

# Lectures to Parents

## Lecture 1

### GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR BRINGING UP A FAMILY

Dear Parents! Dear Soviet citizens!

The most important part of our lives is bringing up our children. They are the future citizens of our country and of the world. They will create history! Our children are the future fathers and mothers who will, in their turn, rear children. They must grow up to be good citizens and good fathers and mothers.

And this is not all – our children are our old age – if they are well brought up we will have a happy old age but if they are badly reared we will experience sorrow and tears. We will suffer before other people and before our country for our guilt.

Dear parents, above all remember the great importance of this matter of child-rearing and your responsibility for it....

Now let us turn our attention to some questions of general significance. First: to bring up a child correctly and normally is much easier than to re-educate him. It is really not as hard as some people seem to think. Any parent is capable of bringing up his children rightly – if he really wants to. And what a joyful, pleasant, happy task it is! Re-education is a different matter. If you have done a bad job, been thoughtless, lazy or neglectful, much will have to be done over again, corrected. And this task requires more wisdom and patience than we find in every parent. So again we advise you, parents, do your task well from the very beginning....

Many mistakes are made because parents forget what period of history they live in. Out in the world, they seem to be good Soviet citizens, members of the new socialist society. But at home, with their children, they live in the old ways. Of course not everything in the pre-revolutionary family was bad, much should be taken over. But do not forget the major differences. We live in a classless society... our children must grow up to be active and conscious builders of communism.

Parents must remember too, that in the pre-revolutionary family the father had great power; children lived completely under his will, there was no escape for them from parental authority and some fathers treated their children cruelly. Government and church upheld their power – it was convenient in an exploiting society. In our family the organization is very different. Our daughters do not have to wait for their fathers to find them a husband!

The feelings of the children rule. Obviously, if parents are to have influence now, they must find new methods, the old ones may no longer be used.

In the old-type family everyone belonged to some class and the son of a peasant was a peasant too, the son of a worker, a worker. Now a broad range of choice opens before our children. Their decisions need not be made according to the economic situation of the family but on the basis of their own capabilities and preparation. Both parents and children understand this. Under such conditions, parental decrees are impossible. Guiding must be done by wiser, more subtle and cautious means.

Our family is no longer a paternal one. Our women enjoy the same rights as men, mothers have rights equal with fathers. The Soviet family is a collective, not a group under one-man rule. Yet in this collective the parents have certain recognized rights. From whence do they derive them?

In the old days, it was believed that paternal power had heavenly sanction, that it was pleasing to God. Parental repression was based on the Ten Commandments.

Now we do not deceive children. Our parents are responsible for their children before Soviet society and Soviet Law. They have great power, therefore, and must have authority. Although a family is a collective of equal members of society, children and parents differ from one another. Parents guide the family, the children are being brought up in it.

Parents must clearly understand that they are not the sole, uncontrolled bosses but must act as the older, responsible members of a collective. A clear concept of this will be very helpful in the task of bringing up children....

The structure of a family is important. This is, in the main, within our control. Even if a family has material problems, it should not limit itself to one child. An only child becomes the center of attention and receives more care than is normal or beneficial.... Often an only child becomes a real despot – parents find that they have brought up an egoist whether they wanted to or not.

A large, well-organized family accustoms the children from infancy to mutual relationships, gives them opportunities to experience love and friendship in various forms between older and younger children. In such a family, children learn that necessary tasks cannot be carried out alone but must be done together. They experience life in a collective at every step, in play and work. This is essential for Soviet children. In

bourgeois society it was less important because that society was constructed on egoistic principles....

Incomplete families, where the parents have separated, have an unhealthy influence on children's bringing up. The children may become the subject of dispute between parents who detest one another and do not hide this from their children. We advise parents who, for some reason, decide to separate to think first of all about the children, to hide their hatred and resolve conflicts tactfully. Parents who truly love their children will try to prevent their mutual differences from reaching a complete break so that their children will not be placed in this difficult situation. Obviously, if the father has left his family he cannot bring up his children. If his influence is bad, better forget him. That is the honest way to do. Of course, he must continue as before to carry his material responsibilities for the care of the children....

Our next question is the matter of goals.

Some families never think about this. Parents just live beside their children and hope that things will take care of themselves. They have no goals, no program. Results, under such conditions, will be casual, haphazard. Parents are often surprised to find that their children have grown up badly.... No one can do a job well unless he knows what he wants to accomplish. You must clearly understand your own desires. Do you want to bring up a true Soviet citizen, an energetic, honest, learned human being, one devoted to his country, to the revolution, work-loving, kind and courteous? Or do you want your child to be narrow-minded, greedy, cowardly, some kind of crafty little business man? Think this over carefully.... Then you will see what mistakes you are making and what is the best path to follow.

