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## Co-operation Between School and Public Libraries

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If the twentieth century is an age of science, it is also an age of co-operation. We have started seeking cooperation in all walks of life—in agriculture, in research, in industry, in social service. In short, there is hardly any field where cooperation is not sought for and is not considered necessary.

In view of the above, cooperation is absolutely essential between school and public libraries. So long as students are in school, they can supplement their knowledge by reading books, borrowing them from the school libraries. As soon as they leave school, the school libraries stop catering to their needs. The public libraries generally cater to the needs of grown up and maturer persons, and they also do not come to the help of the school-boy thrown out of school. It is at this stage that cooperation between the school and the public libraries is needed most, and if this cooperation is promoted on sound lines, the purpose of education, which is to disseminate knowledge to one and all, without fear or favour, will be fulfilled.

Knowledge has advanced tremendously in the twentieth century, and is likely to proceed at a more rapid speed in the near future. To keep abreast of modern advances in all fields of knowledge, man has to read more now than at any other time before. Personal resources of

individuals are limited, and they can buy only a few books, though they need many. Naturally, they have to depend upon libraries and draw upon them to satisfy their needs. To avoid duplicate expenditure on books, the school and public libraries should cooperate by exchange of lists of books, which they propose to purchase. Books needed by both may be purchased only by one library. This will promote not only cooperation, but understanding between the officers of the school and the public libraries, and result in stopping wasteful expenditure.

In certain schools and towns, libraries exist, not because they do real service to the community, but only as an essential feature of modern civilisation. They are ill-stocked, and it is very rarely that books are issued from them. If libraries are to fulfil the role which they should, they have to be organised on modern lines. The function of a library is not only to exist, but to participate actively in the spread of knowledge. It is not enough that a library should issue books which the people want. It should also refine the taste of its readers by suggesting better books for reading and thereby cultivating in them a subtle sense of appreciation. This can best be done, if the organisers of the school and the public libraries occasionally meet and compare notes. The development of taste from childhood to adolescence and from there to maturity

is a very interesting psychological study, and if the organisers make a serious effort, they can not only succeed in satisfying the urge for knowledge, but develop a distinct branch of psychology also. The condition of school libraries in India is really deplorable. The library is generally in charge of a teacher, who is unwilling to do the job. This being the case, the teacher-librarian has a tendency to discourage the issue of books and the use of the library facilities even during the working hours of the school. The school authorities should see that only those teachers who are really interested in the work are deputed to work as librarians. They may be given practical training courses in the local public libraries. This is another way in which the school and public libraries can cooperate.

The school library can offer library services closely connected with the school curriculum, but reference books can only be procured from public libraries. The children's section in public libraries can easily arrange story-hours, when the students from schools may be sent there and their learning is supplemented in a very nice way. Moreover, the students during their vacations can very well make use of public libraries.

The cooperation gets more momentum, when the school libraries are made deposit stations or branch libraries by public libraries. Teachers can also get ample assistance from the extensive stock available with public libraries having larger resources. The teacher training institutes can also be organised easily to enlist more cooperation.

Public libraries can also spare clippings, films, filmstrips, records, maps, globes and paintings meant for children. They can ransack the old, used-up stock of periodicals and make out collections for their schools for decorative purposes. The District Public Library borrows films from the Central and Foreign Embassies' Film Libraries for the use of schools, and

film shows are arranged by public libraries. By way of exhibition and documentaries and the proper use of books, the aesthetic sense is developed. Students are brought to public libraries under the proper supervision of the teacher, and requisite apartments may be reserved in public libraries to fulfil this aim. Sometimes separate rooms may be spared for the use of teachers and parents.

Graded assortment of books can also be regularised by the public libraries which have far better resources. Such lists may be prepared by teachers and librarians collectively as they possess the knowledge of curriculum and book resources respectively. The book annotations may also be prepared by both for the benefit of students. Parents can also be guided about what type of books they should give as gifts.

The stock of public libraries is publicised periodically by way of bulletins and informative folders.

The librarian trains children in the use of books, methods of study, broad classification and arrangement of books. He would also train teachers in the organisation of school libraries. The courses of study are imparted by a children's librarian who organises story hours, which are a necessary feature of library service. The children's librarian, being a specialist, keeps the teacher abreast of the modern children's literature. The teaching materials are also provided by the librarian for the benefit of teachers.

In this way, the public library can render the most efficient service to the student community. The public library may even go to the extent of purchasing books for school libraries and process them for the use of the school children. This will result in saving a lot of time and energy.

Let us now shift on to the services that can be rendered by a school library to a public library:—

1. Even the public library experiences dearth of funds and adequate staff. Student assistants can lend a hand in the case of simple and easier types of library work.
2. The library habits can be accentuated by teachers, for the better use of the public library.
3. The exchange system on the part of both the types of library service can well cater to the needs of children. The small funds at the disposal of school libraries can also make the situation better off.
4. The subject specialists really prove to be a valuable asset for book selection purposes.
5. The school children publicize the the public library in a better way, and membership is increased.
6. Coordination can remove duplication of the material by exchanging purchase lists.
7. Closer contacts on the part of teachers and librarians by way of meetings and discussions would be of tremendous help to children's education.
8. Sometimes, schools can serve as the service point for the neigh-

bouring community, especially where the areas are under-developed.

Mr. Lucile F. Fargo in his *The Library in the School* has stressed the importance of a school library. He says that (a) the library opens unlimited horizons for rural and urban children, and (b) a basement becomes an attractive library for the rural community.

A fine illustration in the aforesaid book shows how teachers and librarians learn to use projectors in the audio-visual room. Such cooperation between both types of libraries can be realised by mutual understanding and goodwill. A coordinated and unified library service can only be envisaged, if the education department has control over these two types of libraries.

The aim of the school and public libraries is the same, i.e., dissemination of knowledge and refinement of taste. Their coordinated efforts, made on a cooperative basis, can always lead to better results. Old ideas are being replaced by new ones in a rapidly changing world, and we can be conversant with the latest trends in knowledge, only if we make the best use of library books. This can be achieved, if the school as well as the public libraries are run on modern lines and cater to the needs of the young and the old.

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# COLD WAR AND JUVENILE DELIQUENCY

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America spends billions of dollars annually for the education of her children and she is the most progressive country in the world. Her democratic system of government has made the well-being of the people her first concern. It is not based, it is said, on the search for the maximum profit, but on the development of all the possibilities and all the human richness of the mass of the people. America was the first country to introduce social studies in her system of education to develop in her youth respect for all races, colours and creeds, to make the youth grow in their insight into ethical values and principles to be able to live and work cooperatively with others, and to grow in the moral and spiritual values of life. All these ideals now seem to be mere words signifying nothing. Her education seems to be a total failure in the life of her youth, for if it had been effective, American children would not have been what they are and would not do what they are doing—the most atrocious things that cannot be connived at as childish pranks. Open any daily paper, and you will see that not a day passes when American children do not commit some odious crime. Hammering a playmate to death for difference of opinion, setting fire to the cot of sleeping parents after pouring petrol on the bedding just for fun etc. are daily occurrences there, like street accidents which people have been accustomed to hear. Such news occasionally trickles out here. They are too atrocious items to be served to the public here. Parents there are puzzled, teachers stunned, senators dazed, clergymen make the sign of cross and quietly go to the priedieu for prayer, psychologists scratch their heads, and social workers look vacant, when they hear of such degradation of their young hopefuls.

