A portrait of Soviet Students

Submitted by the Press Office of the USSR Embassy in Canada

Four thousand, mainly full-time university and college students responded as *Smena* (a popular Soviet youth magazine with a circulation of 1,200,000) offered its readers a questionnaire. Sociologist Viktor Perevedentsev, Ph. D. (Economics) analysed their answers to draw a sociological portrait of the post-secondary school student of today.

As of last year, the day departments of Soviet universities and colleges had a total enrolment of 2.8 million. The average student age is 18 to 24. People from every social stratum are among the full-time students (who constitute over a half of the USSR's university and college students), with a high percentage from professional family backgrounds.

Real Advantage against Formal Equal Opportunities

Most parents want their children to get an education at least as good as their own. To ensure this, many hire private tutors for their young ones.

This is one of the main reasons why the professionals' social stratum largely reproduces itself. Another important reason is that young people residing in the city where the university or college is situated have better enrolment opportunities than young people living in other cities, because of a shortage of dormitory facilities.

Some measures have already been taken to bridge the opportunities gap. Industrial factories send some of their young workers to college on scholarships higher than the ordinary state ones. There are also full-time preparatory courses at institutions of higher learning, with priority admissions going to young insdustrial workers and farmers. Good progress at the course means enrolment in the college or university in question without entrance exams.

What They Want Their Future Occupation to Be Like

The *Smena* poll showed that the three main requirements the students want their future jobs to meet are: to be morally satisfying (77 percent of the polled), highly useful socially (52 percent) and well paid (also 52 percent).

Paradoxically, only 3 in 100 mentioned 'the oppoptunity to become a leader, a manager', even though many of the polled are school activists with leadership experience.

Another alarming contradiction revealed by the poll is the gap between the above-mentioned three priority requirements and the students' ideas of their professional prospects. One can hardly expect people who are not satisfied with their job choice to find their future employment 'morally satisfying'. But only 64 in 100 said they would choose the same profession if they were to choose again. The remaining 36 said they would choose a different one. The fact that so many were unhappy with their selection is attributable to the poor idea the young people had of their own abilities and of the profession they chose, and also to their parents' erratic guidance. (The poll showed that family played a great role in career choice).

Better Pay with Many Creative Opportunities Would Be Preferable

Many of the polled noted they would prefer an occupation which would yield better pay with many creative opportunities.

The fact that professionals (especially engineers) are paid comparatively little has caused a fall in the prestige of higher education in this country in the past few years, revealing itself in the swift decrease in applications for admissions, especially at technical colleges. The situation should change for the better because engineers' salaries will see an average 30 to 35 percent rise in 1987, depending on individual performance and qualification rating. (Grants for highly efficiency workers will also be set up).



Photo by Dennis Doherty

A French student says, "Here's where I'd like to stick your reforms!" in Paris earlier this year.

Arab youths protest shootings

By CARMEN MISENER
Brunswickan Staff

According to a press release submitted to the *Brunswickan* by the Toronto based Canadian Arab Youth (CAY), on December 4th seven university students were shot and two were killed on the West Bank.

The *Brunswickan* contacted the Israeli Embassy to find its side of the story and Av Gil, an Embassy spokesman, agreed that there *was* an incident on the West Bank. However, he did not agree with the CAY, which stated that the student demonstrations were peaceful. He commented that "several of the students had criminal records" and at least one had a history of terrorism.

The CAY's press relaese states that the four Palestinian Universities on the West Bank "have been constant targets of Israeli harrassment and closures, their students and faculty subjected to deportation, arrest and administrative detention." The CAY could not be reached for comment.

On the other hand, Gil stated that prior to Israeli occupation of the West Bank, there weren't even universities there. He commented that the Israeli government only closed down the West Bank when they began to disturb "public life." At one of the West Bank Universities, the Israelis discovered a stack of PLO calenders which made holidays of the PLO massacre of the Israelian athletes in 1972.

The clash between students and soldiers, which led to the two deaths, began when army check points would not allow students into the University.

The CAY concludes that the objective of the Israelis are to discourage the development of Palestinian leadership and encourage youths to study and settle abroad. They accuse the Israelis of emptying Palestine of its most talented young people.

Gil said that "terrorists disguise themselves as students of universities" and he concluded by commenting "this is what causes the problems between soldiers and universities on the West Bank."

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