Remember! You did not bring your son or daughter into the world for your own pleasure alone! And always remember that a future citizen is in your charge. If you fail, the grief will not be yours alone. The whole country will suffer. And do not brush this aside! Do not consider this a tiresome argument! If your factory turned out damaged goods you would be ashamed. Isn't it much more shameful for you to give your country a spoiled or bad human being?

Family affairs cannot be separated from the affairs of society. Your activities at home or at work are reflected in your family. They should see you as a politically, civic-minded person and not separate this image from their image of you as parent. Whatever happens in our country will reach them through your feelings and thoughts. They should know what makes you happy or sad, what is going on at your plant, what kind of community activity you are involved in. They should be

proud of your successes and your service to society. This will not be healthy pride, however, if it is only pride in your good clothes, your automobile or your hunting rifle.

Your own conduct is decisive. You are constantly educating your child – even when you are not with him. Your manner of dress, how you treat your friends or enemies, even what you laugh at – read in the paper – all this has great meaning for the child. You may not even be aware that your thoughts are affecting him in unseen ways – a change in your voice....

If you are coarse or boastful at home or – much worse – if you are insulting to mother, there is no use thinking about bringing up your children. You are already bringing them up badly and no advice will help you.

The parent's own self-discipline – control at every step – this is the most important method of bringing up children correctly.

We often meet parents who believe that some sort of clever prescription exists for bringing up children and that they must find it. In their opinion, if they find this prescription they may bring up work-loving people, honest citizens. If only they can get it into their hands they will be able to work miracles and their child will grow up rightly.

There are no such miracles. No prescription will help if the personality of the person rearing the child has great faults. First pay attention to these faults.

There are no pedagogic tricks. Unfortunately some people believe in them. One thinks up punishments, another some kind of prize, a third plays the clown at home to amuse the children, a fourth bribes with promises.

Bringing up children requires a serious, simple and sincere attitude. – Laziness, cynicism, frivolity will doom your work to failure. – Tricks prevent parents from seeing the real tasks, confuse them and waste time.

And how many parents love to complain about lack of time! Of course it is a good thing to be with your children. It would be too bad if you did not see them often. But this does not mean that parents should never take their eyes off the children. This sort of thing develops passivity, accustoms children too much to adult society, may result in precocity. (Parents like to brag about precocity but later they find that they were wrong to do so.)

Of course a parent should know what his child is doing, where he is. But the child must have freedom so that he will be subject to a variety of influences. Don't think that he can be fenced off even from harm-

ful or negative ones. For, in life, he will meet temptations, strange and evil people and circumstances. A hothouse upbringing will never develop the ability to withstand them and to struggle against them. –

Children must have help and direction from time to time... but this does not mean that they should be led by the hand.... So for bringing up your child it is not more time that you need but correct use of the little time you have.

The essence of child rearing does not... consist in your conversations with the child, in direct effect on him, but rather in the organization of the family, of your own life and the life of the child. In this matter there are no trifles.... Good organization consists in not brushing aside small details.... These details of life act as an influence regularly, daily, hourly.... To guide and organize life is your responsible task.

In summary:

Try to bring up your child correctly so that you will not have to re-educate him, which is much harder.

Remember that you are leading a new Soviet family. As far as possible achieve the right structure of the family.

Set yourself a goal and program for the task of up-bringing.

Remember that the child is not only your joy but a future citizen and that you answer to the country for him. Above all a good citizen yourself and carry your civic feeling family.

Make severe demands on your own behavior.

No need of hunting for tricks and formulas. Be serious, simple and sincere. Guide the child but do not protect him from life.

The main thing in the work of bringing up children is the organization of family life with careful attention to details.

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## **Lecture 2**

### **PARENTAL AUTHORITY**

Our fathers and mothers are commissioned by society to bring up future citizens of our country. Their parental power, their authority in the eyes of their children, is based on this.

However, it would be awkward in a family situation to prove parental authority by continual reference to such social responsibility. Children's training begins at an age when logical proof and presentation of general social rights are impossible. Yet children cannot be brought up without authority. The very idea of authority consists in the fact that it demands no proof, that it is an attribute of older people that is taken for granted. Its strength and value lie in the fact that it is self-evident in

the child's simple eyes. Mother and father must have this kind of authority in their children's eyes.

