

Education in Crisis

and

**THE WAY
FORWARD**

by

W. E. GOLLAN, B.A.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. W. E. Gollan, B.A., is a prominent N.S.W. educationist. A double honours graduate of Sydney University, Mr. Gollan has been a teacher, and, in recent years a headmaster in N.S.W. high schools, for a period of 34 years.

As university tutorial lecturer, evening college principal and lecturer in the Newcastle Labour College he has had wide experience in adult education.

On the professional and policy making side of educational activity, Mr. Gollan is a former executive member of the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation and was, for two years, president of the Secondary Teachers' Association of N.S.W.

In political and industrial life he served for some time as executive member of the Labour Council of N.S.W., and has been, for 16 years, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia.

In 1955 Mr. Gollan visited Europe and Asia and was able to make first-hand observations of the educational systems of the U.S.S.R., China, Japan and parts of Scandinavia, and to engage in discussions with leading educationists in those countries.

He is widely known as a writer and public speaker.

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FOREWORD

Public education has become a matter of wide national discussion. One reason is the growing crisis in education in Western Europe, U.S.A. and Australia, the obvious inadequacy of education to deal effectively with the problems confronting it; another, the spectacular achievements of education in the socialist world, the rapid advances from large-scale illiteracy in most of the socialist countries, a legacy they inherited from the past, to an advanced educational position on world standards.

To the proponents and apologists for the "cold war" this is seen as a challenge that needs to be met in terms of "turning out more scientists and engineers than the Russians", of preparing for a trial of strength in military terms.

To those who value education as a means of promoting human culture, of advancing the intellectual, spiritual and moral life of mankind, the overcoming of illiteracy and the advance of scientific knowledge are matters for rejoicing.

Who, with any generosity of mind and spirit, can fail to experience joy and pride in the achievements of our common humanity, when he observes the USSR and the Eastern European countries, so backward in all respects until recent times, building social and economic systems that create material welfare for all, as a basis on which universal higher education can be built?

Who, with a spark of human feeling in his breast, can fail to be moved by the spectacle of China, comprising one fourth of the human race, oppressed, humiliated, downtrodden and illiterate for centuries, moving with giant strides along the same path?

Who, on the other hand, can fail to experience disquiet when he observes wealthy countries like the U.S.A., Britain or Australia, with advanced industrial systems, failing to organise their social and economic life so that potential talent is developed to the full and made available in the community interest? The growth of delinquency, the hysterical unbalance of so many of our youth, the large percentage of children leaving school with only a "comic-book standard" of literacy, the waste of so much talent, are, rightly, matters of deep concern for parents and teachers—in fact for everyone with a social conscience.

What has been described as the "crisis in education" has deep roots in our social institutions and way of life.

This pamphlet is an attempt to present the problem in a number of its aspects, as seen by a teacher who is also a Communist. It is in no sense intended as a comprehensive statement on education or as a final judgment, but as a contribution to the national discussion that is proceeding. It deals primarily with general aspects of education at the primary, secondary and tertiary stage. Specialist education in various fields — technology, agriculture, research and the like — requires special examination and discussion. It is the purpose of the pamphlet to present a general argument, from which it is hoped numerous specialised studies could arise.

Naturally, also, as a teacher and a Communist, the writer is concerned with answers, with solutions to the problems, both short range ones, and others that go more deeply and involve profound changes in the social structure — in a word, with an immediate programme that can be achieved within the framework of the present social system, and with the establishment of a socialist Australia as a means of establishing basic solutions.

The document has been read in manuscript by some hundreds of people — Communists, educationists at primary, secondary and tertiary level, trade unionists, scientists, housewives and others. A great number have made valuable corrections and additions to the original script. Many of these have been included, and the original text has been substantially modified.

In this sense, the document, as it appears, is the result of collective effort, though the writer accepts full responsibility for the material in its final form.

I have to express my warmest thanks to my many collaborators, for their passionate interest in the subject, and the deep thought most of them have given to it. I hope that this is a good augury for the pamphlet, and that it will provoke wide and deep discussion; not because of any particular merit it may possess, but, so that the social conscience of our people may be further disturbed, and that our children, especially the underprivileged ones, the victims of an inequitable social system, may benefit by sweeping educational improvements; and that further steps be taken towards making available to the community, the talent of our young people, so much of which at present lies fallow for lack of cultivation.

W. E. GOLLAN.

THE CRISIS IN AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

Australian, like British and American education, is in a state of crisis; both because it does not provide the material requirements for satisfactory child and youth upbringing, and because the social system expressed through the present educational theory and practice creates barriers to the full education of most children and adolescents.

As to material needs, it is well known that, from the time a child enters a kindergarten until he leaves school or university, he is rarely, if ever, in a class small enough to enable him to receive the attention and assistance he needs if he is to develop his potential to the full.

In infants', primary, and high school alike, the normal class sizes are around 40-50, and in some cases approach 60. When a teacher is absent through illness, his class is divided amongst existing ones, increasing the numbers still farther. In some States there is no relieving staff of teachers; in others the relieving staff is inadequate.

Senior secondary classes, even those taking the Leaving Certificate, are sometimes kept for weeks or months without a specialist teacher in a particular subject.

Forty to fifty pupils, in many instances, are crowded into classrooms built to accommodate 30 or 36. Over 50% of the 500,000 pupils in NSW are taught in classes of over 40, and in most schools pupils are constantly unsettled by movement from room to room.

In many of the private and denominational schools the position is as bad; in some it is worse, with classes frequently reaching the number of 70 or 80, and sometimes exceeding 100. Only in the expensive private schools are the numbers of a suitable size.

The Commonwealth Year Book for the years 1952-4, shows that, in Victoria, there are almost twice as many teachers, proportionate to the number of children, in private (non-Catholic), as compared with state schools. With these exceptions, all pupils, even the most able, suffer to some extent.

In a class of 40 to 50 pupils, the most devoted teacher finds it quite impossible to do more than give mass-instruction. The personal attention to the needs of each pupil, which is the essence of good educational practice, becomes impossible; matters of control and discipline in oversized classes, crammed into rooms of inadequate size, occupy an undue part of the teachers' time and energy, and limit the possibility of a proper

educational atmosphere in which the pupil is able to make normal progress. The huge volume of correction of written exercises becomes an intolerable burden. It is no exaggeration to say that almost all of the skilled teachers in Australian public schools feel, to a greater or less degree, thwarted and frustrated, because the material conditions actually make it impossible for them to carry out sound educational procedures.

In conditions of modern industrial society, especially in the congested inner-city areas, pre-school institutions are basic in child-training. Furthermore, they are essential to enable working mothers, who comprise a substantial percentage of the workforce, to continue in industry; and to provide some measure of equality of opportunity for student and professional mothers to continue their studies and professional activities. Yet, of the few pre-school institutions that exist, (seventeen in the whole of NSW) most are not a government responsibility at all, but are, in the main, conducted by semi-charitable bodies or are profit-making establishments.

The further training of children in public school kindergartens is seriously hampered by the inadequacy of kindergarten buildings and staff. It should be an automatic matter for the child to proceed to kindergarten when he or she reaches the appropriate age. Yet, in fact, in a number of States, every year, when school opens, many children are excluded because of congestion, and their normal development, both social and educational, is impeded.

The situation is further aggravated by the type of building in which many children are taught — dingy, outmoded, and with little of the graciousness that should be part of the child's everyday life.

Even more destructive of educational atmosphere, and productive of anti-social behaviour, are the "temporary" and makeshift structures that, in practically all States, are becoming a permanent feature of the system — church halls, show-ground pavilions, disused factories, school corridors, weathersheds and the like. At the beginning of 1959, the Victorian Teachers' Union estimated that there were over 30 secondary schools, with a total of over 5,000 pupils, in temporary accommodation. The Melbourne press, recently (May 1959), gave publicity to Norwood High School, consisting of two drill halls, each containing three classes, not separated from each other by partitions.

Furthermore, in many schools in all States, playing areas are

totally inadequate, and in some, congestion is so great that it is necessary for the children's safety to forbid running or playing altogether.

Washing facilities are often non-existent, and luncheon arrangements, frequently, of the most primitive kind.

The anti-social effect on children who spend most or all of their school lives in such conditions is not hard to imagine.

Even where some of the worst of these conditions have disappeared, as in the fine new high schools constructed in NSW during recent years, the basic problems of overcrowding, oversized classes and inadequate staffs persist. Most of these schools, too, are lacking in a gymnasium, assembly hall, and suitable developed playing areas.

The physical health of children is certainly not improved and, in some of the worst instances, is actually endangered, by the unsatisfactory conditions, especially in temporary accommodation. This danger is increased in those States where schools are not covered by the Health Act regulations governing such matters as toilet accommodation and washing facilities.

The health of workers in industry is far more effectively safeguarded than that of their children.

Teachers are constantly devising special measures to meet the problems, but whilst conditions continue to deteriorate, their selfless efforts are successful only to a limited extent. Most affected is the handicapped child, the one who is timid, or has poor eyesight or hearing, or is slow to learn. Lost in a large class, he loses vital stages in the learning process, becomes more and more discouraged as he fails in class after class; frequently expresses his bewilderment by anti-social behaviour; and probably leaves school not only illiterate or semi-illiterate, but suffering permanent social and psychological damage.

