all this is free of charge and on a voluntary basis). In 1976, out of a total of 46.5 million Soviet schoolchildren, more than 20 million children were active in sports sections and 5,000 children's sports schools were in operation. From time to time sports contests and massive children's competitions are organized in the USSR (e.g. "The Leather Ball"—football; "The Golden Puck"—ice-hockey; "The White Rook"—chess.)

7. Shatsky considered that drama, music and other forms of art were very effective media in the general development of the child. In pre-revolutionary Russia there

was no professional children's theatre. Sometimes theatres put on special performances for children, but these were only accessible to children whose families were well-off and who lived in large towns. From 1918 onwards, professional state children's theatres began to be set up all over the USSR (drama theatres of YST's—Young Spectators' Theatres, music theatres and puppet theatres). In 1976 there were 158 of them and in addition amateur children's theatres have been set up. Special children's performances are put on by drama, music and light entertainment theaters. Children's drama studios and dramatic societies are organized in schools, clubs and Young Pioneer palaces.

Large-scale artistic education for children began only after the Revolution. Soviet children are given music education at music and singing lessons at school and during extra-mural activities organized by the school. In addition, many schoolchildren, alongside their studies in secondary schools, go to special music schools and attend music and singing lessons in ensembles and choirs in Young Pioneer palaces, etc. Special lectures on music given by well-known musicologists and composers are organized for children and there is a regular series of children's music programmes broadcast on All-Union radio and television.

Education in the visual arts is given at lessons and in the form of extra-curricular activities at school. In the USSR there are also special art schools where children study art alongside their lessons at general education schools. Art societies for children exist in clubs at factories and on collective and state farms. Each year children's drawing competitions are organized.

8. In pre-revolutionary Russia wide-scale use of child labour was made in industry. Despite the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century it was illegal to employ children under the age of 15 in factories and plants, employers frequently broke the law. Parents, driven by poverty, lied about their children's age and sent them off to earn their living. Official statistics alone show that in certain sectors of industry up to 20 per cent of the work force was composed of children and teenagers. There was no question of school education for these children. This

was what the children of the camp had in mind when answering the questions on the questionnaire.

9. Shatsky's ideas on educational methods are in harmony with the theories of the well-known Soviet educationist Anton Semyonovich Makarenko (1888-1939). The basic essence of Makarenko's educational theory was that Soviet education should be implemented in and through the collective. This idea sprang from the very nature of Soviet society itself—a unified group of people in which each working individual is the proprietor of the industry and participates in its management. Collectivism, as a personality trait, is directly opposed to egoism and individualism which disunite people.

The most important principles upon which the collective is built are the principles of self-direction and the inclusion of each member of the collective in work for its good—as can be seen from the work published here, S. T. Shatsky and his colleagues made use of these principles.

First Steps Towards Education Through Work

This article was published in 1918 and in it the author discloses the vices of the old school system.

Even before the October Revolution the Bolshevik party put forward its demands in the sphere of education: the introduction of compulsory, general secondary education for children up to the age of 16, the complete secularization of education, the provision of children with food, clothing and textbooks paid for by the state, the use of the children's own native language in lessons, the combination of study with productive work performed by the children. The proletarian revolution made it possible to answer these demands.

One of the most important tasks which arose in the formation of the new school system was that of education through work experience. The minimal gap between physical and intellectual work—a characteristic feature of socialism—could be achieved by means of combining study with productive work. But the practical solution of this task was a complicated matter since in the early stages

the necessary material and technical basis was lacking and there was no experience of this type of work which could be used as a precedent. Research, including the efforts of teachers and research workers, was carried out along different paths to try to find a solution to this problem. This article reflects Shatsky's attempts to find suitable guidelines for the creation of a work experience school.

In his previous works Shatsky examined the general problems of education through work provided in organizations outside the school, but in this article he raises the question of the place and role of the school in implementing education through work. Shatsky strives towards a system of education through work which would encompass a variety of different children's organizations: kindergartens, schools, organizations outside school. Shatsky now examines his earlier ideas about the content of education in the light of their application to a whole system of educational institutions with the school as the central link.