One often hears the question: "What is to be done with the child when he does not obey?" This "does not obey" is a sign that the parents lack authority.

Usually, parents whose children "do not obey" are inclined to think that authority is inborn, is a special gift, that if you lack this talent there is nothing to be done about it. You can only envy those who do possess it. Such parents are mistaken. Authority can be acquired in every family. Unfortunately, one does meet parents who base their authority on faulty premises. Their aim is to have children obey. This is a mistake, for obedience cannot be the goal. Obedience can be only one of the means toward bringing up the child. Parents who do not think about goals want obedience for obedience' sake. If children obey, parents are tranquil. This very tranquility is really their aim. Authority established on such false premises is quickly destroyed. Some parents achieve obedience by sacrificing all other aims and their children grow up obedient but weak.

There are many kinds of false authority and we will examine some of them in more or less detail.

### **Authority by Suppression**

This is the most frightening kind of authority although not the most harmful. Such authority is usually exercised by fathers. If father always roars at home, is always angry, raises a storm over every trifle, is always reaching for a stick, answers every question rudely, punishes every transgression – this is authority by suppression.

Such paternal terror keeps the whole family in fear, not only the children, mother, too. It does harm not only by frightening the children but also by reducing the mother to a mere cipher. Such authority only teaches children to keep their distance from terrifying papa; it develops lying and cowardice, and at the same time teaches the child cruelty. From oppressed and spiritless children develop either driveling, good-for-nothing people or petty tyrants avenging, all their lives, the oppression suffered in childhood. This most savage sort of authority is exercised only by uncultured parents and, happily, is now dying out.

### **Authority by Aloofness**

There are fathers and mothers who are really convinced that in order to have children obey they must have very little conversation with them, must keep their distance and only appear as superiors. Father

retires to his office and seldom shows himself, like a pontiff. He dines apart, amuses himself apart, his orders are transmitted to the family through mother. It also happens with mothers. They carry on their own lives and interests and the children find themselves in the care of a nurse or domestic worker. This kind of authority is useless, such a family is irrationally organized.

### **Authority by Swaggering**

This is a special variety of "authority by aloofness" but perhaps even more harmful. Although every citizen of the Soviet Union serves his country, some people consider their own service specially important, they point this out to their children at every step, puff themselves up and boast at home that they alone can do this or that job, harp on their achievements and are overbearing to other people. Impressed by such behavior, the children too, often become boastful with their comrades and brag, "My father is this, my father is that, my father is a writer, my father is a commander, my father is a celebrity." In this atmosphere of pompousness, the "important" father does not know where his children are headed.

Sometimes we find this attitude in mothers, too. A special dress, an important acquaintance, a trip to a resort, all this gives an excuse for boasting, for separating oneself from other people and from one's own children.

### **Authority by Pedantism**

In this case parents pay attention to children, work with them, but they work like bureaucrats. They believe that children must accept their every word with trepidation, as holy. Orders are given in a cold tone of voice and once given, quickly become law. Such parents fear most of all that the child may think papa is mistaken, that papa is not a strong man. If such a papa says "Tomorrow it will rain, one can't go for a walk" and if tomorrow there is good weather – all the same one may not go for a walk! Papa does not like movies – so he forbids the children to go to the movies, even to good ones. Papa punishes the child; then finds that the child's fault was not as bad as it seemed. But papa does not change the punishment: "Once I have said it, so it must be." For such a papa there is always something to busy himself about. In every act of the child he sees some infringement of law and order and continually badgers the child with new commands and directions. The life, the interests, the growth of the child go unnoticed, he is concerned with nothing but his own bureaucratic command of the family.

## **Authority by Reasoning**

In this case parents literally gnaw at children with endless instructions and talks. Instead of saying a few words, perhaps in a jocular tone, the parent will sit the child down facing him and launch into a boring and garrulous speech. Such parents are convinced that pedagogical wisdom consists of preaching. There is very little joy and few smiles in such a family. The parents strive with all their might to be virtuous. They want to appear faultless before the children. But they forget that children are not adults, that children live their own lives and that one must respect this life. The child lives more emotionally, more passionately than an adult. The habit of thinking comes to the child gradually and quite slowly and the constant verbalization of the parent, the incessant nagging and chatter passes by the child's consciousness. Parents will never develop authority by this method.

## **Authority Through Love**

Many parents are convinced that children obey if they love their parents. To gain their children's love they pour tender words, caresses and endearments over them in a flood. Whenever the child disobeys they say "Don't you love papa?" Such a family becomes submerged in a sea of sentimentality.