Each year for the last 10 years the position has grown worse. In NSW for example, the total school enrolments increased from 339,000 in 1946 to 540,000 in 1957. Further increases of 20,000 per annum are officially anticipated. In the other States, the position is similar.

The teachers being trained yearly, are well below the number required to keep pace with this increase, so that conditions will clearly continue to deteriorate.

Furthermore, qualifications required of teachers are being reduced. Fewer university graduates are entering the secondary

service than at any time in the last 10 years. The figures for NSW are:

| | | |
|------|-------|-----|
| 1950 | | 178 |
| 1953 | | 136 |
| 1954 | | 121 |
| 1958 | | 100 |

As a result, young people with two years' training and much lower educational qualifications are beginning to predominate in many secondary schools.

A recent survey by the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation* showed that, in general, in three-year secondary schools and departments, university graduates comprised from one fourth to one tenth of the staffs. Some secondary Departments had no graduates at all. In Queensland, some teachers are being trained for secondary teaching in one-year "pressure cooker" courses which leave them quite unprepared for effective professional work. In addition, teachers are now being appointed in some N.S.W. schools with no professional training whatever.

In full State high schools conducting classes to matriculation, the percentage of graduate teachers is steadily falling.

Inadequate modern facilities and teaching aids add to the problem. Schools need film projectors, radio and TV receiving sets, duplicating equipment, pianos and other costly items not provided by the Education Department. Heavier and heavier burdens are falling upon parents' organisations which are now being called upon not only to provide these facilities, but also to raise thousands of pounds towards playing grounds and in some cases school gymnasias, and swimming pools.

The present trend is, in practice, a form of special taxation, falling upon particular groups of parents.

In these conditions of oversized classes, undertrained teachers and inadequate accommodation and equipment, it is not surprising that a large number of children end their school life still virtually illiterate; and that many of those who succeed in passing public examinations through the skill and devotion of teachers, are quite unprepared for university education.

One by-product of the failure rate in the schools is the rash of "coaching colleges" that has broken out in recent years. Using high pressure salesmanship, many of these institutions prey on parents by creating anxieties and raising false hopes of

* Facts quoted in this section are taken from the journal of the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation, "Education", from reports to Teachers' Federation conferences and similar sources.

success.

The pressure methods of coaching are frequently damaging to the child's normal educational development.

In the universities, despite some improvement because of the Murray Committee report, a similar state of affairs prevails.

Classes are frequently such a size* that the lecturer needs to use a microphone to be heard by his students; equipment and facilities are so inadequate that Professor Messel (of the Physics Department, Sydney University), and others, are constantly appealing to private industry to make the donations required to overcome the lag. As with teachers, an undue amount of time is spent in raising finance to the detriment of teaching and research. Naturally, private industry when it does provide financial assistance demands a voice in policy matters. The result is increased subordination of education to the requirements of monopoly interests.

Furthermore, despite some improvements by way of the Commonwealth scholarship scheme and special research scholarships, there is no satisfactory overall plan to ensure that the maximum number of the most talented students are available for training in specialised research.

All too frequently, the parents' financial position rather than the students' ability determines the personnel of University classes, and of students proceeding to advanced studies.

As to teaching staff, the personal political opinions of an applicant for a University post are often more significant in securing his appointment than his professional standing. There are a number of cases of the most suitable candidate having been chosen by a selection committee, and then refused appointment on the grounds that at some time in his life he had held left-wing opinions.

Such a policy, apart from muzzling the free interchange of opinion that is the essence of true scholarship, places a premium on second-rate ability and conformity to conventional opinion.

The combination of all these elements has resulted in a disastrous failure rate at University examinations.**

* The Murray Committee Report mentions classes of 700 of which "substantial proportions . . . are quite unable to see the blackboard." (Sect. 85, p. 29)

** Only 35% of all students in Australian universities graduate in the minimum time. Only 57.7% of those commencing university courses ever graduate. Source: Commonwealth Office of Education.

It is a fact that most Australian children and youth are not receiving the education required to fit them for life in the present age.

Nor will they receive such education unless in the first instance the material requirements are met by the expenditure of literally hundreds of millions of pounds of public money, which can come from one source only — Federal revenue.

PUTTING FIRST THINGS LAST

Recently, the Prime Minister, when asked in Federal Parliament to extend the Commonwealth scholarship scheme to high schools, to enable a greater number of talented young people to proceed to secondary technical, and university education, refused the request. If this were done, he said, too many pupils would matriculate, the universities would be incapable of taking the increased enrolment.

At the same time, whilst, as this shows, it is national policy to prevent the maximum number of young people from receiving higher education, the expenditure of public revenue continues to follow the pattern disclosed in the 1955-6 figures.

| Total Revenue State and Federal | Total Expenditure on Education | Expenditure on Defence |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| £1,236 million | £87 million (7%) | £190 million (15.3%) |

Per capita taxation this year was £118/6/7. Per capita expenditure on education was £9/8/-. Total national income was £4,312 millions. Of this, expenditure on education accounted for 2%.

Since 1950, some £1,500 million has been spent on armaments and war preparations — with little or nothing to show for it. Had even one-third of this amount been diverted to education, including technical training, the material difficulties would, by now, be on the way to being solved.

As it is, public education is in a worse condition, when related to the task it is called on to perform, than it has ever been.*

In an age when labour productivity is far greater than ever before in history; when national income and profits of industry

* The Murray Committee estimates that an increase of 90% in graduate output will be necessary by 1962. The present demand for engineering and science graduates exceeds the supply by from 9 to 15 times (pp 18-19).

In 1960 only 524 graduates in science and mathematics will be produced, for all purposes by all Australian universities. The schools in that year will need 450, yet clearly will receive only a minute percentage of those needed.

are at an all-time high, it is not unreasonable to ask that the education of children should be better, not worse than in past periods.

The material needs can be met by:

- Ensuring an increased number of more suitably built and equipped school buildings.
- The ending of temporary accommodation.
- More teachers, additional teachers' colleges.
- Class sizes not exceeding 30 in junior classes, 20 in senior classes.
- Improved equipment and teaching aids.
- Remedial classes not exceeding 12 in number, taught by specially trained teachers.
- Increased university and technical college staff with decreases in size of classes.
- Provision of up to date equipment and facilities for university teaching.
- A very large increase in Commonwealth scholarships and in training in research.

The possibility of achieving any, or all, of this programme depends on a special large-scale financial grant by the Federal government, and increased regular provision for educational needs both by annual Federal special grants, and increased State government allocations. Unless these steps are taken, the crisis must inevitably grow worse.

These issues need to become part of the lifeblood of policy of the whole labour and progressive movement if they are to be realised.

DELINQUENCY

The damage being done to youth is most clearly seen in the growing numbers of delinquents. Not only is there an increase in the numbers of young people who reach the juvenile courts, but an increase, also, in the percentage.

The causes are many, but one of the most obvious is the sense of insecurity and instability which grows out of the social system. Some young people are insecure because of family division, poverty, or similar causes. But underlying all of this is the insecurity that flows from a social system in which parents face the future with apprehension or anxiety because they never know when their economic position will be undermined by illness or unemployment. Furthermore, the development of

large monopoly industry over which working people have no influence or control, creates, in many, a feeling of social helplessness and irresponsibility. To this should be added the cynicism that so frequently accompanies the realisation by youth, in the age of monopoly capital and atomic warfare, of the contrast between the ethics as taught in school and the realities of life in capitalist society.

Even children observe something of the contradiction between ethical theory and the practice of nuclear war. The conflict between the high values attributed in school life and teaching to the virtues of co-operation and service, and the hard facts of the pursuit of individual success and wealth, as the real purpose of life under capitalism, creates the conditions for a cynical disillusionment amongst many young people.

The shallow, philistine view of life that interprets success exclusively in terms of the individual acquisition of material wealth, unrelated to social or moral values, undoubtedly penetrates deeply into the lives of young people, expressing itself both in the hysterical ecstacy of adulation of the Johnny Rays and the Elvis Presleys, and the search for spiritual refreshment from evangelists such as Dr. Billy Graham: in both cases the basic drive is to seek escape from the drabness and lack of purpose that surround the lives of so many young people, and to identify themselves with a successful "hero".

The excitement and false glamour of driving a stolen car or performing some other anti-social act arises from the same basic causes, and is given further incentive by the absence of community planning and facilities for normal youth development.

Conditions in many schools, already described, are themselves a factor in delinquency. The unsatisfactory educational experience of so many children, the development of anti-social traits, which over-loaded teachers have frequently neither the time nor the opportunity to diagnose and assist to correct, contribute directly to the growth of delinquency.

This is borne out by the growing number of teachers and parents who, in theory, are firmly opposed to corporal punishment as a disciplinary method, but who, influenced by growing delinquency, are advocating its extension.