According to police reports there, the number of children arrested for cognizable

offences such as burgling, murder, rape, incendiarism, etc. is increasing every year throughout the country. In numerous towns a curfew has been imposed to check juvenile crimes. In Philadelphia alone, the police at one haul arrested about one thousand young boys and girls for most heinous crimes. In big cities like New York, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, and Sanfrancisco real battles between rival groups of young students armed with clubs, crowbars, knives, revolvers etc. are frequently intercepted by police. Senator Hendrickson, president of the United States Senate sub-committee on Juvenile Delinquency, laments in an article entitled 'What is happening?': "In Washington 60 % of the crimes committed this year, have been committed by young people, and in the country as a whole crime among young people has increased 30 per cent since 1948."

Various atrocities committed by young children may be quoted from American newspapers and *The Schoolmaster*, an organ of the National Union of Teachers, London. We shall quote here a few lines from an article, "A crime against our children" by Albert Kahn, a noted American, to show how cold-blooded these murders are sometimes :

"Killing by children is becoming an increasingly familiar phenomenon in our country (U. S. A.), not only killings by teenagers in fierce gang feuds but also killings by children of playmates, casual acquaintances and even parents. In one recent case which was by no means unique in its sordidness, a youth in New York poisoned both his mother and father, and when his father failed to die swiftly enough, the youth forced more poison down the dying man's throat. A few days later, a fifteen-year-old boy in Minnesota shot his father, his mother

and his grand-mother, and following this triple murder, incredible as it may seem, the nation was treated to the spectacle of seeing this wretched, twisted child interviewed on a television programme and asked whether he had 'any message' to give to other children and parents."

Besides these sordid crimes, mischievous pranks are often played by children to annoy their parents. An experienced American teacher made a tape record of such mischievous pranks—one of which is given here.

A young jealous girl of ten says: "Sometimes I wake up and I hear talk, and sometimes my father is talking very sweetly to my mother. And I start peeking and listening."

"Aren't you in bed?"

"Of course, but I hear my father talking sweetly to my mother, and I run back to my room, and I get my little turtle out of the turtle bowl, and I put him on the floor outside the living room, and I give him a pat, and he runs across the floor, and my mother screams."

What has produced these child gangsters, drug addicts, murderers and ravishers of women? Who is responsible for this degeneration of the youth? Education or/and social condition? We are coming to this question shortly. These atrocious deeds cannot be lightly brushed aside as the exuberance of adolescence. They are explosive outbursts of a pugnacious spirit. Their reasoning seems to be that a big offence is a good defiance. They like to live dangerously. Why? What has made them think so? Teachers say that they have been doing their best; so say the parents. Is any organic cause or parental ineptitude or poor heredity responsible for this? Will playgrounds and recreational activities prove effective to divert their attention, or efforts to increase church attendance solve the problem? The roots of juvenile crime seem to be as

widespread as the roots of a vigorous tree. Economic inequality, political corruption, inadequate housing, poor schools, all these, according to some, have combined to produce child criminals. Sociologists say that a lack of community feeling of responsibility is accountable for such crimes. Shaw and McKay are impressed by the fact that, as this community responsibility is aroused in any neighbourhood or community, juvenile crimes seem to decrease. But social workers are of opinion that American "Horror Comics" alone are responsible for all these anti-social acts.

What are these horror comics? They are of several types such as crime comics, jungle comics, superman comics, love comics, and war comics. These comics are small pamphlets, consisting generally of 40 to 50 pages. They are neatly bound, nicely printed and profusely illustrated. Some titles, taken at random, are: The March of Crime, Criminals in Action, Love Scandals, My Love Life, The Saint Destroys the Communist Menace, Live to Die etc., etc. There are coloured illustrations of scenes of violence, half naked girls with bulky breasts, American soldiers shooting the Japanese or the Chinese, the hero (arch-criminal) shooting the police etc. Equally horrifying are their themes, which generally are about taking human life, singing hallelujahs to criminals, eulogising scientific murder, or incredible sadism. Coloured people are always painted as half-way between ape and man, the heroines are invariably faithless, deceitful and tricky. The sentences of these comics are short and cryptic, the language consists of the worst type of slang, exclamations of pain, anger and horror mark every line. In short, brutality, sadism, ravage and rapine are the keynote of all these. These books are sold as hot cakes to American children. According to one estimate, 1200 millions of crime 'comics' are sold every year, and 98 % of American children read these regularly, and each child reads from 20 to 25 comics a month. These 'comics' are

published by gigantic publishing trusts, who earn millions of dollars every year. They are very powerful bodies and have requisitioned the services of well known psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers and educationists to help them in their trade. Lawyers save them from the long arm of the law, psychologists and psychiatrists justify their work and say that 'comics' are necessary to enable children to liberate their aggressive instinct, and educationists keep silence.

To add to this, television and motion pictures have been fanning the flame of juvenile crime. A sample survey was taken and it was seen that in a single city, Los Angeles (U. S. A.), in one week, more than one thousand crime-pictures were shown. According to official figures, more than twenty million children regularly see these pictures in the United States. It is a wellknown fact that children wish to imitate and copy others. Fiction has great influence on the mind of young children, who try to copy and resemble their favourite heroes and heroines. The process has a tremendous impact on their character-building.

Who is responsible for this crime against children? The educational policy of America must be held responsible for this seduction of the innocent. Social condition and economic inequality may be responsible for love 'comics' and crime 'comics'; but what about war 'comics' and superman 'comics'? In such 'comics', the Americans are represented as God's chosen people in the world, endowed with super-strength and intelligence to dominate over the Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, Russians etc. who deserve only to be put down or shot dead. *Gleichschaltung* (conformity) and *Verschwiegenheit* (acquiescence) were the slogans of Hitlerite Germany, where the German race was painted as "Herren-Volk." The same spirit seems to dominate post-war American educational policy.

America fears and hates nothing like communism. So to warn her children of the communist menace and to keep her

people ever alert against any possible Soviet attack, America has geared her educational policy to develop a racist-cum-war mentality. Educational institutions are injecting the virus of cold war in innocent children. In short, her educational policy has been permeated with the methods of totalitarianism in order to maintain a united front against Communism from within and without. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Prussian educational system was reorganised, Von Humboldt enunciated the principle that "what you would put into the State, you must first put into the school". This principle is the greatest threat to democracy, and mankind from age to age become a pawn on the chess-board of international politics. Will they have to think and do as the State wishes them to think and do, will they have to behave slave-like, as the State will order them to behave, will they have no free will to determine their wellbeing? This is a challenge to free man.

However, let us come to the point. This crime against innocent children is a state creation. This is the opinion of the teachers of America. Let us quote again in extenso from "A crime against our children.":

"Nor can it be said that the schools of the land are doing much to counteract the brutalising influences of these media (Comics). The schools are serving increasingly as 'an instrument of national policy', a term with which Eisenhower has described what he considers to be their essential educational function. More and more, under the guidance of careful directives from different sources, schools are indoctrinating children with the precepts of the 'Cold War'. The children are learning daily that the Soviet Union, China and the Eastern European countries are the moral foes of the United States; that their country is gravely menaced by a diabolical 'Communist fifth-column conspiracy' engineered by Moscow, and that the reason they periodically have to hide under their desks is that war may

break out and bombs may fall at any moment of the day or night. At the same time, they are being taught that man can serve no purpose nobler than war. Under the impact of such 'entertainment' and 'education' as they now receive, and growing up in the dark repressive atmosphere which permeates the land, more and more children become juvenile delinquents. But the growth of delinquency, of course, is only one of the multiple sinister effects of the Cold War programme upon our children. Indeed, if one speaks of the greatest criminality in the United States today, it is not the crimes of the children that should be mentioned, it is the crimes that are being committed against the children by those persons now shaping the Cold War policies of our Government."