Parents jealously look into their children's eyes demanding tenderness and love. Mother will say to an acquaintance right in front of the child: "He loves papa and mama just terribly. He is such a loving child."

There are dangers in this direction. Soon children realize that they can deceive mama and papa when they please, it is only necessary to seem to be loving. From an early age the child may begin to understand that one can get around people, to calculate coldly and cynically. On the other hand, the child may look on everyone but the parents as strange and unsympathetic, not loving, since he does not understand comradeship. This is the most dangerous type of authority. It develops insincerity and egoism. The first victims are often the parents themselves.

## **Authority by Kindness**

This is the most stupid kind of authority. Obedience is called forth by kisses and flattery, by giving in, being soft and good. Father and mother appear to the child in the guise of angels of goodness who permit everything, are not stingy. They are remarkable parents. They are



afraid of any kind of conflict and prefer peace in the family. They are ready to sacrifice anything so that everything will run smoothly. Pretty soon it is the children who are dictating to the parents. Parental non-resistance opens the door wide to all the child's desires, caprices and demands. Occasionally the parents permit themselves some small resistance but by then it is too late.

### **Authority Through Friendship**

Quite often, even before the children are born, the parents make a pact: our children will be our friends. In general, this is, of course, very good. Children and parents must be friends. But parents must remain the older members of a family collective and the children the younger members being brought up. If friendship goes beyond these limits, the child begins to bring up the parents. We find this most often among the intelligentsia. The children call the parents Peter or Maria, mock at them, interrupt them rudely, argue at every step. This is not real friendship, for no friendship is possible without mutual respect.

### **Authority By Bribery**

The most immoral kind of authority exists when obedience is bought by gifts and promises. Parents say: "If you obey, I'll buy you a toy horse. If you obey we shall go to the circus." Of course, some encouragement is necessary in a family, something like a reward or prize, but in no case should the child be rewarded for obedience or for good relations with parents. He may be rewarded for studying well or for carrying out some specially difficult work. But even then the reward must not be announced beforehand to stimulate the children to do their school work or other tasks.

We have considered several kinds of authority and there are many more; authority by being jolly, or erudite, by acting with children as "man-to-man."

Some parents do not think about authority at all. They just live anyhow, bringing up the children haphazardly, inconsistently. One day the parent punishes the child for a trivial thing, next day promises a bribe, on the following day again punishes the child. Such parents are always in an uproar and run about like chickens with their heads off; completely impotent, lacking in any understanding of what they are about. The father may exercise one kind of authority and the mother a different one. Their children must become diplomats and wind their way between father and mother.

Do not forget that the main basis for parental authority is the life and work of the parents, their task as citizens, their behavior. If parents are living rationally, if they have clear and significant goals, if they are fully conscious of their actions, they need not hunt for any other basis or seek anything artificial. They will have authority in their family.

As soon as children begin to grow up they are interested in the work mother and father are doing, where they work, what their social conditions are. It is important that children see their parents' work as socially valuable, not isolated but against the background of the whole country. The children should feel not boastful but good Soviet pride in their parents; at the same time they should know about the great men and women of our land so that their mother and father appear as participants in the same great comrade's endeavors.... Children should know about their parents and their achievements, too. True Soviet authority...is that of a member of the collective. If you have succeeded in bringing up your son so that he is proud of the whole plant where his father works and rejoices in its successes – then you have brought him up correctly.

But parents are members not only of their collective but of a socialist society and must appear as participants in this life in the eyes of their children. International events, literary achievements – all this should be reflected in the thought and feelings of father. Only parents who live a full life, citizens of our country, will have real authority in their children's eyes. Please do not think you can live such a life "on purpose" to startle the children with your abilities! You must be sincere and really live such a life. Rest assured – they will see for themselves what they need to.

But you are not only a citizen. You are also a father. It is your business to be the best possible one. You should know what the child is interested in, likes and dislikes, wants and does not want, who the child is friends with, plays with and what the games are, what he reads and how he reacts to what he reads, how he studies at school. Parents should know his relations with the teachers, what his difficulties are and his behavior in class. You should know these things from the earliest years. Then you will not be suddenly surprised by difficulties, conflicts or unpleasantnesses but anticipate and prevent them.

This does not mean, however, that one may annoy a child with constant questioning, cheap and insulting spying. From the beginning, arrange matters so that the children themselves will tell you what they are doing and be interested in your knowing. Invite your son's friends, visit them, get acquainted with their families. This does not need much

time, only sincere attention to the children and their lives. Your interest will be noticed by the children. They love this attention and respect parents for it....