Such proposals, attacking the effect rather than the cause, are a counsel of despair, but they indicate the gravity of the problem in our schools, and the extent to which unsatisfactory conditions

are creating both delinquency and a feeling of desperation amongst those subjected to its full impact.

There are further problems of housing, resulting in many thousands of young people having no adequate social life in the home; there are also the effects on youth of the constant menace of atomic war, the demoralising influence of many of the programmes on TV, radio and film, and of "comic books" and the absence of planned youth activity for leisure hours.

In the collective life of the U.S.S.R., where there is a network of cultural establishments, youth clubs and the like, and where the emphasis in publicity is upon peaceful coexistence, and a peaceful future for mankind based upon international co-operation and on working class action and community of interest, there is very little of the hysteria and unbalance that is so marked a feature of life in the capitalist world.

One immediate demand that needs to be raised is for the adequate provision of facilities — especially supervised play-centres and youth clubs, all the more because so many mothers as well as fathers have been compelled by economic pressure to seek employment in industry. Whilst the provision of such amenities will not solve the problem, it will help to promote a more stable background for the lives of many young people, and offset some of the anti-social influences flowing from the conditions under which so many of them live.

MECHANISATION AND AUTOMATION ARE CHANGING THE PROBLEM

Men and women, youth and children, are living in a very different world from that of 30 or 40 years ago. This has already affected education and will continue to do so, even more, in the future. Mechanisation and the beginnings of automation mean that mankind is being freed, or will be freed, from the more onerous kinds of physical labour. The unskilled labourer will become substantially obsolete as these developments go on.*

At the same time, the developing machine age should give men and women more opportunity for leisure, both by reducing the heaviness of toil, and by making more leisure time available. In this situation, the task of education is twofold: to raise the educational level of the whole working population to that of the technical specialist; and to develop his culture so that increased leisure becomes not a curse but a blessing.

In socialist society this task is being undertaken.

Already, in the U.S.S.R., a cultured community is emerging which has evoked the warmest enthusiasm of Sir Bernard Heinze, Professor Manning Clark, and other recent visitors. Music, drama, the reading and discussion of serious literature are the property, not of a tiny group of intellectuals, but of tens of millions of people. Within the foreseeable future this will be the pattern of life for all men and women living in socialist society.

Already facilities for education to matriculation level, combined with training as technical specialists, have been established for the rising generation. Over and above this, increasing numbers are proceeding to full tertiary education.

On the other hand, the advance of mechanisation under capitalism is one element in the growing economic crisis, and is already leading, not to a fuller development, but to the wastage of human resources. In the coalfields, in N.S.W., mechanisation has already resulted in dismissal for thousands of miners. As the process develops, vast numbers are certain to find themselves in this position, a state of affairs already evident in the 5-6 million unemployed in the U.S.A. and Canada.

* For a view on this question, see the brochure "Technical Education for a New Age", issued by the N.S.W. Department of Technical Education.

The socialist world is preparing for the era of mechanisation and automation and, in the plans, the educational system has a basic role to play.

No such plans exist in any capitalist country. Without a completely new approach based on a planned use of the national resources, including the talents of young people, a very large percentage of the pupils in the schools today will be social and economic derelicts before they have reached middle age.

Such a perspective is, of course, totally unacceptable to the working class, and to progressive people in general.

The formulation of a national educational policy that will prepare for life in the age of automation becomes an immediately urgent and pressing matter.

WHY HAVE WE FALLEN BEHIND?

Fifty years ago, Australia, in education and literacy, was amongst the most advanced countries of the world.

Today, with our schools turning out a large proportion of poorly educated pupils, and with only about 10% of each school year successfully completing the full five year secondary course, and less than 5% proceeding to full tertiary education,* there is obviously a serious decline in Australia's position, relative at any rate to the socialist countries.

The unsatisfactory material requirements already described are part of the explanation. However, there are other, more fundamental questions.

The U.S.S.R., forty years ago, had a population over 80% illiterate. Its school buildings were few, its teachers in many instances poorly trained. Subsequently, during the second world war, a great number of its schools and universities were destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Yet it has surpassed in its educational achievements, not only Australia, but the more industrialised communities of Great Britain and the U.S.A. as well; and is on the verge of another revolutionary surge forward that will put it still farther ahead.

Educationists in all countries are asking how it is that the U.S.S.R., generations behind in 1918, now leads the world in educational and cultural standards.

Part of the answer is to be found in the class-privilege of the social system of capitalism, which is in sharp contrast with full and equal opportunity afforded by socialism.

* See the figures of the Murray Committee Report. (p 22, Sect. 48)

CLASS PRIVILEGE LIMITS EFFICIENCY

Approximately 72 per cent of all pupils embarking on secondary education in N.S.W. do so in public (State) secondary schools; the remaining 28 per cent in private schools, a proportion 2½ to 1. Many of the latter come from prosperous middle class and upper class families, who have no difficulty in maintaining their children at school for a lengthy period.

As a result, by the time the Leaving Certificate is reached, only 50% of candidates come from public (State) secondary schools. Clearly a high percentage of talented children have left school because of economic pressures; whilst such pressures do not exist on the children of the higher income groups attending private schools.

Put in another way, these figures mean that of every 100 students proceeding to the University, approximately 27 are of lower ability than boys or girls from lower-income homes who have left school earlier mainly because of economic pressures. Owing to this lack of equal educational opportunity the whole community suffers. Some of the worst effects could be overcome by extending the Commonwealth scholarship scheme, making finance available without restriction or with a liberal means test to all wishing to proceed to higher, secondary or tertiary education. The cost would run into millions of pounds, but who would say that it is not better spent than in purchasing obsolete military aircraft for "defence", or withdrawing hundreds of young teachers from their work to engage in so-called "national service", whilst their pupils remain untaught.

The fact is that there is no national planning; no clear statement of aims, to ensure that education is given its proper place in national life; finance is not available to enable talented young people to receive the fullest education of which they are capable, whilst the slow learners and the socially handicapped are being allowed to go to the wall.

The waste of human material is a national disgrace and a national calamity.

FREE EDUCATION

What is needed is that genuine "free education" be made a reality for all. Every parent knows that the beginning of each school year means a constant monetary drain to equip the children for school: uniforms, books, sports wear, fees for extras.

In many cases it is the strain which this imposes on the family resources, rather than the prospective new wage he will bring in, that determines that many a capable child leaves school at the earliest possible moment.

Under present conditions, to equip a child to commence secondary education requires an initial cash outlay of £50 or more, whilst the cost of maintaining a child of secondary school age is several pounds weekly.

Parents in the middle, and especially the lower, income groups, find the strain excessive, even intolerable. Free education must mean the shouldering by the community, the state, of the major part of the burden, to ensure that potential talent is not dissipated, and that the community, in fact, accepts the responsibility for the adequate training of its young people.

INEQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The need for higher standards of education for all is gradually becoming an accepted part of community thinking. However, at the same time, reactionary views are being expressed that run counter to this progressive trend.

Such views have this in common, that they call for sharp discrimination between the "bright child" and the remainder of the population. A particularly definite statement of this opinion was given recently by the Governor-General, Sir William Slim, to the effect that "a quicker and more economical way to get the scientists who are needed to improve scientific education would be to eliminate unsuitable students before entry." (to university.)

Such proposals are, of course, completely undemocratic. Their effect would be to create a privileged elite, with an inferior education for the majority. Even more, they arise from a basic misconception of the nature of the problem, which has been well stated by the former chairman of the C.S.I.R.O., the late Sir Ian Clunies Ross, "Australia needs more scientists as well as better ones."

The completely reactionary and impractical character of this emphasis on "the bright child" is demonstrated by the experience of the U.S.S.R., which provides the same education for all citizens, without economic burdens for the parents. As a consequence, Soviet education is producing both quantity and quality. Not only is it graduating several times the number of scientists, proportionate to population, of any capitalist country;

but, in addition, their quality has been clearly shown by recent successes in various fields of science, not only, though most spectacularly, in rockets.

Equality of opportunity in a period of secondary education for all, must mean the same basic education for all primary and secondary school pupils, and also provision by the State to ensure that extended education does not add to the economic burdens of the parents; in particular of parents in the lower and middle income groups.

As matters stand, at present, in Australia, as in all capitalist countries, inequality of educational opportunity is a major obstacle to educational advance.

EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

However, the matter goes beyond this. The fact is that the theory and practice of a special form of education for an "elite" and of a less expensive inferior type of education for the remainder, has always been a barrier to full education for the great majority of young people.

Theories of an intellectual "elite", whether chosen by intelligence tests to determine the I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient) or by examination, are still accepted in all Australian States, and in the capitalist world generally.

For this "elite" there is a special kind of secondary education, usually highly academic. In general, the pupils selected for this type of education have better buildings and equipment, more highly qualified teachers, and are in smaller classes than the remainder who, in the main, follow more practical courses in technical or home science schools.

The "streaming" of children into these different courses has an obvious class bias; the pupils selected for the "elite" schools being intended for professional life, those in the other types of school for various types of working class occupation.

This is very obvious when a study is made of the ways in which pupils have been, and are still, selected for different types of schools and courses.