Look through any textbook or any children's literature of America, and you will find the same spirit of the preparation of the children's mind for war, the same spirit of racist mentality and Cold War in it. In an international meeting of educationists about textbooks organised by Unesco in Tokyo, there was a thorough discussion of objectives and principles which should guide producers of textbooks in the treatment of other peoples, and they came to a unanimous decision as follows:—"There is an urgent need today to broaden the sympathies and understanding of Eastern and other peoples by an insistence on the essential trend in history toward a common struggle for civilisation. The human heritage now bequathed to us is not the making of any one country or groups of countries, past or present, but the outcome of the struggle and aspirations of different communities throughout history. It would follow from this that the history and culture of a country has to be studied in an international spirit without neglect-

ing a national emphasis. This implies a wider perspective on the world, which has to be the basis in all teaching, and, therefore, in the history textbooks," (See document Unesco/ED/163) This decision is being violated by America.

Quite a different picture seems to be seen in Eastern Europe. Genuine love of one's country implies respect for other nations, for their liberty and independence. The patriotic feelings of the Soviet people are said to be mingled with a feeling of friendship and respect for other people. Keeping in view the educational role of books for children, the Soviet Government claims to do every thing to make the books artistic. That is why, it is claimed, so much attention is devoted in the USSR to the publication of children's books. Consideration is given to didactic purposes and not to commercial objects. The purpose of the literature for children there is to assist in the education of an optimistic, brave and industrious people who love their own country and respect other nations. All impartial writers who have visited Eastern Europe; the Soviet Union and Eastern Germany seem to agree that textbooks there are clean and free from racial hatred or animosity, although they are permeated with Marxist doctrines. Teachers, writers, artists, publishing houses, all are trying there to keep the child free from hatred and prejudice, and are working for a stable peace and cooperation between nations.

Children should be given such education as would enable them to live a full life and offer useful service to others, and for that education should be de-politicised. The old, old idea of Plato, "If young men have been and are well brought up, all things go swimmingly in the state," still holds good.

# HONOUR BOARDS

SHAMSUDDIN, B. A., M. Ed, Raipur

Maintenance of Honour Boards does not seem to be popular with schools in the country. In the majority of schools Honour Boards display names of only such students as score distinctions at public examinations. This is taking a very limited view of the school's functions and importance in society. In fact, schools should cater to the all round needs of students and be proud of those who bring them honour in any field.

In some schools, there are Honour Boards, but they are uncared for. They are not properly displayed which defeats its own purpose. Honour Boards serve a very useful purpose in a school set-up. They can be (i) an incentive to students in general; (ii) an encouragement to those whose names are displayed; and (iii) can create a link of affinity between students and the institution.

In fact, the Honour Board is a valuable possession of a school. It is no exaggeration to say that the Honour Board will decorate the school walls better than all sorts of other pictures. It reflects the glory of the school, and at the same time gives a sense of fulfilment to pupils who bring honour to their institutions. Its

importance does not end there. It will serve as an incentive to scores of other ambitious pupils who will enter that institution.

There is, however, a tendency to restrict the application of the Honour Board to the field of scholastic achievement only. This practice quite naturally lays undue weightage on only one aspect of education, and hence inspires only a section of the school population.

The Honour Board designed and suggested below is free from such lapses. Such a Board should be displayed in a prominent place in the school, like the main hall, the verandahs or the entrance-porch where it can be within sight of every visitor. There is no harm if more than one Honour Board is maintained and exhibited in different places.

## HONOUR BOARD.

Serial number.	Name of the Student.	Class.	Year.	Kind of honour or reward obtained.	Field of distinction.
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## Our Educational Diary

### " PEPYS "

4-9-60. The Madras Govt. has included a proposal to start a third University either at Madurai or Coimbatore in the Third Plan.

19-9-60. Mr. Kabir disclosed that the Union Government was drawing up a scheme which would guarantee that no student who had the urge and initiative was denied higher education. He also said that the Govt. always encouraged research. Anybody who submitted a

scheme of research would be given grants "within limits of Government's resources". He was against boys under 16 being sent up for University education. He said teachers should be well-cared for. The country was in need of dedicated and contented teachers. This would solve ninety-percent of our educational problems, he said.

28-9-60. Dr. Shrimalir discounted the report that Mr C. D. Deshmukh'



term would be extended on the score, he was over-aged having reached 65.

[But we know it is not the age consideration alone. Anyway, we are afraid, we are losing the services of an enlightened individual. It would be very difficult to replace him.]

4-10-60. The T. T. Devasthanam committee has requested the Union, Government to establish the proposed Central Sanskrit Institute at Tirupati, promising all necessary help, including finance.

[It is a request which the Union Govt. might well accept. The location of a Sanskrit Institute at Tirupati would be ideal. To locate it in Hyderabad, simply because it is centrally situated, would not serve the cause of Sanskrit. The atmosphere is not conducive to the growth of Sanskrit.]

5-10-60. The Kerala Education Bill will again be amended and one more attempt made to arrive at "agreed formulae."

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Dr. Shrimalai, speaking at Tirupati, made a fervent plea to the teachers to create faith in ideals and values. It is not good to be only educated. One must also be good.

[Teachers alone cannot achieve this. Leaders of society, political & social, must also prove that they have respect for moral values. It is these that have helped to destroy them among the present generation].

8-10-60. The Orissa Government have decided to set up a Rural University at Bhuvaneswar at a cost of two crores, and it will begin to function from July next. It will impart education in agriculture, veterinary science for animal husbandry, agriculture-engineering and home science.

## Wanted Single Faculty Universities and Academies

M. S. V. Chari, B.A., Tindivanam

It is generally recognised that the present system of higher education in India, with its insistence on the students getting a prescribed minimum of marks in a minimum number of subjects, leaves no scope for brilliant students who have talents and aptitude for only one or two subjects, to shine or contribute their intellectual mite to the welfare of the nation. Every educationist sympathises with the lot of such brilliant young men and even generously pays lip-sympathy by saying that something should be done to them. But it all ends with this, and we are where we were, with the result that we are stifling the blossoming of hundreds of Boses, Ramans and Ramanujams.

In a renascent India, with its admitted paucity of intellectual giants, who are in such urgent need for the reconstruction of India, it would be sheer folly to be keeping

quiet without doing anything to end this tragic indifference to the frustrated and brilliant young intellectuals in the country.

There is only one remedy to this state of affairs. I suggest the starting of single faculty Universities and Academies spread all over India. Students who secure brilliant marks in anyone subject in the S.S.L.C. examination may be admitted into these Universities and Academies. In the context of the present industrial upheaval that we are witnessing in India, let us start such single-faculty Universities and Academies at least in the sciences, including mathematics. This is the urgent need of the hour.

Will the Union Ministry of Education bestir itself in this direction and make provision for this in the Third Plan?

that all aspects of the situation are considered by a variety of people.