1. During the years 1918 to 1920 there existed a number of different ideas about the nature and content of labour and polytechnical education. The most consistent views on the subject were put forward by N. K. Krupskaya and A. V. Lunacharsky. They were against early specialisation and insisted upon the general, all-round character of secondary education, emphasizing that a polytechnical education must give pupils an idea of the whole production process and how it is organized in their country and must prepare workers who are able to adapt themselves quickly to changing conditions and capable of dealing with new machines.

Between 1918 and 1920 Soviet educational theory took its first steps in formulating the theory and practice of work-experience and polytechnical education.

At the present time all Soviet schools (general education and vocational) give pupils a polytechnical education. In the process of studying a variety of different disciplines, pupils are acquainted with the theoretical basis of the most important branches of industry. Special disciplines such as work in the school work-shops, in inter-school production training centres, in specialized shop-floors and sections in industrial enterprises, are also included in the

curriculum of the general education school. Young people are acquainted with the principles of mechanics, electronics, design, technical drawing, etc.

During the summer holidays the older schoolchildren get together in working collectives: pupils' production brigades, camps, recreation centres, etc., which are materially supported by collective and state farms. The combination of work and sensible recreation, plus sports activities constitutes the basic way in which children spend their summer holidays.

2. Here Shatsky repeats almost word for word Lev Tolstoy's criticism of education in Russia in the nineteenth century. The vices of education which Shatsky is writing about here were a result of pre-revolutionary educational theory and could not, of course, be tolerated in the new school system.

3. This phrase of Shatsky's can only be understood in its context. As is clear from his preceding comments, the author is talking not about the general impossibility of preparing children for the future, but about early specialisation and instilling children from an early age with ideas about their future career, psychologically and practically preparing them for the life of a public servant, a lawyer, a soldier, etc. In pre-revolutionary Russia this was standard practice both at home and at school. Progressive Russian educationists were against utilitarianism in education and defended the idea that education should above all produce general humane qualities such as kindness, morality, industriousness, etc., which were indispensable to all, both academic and peasant alike.

4. In his comments Shatsky comes close to the Marxist conception of the necessity of eliminating the contrast between intellectual and physical work. In his work *Principles of Communism*, F. Engels writes about this: "Education will enable young people quickly to go through the whole system of production, it will enable them to pass from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will therefore free them from the one-sidedness which the present division of labour stamps on each one of them. Thus the com-

unist organisation of society will give its members the chance of an all-round exercise of abilities that have received all-round development."

5. Educational work outside school is one of the forms of organizing children's leisure time out of school hours. In pre-revolutionary Russia this was carried out by a few enthusiasts on their own initiative and without any support from the state. Public readings of literature were given and libraries and reading-rooms were organized. In Moscow before October 1917 there were 17 societies which worked with children outside school hours. These were the first shoots of a new campaign which took on massive dimensions after the October Revolution.

Young naturalists' clubs began to function in 1918. They organize children's activities in nature study and conservation, carry on experimental work in biology and socially useful agricultural work, and organize young naturalists' rallies, exhibitions of their work and traditional mass festivals (The Day of the Forest, Harvest Festival, etc.).

From 1923-24 state extra-mural organizations for schoolchildren in the form of Young Pioneer and Pupils' Houses began to be created, containing a number of different clubs, societies and professional sections. From 1926 young technicians' stations and centres for technical work with schoolchildren came into existence. They contained a number of circles, clubs, design bureaux, young people's invention and rationalization societies, etc. Displays and exhibitions and competitions in technical forms of sport were organized.

At the present time in the USSR this work is carried out in special extra-curricular organizations: Young Pioneer and Pupils' Houses, children's libraries, children's young technicians' and young naturalists' clubs, etc. They are supported by the state and are free of charge. Work in them is carried out on a voluntary basis, is diverting for the children and requires their active participation. For example, a Young Pioneer Palace (or House) organizes the following clubs and societies: mathematicians', physicists', cosmonauts', art lovers', international friendship, etc. In 1976 in the USSR there were 4,501 Young Pioneer Palaces, 1,085 young technicians' stations, 641 na-

turalists' clubs, 209 excursion and out-door activity centres, 157 children's parks and 37 children's railways.

6. In rejecting the former teaching practice which was based on formal book learning, during these years Shatsky to a certain extent underestimated the necessity for a systematic approach to schoolchildren's assimilation of basic academic principles.