The question at issue is not whether children or adults differ in natural ability. Clearly, some are more gifted than others; some absorb knowledge more readily, some mature earlier; some have special gifts in music, art and other fields.

What is important is the existence of a theory that only a small minority is capable of full secondary education; a theory that meets the requirements of class-privilege in capitalist society. It is on such a theory that selection for various types of education has been conducted for many years.

The question is frequently asked whether the most talented children achieve their maximum academic development in a class or school where there is a marked difference of ability.

Proponents of the selective school claim that the incentive of competition at a high level raises the standard beyond what it would reach if competition were less keen.

Evidence on this point is not conclusive.

The carefully selected top-level pupils in selective high schools in N.S.W. certainly achieve a great number of high passes in their final examinations, but it is also true that many country high schools achieve results not far below, and in some cases equal to them, from ungraded pupils of varying levels of I.Q. and primary achievement. Furthermore, a number of high and intermediate high schools, especially those with small senior classes, have been securing 100% passes in the Leaving Examination, a state of affairs by no means common in selective schools.

What can be said with assurance is that segregating the outstanding pupils in "Opportunity A" classes in primary school, and in selective high schools, tends to unbalance them, to give them notions of intellectual and social superiority that are harmful to their social development.

The fact is that educational progress of pupils is determined by a number of factors, including incentives, size of classes, quality of teaching, the effectiveness of school organisation, the pupil's own approach, and, above all, the capacity for work. In study and academic work, as in all fields of human activity, the transforming power of labour is a basic issue. Human ability expands through its exercise in labour, in concentrated effort, in the field of academic work, as in all others. Furthermore, improved nutrition or standards of physical fitness or an improved home-situation, lead, often, to a marked increase in levels of scholastic achievement; and even to spectacular increases in the level of the "Intelligence Quotient", (I.Q.), which, in theory, is an innate, fixed and unchanging quality, not subject to the influence of external factors. (See below, under "The I.Q. system".)

SELECTION BY EXAMINATION

By the early years of the 20th century, education to primary standard had become general. Industrial society needs general literacy to enable its machines to be efficiently maintained and serviced, and its bookkeeping and general administration to be carried on.

But capitalism required only a tiny minority with higher education to carry out the more skilled operations and higher administrative functions. These were selected by public examination which was highly competitive and academic.

The vast majority of children either ceased formal education at the end of the primary course at about ages 12-14, or took a limited secondary or technical course, to become skilled craftsmen or clerical workers.

SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ALL

As production processes became more complex, the need increased for a greater percentage of workers with a higher secondary or tertiary education (scientists, agronomists, technologists, doctors, teachers, administrative staff).

At the same time, public demand, led by the working class movement, raised the slogan of secondary education, not as a privilege, but as a right for all.

Various governments, under pressure from the trade unions and the labour movement as a whole, have introduced reforms, such as part-time daylight training for apprentices, increase of the school leaving age, and similar legislation in other fields.

However, the demand for greater equality of educational opportunity has continued to be pressed upon governments by the working class movement, and progressive opinion generally.

SELECTIVE SYSTEMS

In opposition to these demands, various theories have been advanced, all based on the assumption that those who, in fact, succeeded in life deserved to succeed because of inborn ability, and that first-rate education would only be wasted on the remainder.

In practice, this has meant the arrangement of children in schools according to the class position they were expected to fill in society, i.e. professional people, skilled craftsmen, semi-skilled or unskilled workers.

In some States this is still done by means of public examination, usually between the ages of 11 and 12. On the basis of the examination, at this extremely early age, a final decision is made as to the course or type of school in which the pupil is to spend his secondary school life (i.e. academic high, junior technical or home science). In other words, for the great majority, the course commenced at age 11 determines the future position of the child in society.

Educationists in general have long been thoroughly dissatisfied with the predictive accuracy of such an examination held at so early an age.

There are even more grounds for dissatisfaction now that crisis conditions have resulted in tens of thousands receiving education under such chaotic conditions that many, even of the ablest children, gain poor examination results.

THE I.Q. SYSTEM

The system of selection operating in N.S.W. since 1943 was introduced as an alternative to selection by public examination.

The I.Q. (Intelligence Quotient) system was, it was claimed, both scientific and democratic. Pupils were admitted to secondary schools not on the basis of examinations, but of alleged ability to succeed as determined in advance by a test of intelligence, although minor use was made also of school test results.

Those with highest I.Q.'s were, in general, admitted to full high schools; those in the intermediate group to junior technical and home science schools; the third, and lowest, to "opportunity" or "general activity" classes or schools.

The N.S.W. Department of Education has itself in practice admitted the low predictive value of I.Q. tests, by increasing in recent years, the emphasis placed on school tests in selection of pupils, and by making the final decision through a committee. However, the I.Q. still plays a decisive part in determining courses.

The I.Q. system operates partially in other States. For example, within some schools, children of the same age are graded into forms according to their I.Q.; whilst in Queensland, there is every indication that I.Q. tests will soon be introduced as the standard method of selection for secondary schools. In all States there are advocates of the system, as the alleged scientific method of evaluating innate ability.

Actually the I.Q. system is the reverse of scientific. It is based on an unproven assumption that tests can be devised to be given to children between the ages of 9 and 12 that will establish their innate ability, their intelligence.

This is supposed to be a fixed, practically unchanging quality, so that, when the test results are known, the child can be placed into the educational category for which the results indicate he is suited.

What happens in practice is that the child, long before he has finished his primary education, is card-indexed by the Guidance Sections of education departments, in effect allotting him his future place in society.

This is the most damaging effect of the I.Q. system, that it divides children according to the results of tests, almost into different castes, from which their chance of escape to a different grouping is meagre.

In this respect the I.Q. system of selection is worse than others, but not different in its basic effects.

The existence of different quality streams of education, whatever the method of selection, leads inevitably to glaring anomalies.

"THE BRIGHT CHILD"

One such anomaly is the theory, parallel to the view expressed by the Governor-General regarding university students, that more attention should be devoted to the "bright child" in secondary education, and less to the remainder. In other words, the proposal is to use the educational system to reinforce the special position of an "elite".

These views are based, frequently, on intelligence testing, from which conclusions are "scientifically" drawn that only a small minority are in fact *capable* of successfully undertaking higher education; such views continue to be circulated in the teeth of the experience of the Soviet Union, where, for a number of years, most of the adolescent urban population has been educated to matriculation standard.

MAKING THE CHILD FIT THE COAT

However, the educational theory of the class-society of capitalism cannot avoid class biased conclusions. The theoretical educational "experts" of capitalism claim that 10-20% of young

people are of such poor natural endowment that they cannot successfully take public examinations; another 25% or so are capable of taking some examinations at a lower level preparatory to proceeding to low-skilled occupations; a further 40-50% can reach the level of the skilled trades; whilst only 15-20% can cope successfully with higher education. For example, the Murray Committee Report, on University Education, accepts the figure of about 16%.

In this way, the whole of the child and youth community is neatly divided into the categories demanded by the social system—and the division is defended, not on the grounds of the requirements of capitalist society, but on the basis of the theory that natural ability, alone, determines the kind of education the child is capable of successfully undergoing.

Brian Simon and other British educationists have shown how the I.Q. system is manipulated in Britain to serve the requirements of the social system rather than to provide a suitable education. They have presented evidence that the I.Q. regarded as acceptable for entrance to a Grammar School varies, according to the number of places available. In an area where demand for a place was not high, an I.Q. of 110 could be sufficient to gain a place. In another, where fewer seats were available, a child with I.Q. 115 could be excluded. In other words, the actual purpose of the I.Q. system and other methods of selection are to ensure that only the "necessary" number is admitted to full secondary education.

For the remainder, one result is a lowering of standards.

This is because the educational authorities in all States, whether adopting the I.Q. system or not, have set the standards to be achieved by different groups at different levels, with the result on the one hand of a growing emphasis on the need for special opportunities for the "bright child", and, on the other, a reduction of much of the formal acquisition of knowledge by a large percentage of children.

Parallel with this have gone changes in educational procedure—more non-academic activities for pupils, learning by playing, the use of projects and group methods of learning.

Whilst such procedures have considerable educational value, they are no substitute for planned, methodical work. When low standards are accepted as the only realisable goal, these practices become ends in themselves, and often help to prevent the pupil from reaching normal levels of achievement.

In practice, with large classes and inadequate accommodation and equipment, the result has frequently been the loss of any serious purpose in education for a large number of children. In a great number of cases, with educational goals set at low levels, many pupils leave secondary school with a very low educational achievement, in some cases virtually illiterate, and those proceeding to technical education frequently lack the basic knowledge and skills required.

The setting of lower standards as goals frequently results in a lower level of accomplishment than is, in fact, possible.

It reduces standards for both teachers and pupils.

REMEDIAL TEACHING WITHOUT A REMEDY

For the group with the lowest I.Q., or poor natural endowment, the theory is that remedial teaching in small groups will raise their standards, at least to the level of literacy.

But, in reality, very few teachers are trained in remedial teaching, classes are large, and growing larger, and most of these retarded pupils receive little real education. In this way, while lip-service is given to the ideal of secondary education for all, in fact, a considerable percentage of pupils are leaving the secondary schools with a sense of failure and defeat.