It is the Local Education Authority's responsibility to decide whether a child should attend a special school. The medical officers of the School Health Service play an important part in the examination of handicapped children and in advising the education authority on their need for special educational treatment. The authority, however, is expected to consult other people—the parents (of course), the child's teacher, psychologists, nurses and social workers; in fact, anyone who can contribute to an understanding of the particular child and his individual need.

Parents have a right to ask for their handicapped children to be examined from the age of two years to see if they need special educational treatment. They also have a right of appeal to the Minister of Education against the decision of the authority to send the child to a special school or to report that he is ineducable. (Ineducable children are the responsibility, not of the education authority, but of the local health authority). The local education authority has a duty to discover the handicapped children in its area and see that, if necessary, they have special educational treatment.

The general aims of special schools do not differ from those of ordinary schools, though there may have to be some modification of organisation and some additional services to achieve these aims. On the whole, special schools are smaller than ordinary schools, partly because of the relatively small number of any type of handicapped children in local need of special school education and partly because it would not be possible in too large a school for the Head to know the children well enough individually to ensure that their particular individual problems were being well met. In the case of young children, schools may be quite small, but with the older, they are usually big enough to allow for reasonably good classification, for

the more specialised staffing necessary for a wider curriculum and to provide the kind of community life suitable to the maturing interests of the individual children.

The regulations for the size of class in special schools state that they must not be larger than ten for deaf, partially deaf children, or those suffering from speech defects; than 15 for blind, partially sighted or maladjusted children; than 20 for educationally sub-normal, epileptic or physically handicapped children.

Each of the schools has its own character, for they are not cut to pattern. This is partly because there is no imposed curriculum, syllabus or method; the Heads of the schools have freedom, as they have in ordinary schools, under their governing body, to organise the schools, plan the curriculum and time-tables, to order the books they want and employ the methods of teaching which seem to them most desirable.

### Liberal Curriculum

As in the ordinary schools, the curriculum is a liberal one, giving good place to art, craft, music and physical education as well as to English, arithmetic, geography, history, and so on. The various handicaps, of course, present various problems in teaching and learning. In schools for the deaf, skilled teaching of speech and language and informed use of hearing aids is necessary to enable these children to live and learn as normally as possible. Blind children must be taught Braille and must be given opportunities to learn to live independently in a world designed for sighted people. Educationally sub-normal children need to go at a slower pace and to be taught by those who appreciate their inability to deal with complex situations and ideas. Maladjusted children, with their severe emotional problems, need specially skilled handling. It is recognised however that, fundamentally, all children have the same general emotional needs

and interest in education, though they may vary in their ability to pursue knowledge and acquire skill. The social side of education is regarded as important. Handicapped children particularly need to learn to be independent, to show initiative and to live happily with other people, to take responsibility and to accept the disciplines necessary for good group life. The special schools meet this need well and help the children to learn to live happily with their handicaps.

For many handicapped children, admission to a special school provides an opportunity to enjoy companionship with other children like themselves, and this as a rule relieves them from the feelings of inferiority which inhibit learning and harmonious development. Most thrive well and reveal hitherto hidden possibilities in the particularly favourable climate of the special school. Nevertheless, when handicapped children are able happily and profitably to attend ordinary schools, they do so, and the situation of individual handicapped children is kept constantly under review by doctors, psychologists and teachers, in consultation with parents to see whether they can go to the ordinary schools or whether a different type of special school is indicated.

On the whole, blind and deaf children remain in special schools for all or most of their school life. Many severely physically handicapped children do so also, but others return to ordinary schools. Delicate and maladjusted children, on the other hand, usually attend special schools for a temporary period. Epileptic children who are responding well to treatment, remain in ordinary schools as far as possible, though some go to special schools, and the majority of children with speech defects have treatment while attending ordinary schools.

Many of the special schools are boarding schools, since it is only in large centres of population that there are enough children to make it feasible to establish day special schools for each type of handicap. Great importance, however, is attached to keeping the child in touch with his home. Parents

are encouraged to visit their children, and all children return home for regular holidays. In some cases there is a weekly boarding system whereby children can return home at the weekends.

Although attendance at day schools keeps the children in their homes and in touch with everyday life, the boarding schools have made a great contribution to the education of handicapped children, providing communities suited to their needs in which they have good companionship with other children and opportunity and time to develop interests and hobbies through the encouragement of resident staff and the stimulus of good outdoor environment. Visits to places of interest are encouraged, and participation in local activities.

A major problem for handicapped children and their parents arises when the school-leaving age is reached. It is a tribute to the teaching and care they have received in special schools that so many of the special school "leavers" go confidently out into life and employment, having gained knowledge, poise and skill and an ability to work well with other people, and to cope with their handicap. Mention has already been made of the valuable work of the Youth Employment Service.

There are unfortunately some children so handicapped, particularly some of the gravely physically disabled, for whom this happy entry into adult life is impossible. Nevertheless, the special schools have given them much of happy childhood, good play, companionship, knowledge and interests and a feeling of personal worth which should help them to meet even their restricted life with more independence and contentment than would otherwise have been possible.

Although everyone hopes that handicapped young people will have the adult satisfaction of becoming self-supporting or even partly so, every handicapped child is considered to be worthy of education, apart altogether from the possibility of his future employability.

# FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE USSR

Professor Ilya Galperin, Philologist

How are foreign languages studied in the Soviet Union? Are there many Soviet people who can read and speak a foreign language? Which languages are studied most of all? What are the teaching methods? These questions are frequently asked by guests from many countries, including India, when they visit the Soviet Union to acquaint themselves with the educational system of the USSR. As well as I can, in the space of this brief article, I shall try to answer some of these questions. There is plenty to say, though I might as well admit at once that we are far from satisfied with our present achievements in this sphere.

## A Letter in the London "Times"

The fact that the study of foreign languages has been put on a sound footing in the USSR is attested to by the letter of a group of British scientists, published in *The Times* of February 1, 1959. According to these British specialists who visited our country, the Soviet Union has outstripped Great Britain not only in rocketry and sputniks, but also in the training of teachers of foreign languages. More and better teachers of the English language, they wrote, were being trained in the USSR than in England, the home of that language. How true is this, I do not know, but there is no denying that such a statement bears out the progress achieved in the study of foreign languages in our country.

## Foreign Languages Taught at Every Level

The Soviet people, in whatever sphere they may be employed, always show a great eagerness for knowledge. This zest for learning is a characteristic feature of Soviet society. Nearly everybody studies in the USSR, whether young or old. Old skills and knowledge are being refreshed, and new ones constantly acquired. Among

the other general educational subjects' foreign languages occupy a place of great importance. They are taught, therefore, at every rung of the public education system: in the secondary school, technical school, higher school, and postgraduate courses. The Western European languages studied are: English, French, German, Spanish, Polish, Rumanian<sup>2</sup> and Czech. The Eastern languages are: Chinese, Hindi<sup>3</sup>, Urdu, Bengali, Japanese and other languages. One of them is an obligatory subject of the curricula. Every type of school, therefore, allots definite hours to the study of foreign languages, defines the aim to be achieved by the teachers, works out specific curricula, and supplies the pupils with the necessary textbooks and readers. Matriculation in a higher school also entails an examination in a foreign language. To fill the growing need for teachers of foreign languages the USSR has set up a special type of higher school—the pedagogical institutes of foreign languages. The leading institute of this type is the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages which not only trains foreign language teachers, but also qualified translators. Moreover, the public education departments in all the large cities of the Soviet Union have organized a wide network of courses for those who wish to study foreign languages. The number of these courses has been growing from year to year.