7. S. T. Shatsky was one of the first Soviet educational theorists to urge the organization of teachers' work as an integral body. This task was dictated by the new goals of education in a new society. A. S. Makarenko also insisted upon the same idea and put it into practice during the first years of work in the Soviet school system. At the present time the creation of a purposeful, united, creative teaching collective and systematic self-education and self-improvement is the prime concern of the leaders of children's organizations and schools in the USSR.

Recognizing the importance of the efforts of the whole teaching collective for successful educational work, Soviet educational theory considers it an essential condition of the effectiveness of the teaching collective that individual teachers should possess specific personal qualities, as, for example, ideological conviction, teaching expertise and love of children. Many years of experience in the Soviet school system have confirmed that Shatsky was right in his insistence upon a closely-knit collective of teachers as one of the conditions for the success of educational activity.

The Russian Kindergarten System

The article was first published in 1921.

In determining the concept of "children's life", in his work *The Good Life* Shatsky named four elements which constitute it; in this article he widens this concept, introducing some new elements: intellectual and physical development. Particular attention is given to methods of developing children's intellectual powers.

1. During the First World War children's hearths (as kindergartens were known) were organized in Moscow for pre-school children whose fathers had gone to fight at the

front; they were supported by funds from the children's welfare society. Then courses of pre-school work with children began to be set up. Before the October Revolution in Russia there were only 285 pre-school institutions, amongst which there were both "popular" ones, supported by public funds and private ones which charged high fees. The number of children attending kindergartens was about 5,000.

Right from the very first days of the existence of the Soviet state, kindergartens began to be organized as wide-scale state institutions. At the present time in the USSR the kindergarten is a state institution for the public education of children under school age (up to 7 years), which is the first link in the system of public education. The kindergarten is equipped in accordance with the fixed standards providing for all the child's needs; the teaching staff comprises people with special education in this sphere. The aim of work in a kindergarten is the all-round education of the child and preparation for study at school.

In 1976 there were 117.6 thousand permanent pre-school institutions in the USSR with a total of 12,408 thousand children attending them (there are also summer pre-school institutions: in 1976 5 million children attended them).

2. The truth of Shatsky's propositions here is borne out by many years of experience of educating children in Soviet pre-school institutions.

To convince oneself of this, it is sufficient to become acquainted with the organization of a child's day in a contemporary kindergarten.

Model regime for the day (for children aged 4-5):

Children's arrival, inspection, games, morning exercises.

Preparation for breakfast, breakfast.

Lessons.

Games, observation, fresh air and sunshine.

Lunch.

Preparation for sleep, sleep.

Games.

Preparation for afternoon snack, afternoon snack.

Walk, play in the playground.

Supper.

Games, children go home.

The content of lessons is varied: speech development, nature study, literature, development of basic mathematical concepts, drawing, moulding clay, appliqué work, design, musical education, physical education. Children are taught to be able to play both on their own and in their peer group. Teachers are recommended to encourage the stimulation of the children's imagination, development, initiative, and to give attention to the development of friendliness, mutual help, orderliness etc. Children are taught the ability to concentrate, listen carefully to the teacher and to their friends and to ask questions.

In recent years special preparatory groups (for 6-7 year-olds) have been introduced in Soviet kindergartens; here children attend special lessons to gain a basic knowledge of their native language, mathematics, nature study.

In the USSR systematic study at school begins for the child at the age of 7. However, there are people in favour of beginning children's formal education earlier. So, for a few years now an experimental school has been in operation, which takes children from the age of 6. It has shown positive results, but this question remains a debatable one in Soviet educational theory even at the present time.

3. At the basis of the Soviet system of pre-school education are to be found the very same principles which Shatsky propounded in his day. It is a recognized fact that the distinguishing features in the organization of the life of children under school age are relative freedom, the absence of any serious obligations towards society and the absence of harsh regimentation of the child's activity by adults. All aspects of a child's activity contain a wide spectrum of tasks "of general human knowledge": communication (through speech), the establishment of mutual relations with the people around, the use of everyday objects and elementary tools, the planning of activity, the formation and realization of intentions, the conformation of behaviour to examples and rules, finding solutions to difficult situations which arise in the course of joint activity, etc. In his pre-school years the child acquires the most general qualities and abilities necessary to every member of society and which form the basis for the subsequent acquisition of different types of knowledge and skills.