Furthermore, the practice of segregating the groups in different schools according to I.Q., examination, the availability of different types of schools in different suburbs, or any other method of selection has caused great bitterness by appearing to place a stigma upon children not admitted to full high schools, and consequently reducing their incentives.

Most destructive of the self-respect and capacity to overcome retardation of retarded or slow learning pupils, is the social segregation imposed upon them in some schools, and the assumption which unfortunately affects many parents, teachers, and pupils themselves, that they are the outcasts of the system, doomed to a life of semi-literacy and social inferiority.

Once the I.Q. system is accepted, with its implied set of social classifications, such an outcome is inescapable. It is as true for the lower classes in the secondary modern schools in Great Britain, as it is of General Activities classes in N.S.W. (See "The Common Secondary Scheme" by Brian Simon. Lawrence and Wishart, 1955.)

THE WYNDHAM REPORT

The same basic education is required for all children as far as the compulsory school leaving age, just as it is in primary school. Those who stay at school beyond the compulsory leaving age, should have the same basic "core subjects" to the end of secondary education, and additional optional subjects of equivalent standard.

Thus, courses should not be "academic" as in high schools, nor narrowly "practical" trade subjects, but all courses should combine scientific, cultural and practical subjects in all schools, thus enabling an equivalent standard of "matriculation" at age 17 or 18 to either University or Technical College.

As it happens, the Wyndham Report on Secondary Education in N.S.W. proposes reforms along these lines. (See "Report of the Committee Appointed to Survey Secondary Education in N.S.W." N.S.W. Government Printer, 1957.)

It recognises secondary education as a right for all adolescents.

By recommending that most children be educated in a single type of secondary school, its effect will be to remove some of the discrimination and class-distinction from secondary education.

It endorses the principle of a core of subjects to be studied by all pupils alike, so taking a step towards providing a standard minimum body of knowledge for all.

By increasing the secondary school life from 5 to 6 years, it provides for more adequate preparation for University education. It reduces the importance attached to selection, and is a move in the direction of greater equality of opportunity.

The more gifted children whilst losing nothing that they at present enjoy, will undoubtedly benefit by the experience of a more normal social intercourse in schools enrolling all types of children. The same educational facilities will be available to all children; and it will be possible for the school authorities to assist children into courses of study suited to their special aptitudes and interests.

In substance the practical proposals of the Wyndham Report are progressive, even though some of its argument and educational theory are based on individualistic concepts in line with current United States educational thought.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT THE WYNDHAM REPORT?

The Wyndham Report needs to become an important public issue; first of all to ensure that its proposals are put into operation in a planned, methodical way and, secondly, as a rallying point in the demand for adequate Commonwealth finance to enable it to function.

This requires, in the first place, action by the working class—the trade unions and the whole labour and progressive movement. It also involves an extension of the work and activity of the parents' organisations, and combined parent-teacher action.

If the schools are to become centres of community leadership and influence, the activity of parents is of the utmost importance. Already, parents' organisations have shouldered the heavy burdens of providing special equipment for schools; in addition, they, in conjunction with the teachers' unions, have helped to make education into a major political issue, to which all political parties are compelled to give attention.

Public attention has been directed to education on a previously unprecedented scale; and, in achieving this result, the combined efforts of the parents' and teachers' organisations have played the leading rôle.

Under pressure from the parents and teachers, the Prime Minister has agreed that the Commonwealth has the necessary powers under Section 96 of the Constitution, to advance funds for primary and secondary education, provided a request is made by the State governments. Clearly the time is overdue for the State governments to give their support to the growing demand for Federal aid to education.

The campaign for Federal aid requires, both direct representations to the Federal government, and the strongest measures to ensure that the State governments play their part.

If the principles of the Wyndham Report are to be put into operation, a very great increase in financial provision will be needed, immediately.

The six year secondary course will impose still heavier burdens on middle and lower income homes. A major extension of the Commonwealth Scholarship scheme is urgently needed, so that all pupils successfully progressing through secondary education after age 15, will be entitled to scholarships, either without restriction, or with an extremely liberal means test.

Furthermore, the staffing of schools will present new problems.

Especially in the early years, a considerable number of teachers specially trained in remedial work, will be needed to assist the casualties of the present system to overcome retardation in some, or all, subjects, and to take their place in normal development. New systems of teacher training will need to be developed so that secondary teachers can be trained, capable of taking a number of subjects in the junior years. Above all, there will need to be a very great increase in the number of teachers to cope with increased numbers continuing in secondary education, and to provide for the necessary reduction in size of classes. All of these and other requirements will require a vast increase in expenditure.

Already the principle has been established by the appointment of the Murray Committee on University education, that the educational crisis calls for special measures at the University level. The time is overdue for the application of the same principle in primary and secondary education.

THE MURRAY COMMITTEE REPORT — AND EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The chaos of overcrowding, understaffing, inadequate equipment, and extremely poor conditions generally in universities, created the basis for a mass movement which compelled the Menzies government to appoint the Murray Committee to report on university requirements.

By limiting the terms of reference to universities, the government sought to evade its responsibility to primary and secondary education, from which the university students came. Furthermore, although it made certain recommendations regarding technical education, its financial provisions were limited to the universities, and the practical means of greatly increasing the flow of technicians and technologists were not stated. The Committee concerning itself specifically and narrowly with university education, has tended to concentrate unduly on the problems of the intellectual, the highly-trained university product; and inadequately with the basic questions of raising general standards so that an increased percentage of university graduates and highly trained technologists is a normal outcome of the system. Nonetheless, the Committee's findings, in effect, were an unanswerable argument for large-scale financial aid by the Federal Government to the educational system as a whole.

The Murray Committee sets out the objective of increased

general education in the following words:

"Australia has already benefited in quite spectacular fashion from the application of science in the primary industry: there is common agreement that, with a very high standard of living, secondary industry can only maintain its present promise of great achievement by technological and managerial skill and enterprise of the highest quality; and behind all this is *the basic need to drive ahead with the development of a whole continent, vast areas of which, but for the benefit of science, must remain unproductive bush and barren desert.*" (Par. 75.)

To achieve this purpose the Committee asserted: "This requires, not a small number of very clever people, but a very large number indeed of highly educated men and women, and nothing short of this will do." (Par. 75.)

Asserting that "active steps should be taken without avoidable delay by governments, universities, industries and schools," the Committee proceeds to affirm: "Government cannot escape the duty to satisfy itself that there are enough facilities for university education to enable those young men and women of the nation who ought to have a university education, to acquire it."

The Committee goes on to set out the responsibility of the government *to provide by scholarship, sufficient finance to ensure that all students of sufficient academic quality should receive a university education.*

At another point in the report it is stated that "only 4.4% of the N.S.W. 17-18 age group entered the universities . . . (in 1957) . . . Evidence suggests that 16% of any age-group of the Australian population have intellectual ability above the minimum generally considered necessary for success at university." To carry out the committee's policy very large financial aid is required.

After advocating steps by which capable technical students should be assisted to convert to university courses, so increasing the pool of Australian trained technologists, it goes on to recommend a higher degree of co-ordination between university and technical education.

Every aspect of the Murray Committee Report on tertiary education has its counterpart at the primary, and especially the secondary level.

If the talent of the nation is not to be wasted or dissipated, it is clearly necessary to extend the Commonwealth scholarship scheme to at least the senior years of secondary school. Otherwise

the class-privilege that limits equality of opportunity, will continue to deny higher education to a large part of the population, even to a large part of the 16%, regarded by the Committee as the elite.

If university students are to succeed in the better buildings and with the improved equipment recommended by the Report, the conditions existing in primary and secondary schools must be replaced by a parallel development to that of the universities.

If million of pounds are to be spent at the tertiary level in raising educational standards, tens of millions need to be spent on the primary and secondary schools. No Federal government, with any real national vision, can fail to accept its responsibilities for the development of scientific and general education, in accordance with the perspectives of the Murray Committee. A national plan of educational development in accord with national needs, and provision of the necessary finance by the government, is a basic and urgent need in Australian public life. This is all the more so, because university leaders have already stated publicly that the financial provision for universities, whilst adequate for normal expansion of universities for the next two or three years, is totally insufficient to meet the requirements of university development even for a 7 or 10 year period.

Professor Stephen H. Roberts, Vice Chancellor and Principal of Sydney University, has indicated in a recent brochure to graduates, that, with Sydney University expanding at the rate of 1,000 students yearly, and taking into account the backlog in buildings, equipment, and teaching staff, the Murray Committee provision would be totally inadequate to meet normal expansion, even without providing for substantial reduction in class sizes and other necessary reforms.

Other reports such as were issued recently by the Agricultural Institute of Australia, on the training of agriculturalists and the role of agricultural research in Australia, draw attention to the need for a great expansion of specialist training in a large number of fields. It is clear that if the Murray Committee's perspectives of national development through the application of science are to be realised, special institutes and research establishments need to be envisaged over a whole range of activities and fields of enquiry and investigation. It is not merely a matter of extending university facilities, but of a vast extension of the whole field of research and specialist training.*

Furthermore, as the Murray Committee report clearly implies,

the universities, if they are to perform their function of intellectual leadership, need to be freed from government censorship of ideas, and the screening of their teaching staff on political grounds.