## Foreign Languages at Factories and Plants

Foreign languages, too, are being studied at the factories and plants, in the offices and clubs all over the country. These studies, as a rule, are organized by the trade unions in the shape of study circles which very many factory and office workers attend.

The system of correspondence courses for the study of foreign languages has

also been developed very widely. The USSR has many correspondence institutes and faculties (belonging to various colleges), as well as foreign language correspondence courses.

The Moscow Television Centre is now preparing to broadcast English lessons. The studio has already invited teachers of language institutes, and they are now working out the teaching methods suitable to the specific conditions of telecasts.

The graduates of foreign languages institutes have a fair command of the languages of their choice. In some of the technical schools, the aim of teaching a foreign language is limited to the practical needs—the ability to read and understand the specialized literature.

### Breadth and Broader Vision

Those who know at least one foreign language realize that it gives them breadth and broader vision. It widens their range of interests, and induces them to take a deeper interest in their native language. Acquaintance with the life and culture of a foreign country is another side of the educational value of foreign language study and receives due attention in the teaching process.

To fill the growing need for literature in foreign languages, numerous textbooks, teaching aids and readers are published in the Soviet Union. The classics of world literature are published for advanced studies. Many people in the Soviet Union are able to read the best authors of other countries in the original.

I should not omit to mention the role of the Central Foreign Literature Library in spreading knowledge of foreign languages. Very many teachers, engineers, factory and office workers have learnt foreign languages in the study groups organized by this library. While helping the Soviet readers to learn foreign languages, the library has also been keeping them informed of the latest books published abroad. Meetings between the readers and prominent representatives of foreign culture are also organized by the library. In the buses, in the subway, in the parks and the theatre lobbies, one may more and more often find people, both young and old, carrying books in foreign languages. More and more cinema-goers want to see foreign films that are not dubbed. More and more Soviet people are able to do without interpreters when travelling abroad or receiving foreign guests at home.

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## The Librarian's Relations with Teachers and Students

Sat Pal Goyal B.A., Dip. Lib. Sc. (Delhi), Chandigarh

Since the dawn of democracy in India, the concept of education has also been revolutionalized. Education has become a process of self-education, where the teacher's role is largely to be a "friend, philosopher and guide." Libraries have also acquired great importance. The academic library may be regarded as the nerve-centre of the institution.

But the resources of our academic library cannot be fully utilised, until and unless

the principal, the teachers, the librarian and the students understand its purposes and agree on what it can do for the institution.

*The Principal and the Librarian:*—The Headmaster or the Principal of a school or college is the hub of the educational process. He has a wider vision of the college or school life, to which the librarian must contribute by informing him about the day to day activities of the library. No policy of major importance should be

adopted without his approval. He should be consulted every time a librarian faces a problem. The librarian may request the provision of adequately paid trained staff to run the library.

*Library Committee and the Librarian:*— There should be a library committee of 5 persons (3 members of the teaching staff, principal as 'ex-officio' Chairman and the librarian as its secretary). In the interest of the institution, as in the Senate of U. S. A., 1/3rd of the members from the teaching staff should change. The ideal function of the committee is to "aid and advise" the librarian.

The committee should not interfere with the technical work of the librarian. Wherever the committee has direct control over the acts of librarian, surveys in U. S. A. show that the standard of books on the shelves and service has considerably declined.

*Library Superintendent:*— The library superintendent has also a place in the library advisory board. Whatever has been said about the library committee also applies to the library superintendent.

*Non-instructional Staff:*— Non-instructional staff will have certain legitimate demands upon the library service. They will need books for information, inspiration and recreation, which should be provided to them as far as possible.

*Student Library Assistants:*— In some libraries, selected students, designated as "Student Library Assistants", are given certain responsibilities of the library. They work for 8 hours a week or 45 minutes a day. They help the staff in the preparation of books for use. Their work should be carefully supervised. As a compensation for their work, they are given half-fee concession.

*Teacher's expectation from librarian and students:*—

#### A 6 (i) Librarian

6 (1) *Materials for class room.* The teachers depend on the library for the materials they use, and the library depends upon the teacher for incentive which he furnishes for the utilization of its resources, and to a great extent for the selection of books. Teachers expect that the library will stock adequate numbers of references, text and semi-text books (especially books as recommended in the prospectus of an institution) and books on allied subjects. The library must be prepared to satisfy the demands made on it in this field.

(6) 2 *Use and enjoyment of books:*— It is expected that librarians will cooperate with teachers and students in helping them to enjoy books and libraries; because it is their responsibility to teach students the use of libraries.

(6) 3 *Selection of new materials:*— Even if members of the staff select books, the duty of the librarian is not over. Librarians should make it certain that the budget is not spent too quickly and thus exhausted before the year is well under way. The librarian will continuously circulate to staff members lists of new books in their respective spheres. He should be vigilant to see that funds are not wasted.

B 6 *From Students:*— Teachers expect from students that they will report and comment on the "reading". They will take the "library period" seriously and read books for "information", inspiration and recreation.

*Librarian's expectations from Students and Teachers:*—

#### 7(A) Students.

##### 7A(1) To seek any kind of Guidance .-

Librarians are no longer mere custodians of books whose sole purpose is to guard them against loss. They are interpreters

of books and teachers in the sense that by their efforts students are introduced to the contents of books and libraries.

In the period of traditional education, students read only text books and had no interest beyond those of subjects and books. But the dynamic method has compelled them to read widely and have interests of wider range.

#### 7A(2) Care of Books and Library property:

Students should use library books and other property carefully. It is a matter of common experience that some students misuse books. Dr. Ranganathan says: "Margins were taken as free spaces to write in. Whole pages were sometimes heavily underlined. People, too lazy to take notes and indifferent to the needs of others, even went to length of ripping out a score of pages at a time. Illustrations were deformed by beads, caste marks or spectacles, and some plates have been lost."

It is expected that students will not do such things again.

7(3) *Discipline in Library* :—Students are expected to maintain discipline in library by obeying library rules "which are for their convenience" and benefit. Library rules should not be considered as hurdles in their way.

7(4) *Record of their Reading* :—It is expected that students will maintain a record of their reading in a "Record Book" which will reveal the call no., author, title and their opinion about the book.

#### *Librarian's Expectations from Teachers.*

##### 8(1) *Knowledge of contents of the Library* :—

Teachers can fully utilise the resources of a library when they know its contents. They should also know new materials in their sphere, so that books in their respective subjects may be kept up-to-date. The teacher can help the librarian in

discarding material which is no longer useful.

##### 8(2) *Development of "Reading habit"* :—

The dynamic method demands from a teacher that he (a) will explain the use of books to students and (b) develop the "reading habit" and taste to enrich knowledge.

Teachers should not consider that their days of learning are over and that their business is to teach, not to learn. Even the wisest and most learned man alive is still, as Newton said; "like a child picking pebbles by the sea of knowledge." They, by their personal example, will attract students to utilise the resources of the library.

#### *Students' expectations.*

9(1) *Wide Collection of books* :—Students may expect that the library will house a wide range of collections of books and kindred material, in every subject in the universe of knowledge, so that they may use them for "information, inspiration and recreation".

