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1949-50 SCHOOL YEAR OPENS IN USSR

[Numbers in parentheses refer to the appended list of sources.]

I. TRENDS IN THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

The 1949-50 school year began in the USSR on 1 September. The introduction of compulsory, general 7-year education in rural areas is the most notable event of the new school year. Recurring press comments on textbook and teacher shortages, inadequate school space, and poor attendance in some localities are evidence that this new program is meeting difficulties. The press also stresses the importance of raising the ideological level of instruction, of increased Russian-language instruction in non-Russian schools, and of decreasing the number of students repeating grades.

General 7-year education -- This school year, by decree of the Soviet government, all children who have completed the fourth grade must enter the fifth grade. This introduction of compulsory, general 7-year education will swell attendance in Soviet schools. In recent years, more than 90 percent of the children completing primary (4-year) schools have entered 7-year schools. About half of the students finishing the 7-year course have entered secondary general and special educational institutions (1). This increment of students is being handled by opening fifth grades in primary schools (2), by opening additional fifth grades in 7-year schools, and by opening new 7-year schools (3).

In Georgia, compulsory 8-year education is being introduced in the rural areas (4). General complete secondary education is being introduced in Armenian cities (5) as well as in other USSR cities.

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Poor attendance criticized -- On 24 September 1949, Uchitel'skaya Gazeta printed a decree of the Council of Ministers Uzbek SSR and the TsK KP(b) Uzbekistan on the general 7-year education of children in Niyazbashskiy Village Soviet, Tashkent Oblast. The decree points out the failure of this village soviet to full-fill satisfactorily decrees issued last summer on the registration and full enrollment in schools of school-age children. Not only were all children of school age not registered, but only 1,266 of the 1,383 registered attended classes. The decree points to the failure of responsibility of the chairman of the village soviet, kolkhoz chairmen, and secretaries of primary Party and Komsomol organizations in this matter.

In an article commenting on the decree, Uchitel'skaya Gazeta stated that many other executive committees of soviets have undervalued the importance of general education. It continued with the following observations: Local soviet organs as well as people's education organs are fully responsible for carrying out general education. Successful general education is the result of enormous mass-political work carried out by Party and soviet organizations and by schools. An important cause of poor attendance is the lack of propaganda and explanatory work directed toward parents. The Council of Ministers Uzbek SSR and the TsK(b) Uzbekistan have called on kolkhoz managements and primary Party and Komsomol organizations to discuss school problems, to establish control over children's activities, and not to divert children to agricultural work (6).

Shortage of teachers, schools, and textbooks -- At a meeting of the collegium of the Ministry of Education RSFSR, it was reported that new 7-year schools in the RSFSR have not been manned with adequate teaching staffs. For example, 70 new 7-year schools opened this year in Kaluga Oblast. They are short 29 Russian-language teachers, 37 mathematics teachers, and others (7).

During the 1948-49 school year, many Kazakh schools operated with two or three shifts of students. A decree of the TsK KP(b) of Kazakhstan calls for the elimination of third shifts and for a minimum of second shifts this year (8). At the same time, a Moscow secondary school is forced to hold 50 classes in only 22 classrooms because of a shortage of school space (9).

The plan for the 1949-50 school year calls for the printing of 170 million new textbooks for Soviet schools. By 10 September, 96.5 percent of these books had been printed and 92.2 percent delivered to book trade organizations (10). However, many schools have had to begin classes without receiving textbooks. Many reports received by the editors of Uchitel'skaya Gazeta and articles in local newspapers speak of the unsatisfactory delivery of textbooks to schools. Many book trade organizations and people's education sections display exceptional sluggishness and bad administration in this matter. While textbooks are clearly lacking in L'vov schools, these books have appeared in the city's markets at increased prices. About 70,000 textbooks were being hoarded in the warehouses of the Poltava Oblast section of people's education at the time the new school year began. There are many similar cases of poor organization (11).