"The universities have the inescapable duty . . . to secure their integrity in the free pursuit of knowledge," and again "Truth should be faced even though . . . statesmen are human enough to be restive or angry . . . when perhaps at inconvenient moments the scientist or scholar uses the license which the academic freedoms of the university allows him to bring us all back to a consideration of the true evidence."

Such reform, freeing university thought and teaching from police surveillance and political intimidation, are clearly part of the basic requirements of a university functioning in the community interest.

However, there is, so far, no evidence of any change of heart by any of the Australian governments, especially in their repressive and exclusionist attitudes to left-wing ideas.

Furthermore, far from facing up to the need for a real expansion of both university and research facilities, some State governments are considering the dilution of university courses, reducing their content, and in effect, their academic standard. For instance, the Liberal Party government of Queensland has recently given currency to the idea of "University Centres" in the large country towns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, to reduce pressure on the University of Brisbane.

The proposed "centres" will not have the status of university colleges, will be staffed by local officers of the Dept. of Agriculture, Education etc., and will be provided only with skeleton equipment, libraries and other facilities.

Such developments indicate clearly that at the level of universities, no less than in primary and secondary education, the crisis conditions are still very much in existence, and that "education on the cheap" continues to have a strong attraction for the spokesmen of capitalism.

The Murray Committee represents a new development in the approach to education, but it needs to be enormously expanded both as to further enquiry and in increasing many times over the financial provision, if high quality education at all levels is to be safeguarded and intended to meet national need.

* "Australian universities are providing, on a population basis, only one quarter of the Ph.D's of the British universities and one fifth of the United States and Russia." (Murray Report, Sect. 145, p 43.)

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION IS NEEDED?

The Communist View

Public discussion on the kind of education needed in society today tends to take the form of a debate between the advocates of "scientific" and "humanist" education. The communist view is that education is concerned with the development of the whole human personality, as an individual person and a member of society; that it should be based on science and the scientific method, but that its purpose should equally be the creation of cultured personalities for whom music, art, literature and public affairs are part of the fabric of life.

Such education should be available for the whole community, not merely, as in capitalist society, for an intellectual elite.

The advance of scientific knowledge and the use of scientific method are of primary importance to man because, through enlightenment, they free him from the blind forces of nature, and through labour and struggle enable him to master his environment.

Technological progress in recent times has extended man's control over nature, to the point where it is possible to provide for all normal material needs. This is the economic base on which the good life for all citizens can be built. Such a life involves the creation, in the broadest sense of a cultured community — a community providing the maximum opportunity for the development of the potential of all its members.

Communists have a lofty view of human powers — mental, moral, and physical: a view of man changing himself and his environment through the exercise of those powers in collective labour.

The promotion of culture involves the all-round development of the whole community, including the care of physical health and welfare, and preparation for working life, as well as the things of the mind and spirit, the sciences and arts.

Far from posing "humanist" and "scientific" concepts of education against each other, Communists seek their synthesis in the production of the whole man, the all-sided personality, for whom all life and experience form a unity.

To what extent can these educational ends be achieved in the class-divided society of capitalism, which has different systems of education for the rulers and the ruled?

It is the opinion of Communists that any developments in the direction of greater equality of opportunity are wholly desirable; that important reforms and improvements can be achieved within the framework of capitalism, and that such improvements will both have an absolute value in themselves, and will assist to pave the way to the planned socialist society of the future.

As to the immediate situation in education in Australia, it is necessary to ensure, in the first place at pre-school, kindergarten, primary and secondary levels, that greatly increased government finance and assistance be directed to the maintenance and development of the State (public) school system, and to the State system alone.

Private and denominational schools are, in essence, the creation of particular groups within the community, schools of privilege or special economic or religious interests, and, in one sense or another, are exclusive. Such an action as that of the Menzies government in using public funds to provide financial assistance to private schools in the A.C.T., especially when public (State) schools throughout Australia are starved of essential equipment and short of staff, is an obvious piece of class legislation, unethical, and contrary to the public interest.

Furthermore, it is the responsibility of governments to ensure that the State (public) school buildings, equipment and staff are in accordance with modern requirements, and, as to buildings and amenities, are at least at the standard required by government ordinance.

As matters stand at present, private schools in most States have to meet the requirements of the Health Act; public (State) schools do not. It is not surprising that the general standard of buildings and amenities of the private schools in most States are far superior to those of the State schools.

Education needs to be free, compulsory and secular. There must be no offence to the religious opinions of any student; but any attempt to reintroduce religious influences or controls or any forms of indoctrination in supernaturalism, can only be harmful.

All pupils should be provided with a minimum body of knowledge to provide for life in the world today, syllabuses should be so designed that scientific principles become part of the child's intellectual inheritance, and so that appreciation of literature, art, music, form a part of his normal development.

Education should include some systematic training in the manual arts, agriculture or home science, and the child's physical well-being needs to be safeguarded by adequate grounds, sporting and gymnastic facilities and medical care. Ethical and moral training should be a matter of constant concern of all teachers, and the closest relations in this matter should be maintained between home and school, with facilities provided to ensure that such relations are practicable.

Furthermore, moral education needs to go beyond abstract consideration of the "golden rule", and to provide for the purposeful training, in a practical way in the virtues of co-operative endeavour, international friendship and the equal rights of peoples.

All militarisation, the glamourising of and mental preparation for war, should be excluded from the schools, along with racial discrimination.

Above all, the immorality of nuclear war and positive inculcation of the concept of world peace, need to form part of the regular pattern of teaching.

These are urgent, practical tasks in preparing for life in the atomic age, the age of automation, which, if humanity is to survive, must also be an age of international peace.

Educational developments in the socialist world, and, especially in the Soviet Union provide striking confirmation of the correctness of communist theory when applied to the education and upbringing of young people.

A brief survey of the spirit and structure of education in the U.S.S.R. should therefore be of profound interest to those interested in education in all countries.

SOCIALIST THEORY AND PRACTICE

With the rise of socialism and, in particular of Marxism, the kind of education required for a socialist society was first expressed.

Higher education for all became for the first time a serious political objective, and, from the beginning, socialists were not satisfied that the kind of education which had been suitable for a leisure class could be merely taken over and used by a socialist community.

They were critical of an education based on a social division into intellectuals, professional and leisured people, on the one hand, and workers on the other.

In this connection Karl Marx wrote of the need for "an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as *the only method of producing fully developed human beings*". (Capital, Vol. 1). And again: "the combination of remunerative productive labour, mental education, physical exercise and polytechnical training elevates the working class considerably above the level of the higher and middle classes". (ibid.)

Marx was concerned with education for life, for useful people, not education for a leisured class, and he saw the need for maintaining the organic connection between labour and culture.

Both Marx and the other socialists ridiculed the pretensions of the middle and upper class intellectuals, who were usually presented as the highest product of the educational system. They saw them as one-sided people lacking in the all-round development which socialism sets as its objective.

CHANGING MAN

Socialism sees all labour, physical and mental, as a unity, and sets out to end the distinction that exists between them in a class society, by seeking the end-product of the worker-intellectual. The socialist man is an all-round person, at home in physical labour, with technical skills, and a scientific understanding of nature and man's place in it. A cultured life in socialist society includes physical welfare and an interest in the world of spirit and mind as reflected in the arts and sciences.

Under capitalism, both worker and intellectual tend to be one-sided, partially developed. Socialism sets out to achieve a synthesis in personality, to produce people for whom both productive labour and intellectual life are requirements for satisfactory living. Under communism, the distinction between mental and physical labour, essentially a class distinction, will have disappeared.

The new man, already appearing in socialist society, meets the requirements of the epoch in which mankind through science and automation, takes control of his environment.

SOVIET EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

When the Soviet Union came into existence it was faced with an immense educational task: a population over 80% illiterate; a community of peoples, some of whom did not even have a written language; few universities or training institutes; a very small number of teachers at either university or school level.

In the midst of restoring a wrecked economy, this task was undertaken with such success, that in 15 years the problem of illiteracy was basically solved and each of the constituent republics had an educational system functioning in its own language.

THE SOVIET SCHOOLS

In the early period the Soviet educationists experimented with methods similar in some respects to those in operation in Australia today — the use of I.Q.'s, the Dalton plan of learning, group projects and the like.

The results were unsatisfactory. Pupils were not acquiring a standard body of exact knowledge, and, by the use of I.Q. testing, were being directed into different types of school according to their supposed intelligence. Forms of inequality were entering the system in conflict with the basic principles of socialism.

After a national debate led by the Communist Party and the government, a uniform type of school and curriculum was established for all pupils. The emphasis was placed upon efficient, skilful teaching and systematic hard work as the central principles. Special schools, or classes with trained teachers, were established for handicapped, backward and socially-maladjusted children. When they had reached normal standards, they were in most cases able to cope with the normal work. Great emphasis was placed upon co-operative work by pupils; in the atmosphere of socialist life, the more successful pupils assisted the slower learners; whilst pupil organisations such as the Pioneers and the Young Communist League, gave leadership and inspiration in standards of scholarship and athletics.