##### 9(2) *Opportunity to use the Library* :—

Students may expect that they will be provided every opportunity to use the library's materials freely and comfortably. There will be open access, and library rules will not hinder their use.

9(3) *Teaching the Use of Books* :—Students are not permitted to experiment in a chemistry laboratory without suitable preliminary instruction in the use of apparatus and materials. Yet most students have learned too little about the equipment of the most universal of all laboratories—"The Library". This hinders the proper use of books. Teachers and librarians should impart instruction in the use of books in the "Library Period", which should be provided in the timetable.

9(4) *Library Atmosphere* :- A library should have an "atmosphere", and its essentials are quiet, space, dignity and beautys. The library should be well ventilated and set apart for the library purposes. It should be attractively laid out in the matter of furniture as well as the wall display, and it must have the calm and studious atmosphere which is very valuable to the library.

Staff relations in the administration of an academic library should be such that the library may be utilised by staff and students to its maximum; and the library may be run on such lines that all the Five Laws of Library Science are implemented and the library may become the most useful and most used part of an institution.

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## THE BIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL

Miss S. L. Aiyar, M.A., Ph. D., Bombay

The biographical novel is the latest in the evolution of the novel and it is only in the last thirty years that it has become popular. It is now an accepted form of fiction.

The new-found interest in history in the closing years of the eighteenth century created the historical novel; in the same way, the newly awakened desire to study human personality and enshrine it in biography paved the way for biographical fiction. The development of this form may be said to be parallel to the progress made by biography, towards becoming a conscious art form.

As its name indicates, the biographical novel selects for its hero or heroine an individual about whom there is sufficient information and who, as it often happens, has been the subject of biographies. Thus biography ministers to biographical fiction, even as history does to historical fiction. The difference between biographical fiction and historical fiction is analogous to the difference between biography and history. In the historical novel the emphasis is upon the background, while in the biographical, it is upon the actual men and women who played their part upon the stage of life. The aim of the historical novelist is to depict an epoch in history and to show "the body of the time, its form and pressure". He tries to capture

the ethos of an age, its *zeitgeist*. As against this, the biographical novel sets out to portray the character and destiny of an individual. We may define it thus: It is a novel that seeks to apply fictional methods, including the introduction of invented scenes and characters, with a view to illuminating every circumstance connected with an historical personality, in its development, as shaped by, and shaping the "Time Spirit".

The biographical novel appears to be an offshoot of the historical novel, just as the political novel is another. Writers have shifted their emphasis from the historical background to the historical figures. Butterfield (in 1924) anticipates this new form of the novel when he says: "Biography also may place new fields of experience within the scope of the novel"; and then his theme would be, "a human heart caught in the world and entangled in time and circumstance". It is interesting to recollect that Sir Walter Scott was staunch in his opinion that no novelist should make the historical figures prominent. Since Scott was a romanticist with a strong *penchant* for history, he defines the historical novel as a compound of different kinds of fiction, the novel of adventure, the realistic novel and the Gothic novel. In his novels the historical figures are always relegated to a subordinate place; they form not the



centre of action, but just an *entourage* to lend verisimilitude to the novel.

While defining the biographical novel, as one which sets out to portray the character and destiny of a single individual, we must not forget that the life of a great man is often inextricable from his country's destiny. A novel on a scientist would inevitably be a novel on the advance of science; we have such a one in Zol Harsany's *The Star Gazer* (on Galileo). Merezkovsky's *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci* cannot neglect the state of Italian art altogether. Likewise Pierre Lamure's *Moulin Rouge* (on Toulouse Lautrec) has to allow scope for a description of life in Parisian Montmartre. Men like Napoleon, Garibaldi or Lincoln stand as the epitome of their country's destiny. Writing novels on the lives of such men involves a depiction of the times in which they lived, for they are the makers of history. Not infrequently, therefore, a biographical novel may step into the realm of history and challenge a place also as an historical novel. This is marked in novels like Feuchtwanger's *This is the hour*, a novel on Goya, Merezkovsky's novel on Leonardo, and Lytton's *Rienzi*.

It is necessary, however, that the novelist must keep his aim clear and not allow the central figure to be blurred by other interests; for in a biographical novel every episode is related to the hero. History can only aid the dynamic presentation of character, the destiny of the hero and his pressure on the times, it cannot usurp the prominent place. Just as the historical novelist spotlights his treatment of an epoch in a novel, by introducing men and women who were actors in the drama of the age, the novelist of biography brings out the significance of a man's life by relating it to historical events. Mark how in Merezkovsky's novel the changes and chances of state policy are done in lively tints and the luxury and lasciviousness of the times are made to stand out in their "native hue"! The novelist projects the

life of Leonardo against the background of Renaissance Italy, where superstition, religious fanaticism and pseudo-knowledge jostled with beauty, art and intellectual curiosity of a high order; but the personality of Leonardo dominates over this background.

If from one point of view the biographical novel results from the invasion of biography by fiction, from another, it implies the disciplining of fiction by the hard facts of biography and the need for the novelist to prime himself thoroughly with the latest researches of scholars who have brought to light whatever had been previously obscure. Apart from this, the novelist who ventures on this field has often to bring to bear his own viewpoint and interpretation of the life chosen. The biographical novelist is thus Janus-faced, with one face looking towards fiction and the other towards fact. The creative imagination and the erudition backing it form, as it were, the two wings of an artist who wishes to succeed in this type.

The biographical novel should not be confused with biographies (like those of Andre Maurois or Emil Ludwig) which employ the art of fiction in order to enhance the narrative. The biographer cannot invent scenes or dialogues or episodes, though he may dramatise, select and arrange his matter, in order to "illuminate the man" before us, to revive him to our imagination in "his habit as he lived". Just as the imaginative light in the historian's mind plays upon history, so does the creative mind of the biographer transform the dry bones of biographical matter into art. Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria*. Ludwig's *Cleopatra*, Adam Back's *Life of Buddha*, Cecil Woodham-Smith's *Florence Nightingale*, Eve Curie's *Madame Curie* and many other biographies of our time read like novels without straying out of the bounds of strict biography. It would not be far fetched to say that modern experiments in biography have prepared the ground for biographical fiction. As against biography,

biographical fiction invents minor characters, episodes and scenes, but all in keeping with the theme, *i. e.*, the life and character of the hero.

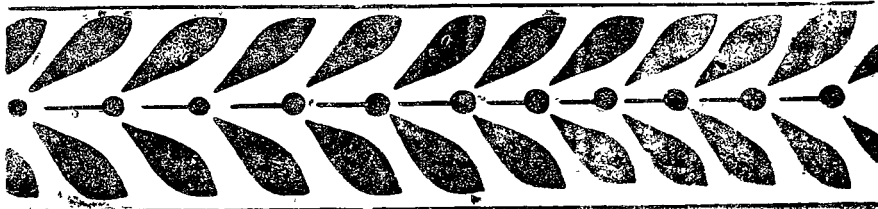
The biographical novel has to be distinguished not only from the historical novel, but from other types: for example, novels having an imaginary figure for their main character try to achieve historical verisimilitude by making the hero work out his destiny among real characters. Edward Thompson's *The Youngest Disciple* is an instance of this. The hero of this novel is the imaginary Panch Cowrie, but the Buddha is also brought in. This does not make the novel biographical. Another type is the novel which chooses a fictitious name for a historical character. Such a novel usually takes more liberties with facts than is permissible. In many of these novels there is hardly any resemblance between the novel hero and the one he is supposed to represent. In Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon*, the hero is supposed to be Byron. The whole plot of this novel is invented, and every biographical figure appears under a fictitious name. The hero of Somerset Maugham's *Moon and Sixpence*, Strickland, has very little in common with the painter Gauguin. The Tahiti scenes are the only ones which seem to be common to both of them. How then can one call Maugham's novel biographical?