Giving help to the child strengthens your authority. Every child needs advice and help sometimes. He may not ask for help – give it when needed. Sometimes the help can best be given by a joke, or some directions or suggestions.

Parents' help must not be obtrusive, tiresome or boring. Sometimes it is best to let the child overcome his difficulty himself, only resolve problems too complicated for him. He must learn to overcome obstacles but not be allowed to get in despair about a problem. Be sure he can solve it himself. Let him see your faith in his strength and ability. The child should feel you by his side, your wise care, but at the same time know that you demand something of him, that you do not intend to do everything for him and relieve him of responsibility.

The child must never think that your guidance of the family is only for your own pleasure but understand that you are meeting your responsibility to society.... Even in early years the child on a desert island.

In conclusion, real authority is necessary in a family. Real authority rests upon the parent's social activity, social feeling, and the parent's knowledge of the life of the child, and his acceptance of responsibility.

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### **Lecture 3**

## **DISCIPLINE**

The word discipline has several meanings: rules of behavior, habit training, obedience....

Sometimes a man is called disciplined who is only obedient. Of course, in the majority of cases, exact and swift fulfillment of directions from a superior organization or an individual is expected. In Soviet society, however, simple obedience is by no means sufficient indication that a man is disciplined. We cannot be satisfied simply with obedience and still less with the blind obedience which was expected in pre-revolutionary schools.

From a Soviet citizen we demand more complicated discipline. We demand that he not only understand why it is necessary to fulfill this or that order but that he actively try to carry out the order in the best possible way. More, we expect that he be prepared to fulfill his duties at any moment without waiting for directives or orders but using initiative and creative will.....

We call a man disciplined only if he knows how, under all circumstances, to conduct himself in the right way, the best way for society, and if he is strong enough to carry through tasks to the end in spite of difficulties and obstacles....

A disciplined Soviet citizen is developed by the whole sum of correct influences among which political education, general education, books, papers, work, social activities, and even play, relaxation and recreation, will have a place....

So discipline is not developed by special measures but by all the circumstances and influences which affect children. Understood this way, discipline is not a *reason*, a method, or a means for bringing up children correctly, but the *result* of it.....

But there is a narrower department of educational work which is very near to discipline and is often confused with it – that is, *regime*.....If discipline is the result of upbringing, regime is the means.....

The family regime must not and cannot be the same in varied situations. The age of the children, their abilities, surroundings, neighbors, living conditions, the road to school, the life on the street, and many other things will influence and change the character of the regime. One regime is suitable for a large family and a completely different one for a family with only one child; one suited to younger children may be wrong for older ones. Older girls require their own special regime. So we must not understand regime as something permanent and unchangeable.....

In some families this mistake is often made; piously they hold on to a regime undertaken for a special purpose, holding it inviolable to the injury of children's interests and their own. Such an inviolable regime becomes a dead thing, useless and even harmful.

Regime cannot be permanent just because it is a method of upbringing. Everyone bringing up children has a definite aim; however, this aim always changes and becomes complicated.

In early childhood, for example, parents have the task of teaching the child cleanliness. Toward this aim they set up a special regime: baths, correct toilet habits, keeping the room clean, the bed and table orderly. Parents must never forget about this, must see that it is carried out, help if necessary, demand good work. If this is all well organized, it will be very useful and finally the time will come when the child has acquired habits of cleanliness, when he himself will not sit at table with dirty hands. This means that the goal has been reached. The regime needed to achieve this end now becomes superfluous. It must gradually be changed to another..... So we see that the regime is only a meth-

od....and we cannot recommend a regime to parents. They must choose the one suited to their circumstances.

In spite of the variety of possible regimes there are, however, certain characteristics that should always be present. First of all, the regime should be consistent.

The regulations chosen for family life are followed not because someone else has adopted them or because they somehow make life pleasanter, but because they are necessary to achieve your chosen and well-understood goal. This goal should, in most cases, also be known by the children. If you insist that the children sit down to dinner at a certain hour, then the children must understand that this order is necessary in order to lighten the work of mother or the domestic helper and also so that several times a day the whole family may gather together to exchange ideas and experiences.....

There are parents who insist that children be silent at the table. Children submit but neither they nor the parents know why such a rule is followed. When the parents are asked about it, they explain that if one talks at table one may choke. Of course, this is senseless. Everybody talks at table and nothing unfortunate happens.....