As the result of decrees on ideological questions issued by the TsK VKP(b), many courses and textbooks, particularly on biology, have been revised. And as Kazakhstanskaya Pravda points out, the reorganization of the teaching of biology on the basis of Michurin science points the way for the reorganization of other subjects (12). The following article published in Uchitel'skaya Gazeta demonstrates that the 1949 publication of textbooks has not been sufficient to replace all textbooks not following the new Party line and points out the resulting difficulties:

The Ministry of Education RSFSR explains that along with textbooks published in 1949, textbooks published in preceding years should be used, with the exception of textbooks on botany, zoology, human anatomy and physiology, and principles of Darwinism. When textbooks of several different editions are used in a school,

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it is recommended that only one edition be used in a given class. In the event that there are several editions of a textbook in a class, the teacher, in assigning homework, must indicate exactly to the students where they can find the necessary information. Instructions on which earlier editions of textbooks can be used are given in the list of textbooks for primary, 7-year, and secondary schools which was distributed to ministries of education of autonomous republics, and to kray, oblast, and city sections of people's education (13).

Russian-language instruction held inadequate -- The teaching of the Russian language in non-Russian areas is being increasingly stressed. An instruction of the Seventeenth Congress of the KP(b) Azerbaydzhan stated that "for us, the Soviet peoples, the Russian language... is the native language of our multi-million, multinational Soviet family" (14). In relation to this, it is interesting to note that Russian will be taught from the second grade in Armenian and Azerbaydzhanian schools in Armenia for the first time this year (15).

However, several reports criticize the quality of Russian-language instruction. At a Kazakh republic conference on people's education, it was noted that Russian is poorly taught in many Kazakh schools. It was stated that special faculties for training Russian-language teachers should be established in teachers' institutes (15). A. S. Raud, Minister of Education, Estonian SSR, issued an order on improving the teaching of Russian in Estonian schools. The main shortcomings there are poorly trained teachers and poor textbooks. Summer courses will be held for Russian-language teachers to improve their qualifications (17). Instruction of Russian in Kirgiz schools has also been criticized (18).

II. ATTENDANCE, EXPANSION OF PRIMARY, 7-YEAR, AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Information from the Soviet press gives school attendance figures for all republics, except Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan, and for some major cities and oblasts. It should be noted here that the term "school" (shkola), refers to primary (4-year), 7-year, and secondary (10-year) schools. Attendance at specialized secondary educational institutions (tekhnikums) and higher educational institutions is not included in these school attendance figures unless otherwise noted.

USSR -- More than 36 million persons are attending USSR schools, specialized secondary educational institutions, and higher educational institutions this school year (19). Of this number, almost 34 million children and teen-agers are attending primary, 7-year, and secondary schools. Almost 1,500,000 teachers will instruct them (20).

RSFSR -- A total of 18,470,000 students, including 2 million for the first time, are beginning classes today in RSFSR schools. The number of students attending the fifth to the seventh grades has increased by 2 million over last year (21). The number of fifth-graders in RSFSR schools has increased by 500,000 in comparison with last year (22).

In Moscow, 613,000 children, including 54,000 first-graders are attending the 550 schools in the capital city. This is almost 20,000 more than last winter. There are also about 50,000 youths attending the 139 young workers' schools in Moscow (23). The enrollment in Leningrad City schools is 340,000, including 11,000 first-graders (24), while 165,000 students are attending schools in Leningrad Oblast (25). Kuybyshev City and Oblast schools have an enrollment of more than 300,000 students this school year (26).

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The development of people's education in the Tuva Autonomous Oblast was begun in 1944 when Tuva was annexed by the USSR. Now Tuva has 140 schools with an attendance of 22,400 and a teaching staff of 1,100 (27). In Sakhalin Oblast, there are now 537 schools, including 383 primary, 124 seven-year, and 30 secondary schools, as well as a teachers' institute and two pedagogical schools. There are 90,000 students and 3,000 teachers in the educational institutions of Sakhalin (28).

Ukrainian SSR -- Today, 6,401,000 school children began the new school year in the 29,735 schools in the Ukraine (29). A total of 2,500 new schools have been opened (30).