The problems which arise with regard to this form of fiction are both varied and interesting. It is possible for instance to employ the fictional method in such a way that it falsifies the character of the life presented, in essential respects. If it does this, it may gain as fiction but lose as biography, and the novel becomes the

instrument of biographical distortion. The innumerable novels of Harrison Ainsworth fall under this type. It happens that a novelist fails to enter into the spirit of "a life" as is seen in Neila Gardner White's, *A Daughter of Time*, a novel on Katherine Mansfield. If the novelist had not averred that her novel is on Katherine Mansfield, one would not have recognised the characters under their false names, since many significant details of the life are absent. The greater part of the novel deals with Katherine's relationship to Murry, and very little is said about her genius.

There are biographical novels which steer so close to facts that they err on the other side, and remain bad biographies. In others so much fictitious and legendary matter is introduced that hardly any biographical truth is left over to justify the form. This is the fault of Flora Annie Steel's novels on the Moghul emperors. A very glaring fault in this type of novel is the deliberate twist given to the character of a known historical figure. Thus Robert Payne in *The Lord Comes* mars the beauty of the Buddha's life and character by the introduction of unseemly elements in the first half of the novel. He depicts the hero as leading a Bohemian life in the taverns and pleasure resorts of the city. These scenes grate on our aesthetic sense, as they do not fit in with what we know of the hero's life and character. The Light of Asia does not quite shine in the dark lantern of the writer, and his art is rather askew.

(To be continued)



# GUIDANCE IN SCHOOLS

P. Madhavan Nair, M.Sc., B.T., S. N. Training College, Nedunganda.

It is expected of the Secondary School, as one of its most important functions, to determine the aptitudes, inclinations and innate potentialities of the pupil and then to give him proper directions. As an effective means to achieve this end, a programme of guidance and counselling is absolutely essential."

By a guidance programme, it is meant to help the pupil to discover his "natural endowments" and "to develop in him an insight into the solution of his problems." It enables him "to become adjusted to his present situation and to plan his future in line with his interests, abilities and social needs."

## Importance

A regular programme of guidance has become almost indispensable in every school as a result of the introduction of a diversified curriculum. Here the pupils are confronted with the problem of choosing subjects and courses of study, and hence there exists a high probability of making a wrong choice, if they are left to themselves. It is equally harmful, even if parents do this work regarding the choice of subjects and courses for their children, because they are naturally tempted by their high vocational ambitions and aspirations. This creates very serious problems and often makes the pupil a misfit in society. Lack of proper guidance is one of the basic factors responsible for educated unemployment in our country, and the solution of this problem depends on the extent to which we are able to find out ways and means to fit square pegs in square holes and round pegs in round holes.

The underlying principle of guidance is the proper and profitable use of human energy. The school alone is considered to be the legitimate agency which has to take up this responsibility of guiding pupils; and teachers are considered to be

the competent personnel to explore and develop the aptitudes and tastes of the pupil. As a matter of fact, there is guidance in some form or other in every school, whether pupils and teachers are aware of it or not.

## Educational and Vocational Guidance

These are two aspects of the same programme. Strictly speaking, educational guidance means guidance within the school. This includes guidance regarding the choice of subjects and courses, books for reading, methods and schemes of learning, co-curricular activities and the like.

Vocational guidance refers to that aspect of the programme which deals with problems regarding the choice of proper vocations. So, its main aim is to enable the individual to choose a suitable vocation in accordance with his abilities and inclinations. Very few people are fortunate enough in this respect, are able to derive pleasure from the work they do and are really happy. Therefore, if some means are adopted to enable the individual to choose proper vocations, it will be a very great service to humanity. The following are some of the natural results of such a programme of vocational guidance:—

- (i) Free growth of the individual's qualities.
- (ii) Proper use of human energy.

It is impossible to make educational guidance free from its vocational implications, as the vocational goal is naturally having much influence over the educational choice. Even when educational guidance is given, its vocational aspect will creep in at least implicitly. All the directions which may be given will be centred round the vocational aim, and the teacher is expected to guide the pupil to the pursuit of suitable vocations considering the individual's abilities.

### Techniques of understanding

Now it is quite clear that a thorough understanding of the child is of vital importance for proper guidance. Such a knowledge about the child can be made available from different sources. Testing is a common technique, which may serve the purpose well. This is a device which is economical in collecting "accurate" and "objective" information in meaningful terms through quantitative description of data. But it should be noted that "tests give evidence regarding what a student can do, but they cannot take decisions for him". However, a combination of test results and other less objective types of evidence like past achievements, adjustments, emotional balance etc., which can be obtained by means of cumulative records, anecdotal

records, case study methods and the like is helpful for organising an effective programme of guidance.

All these methods are widely used in countries like the United States of America. In India, we are just trying to understand the educational significance and practicability of these methods. In this connection, the Secondary Education Commission gives the following suggestions:—

- (i) The services of trained guidance officers and career masters should be made available to all educational institutions.
- (ii) Audio-visual aids, like vocational guidance films, should be used to inform pupils of the significance of various occupations and the nature of work involved therein.

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## LETTER TO EDITOR

Dear Mr. Editor,

People are wondering why there should be this persistent fall in standards at all levels of education. A variety of reasons are given as the causes for such deterioration.

But everybody, including even the educationists who must know better, is turning a Nelson's eye to the real reason!

The real, tragic truth is, we are not concentrating on essential subjects at any level. I suggest that, unless we are prepared to allot 75% of the school hours to the study of essential subjects, at every stage, all talk of improving the standards will be just moonshine.

It is a sorry fact, that in the present time-table we are just able to devote barely 40% of the school hours to essential subjects. Take the primary stage for instance. Here the 3 R's must be concentrated upon. But, out of seven periods, we are able to devote only 3 periods to the 3 R's. We devote the rest of the school-day to less essential subjects. I do not say that they are not necessary. I only contend that they are played up at

the expense of the study of the 3 R's. No wonder, the boy who emerges out of the primary stage has only a shaky foundation even in the 3 R's. The same process is repeated in the higher stages.

In our fad for 'rounding off' education at every level, we are only giving a flimsy sort of education in essential subjects.

In the secondary stage, we give our boys such scanty general education that they are unfit for specialised studies in the University. It is still worse at the University level. A heavy curriculum of English and General Knowledge studies have a cramping and stifling effect on the study of the optionals, which constitute the core of University education.

Our present day curricula in education can only produce students with a shallow knowledge of all the subjects they have been taught.

So, if we want to improve the standards, there is an urgent need for recasting our curricula with a view to make our students drink deep from the springs of knowledge.

—CRITIC.