4. This dream of Shatsky's became real in the USSR. The Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR, the highest academic institution uniting all the most outstanding academies in the field of education, has been created and is situated in Moscow. The Academy includes 13 research institutes, including one dealing with pre-school education, one concerned with the general problems of education, one dealing with general and educational psychology, etc. The Academy also publishes a number of journals: *Sovietskaya pedagogika* (Soviet Educational Theory), *Voprosy Psikhologii* (Questions of Psychology), *Doshkolnoe vospitanie* (Pre-school Education), *Semya i shkola* (Family and School) and others. In the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR research is carried out in the leading fields of educational theory, psychology, new curricula and syllabi are worked out and means of improving education are investigated.

Which Comes First: the Children or the School?

This work was first published in 1922.

Between 1918 and 1920 the first step was taken in the young Soviet state to create a Soviet theory of education based on Marxism. At that time the goals of education were formulated, the theoretical basis of the Soviet system of public education was created and the basic principles of a Soviet upbringing were put forward. The elaboration of certain didactic problems was also begun, for example the activation of the educational process, the application of new teaching methods, etc. Certain questions on the theory of education were also discussed: collectivism, self-direction in schools, new relationships between pupils and teachers.

General instructions about the transformation of academic and educative work and the new principles underlying it were published in the documents "Regulations for the Establishment of a Unified, Work-Experience School" and "Basic Principles of the Unified Work-Experience School" (1918). The basic features of the school were determined as follows: the link between school and life, the harmonious development of the pupil's personality, education through work and polytechnical education, the develop-

ment of independence, active participation and creativeness of the pupils, and the unity of the school.

A sharp ideological dispute arose over the basic questions of educational theory. Educationists who were antagonistic to Marxist-Leninist ideology continued to propound ideas about the apolitical nature of education and educational theory and about the need for "liberal education", and the expedience of private initiative in education.

There were also a considerable number of educationists who, having become active participants in the building of the Soviet school system, were insufficiently versed in Marxism and their positions were confused and mistaken. The contradictions and errors of the best of the old educationists who had gone over to the side of the proletarian revolution were, as Lenin remarked, to a certain extent quite natural, for 1) weight of the past hung over them; 2) their contradictions reflected the contradictions of the period of transition to socialism; and 3) many of them had not had time to assimilate dialectical materialism.

The philosophical works of Lenin were of great importance in the creation of Soviet educational theory. Lenin formulated the basic tasks of educating a person in socialist society: the formation of a scientific world outlook on the basis of the mastery of the fundamentals of scientific theory, education through work, the education of communist morality, dedication to the cause of the working class, internationalism, etc.

One of the questions under discussion was that of the "educative influence of the environment". Shatsky took an active part in this debate and in the article published here he examines the questions of the content of education and its link with life.

1. Problems in the field of public education were not solved immediately. The bloody civil war (1918-1922), foreign military intervention, uniting the whole of the international counter-revolution, strove towards the restoration of the overthrown regime. They did a great deal of damage to the economy of Russia, which was backward even without that, and the country was in ruins. Schools worked in extremely difficult circumstances: there were

not enough academic institutions, lessons took place in unheated rooms, without textbooks, manuals, copybooks, etc. Despite the wide-scale enthusiasm of progressive teachers and pupils, as a result of the difficult economic conditions in the country, there was a large gap between the ideals of education and reality, which in some teachers gave rise to the sense of disillusionment and hopelessness which Shatsky is talking about.

Later on, the transition to the peaceful task of restoring the economy (1921-1925) also created the possibility for the strengthening and development of the Soviet school system. The material conditions under which schools were working gradually improved. By 1923 the tasks of the cultural revolution were pushed into the foreground: the struggle for overall literacy, the preparation of new specialists, the ideological transformation of the old intelligentsia, the development of science, technology, art and the theory and practice of education in the interests of building socialism. During these years Lenin wrote in his article "On Co-Operation":

"This cultural revolution would now suffice to make our country a completely socialist country; but it presents immense difficulties of a purely cultural (for we are illiterate) and material character (for to be cultured we must achieve a certain development of the material means of production, must have a certain material base)".

In this work Shatsky puts forward his view on the possible paths the cultural revolution could take.

2. In this instance Shatsky is criticizing the old, pre-revolutionary school system, quite rightly condemning the pupils' early professional specialization.