There are 107,000 children, including 12,000 first-graders, attending the 133 Kiev schools this year (31). Another report states that attendance at the 146 Kiev schools totals 114,000 children this year, an increase of 8,500 over last year. This higher figure probably includes young workers' schools. Eleven new schools have been opened and the number of secondary schools increased from 74 to 96. In Kharkov Oblast 380,000 children have begun the new school year, an increase of 30,000 over last year (32).

Belorussian SSR -- More than 1,500,000 children are attending classes in the 11,789 schools in Belorussia. Hundreds of new schools have opened in Vitebsk, Mogilev, Bobruysk, and in villages and rural areas (33). In Minsk 38,000 children, several thousand more than last year, are attending classes (34).

Uzbek SSR -- There are now 4,665 schools, with more than 40,000 teachers, in the Uzbek SSR. A total of 1,218,000 children, 44,000 of whom are eight- to tenth-graders, are attending school this year in Uzbekistan (35). In Kashka-Dar'ya Oblast alone, attendance totals 94,000, which is 5,000 more than last year (35).

Kazakh SSR -- On 1 September, 1,200,000 Kazakh school children will begin the new school year. A total of 8,494 schools will be open in Kazakhstan this year, including 2,187 seven-year schools and 567 secondary schools. Last year, 416 school buildings were constructed by the community efforts of Kazakh citizens. The construction of 315 more school buildings was completed this summer. A total of 3,600,000 textbooks in the Kazakh language and 3,330,000 textbooks in the Russian language have been distributed to schools in the Kazakh SSR for the new school year (37).

Georgian SSR -- Attendance this year at Georgian schools is 745,000 in comparison with 698,000 last year. Up to 20 new schools have been constructed in connection with this expansion (38).

Azerbaijdzhan SSR -- A total of 600,000 students are starting the new school year in Azerbaijdzhan (39).

Lithuanian SSR -- More than 400,000 children are attending Lithuanian schools this year. Hundreds of new schools have been opened (40).

Moldavian SSR -- As a result of the enormous work done on cultural reforms, there are 1,924 schools in Moldavia, including 696 seven-year and 106 secondary schools, which are attended by more than 400,000 students (41). In connection with the shift to compulsory 7-year education, 38,000 more children are attending Moldavian schools than last year (42).

Kirgiz SSR -- Attendance this year at the 1,700 Kirgiz schools totals 318,000, an increase of more than 18,000 over last year. Fifty new schools have been opened and the teaching staff augmented by 1,200 new teachers. In accordance with the new general education law, more than 40,000 students have entered fifth grades in 7-year and secondary schools (43). All Kirgiz and Russian schools in the republic will be supplied with the necessary textbooks. As of today, 593,600 textbooks in the Russian language, or 70.7 percent of plan, and 622,500 books in the Kirgiz language, or 70 percent of plan, have been printed and distributed to the book trade network (44).

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Armenian SSR -- There are 300,000 students attending Armenian schools this year. Twenty new schools have been opened in the republic (45).

Latvian SSR -- On 1 September, 290,000 school children started classes in Latvia (46). These include the 6,000 students attending school in Daugavpils, an increase of 1,000 over last year, and the 6,200 students attending Liyepaya schools, 600 more than last year (47).

Estonian SSR -- More than 160,000 children, including 20,000 first-graders started the new school year in Estonia. General 7-year education has been completely realized in Estonia. Hundreds of primary schools have been reorganized as 7-year schools and the teaching staff expanded by 936 new teachers (48).

Another report states that 150,000 children, including 19,000 first-graders, are starting the new school year in the 1,192 general education schools in Estonia. Ten new schools have been opened (49).

Karelo-Finnish SSR -- In connection with the introduction of general compulsory 7-year education, 71 new schools have been opened in the Karelo-Finnish SSR. A total of 70,000 children are attending schools in the republic, including 18,000 for the first time (50).

Turkmen SSR -- Ashkhabad schools suffered severely from the earthquake which struck the city last year. However, school activities did not stop. After the earthquake, schools were first held under tents and then in temporary quarters constructed with the aid of parents and older students. Thousands of citizens have taken part in the restoration and repair of schools (51).