# EDITORIAL

## National Service for Students

It is a pity that the scheme of compulsory national service for students is still being persisted with. A budget of Rs. 138 crores on the scheme during the the third plan period is now revealed. The national service, as now formulated, is to include military training, manual work, social service and 'general education' for a compulsory period of nine months. Our fundamental objection to the scheme is that it causes a disastrous break in studies at a very important stage in the life of the student. The value of the 'general education' imparted every alternate day is bound to be insignificant. And if the pupil picks up the academic routine a year later, he will be severely handicapped. The momentum arising from continuity in studies would have been lost. Even the habit of study may be lost. National service might well seem to be unending extra-curricular activities; and the fate that overtakes the student who prefers extra-curricular to curricular activities will hang over every one participating in the scheme.

A second objection, no less serious, is that it envisages a violent disruption of home life, in parting children from their parents. It has been claimed by the National Service Committee: "There can be no objection, on principle or otherwise, to compulsion, as it is the right of the State to ask its citizens for a period of service in return for what it does for them." We submit that in any event the State should forbear from making this demand on children, who are not in any sense full-fledged citizens.

There are numerous other objections, already canvassed in these columns. For one thing, compulsory manual work and social service may very well wean the student away from these desirable pursuits. For acts of, in the activ-

national service camps may well increase rural unemployment. And we would remind the Union Ministry that the conference of Education Secretaries foresaw many difficulties. In the meanwhile, there are many other important things in the educational field needing to be done during the third plan period.

*The South Indian Teacher* recently wrote: "Food, clothing and shelter—the minimum needs—should be provided at any cost to the teacher. That is the reason why we are to treat education as the first charge on the revenues.....The pupils entrusted to a teacher must be in manageable numbers.....Anti-national points in our history and anti-social ideas in sums in arithmetic books need elimination immediately.....The Godless education should give place to a system which will put in fear of God, obedience to elders and loyalty to the nation. Physical education should be on lines suited to our country, and the old Indian games should be revived. Such a reform of the content of education is necessary to equip the future nation physically, intellectually and morally to bear the burden of freedom won at great sacrifice by our leaders." Here indeed are the urgent priorities.

## New Pedagogy for Colleges

Some months ago Dr. H. J. Taylor of Assam (in an article in the *Indian Express*) suggested some new methods of teaching in colleges. After criticising the present methods as encouraging the student to cultivate his memory and neglect his intelligence, Dr. Taylor declares that we must repudiate the idea that the teaching pattern must be a replica of the examination pattern. The main object of a lecture is not to convey information, but to stimulate the student's mind. The student should be left to augment by his own efforts the information gained in the class-room. If these principles are accepted,

it is clear that the teaching method also should follow suit.

"A department should organise its timetable according to the subject and offer courses of lectures on the different branches. Some would be elementary, others more advanced. Some might be given each year, others in alternate years. In a three-year scheme there might even be topics on which it would suffice to lecture every third year. Students would then be advised which courses to attend, and a lecturer might find himself addressing a mixed group of, say, first year honours and second year pass students. In a field common to more than one department (physics and chemistry provide obvious examples) he might draw students from both. The courses should be of limited length, 10 lectures perhaps, or 15. This would be very good for the lecturer, as it would require him to plan his work carefully. It would be far better than the present method of assigning a class to a lecturer and expecting him to carry on indefinitely."

In experimental science, a new approach is required. The present practice of "stock experiments with stock apparatus" does not teach the student the art of scientific measurement. Dr. Taylor recalls how, during the war, when the value of the earth's magnetic field needed to be measured at Bombay to devise coils to counteract magnetic mines, our graduates failed to do it correctly. He advocates therefore some freedom within a definite scheme of experiments—"freedom to question the instructions, freedom to try other methods, freedom now and then to measure something new."

Here are some very thoughtful and constructive hints for transforming our University teaching. They do not seek to do away with examinations, nor to simplify them and dilute their standards. But they try to improve the quality of the teaching and raise the standard of the pupils. We commend them to the serious consideration of all college teachers

## Have Indian Teachers Failed?

### Report of a Symposium.

Under the auspices of Extension Services Department, a Symposium on "The teachers of this country have failed in their mission towards the country and the younger generation" was arranged at the Govt. Multipurpose Higher Secondary School, Raipur. Principal Yoganandam presided over the function. The speakers were: Shri S. Chaturvedi, Principal, Government Training College, Raipur, Prof. B. C. Shrivastava Chhattisgarh College; Shri Sovami, of Rajkumar College; Shri R. P. Shrivastava, Head Master, Public High School; Shri Ramchandran, Principal, New Arts College; Shri B. Singh, Head Master, R. D. Tiwari High School, Shri M. L. Pande, Head Master, Hindu High School, Raipur; and Prof. B. K. Dixit of Govt. Training College, Raipur.

The symposium started with a talk by Principal Chaturvedi. He said that 'indiscipline amongst students' had become the talk of the day. Everybody was heard talking about it. Besides, the public were also getting suspicious about the teachers and even went to the extent of saying that teachers were responsible for what was going on in the country. The teachers were in confusion. They did not know what they were doing. Sometimes they wondered whether they were indeed failing in their duty. So, how far the teachers were responsible for what was going on in the country, was the question. Shri Chaturvedi dealt with the question and said that there was something wrong somewhere. He quoted the example of a committee which was meant to select books for primary schools.

The members of this committee were from amongst the judges of High Court, the teachers of Colleges and even members of the Public Service Commission, but no primary school teacher was taken in it. Thus teachers had no voice in the organisation and administration of schools. Similarly, all great persons talked very highly about the teaching profession. But the persons who entered this profession were not given a proper place in society. The result was that unfit persons took up the job of teaching. Again rapid expansion in the field of education was going on. Every year a number of new schools<sup>er</sup> were being opened by the Government. It meant that there was a great demand for good teachers, but our country could not cope up with the speed and failed to provide good teachers. Again, there was the trouble of public interference. If there were able teachers, who really put their heart in the work, they were not allowed to work in an atmosphere of freedom. The politicians of today claimed to know education from A to Z and interfered in every step.

The children of today were better than what we had been in our childhood. The teachers of the past used to teach books, now they taught experiences. Teachers were doing more work and better things. With the advance in all fields of life, teaching was also fast advancing. Today the values had changed, the aptitudes had changed, and the teachers had accepted the great challenge. In the face of innumerable problems created for them, they were trying their best and were advancing, adapting themselves to the new situations

and changes, and they had not failed in their duty.

Prof. B. C. Shrivastava said that the main task before the teachers today was to prepare good citizens. A good citizen understood his rights and duties. Our country was democratic and the citizens should be such, as would fit in this democracy. Now the question was whether we were preparing such citizens. The fact was bitter. We had failed to prepare such citizens. The citizens of today demanded their rights, but were indifferent towards their duties. Shri Shrivastava further said that education today was controlled by the Government. The teachers worked only as servants to earn their livelihood, and did not care for the building of the lives of children. Education was measured in terms of money. Teachers had no position and prestige in society. Most of the able teachers were unable to carry on their work efficiently because they were hard hit in life. They got so little that it was not even sufficient to keep their body and soul together, not to speak of their mental development.

Under the circumstances, it was very essential that the work of education should be solely left to the teachers. They should be given full freedom of organisation and administration in the field of education. Education should be made free. There should be reforms in society, and teachers should be given their proper place in it. In the present society the teachers could not do their duty properly.

(To be Continued).

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### XXXV ALL INDIA EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE.

The 35th All India Educational Conference, will be held at Cawnpore during the last week of December.

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