3. By race, Shatsky means nation, as is clear from the context.

4. In Soviet educational theory in those years the concept "environment" was interpreted in different ways. By environment, the majority of educationists meant the sum total of factors in the child's surroundings (productive, social, family, everyday life, etc.) which have an elemental effect on children. Individual theoreticians attached excessive importance to the environment in the formation of

children and at the same time accepted the role of the school in education. Evaluating their views, A. V. Lunacharsky wrote: "Our task is to understand the specific nature of the school and, not altering this specific nature or denying its enormous importance, to include it on the revolutionary front and make it one of the most important militant factors in its revolutionary activity".

Although on the whole he had a correct understanding of the significance of the school, Shatsky, as is clear from this article, could not avoid a certain amount of exaggeration in his evaluation of the influence of the environment on the formation of children.

5. Edison Thomas Alva (1847-1931)—American inventor in the field of electrotechnology and entrepreneur, founder of large electrical companies. From the age of 12, when he finished primary school, he worked as a newspaper delivery boy, a telegraphist and then took up inventing. He suggested and inaugurated the production of the incandescent lamp, various pieces of electrotechnical equipment and many other things.

Maxim Gorky—pseudonym—real name Alexei Maximovich Peshkov (1868-1936). Great proletarian writer, founder of socialist realism and father of Soviet literature. He lost his father early and began to lead an independent life, working as a loader and a baker. Spent a great deal of time and effort on his self-education. His ideological, social searching led Gorky to Marxism. In his literary works he reflected the ideas and aspirations of the revolutionary proletariat. His main works are: the novels *Foma Gordeyev*, *Mother*, *The Life of Klim Samgin*, the plays *The Petty Bourgeois*, *The Lower Depths*, *Summer Folk*, *Yegor Bulychov and Others*, *Vassa Zheleznova*. His collected works have been published in the USSR in 30 volumes.

6. "Social heredity" is what Shatsky calls the influence of the social environment.

7. Pyotr Frantsevich Lesgaft (1837-1909)—Russian educationist, founder of the system of physical education in Russia. Elaborated a theory of physical education upon the principle of the unity of physical and intellectual development. Basic works on education: "Guidance in the

Physical Education of Children of School Age” and *Family Upbringing*.

8. Shatsky, like the majority of Soviet educationists of his time, was well acquainted with the pre-revolutionary school system and categorically rejected the content of the old system of education and upbringing. He sought paths for the work of the new school, which had no analogy in history. At this time the searchings of theoreticians and practitioners of Soviet educational theory were influenced to a certain extent by bourgeois theories. Shatsky was influenced by certain of Dewey's theories, which he later decisively rejected.

9. Ivan Mikhailovich Sechenov (1829-1905)—Russian experimenter in the natural sciences, materialist, founder of the Russian school of physiology and the natural science tendency in psychology.

10. Children's homes (from 1918)—state educational institutions for children who have lost their parents. During the civil war they played an important part in wiping out child neglect and homelessness.

At the present time in the USSR there are two types of children's homes: for children under school age (from 3-7 years) and for children of school age (from 7-16 years). In the latter children study at school together with children who live with their families. The children's homes in conjunction with the school carry out the general tasks of a communist upbringing and prepare children for an independent life. In connection with the improved living standards of workers in the USSR in recent years, the number of children's homes and children brought up in them has been reduced.

11. Although he correctly understood the power of the influence of the social environment in the formation of children, Shatsky did not in these years raise the question of the class nature of education sufficiently clearly.

12. In this instance, under the general concept of “educational process” Shatsky understands the “factors of formation” of personality, and at the same time somewhat belittles the importance of purposeful education.

The Marxist educationists N. K. Krupskaya and A. V. Lunacharsky upheld the Marxist-Leninist thesis on the need for a purposeful, systematic moulding of the individual so as to prepare him for active participation in life. As can be seen from the work published here, Shatsky in those years had embarked upon the path of searching for the correct correlation of factors in the formation of schoolchildren.

Contemporary Soviet educational psychology pays the greatest attention to the formation of the personality in the social and concrete historical conditions in which the child exists, attaching a great deal of importance to education and upbringing. There can be no doubt that heredity and the environment play a definite role in this process, although education is the most important factor in forming the personality. Education orders and organizes a child's life and activity, creates a situation beneficial to its development and conditions for the realization of the child's creative powers, at the same time forming and guiding them.