The following table shows attendance at USSR schools (primary, 7-year, and secondary) at the beginning of the 1949-50 school year, and gives comparison with 1948 attendance, where available:

	<u>School Attendance</u>	
	<u>1949</u>	<u>1948</u>
USSR	34,000,000 -	--
RSFSR	18,470,000	--
Moscow City	613,000	593,000 +
Leningrad City	340,000	--
Leningrad Oblast	165,000	--
Rybyashev City and Oblast	300,000 -	--
Sakhalin Oblast	90,000 (a)	--
Tuva AO	22,100	--
Ukrainian SSR	6,401,000	--
Kiev City	107,000 (b)	--
Kharkov Oblast	380,000	350,000
Belorussian SSR	1,500,000 +	--
Minsk	38,000	36,000 (c)
Uzbek SSR	1,218,000	--
Kashka-Dar'ya Oblast	94,000	89,000
Kazakh SSR	1,200,000	--
Georgian SSR	745,000	698,000
Azerbaijshan SSR	600,000	--
Lithuanian SSR	400,000 +	--
Moldavian SSR	400,000 +	362,000
Kirgiz SSR	318,000	300,000 -
Armenian SSR	300,000	--
Latvian SSR	250,000	--
Liyepaya	6,200	5,600
Daugavpils	6,000	5,000

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	<u>School Attendance</u>	
	<u>1949</u>	<u>1948</u>
Estonian SSR	150,000 (b)	--
Karelo-Finnish SSR	70,000	--

- (a) Includes attendance at three higher schools
 (b) Lower figure cited
 (c) Source states several thousand less than in 1949

III. HIGHER SCHOOLS OPEN, PARTY CONTROL TIGHTENED

The 1949-50 school year began on 1 September for higher educational institutions as well as for lower schools. Soviet press comments stressed the importance of continuing purges of professors and courses not following Party decrees on ideological questions, and of strengthening Party control over the activities of universities. Particular attention was also paid to the opening of new higher educational institutions and to expansion of established facilities.

Editorial comments on higher schools -- According to Uchitel'skaya Gazeta, important work was carried out during the last school year in all Soviet higher educational institutions on improving the quality of science instruction on the basis of Leninist-Marxist methodology. The paper goes on to say: "The decrees of the TsK VCP(b) on ideological questions and the August session of the All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences imeni Lenin aided in improving the scientific-theoretical operation of higher educational institutions in all fields of knowledge..... However, not all has been done so far. The positions won must be secured. The unity of theory and practice must not only be talked about, but actually carried out in universities and institutes" (52).

In an interview with Pravda Ukrainy, S. M. Bukhalo, chief of the Administration for Higher School Affairs, Council of Ministers Ukrainian SSR, stated: "Party decrees on ideological questions have played an enormous role in the life of Ukrainian higher educational institutions. They helped to improve significantly the teaching of philosophy, history, literature, arts, and biology. Higher educational institutions were purged of infiltrating hangers-on of bourgeois pseudoscience -- Weisman-Morganists, cosmopolites, and bearers of the survivals of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. Departments of many higher educational institutions have been strengthened by young scientists who stand fast on the position of Marxist-Leninist science" (53).

More stringent Party control over education is also indicated in an article in Sovetskaya Latvija. This article states that in recent times some professors and instructors at Latvian State University in Riga have fawned over Western European science and have failed to reveal the priority of native science in their lectures. The university has freed itself of bourgeois specialists who do not know how to and do not want to reconsider their pseudoscientific idealistic theories, says this article. Control over the quality of instruction and over the content of lectures will be strengthened this year, it concludes (54).

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A Pravda article further demonstrates methods of Party control over universities. The article remarks that after the liberation of Estonia, the directors of Tartu University retained the university's progressive professors and teachers. Hundreds of new students, children of laborers, have entered the university, swelling its enrollment to 3,000. The university's Party organization is fighting to liberate the university intelligentsia from survivals of the past and to aid them in acquiring a Marxist-Leninist world-outlook. The Party organization has established a program for this purpose.