Every regime must be regular.... If one's teeth must be brushed today, they must be brushed tomorrow; if one's bed must be made today, it must be done tomorrow also. The youngster does not make his bed once – twice. Should one make a fuss about it? Parents say, "It's only a trifle, one must not make the child nervous." Such reasoning is wrong for there are no trifles in education. An unmade bed means the beginning of slovenliness, disregard for an established regime.

The fact that a regime is obligatory and definite can be harmful if parents themselves are insincere, if they demand that children conform but themselves live in a disorderly fashion. Certainly the regime of the parent will differ greatly from the child's. But the difference should not be in principle. If you say that children may not read at the dinner table then you yourself must not do so. Similarly, if the children must wash their hands before eating, don't forget to do so yourself. You can make your own bed, it is not really difficult!.....

A time must be established for going to bed and for getting up. The allotment of the child's working hours must be carefully regulated, especially when he goes to school. Hours for eating, playing, going outdoors, etc, should also be established for younger children.... There must be regulations about cleanliness, changing one's clothes, behavior at table.... Children must learn that everything has its proper place and after work or play leave everything in order.....

Children need more activity than adults, of course, but do not think that the child must run and scream a great deal in order to use up energy. One must bring up the children so that they will know how to control their activity. Usually, there is no need of running about in the house. For this there is the playground, or garden, out of doors....

One should also teach children to control their voices screaming, shrieking, loud crying – all this is a sign of disorder. It shows more about the unhealthy nerves of the child than about any real need. Parents themselves are to blame for tense, screaming children. They are tense themselves and instead of creating an atmosphere of secure calm and quiet in the family, raise their own voices to a shriek....

Parents should learn, as early as possible, to use a calm, friendly but decisive tone in giving directions. Children at an early age should be accustomed to this tone, to taking directions and fulfilling them willingly.

Be as affectionate as you like with the children, laugh and play with them, but when the necessity arises, know how to give orders briefly, in such a way and in such a tone that there will be no doubt in your child's mind of the rightness of the order and the necessity for carrying it out.

Parents should learn how to give instructions very early, even when the first child is only a year-and-a-half old. It is not at all difficult, it is only necessary to meet the following requirements:

- Instructions must never be given angrily, loudly, irritably; but they must not sound like an entreaty or appeal, either.
- The order must be within the child's power, fulfillment of it must not demand too great an exertion.
- The order must be reasonable and not go against common sense.
- The order must not contradict those previously given by you or by the other parent.

When instructions have once been given, they must be carried out without fail. It is a very bad thing to give directions and then to forget about them.

What shall one do if the child fails to carry out directions? Above all, try to see that this does not happen. If the child does not obey the first time, repeat the order in a more official and colder tone.... Having given the order again and seen that it has been carried out, find out why you had to repeat it. No doubt, *you* are the guilty one, you did something wrong, there was some oversight. Try to avoid your mistake.

It is very important that the children do not get the habit of disobedience....

If the regime has been correct from the very beginning and if parents have been careful, punishment will not be needed. There are no punishments in a good family. But there are families where because of neglect and errors, parents cannot make headway without punishment. In such cases, parents often resort to punishment unwisely and spoil more than they help. Punishment certainly is a difficult matter. It requires great tact and care; that is why we urge parents, as far as possible, to avoid using punishments and to try to bring up their children by using the right kind of methods. Of course, this takes time, one must be patient, and quietly await results.

In exceptional cases, one may employ some kind of punishment. For example, withhold a treat or entertainment, postpone a trip to the movies or the circus, withhold pocket money if it is usually given, forbid going out with friends. But once more, parents must remember that if the regime is wrong, punishment will be of no use. If the regime is correct, one may do without punishment, only be patient....

Be cautious, too, in using encouragement. It is never necessary to announce awards or prizes ahead of time. It is best simply to limit oneself to praise and approval. Childish joys, pleasures and entertainment should come to the children not as a reward for good conduct, but in the natural order of things as the legitimate satisfaction of their needs.

That which is necessary to the child must by all means be given to him, regardless of his merits and that which is not necessary or is bad for him must not be granted in guise of a reward.

In summary, discipline is the result of education and regime is the means. Therefore, regime is of various kinds, depending on circumstances. Every regime must be consistent, definite, exact.... The main aim of a regime is to provide experience in disciplined action. With a correct regime, punishment is unnecessary and, in general, should be avoided, as should excessive praise. It is best to rely on a correct regime and patiently await results.