13. Shatsky considered that different forms of activity should form the basis of the organization of a child's life. Contemporary Soviet educational psychology emphasises the dialectical nature of activity: a person's personality is reflected in activity and at the same time activity forms his personality.

The following classification of activity is commonly accepted: socially useful work activity, play, academic, sport and aesthetic activity. As can be seen from the article published here, as far back as the 1920's Shatsky defined the aspects of activity in approximately the same way.

14. Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov (1711-1765)—first Russian scientist of world significance, one of the founders of physical chemistry, poet, who laid the foundations of the contemporary Russian language, artist, historian, champion of education and the development of an independent school of Russian science.

M. V. Lomonosov was the son of a peasant from the village of Kholmogory (in the north of Russia). Anxious to receive an education, at the age of twenty he set off for Moscow, travelling on foot and on carts which gave him

lifts along the way. Making out that he was the son of a nobleman, he was admitted to study at the Academy (a general education school) and upon completion of his studies there, was sent as one of the best students to continue his education in St. Petersburg. Lomonosov was a man of wide interests and abilities and encyclopaedic knowledge.

The life of Lomonosov has become a symbol of an extraordinary thirst for knowledge.

15. Oblomov—the hero of the novel of the same name by the Russian writer I. A. Goncharov (1812-1891). Oblomov is a typical character of the serf-owning gentry, leading an aimless parasitic life. In Russian literature this image has become synonymous with idleness, lack of will-power and an aimless existence.

16. Debates about the new content of education, the principles of constructing the curriculum and teaching methods were very heated in the years described here. The first years after the October Revolution had been spent in throwing out the old school textbooks, eliminating chauvinism and methods of regimentation and rote-learning, but now it was necessary to pour new content into teaching, to co-ordinate school with life and with the burning topic of building socialism, and defining new teaching methods.

The school curriculum at the beginning of the 1920's had the following aims: a) to give children a conception of the essence of people's working activity and of the laws of development of animate and inanimate nature; b) to help them to realize the basic laws and activity of society in their vital connections; c) to involve pupils in work commensurate with their abilities and in the transformation of nature and social life. There were heated discussions about the content of education and since the curriculum was only a recommendation, in some places individual curricula were set up which took into consideration the special features of the area. This evoked wide-scale creative work on the part of the teachers in defining the content of education. But quite often the curricula which were set up in individual areas lacked a scientific basis and were characterized by an overwhelmingly pragmatic approach.

However, in its goals, the work on the curriculum and on teaching methods which was carried out in those years was a success since it linked education with life and laid the foundation for a new content in education. In the years which followed, the theoretic and scientific principles of education in the Soviet school system were reinforced and the school began to give its pupils knowledge on a systematic basis.

At the present time general education schools in the USSR successfully fulfil the tasks of attaining a high level of academic achievement amongst pupils and of preparing them for socially useful work. The unified curriculum for all pupils at compulsory secondary schools includes the following compulsory subjects: native language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, social science, physical education, art, work training, a foreign language and others. In schools in the national republics national culture and history are also taught.

In this Soviet educational theory works upon the principle that the school and teaching must develop the abilities of all pupils and open wide possibilities for each personality being formed.

How We Teach

This article was first published in 1928.

In this article and the following ones, written at the end of the 1920's, Shatsky raises questions which were burning issues at the time. For the Soviet school system and educational theory this was a period of searching for new content, organizational forms and teaching methods, when in the process of educational experiments the most effective of them were selected for application. In the article published here questions are raised about the active participation of pupils in the classroom, the awakening of interest in what is being studied and the involvement of pupils in independent work.

1. S. T. Shatsky has the pre-revolutionary school system in mind here.

2. Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936)—outstanding Russian physiologist, academician, founder of the theory of higher nervous activity. His theory of conditioned reflexes is the foundation of the materialist approach to the study of the higher functions of the brain in animals and human beings. Pavlov introduced the concept of signalization systems as a result of which were explained the analytic and synthetic functions of the cerebral cortex, abstraction and generalization. These discoveries have an extraordinarily important significance not only for physiology, but also for psychology and educational theory.

Rationalizing Lessons in School

S. T. Shatsky published this article in 1928. In it he examines the problems of didactics which were topical at that time and which have not lost their significance even for the present day.