From the beginning, Soviet schools aimed at giving a general cultural and a polytechnical education, so that the graduate of secondary schools would be equipped with both academic knowledge and some experience of production processes.

Educational research into the best methods of teaching was extensively employed, and in this field, also, the collective principle operated — the better or more advanced teachers communicating their methods to others. An Institute of Pedagogy main-

tains a scientific approach to the theory and practice of education.

The authority of teachers was firmly established. They were given comparatively high rates of salary, and a place of honour in the community. At the same time, the teacher maintained his position in the school as the leader and director in a co-operative enterprise, rather than as a dictator.

Women have full equality of rights, of salary and of opportunity. Over 50% of all Soviet teachers are women.

A large number of teachers have been elected to the Parliamentary bodies of the Soviet Union.

Discipline in schools is good and is based on firm adult leadership combined with pupil participation. The pupils, through their organisations, have an opportunity to express their viewpoint, but not to interfere in actual administration.

The fullest parent participation is enlisted in ensuring the maximum effort by pupils, and in discussing the development of the school, and educational problems.

The co-operation of home and school in the moral training and upbringing of children is highly developed, and school and home collaborate in assisting children to develop their personal qualities and to become useful members of society. (See below—“Moral Training”.)

Thus education is a matter of earnest daily attention by governments, parents and teachers alike.

State expenditure per head on education is several times that of Australia.

It is a matter of the deepest conviction amongst parents, teachers and governments alike that nothing must stand in the way of each pupil's achieving the maximum possible education and personal development. In his booklet “Education in the U.S.S.R.” (Soviet News Booklet No 24.) by F. Korolev, the author emphasises that care is taken to avoid “levelling” of children, and every effort is made to ensure the development of each child in accordance with his specific individual qualities.

MORAL TRAINING

(See “Family and School in the U.S.S.R.” by A. Levshin.)

Soviet education accepts its key place in the moral training of young people, for the whole period from kindergarten to secondary school and university. Teachers are expected to familiarise themselves with the home conditions of the children they teach, and to assist parents with advice in matters of lack

of progress in school and also in questions of conduct and character development. However, this is not a one-way matter, for the school also has the responsibility to organise regular meetings of parents to discuss similar problems, and to hear parents' views. A close bond is forged between home and school in the common task of the upbringing of young people. Soviet educationists stress the virtues of courage, honesty, a sense of responsibility, recognition of the rights of others, respect for older people, above all, training in proper work-habits as a preparation for life and in building character. Effective use is made of sport and the principle of teamwork.

Pupil participation in corporate life is maintained through organisations such as the Pioneers and Young Communist League, class and club committees of various kinds. The development of a sense of social responsibility is regarded as a prime factor in the building of character.

Moral training is based, primarily, on training children in the fundamentals of correct behaviour and organising their lives, so that the observance of a satisfactory regimen becomes a matter of daily habit. Furthermore, the material conditions are provided to make the child's life outside the school a balanced and satisfactory one.

A network of libraries brings the best kind of literature to every corner of the U.S.S.R., whilst film, radio and TV have maintained a high cultural level in all performances. When it is remembered that children and youth clubs, children's theatres and other cultural facilities are available for the leisure hours, with emphasis on organised leadership by the children themselves, under adult guidance, the absence of delinquency as a major problem is not surprising.

Furthermore, the emphasis on art, music, and dancing, as well as physical fitness, and the facilities available for such activities, provides a rich cultural background for an even development.

CULTURE FOR ALL

For the last 30 years, most pupils, after spending their early years in pre-school kindergartens, have been passing through the seven-year school from age 7 to 14 or 15. All were encouraged to continue at least part-time education after 15, in factory, trade or special technical schools, to qualify as specialists. Each year, increasing numbers went on to matriculation in the ten-

year schools and to higher education.

In the large cities in recent years, a very high percentage of the pupils have proceeded to matriculation standard.

The qualifications of teachers have risen steadily. At present there are five times as many graduate teachers in Soviet secondary schools (250,000) as in the U.S.A. (50,000); twelve times as many as in Great Britain.

In technicians, the Soviet by 1957 was producing $12\frac{1}{2}$ times the United States total annually: 250,000 against 20,000.

At the tertiary level, over four times as many Soviet students were engaged in higher education, as in Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy combined, i.e., four advanced countries with a total population approximately equal to that of the U.S.S.R.

Just as striking is the "success rate". Some 80% or more of all students in university or institute graduate in the minimum time; this compares with less than 40% at Sydney and Melbourne universities, and it is to be remembered that the graduation in the technical and scientific faculties in the U.S.S.R. includes advanced studies in the humanities as well as the special or vocational subjects.

All engineering and science graduates need to be at home in a foreign language, and they are required to present a thesis at graduate level in history or literature.

From the 10 year school (i.e. age 7-17) some $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions were already graduating yearly by 1958; whilst the universities and institutes are turning out fully qualified scientists and engineers at professional level, at several times the rate of the U.S.A. and Britain combined. And this in a country over 80% illiterate in 1918.

However, despite these great advances, important further developments are at present taking place.

EDUCATION AND PRODUCTIVE LABOUR

A national discussion revealed that the kind of school operating in the Soviet was too academic in its emphasis. It was producing young men and women, some of whom considered a university career the only suitable one, and expressed a scornful attitude towards physical labour.

Furthermore, it was disclosed that many young people, in order to make sure of entry to university on leaving school, were undertaking courses for which they were not suited.

This gap between the schools and life, the posing of mental and manual labour against each other as though they were in

opposition, instead of complementary in a socialist society, has led to far-going changes. (See "Bringing the School Still Closer to Life" — pamphlet, and "Proposals to Reform Soviet Education" by N. Khrushchov. Both pamphlets available at Pioneer Bookshop, 40 Market St., Sydney.)

The Soviet schools, will, in future, be divided into two stages. In the first stage all children from age 7 to 15 or 16, for an eight year period, will attend school full time: during this period there will be some increase in practical and manual subjects.

In the second, from 15 to 16, for a further three or four years, most pupils will work part-time in industry, receiving skilled instruction in the factory or on the collective farm; the remaining time being spent at school completing their secondary education. In the factory, their work in production will be paid for at apprentice rates, on the collective farm at workday-unit rates; they will receive instruction from the most skilled workers, and by the time they finish their secondary education they will already be trained tradesmen or specialists, with a general secondary education similar to but beyond matriculation levels in Australia. In many cases the secondary education during this period will be received from evening or correspondence schools, and, in all cases, will have a wide and deep cultural content.

After completing secondary education, at about age 18 or 19, students are to be encouraged to proceed to higher education at evening or correspondence schools as the first or preparatory stages for universities or institutes. Those admitted to universities for full-time studies will gain their places, after passing public examinations, partly on the report of public bodies (trade unions etc.) who would recommend those who had displayed high qualities of workmanship, citizenship and suitability. It appears that approximately 80% of all places in universities are to be gained in this way, the remaining 20% being open to the most brilliant matriculants direct from school, i.e. students who are likely to excel in research and higher education.

Already, it has become clear, where the methods of combining education more closely with productive labour have been tested, that students entering university are not only people whom life and experience in production have given a sound working class background, but are also more mature in their approach to

tertiary education, and surer of their vocational interest. In general, they gain far more from their period in university or institute than pupils proceeding directly from school.

This trend will undoubtedly grow more pronounced as the system becomes general, and the schools, colleges and universities generally cease to stand aside from production and become integrally connected with it. So education will prepare young people for communism when labour and culture will become necessities of life for all.

Within this general pattern, various types of education partly vocational, partly general, will exist side by side. In some cases factories and farms will establish their own schools, whilst some of the large schools are already preparing to set up workshops or factories to engage in actual production. Agricultural high schools and colleges will take the form, in many cases, of large State farms. Such institutions should find it possible to engage in research and assist the raising of general standards. Other schools will carry on the technical training of their pupils in conjunction with neighbouring factories and collective or State farms.

The problem of full education of a whole community as it moves towards communism, raises issues that go to the very heart of communist theory and practice. The new proposals set out to provide a unified experience for young people in their lives as producers of material goods, and by degrees to put an end to the contradictions that had become apparent between mental labour (of students and intellectuals) divorced from actual production and the manual labour of industrial workers.

The harmonious relationship between education and production paves the way for a new synthesis, the establishment, in terms of modern industrial society, of the place of young people as organic members of the social unit of production.

Such a system is on the way to producing balanced personalities, with a scientific outlook, a humanist culture and a communist ethic, in which the welfare of the collective is harmoniously combined with that of its individual members.

These developments, enabling children and youth to develop normally in society must be of tremendous interest to parents and teachers faced with the problems of youth upbringing in capitalist countries. The new experiences will have significance for education everywhere, not only in the socialist world.

They certainly offer a glowing contrast to the deterioration of educational standards in capitalist society, and set standards that all interested in education and child and youth welfare will be anxious to have paralleled in Australia.