Study programs on Marxist-Leninist theory have been set up for the teaching staff, Pravda continues. "On the initiative of the Party organization, biology lectures are now conducted on the basis of Michurin's teaching. It is particularly important that students, in hearing lectures, know physics, biology, literature, and art in the light of the teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.... A conference held by the Party organization pointed out that many old teachers have been freed from idealistic viewpoints and have purified their lectures of reactionary bourgeois teaching. In the new school year, the Party organization must greatly strengthen the instruction of the teaching staff on the facts of the fight against survivals of the past, disinterest in politics, bourgeois objectivity, and grovelling before the authority of science.... The Party organization is also striving for greater influence over the work of Komsomol organizations, sport groups, and student scientific societies" (55).

According to Pravda Ukraine, the ideological-political education of students on the great ideas of Leninism must be the center of attraction of every higher educational institution, its workers, and Party and Komsomol organizations. The science of Marxism-Leninism is necessary to every specialist and field of knowledge. The chair of Marxism-Leninism has a special role in improving teaching in general in higher educational institutions. It is necessary to improve the quality of work of these chairs, to make them leaders in all higher educational institutions, and with the aid of Party organizations, to improve the selection, training, and retraining of teachers of Marxist-Leninist principles (56).

K. Galkin, chief of the Graduate Studies Section, Ministry of Higher Education USSR, states in an article in Uchitel'skaya Gazeta that during the 1949-50 school year, higher educational institutes and scientific research institutes must admit many more graduate students than last year. Applicants for graduate studies should be considered not only on the basis of general readiness and capability to conduct scientific work, but also on their ideological-political preparation (57).

Note higher-school attendance, new schools -- A. M. Samarin, Vice-Minister of Higher Education and Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences USSR, stated in an interview with Moskovskiy Komsomolets that 197,000 new students are entering the 830 USSR universities and institutes this year. Of these new students, 20,000 have been awarded gold and silver medals. A total of 750,000 students, 165,000 more than in 1941, are now attending Soviet higher educational institutions (58).

Attendance at the 3,468 specialized secondary educational institutions in the USSR (59) is approximately 1,250,000 (60).

A total of 128,000 students are attending higher educational institutes in Moscow (61) and about 70,000 in Leningrad (62). Attendance at the 159 Ukrainian higher educational institutions totals 135,000, including 33,500 beginning students (63). In Moldavia, 5,000 students, 600 more than last year, are attending the eight higher educational institutions in that republic. About 1,300 of these are first-year students (64).

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New higher educational institutions have been opened in many Soviet schools, including 31 teachers' institutes in the RSFSR along (65). These institutes will train teachers of Russian language and literature, physics, mathematics, natural sciences, and geography for the fifth to seventh grades of 7-year and secondary schools. The opening of the new pedagogical educational institutions will basically solve the problem of teaching staffs to carry out general 7-year education (66). A pedagogical institute is opening in Kostroma (67) and teachers' institutes, for the first time, in Southern Sakhalin and Gorno-Altay Autonomous Oblast (68). Teachers' institutes have also been opened in Bobruysk, Liyepaya, and Soroki in the Moldavian SSR (69).

New agricultural institutes have been opened in Kostroma, Blagoveshchensk (70), and Ryazan' (71). The Ryazan' Institute has an agronomy and a zootechnology faculty. The Southern-Ural Polytechnical Institute which has been established in Chelyabinsk will train specialists for Ural, Kazakh, Bashkir, and Siberian enterprises. The newly organized forestry-engineering institute in Kharkov will train engineers in mechanization of logging and specialists in timber transport (72).

Not only have new institutes been established but dozens of new faculties and chairs have been opened in older higher educational institutions. New agronomy chairs have been created in Moscow, Leningrad, and in the majority of other universities (73). The Leningrad Pedagogical Institute imeni A. I. Gertsen and the Khabarovsk Medical Institute have opened special departments for students from national regions and okrugs of the Far North (74).

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