1. Striving to get rid of the vices of the pre-revolutionary school system and to educate pupils to be active and conscious builders of a socialist society, the organizers of public education, academics and teachers of the 1920's carried out a search for new paths and methods in education. Mistakes were inevitably made and extremities did occur. For example, at the end of the 1920's the brigade-laboratory method and the link system began to be applied. Pupils, grouped together as links (brigades) worked independently at set tasks and then the brigade reported its results. The absence of an individual account of knowledge led to an irresponsible attitude amongst pupils, the pupils' knowledge was unsystematic and it was difficult for teachers to have an educative influence on their pupils. From 1932 the use of the brigade-laboratory method as a universal teaching method was abandoned.

Soviet Teaching and Teaching Aids

This article was first published in 1928. By that time a radical transformation had taken place in Soviet schools in the content of education and methods of work, in comparison with the pre-revolutionary system. The basic prin-

ciple of the Soviet school system—the linking of learning with life—called for an essential transformation in teaching methods. One question which was frequently raised was that of the selection of teaching material. What should it be like, what functions should it fulfil, what educational needs should it answer, how should it be prepared—all these were very topical questions at the time.

Time itself has shown how right Shatsky was in raising these questions. In the 1930's and subsequent years a large-scale centralized construction and preparation of teaching materials was implemented in the country. At the present time the elaboration of such materials is carried out by scientific institutions.

1. The school system in those years was organized as follows: 4-year primary schools (Level I schools), based on them—schools for young people of the peasantry (V-VII grades), factory apprentice schools (V-VII grades), which gave vocational training, Level II schools (V-IX grades), schools with a vocational basis (VIII-IX grades). All schools were state schools and free of charge.

2. These ideas of Shatsky's have become implemented at the present time. Young people are encouraged to take an interest in technical creative work amongst other things by the great number of journals such as *Yuni Tekhnik* (Young Technician), *Yuni Naturalist* (Young Naturalist), *Tekhnika molodyozhi* (Technology for Young People), etc.

The Work of the First Experimental Centre of Public Education

This article was first published in 1928.

The First Experimental Centre of Public Education—a group of experimental-model organizations attached to the People's Commissariat for Education—was set up in 1919. S.T. Shatsky was nominated as its director. The station was composed of two sections—rural and urban. The station included kindergartens, general education schools, extra-mural organizations for children and adults and permanent teacher-training courses for raising the qualifica-

tions of teachers. The work of the station was of a scientific-research nature and was defined in a special Statute confirmed by the People's Commissariat for Education. The workers at the station theoretically and experimentally elaborated the content, teaching methods and organization of educational work. A great deal of attention was given to the combined work of the school and the general public in the sphere of educating children.

Published under the general title of "The Work of the First Experimental Centre of Public Education", this work includes material from articles and reports by Shatsky relating to the work of the station. Here they are published in an abridged form. The materials bring up the questions of the goal and purpose of the First Experimental Centre, its organizational basis and its theoretical and practical tasks.

1. New Economic Policy (NEP)—1921-1930—the economic policy of the Communist party and the Soviet state in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. The essential idea of NEP was the strengthening of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry on an economic basis and the establishment of the link between socialist industry and the small-scale peasant economy. The aim of the introduction of NEP was to revitalize agriculture and small-scale industry, then to restore and develop industry on a large scale, to prepare and implement the socialist transformation of agriculture and create a material and technical basis for socialism. In order to revitalize commodity circulation and satisfy the demands of the population for manufactured goods, small-scale industry was partially denationalized, private trade was allowed and a direct exchange of goods was introduced between industry and peasant agriculture through the medium of cooperatives.

NEP allowed a certain amount of development to capitalist elements, while leaving the overall command of the economy in the hands of the proletarian state. The policy of gradual limitation and elimination of private capital led by 1930 to the undivided sovereignty of socialist relations of production.

2. Pre-revolutionary Russia was considered a peasant

country: 4/5 of the population lived in the country and was connected with agriculture. At the beginning of the twentieth century more than half (62 per cent) of all the land in Russia belonged to the land-owning gentry, the bourgeoisie, the tsar's family and the church. Many millions of peasants were either without land at all or owned very little land. On an average, for each family of the land-owning gentry there was 2.3 thousand desyatinas of land, whereas for every peasant household there were 7-15 desyatinas. 65 per cent of the rural population lived in poverty (peasants without land, with very little land, without their own horses) and rented land from the land-owning gentry. In 1917 all the land belonging to the gentry, the bourgeoisie, the tsar's family and the church was nationalized and given to the peasants to use free of charge. Up to 1927 agriculture was based upon small, divided peasant farms, operating on the principle of private property.