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#### **Lecture 4**

#### **PLAY**

Play has the same significance for the child that activity, work and service have for the adult....As children are in play, so by and large, they will be in work when they grow up....

There is really no great difference between work and play. Good play is like good work, bad play is like bad work.....Every type of good play requires physical and intellectual effort. If you buy the child a me-

chanical mouse you may wind it up all day; the child may look at it – in this sort of play there is nothing good! The child is passive. If your child is occupied only with such games he will grow up without initiative, not accustomed to undertake new tasks or work, or to overcome difficulties. Play without effort, play without activity, is bad play. In this respect, play is very like work.

Play brings the child happiness. This will be creative happiness, or joy in achievement or aesthetic pleasure...and here is a resemblance to good work....

How does play differ from work?... Work is the participation of man in social production, in the creation of material, cultural or social values.... Play has only an indirect relation to social goals....

Parents often make mistakes in guiding play. Some of them are simply not interested or think that children know best how to play. Other parents pay attention to their children's play, too much so! They interfere, point out, discuss, set problems in games and resolve them before the child does – they are enjoying themselves!... If the child builds something and has difficulty, father or mother sit down beside him and say, "Don't do it that way. Look, this is how you should do it...." The child can only listen and imitate. He gets used to the idea very early that only grown-ups know how to do everything well. Such children grow up with a lack of confidence in their own strength and fear of failure....

Some parents think the most important thing is to have a quantity of toys. They spend a great deal of money and shower the child until the children's corner is like a toy store! Children at best become collectors of playthings and at worst, go from one toy to another without any interest, play without enthusiasm, break and spoil their toys and demand new ones....

Children's play passes through several stages of development and each demands a special kind of guidance. The first phase is play indoors with toys. This continues until about five or six years of age when the second stage begins. This first period is characterized by the fact that the child prefers to play alone or, rarely, with one or two friends. He loves to play with his own toys rather than with strange ones. This is the very time when the individual capacities of the child are developing. There is no need to fear that because he plays alone the child will grow egotistical. He must be given the chance to play alone! The child is not yet able to play in a group, often quarrels with comrades, does not know how to find collective interests. Give him freedom for this individual play; there is no need to force companions on him. This only destroys his play



mood, makes him nervous.... The better the child plays alone when he is young, the better he will be later with companions. At this age the child is aggressive and in a certain sense is a "property-owner." Playing alone the child develops his own abilities, his imagination – skill in building, organizing, and this is useful....

For some children earlier, and others later, an interest in friends, in group play, begins to appear....One must help the child to make this rather difficult change....it is good if an older child in the yard helps to organize the little ones....This second stage is harder to guide, for the child is now in a broader social arena. This stage continues to the age of 11 or 12, including part of the school period. School brings a wider circle of friends and interests... the child is already a member of society but a child society of social control and discipline.

School helps them to reach the third stage...ht this stage they are members of the collective, not only for play but for study and work. Now play becomes sport...collective discipline appears.

At all three stages the parent's influence is of great importance....

In guiding children's play it is important: (1) to see that the child is really playing, creating, building, combining; (2) to see that the child does not go from one thing to another without carrying through his activities to completion; (3) to see that each plaything has value and is cherished. There should always be order, cleanliness, in playland. The child should not break toys, should love them.... (But he should not suffer too long either if they are spoiled or broken.)....

If the child is in difficulties or if the play is uninteresting, give him help; set up some interesting problem, bring new material or play with him.... When the child goes outdoors and meets groups of youngsters, parents should know what kind of children these are and how they play.... The care and initiative of one of the mothers or fathers will often help to change the life of a whole group of children for the better.

At this second stage, the relation among parents of the children is important.... Sometimes every parent may be dissatisfied with the children's outdoor activities yet not discuss it or consider how they may improve matters... and this is not at all hard to do. At this stage the children are already organized in something like a collective; it would be a very good thing if their parents gave them organized guidance.

At this stage children often quarrel and complain about each other. It is a great mistake for parents to take sides with their children quickly and get into quarrels with parents of the offender. Even if your child comes to you in tears, hurt and angry, do not rush to attack the offender and his parents. Quietly question your son or daughter and try to get a

clear picture of what happened. Guilt is seldom all on one side. Probably your child lost his temper, too. Explain that it is always necessary and possible to find a peaceful solution to conflicts. Try to reconcile your child with his "enemy" – invite him to your home as a guest, talk with him, get acquainted with his parents, clear up the affair.

The most important thing is that you see not only your own child but the whole group of youngsters and that you and other parents cooperate in bringing them all up.... Let the child see that you are not carried away by family patriotism, but activated by social motives; then he will see in your behavior an example for his own.