THE WAY FORWARD

It would be utopian to expect that all of the benefits of education under socialism could be made available in the class-society of capitalism.

The wealthy classes will undoubtedly insist on the maintenance of private schools, providing special privileges and opportunities for those able to afford them. Such schools will continue, quite consciously, to maintain and expand class privilege and the class structure of society. Similarly, religious groupings will maintain special schools under denominational control. Furthermore, it would be naive to expect that the capitalist State would willingly abandon the principle of "education on the cheap", for the majority; especially as the alternative of a first-class education for all citizens would involve a major re-allocation of national finance, in which the needs of schools and universities would have a higher priority at the expense of record profits for monopolies.

The collective, co-operative spirit of living that is part of the lifeblood of socialist society, permeates all socialist institutions including the schools and universities; whilst the individualist self-seeking profit-making motivation system, tends to corrupt and vitiate all aspects of life under capitalism, including, to some extent, the system of education and child upbringing. If, for example there is profit to be made from debased comic books or film, stimulating anti-social eroticism and crime amongst children and youth, such material is likely to continue to form part of the cultural background of young people in capitalist society.

Nonetheless, it is part of the lesson of history, that mass demand and mass struggle can win improvements in social legislation, especially when the rulers are themselves divided. Most educationists, including those whose outlook is completely identified with capitalist society, realise the need to increase the percentage of citizens receiving full tertiary education; similarly with many of the private owners of industry, who realise the place of science in modern industry and agriculture.

A strong public opinion calling for educational advance is thus being created. It is the task of the working class, of the labour movement as a whole, to give drive and direction to the movement, to place upon it the stamp of working class and socialist ideas.

COMMUNIST PROGRAMME FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

An Educational Code providing minimum conditions for the educational welfare of all schoolchildren needs to be drawn up and put into operation. This should provide for classes of a size that can be effectively taught: junior classes not to exceed 30, senior classes (ages 15-18) 20, remedial classes to have a maximum of 12.

The same basic education should be provided for all, through-out primary and secondary education, consisting of a "core" of basic subjects, with additional elective subjects according to pupils' aptitudes and special interests. The courses should be balanced, including both academic and practical subjects. Education should be free, with books and necessary equipment supplied; it should be secular and compulsory, and the school leaving age should be progressively raised as facilities become available, until a national minimum of 16 years is reached.

A scholarship scheme needs to be organised providing for stipends to all pupils successfully proceeding through secondary education, of a quarter of the basic wage; such stipend to be available after age 16; pupils of 14 and 15 to receive double child endowment.

All schools need to be provided with playing and recreation grounds at the rate of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ acre per 100 pupils. School halls, gymnasias, cafeterias, libraries and, in secondary schools, laboratories should be a basic part of the provision.

All large schools need, in addition to teaching staff, a medical orderly, registrar and clerk, and caretaker-gardener.

The school facilities should be fully used as evening and week-end cultural and sports youth centres with trained and paid supervisory staffs; and opportunities need to be provided for at least one recreational camp annually for all children.

Full daytime training should be established for all apprentices, and technical diploma students should be provided with study time off, with pay, prior to examinations.

State and Federal public finance should be restricted to State (public) schools; and the necessary action should be taken in concert by Federal and State authorities whilst maintaining State autonomy in administration.

In addition to these basic principles to safeguard the interests of children and promote their maximum development, a summary statement is made, below, of other basic requirements.

INDUSTRIAL CODE FOR TEACHERS

- Increased salaries and teachers' college allowances to attract able students.
- Equal pay for men and women teachers.
- Staff-rooms, rooms for rest, rooms for parent interviews and other minimum amenities.
- Defined hours and conditions of work.
- Overtime to be paid at overtime rates.
- Senior staff to be relieved of routine clerical and administrative work.
- Increased numbers of teachers and training colleges.
- All teachers to be fully trained, professionally, and, in general, to graduate level, 4 years beyond matriculation.
- Additional specialist training in remedial teaching, infants, home science, technical, music and art teaching.
- Frequent refresher courses in school time.
- Additional study leave. Leave to exchange with teachers of other countries.
- Teacher exchange to be extended to cover socialist countries.
- All temporary and partly-trained teachers to have the opportunity to complete their training or qualification.

UNIVERSITY AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

- Rapid expansion of university and technical student bodies.
- Corresponding expansion of staff, buildings and equipment.
- Abolition of all student quotas.
- Extension of selected university and technical courses to larger provincial towns.
- Double the number of Commonwealth scholarships immediately.
- An increase in means test for living allowance to £1500.
- Increased living allowance from £5/15/- maximum to $\frac{3}{4}$ of basic wage.
- Abolition of all "bonding" systems while retaining guarantee of employment.
- Equal opportunity for university and technical female staffs with male staffs.
- Immediate increase of university staffs of 60% to reach U.K. standards.
- More time for university and technical staffs for research and staff-exchange.

- Removal of political checks for employment or promotion of graduates.
- Selected senior technical colleges to develop degree courses with university status.
- Subjects completed for diplomas to be recognised as partial qualification for such degrees.
- Compulsory inclusion of some "humanities" in technical courses and university science courses.
- Conversion between trade and technical courses, and between technical and university courses to be facilitated.
- Special facilities to enable non-graduate teachers to obtain a university degree, including the establishment by teachers' colleges of their own degree courses.
- Co-ordination of all university, technical and teacher training education under a single national plan, whilst maintaining the largest possible measure of autonomy to individual universities and technical and teachers' colleges.

PRE-SCHOOL AND AFTER SCHOOL

- A net-work of government-financed nursery schools and pre-school kindergartens, both to assist in normal development of young children and to provide the necessary facilities for working mothers.
- Adequately-staffed and government-financed youth centres and other cultural centres and cheap sport facilities to provide for young people an opportunity to make satisfactory use of leisure time, and to counter the trend to delinquency created by the social conditions of capitalism.

FEDERAL FINANCE GRANTS

- A special grant of Federal finance to enable the lag in buildings, equipment and teacher-training to be systematically overcome.
- Additional annual Federal grants, the amounts to be determined by a special commission which should take evidence both in Australia and overseas, including an examination of the educational system of the U.S.S.R., U.S.A. and Great Britain.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

- Repeal of any regulations limiting right of teachers to criticise shortcomings of education or administration.
- Regular meetings of principal and staff on school policy.

- Regular meetings of parents called by existing parents and citizens' organisations.
- Parent-teacher co-operation to assist education departments to apply these policies on education.
- Education Commission to control and administer education in each State to include representatives elected by teachers' and parents' organisations.

EDUCATION IN A SOCIALIST AUSTRALIA

The achievement of a large part of such a programme would mark a tremendous educational advance. Great as the advance would be, it is the minimum required by society for the age of automation.

However, it would still be incomplete, for only in a socialist society, when the restrictive effects of special vested interests are removed, and the whole community is integrated into a collective effort, and working with a collective spirit, can development of education and culture for the whole of society be fully realised.

In the socialist Australia of the future the education of the whole community to the level first, of full secondary, and then of tertiary education, will be a realisable goal.

This will involve a full polytechnical education for all, the combination of academic education with workshop and farming practice to end the contradiction between mental and manual labour and provide for the all-round development of all citizens. The task is twofold: to work for the reforms that can be won within the framework of capitalist society, and to build for the future when man, in socialist society, will have taken control of his environment, will have passed from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.

The advance of science and of human productivity have brought mankind to the threshold of such a way of life. The transition to socialism, already accomplished by over one-third of the human race, opens new vistas of peaceful development for humanity, in which man will make a new qualitative advance, more profound in some respects than the historical transition from barbarism to civilisation.

The struggle for educational advance is a link in the chain of the progress of mankind towards this great goal.

SUGGESTED READING

Report of the Committee appointed to survey Secondary Education in N.S.W. N.S.W. Government Printer, 1958.

Report of the Committee of Australian Universities. Commonwealth Printer 1957.

Simon: "The Common Secondary School". Lawrence and Wishart, 1955.

Makarenko: "The Road to Life"; "Learning to Live"; "A Book for Parents".

Beatrice King: "Russia Goes to School". Heinemann, 1948.

Medinsky: "Public Education in the U.S.S.R.", 1954.

Novikov: "Notes of a School Principal", 1948.

Professor Velyutin: "Higher Education in the U.S.S.R.", 1959.

Scott Nearing: "Soviet Education", 1958.

Communist Party of Great Britain: "Higher Education in the Nuclear Age", 1959.

Kalinin M.I.: "On Communist Education", 1949.

Koralev: "Education in the U.S.S.R.", 1958.

Levshin: "Family and School in the U.S.S.R.", 1958.

Khrushchov: "Proposals to Reform Soviet Education", 1958.

C.P.S.U. Central Committee and U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers: "Thesis on Education".

Most of the above booklets and brochures are obtainable at the following addresses:

Pioneer Bookshop, 40 Market Street, City.

New World Booksellers, 52 Phillip Street, City.

The Report on Secondary Education can be obtained from the N.S.W. Government Printer.

The Report on Universities is available through the Commonwealth Sub-Treasury.