The socialist transformation of the countryside began in 1927. Collective farms were organized as cooperative organizations of peasants set up on a voluntary basis for joint large-scale farming based on collectivized means of production and collective work. The collective farms were a new form of agricultural production alongside the state farms, socialist state agricultural enterprises set up in 1918, in which the basic means of production and agricultural products were the property of the state. Land was given by the state to the collective farms for use free of charge and for an unlimited period of time. The agricultural produce of the collective farms was to be bought by the state. The money thus received was to be used to pay the workers on the collective farm, to increase the fixed and circulating assets of the farm, to set up a fund for cultural and other amenities, funds of social security and material assistance, etc. Thanks to the policy of collectivization the situation of the peasants was radically changed and there was a rise in the level of their economic, political and cultural life.

3. The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol, YCL) is a large-scale organization uniting progressive young people (aged 14-28). Founded in 1918, the YCL is affiliated to the Communist Party of the So-

viet Union and constitutes its reserve in the state, economic and cultural development, in the struggle for the victory of communism. The principles of its work are: collective leadership, the all-round development of inner Komsomol democracy, the broad initiative of all members of the YCL, criticism and self-criticism. It educates youths and girls in the spirit of fidelity to the principles of proletarian internationalism, friendship between young people of all countries and promotes the expansion of the democratic youth movement. Its leading organs are general meetings (for primary organizations), conferences (for regional or town organizations) and congresses (for the whole of the YCL). Its highest executive body is the Central Committee of the YCL. The obligations of a member of the Komsomol are: to take an active part in the struggle for communism, to set an example in work and study, to acquire knowledge, culture and science, to be a patriot to his country, to take an active part in the political life of the country, and others.

During the years of industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture many thousands of young Komsomol members voluntarily took an active part in socialist construction. An enormous army of young people was formed who enthusiastically helped the teachers to eliminate illiteracy and semi-literacy amongst the population. The strengthening of the links between the Komsomol and the school was considerably helped by the creation in 1922 of the All-Union Young Pioneer organization, a voluntary children's communist organization for children aged 10-14, which in 1924 was named after Lenin. The principles of the activity of the Young Pioneer organization are: its communist orientation, initiative, collectivism, adventure. Its tasks are: political and moral education, inculcation of a love of learning and knowledge, work-experience, aesthetic and physical education. The structure of the organization is as follows: Young Pioneer units (created in the school, uniting all the Young Pioneers in the school), within the unit groups are set up (all the Pioneers in one grade), the groups are divided into cells. All the units in the town make up the town unit, which in turn is incorporated into the regional and then the republic Young Pioneer organization. Admission to the organization takes place at a special Young Pioneer meeting, where the new

member makes a Solemn Promise and is given a red Young Pioneer scarf and a badge.

The activity of both the Komsomol and the Young Pioneer organizations is guided by the same tasks, the most important of which are the preparation of the growing generation for active participation in social life, useful work, all-round intellectual, physical, cultural and moral development, the inculcation of deep respect for the principles of life in a socialist society, love of their country and participation in the struggle for peace throughout the world. At the present time the Komsomol numbers about 39 million young people in its ranks, and the Young Pioneer movement—20 million children.

Improving the Quality of Lessons

This article was written in 1932.

Shatsky considers it essential in teaching to take into consideration the features of children's consciousness, not to give ready-made formulae and to lead children to a comprehension and understanding of the world by means of observation, experiments, etc.

Shatsky puts forward the question of the necessity for the pupil to realize the social significance of learning. These ideas have not lost their relevance even today.

1. Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)—Russian writer. Sharply criticized serfdom in Russia, the demoralized state of the nobility, the growth of new capitalist forms of exploitation and pinned his hopes on a rapprochement between the intelligentsia and the people, and on moral improvement. The basic theme in his work is the world of human suffering and the tragedy of the humiliated personality. He juxtaposes the characters who have all-destructive intellectual ability with kind-hearted people gifted with a fine spiritual intuition.

His main works are the novels *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Karamazov Brothers*. *The Demons*, *The Insulted and Humiliated*, etc.

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