Later, at the third stage, leadership of play is in the hands of the school or sport organization. Parents, however, can exert a good influence on the child's character.... They must see that sport does not become an all-absorbing concern for the child and they should develop other types of activity.... They must stimulate pride not only in personal success but in the success of the team or group.

Boastfulness must be checked. Educate the child to respect his antagonist's strength, to pay attention to training, organization and discipline on his team. Teach him to be calm in victory or defeat. At this period of the child's development it is a good thing for parents to be intimately acquainted with his comrades on the team or in the sports club. Parents must see that play does not absorb the child's whole spiritual life but that, at the same time, his work habits are developing correctly.

To sum up:

Play has great significance in human life, it is preparation for work and must gradually change to work.

Many parents do not give enough attention to guiding play and either leave the child entirely to himself or surround his play with too much care and too many toys.

Parents should apply different methods at different stages of play but always give the child the chance for independence and correct development of his capabilities, not refusing to help in difficult situations.

In the second and third stages one must guide not play as much as relations among children and to their collective.

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## **Lecture 5**

### **THE FAMILY ECONOMY**

Every family has its economy. In distinction from bourgeois society, our family has only a work economy which cannot have exploitation of people as its aim. This economy may grow and increase not because

some member of the family receives profits but only as a result of increased wages for someone in the family and by family economies.... Our economy consists only of things for individual use, means of production cannot be included since these, in our country, belong to all society....

Naturally, every family tries to improve its standard of living, but this we can do not by plundering exploitation of other people but only by labor participation of members of the family in the general life and work of the whole Soviet people. Riches in our family do not depend as much on the strength of the family as on the successes of the entire country, on its victories on the economic and cultural front.

Every child, as member of a family, is to a degree a participant in the Soviet economy. Our children must, therefore, be brought up to be not only participants in the family economy but to be working citizens.... Everyone will take part in the governmental economy and the better prepared a person is for this, the more useful it will be for all Soviet society and for himself....

Family economy is a fertile field for developing the dualities needed for a good working citizen and manager....

## **Collectivism**

In simple terms, collectivism means the solidarity of man with society. Individualism is the opposite of collectivism. In some families, because of lack of attention to this question, children are brought up to be individualists. If a child from earliest childhood does not know where the family means come from, if he is to satisfy only his needs and does not notice the needs of other members of the family, if he fails to relate his family to all Soviet society, if he grows up greedy, demanding – then he has been brought up an individualist. This may be harmful to him and to society.... The child should know as young as possible where his parents work..., what they do, what they produce, and what u their product is to society. They should meet the parents' coworkers and hear about their work too....

It should be explained that the money parents bring home is not only something pleasant to spend, but something that has been earned by much socially useful work....

As the child grows up, they should tell him about projects in other parts of the country.... If possible, the child should be shown the factory, the process of production should be explained.

If the mother does not work in industry or some institution, but as a housewife, the child must know about her work, respect it and understand that this kind of work too requires strength and effort.

Even a very young child should know about the family budget. He should know how much his parents earn and be involved in family discussions of finances.... When the question of purchasing items of general use, such as a piano or radio are under consideration, he should be involved....

If the family is well-off the child must be taught to understand that wealth is no reason for boasting.... When there is a surplus, money should be spent not to satisfy the desires of the child alone but for the whole family. Better to buy books instead of an extra suit!

If the family is, for various reasons, having a hard time financially, one must see that the child does not envy other families. He should understand there is more to be proud of in the immediate struggle to improve living conditions than in having superfluous kopeks. In such a family one must develop the child's patience and ability to look forward toward the better future which is being prepared in our land, and the ability to share joyfully with his friends. Parents should never complain or whine in the child's presence but be cheerful and emphasize the bright side of things as they try to increase their earnings and so improve the family situation. Every improvement should be emphasized and pointed out....

## **Honesty**

Honesty does not fall from heaven! It has to be developed. Dishonesty can also be developed in the family, it all depends on correct parental methods. What is honesty? It is an open, sincere attitude. Dishonesty is secret,... If the child asks for an apple, this is honest. If the desire is secret and he tries to take it without being seen – that is dishonest. If mother gives the child an apple and keeps it secret from the other children... she is developing a secretive attitude – consequently, dishonesty.

From earliest years, parents must teach children not to take anything without asking, even if it is in plain sight...Very precious things should not be hidden but the child should learn to treat them carefully.... (This means that the family must be orderly)....

If the child has been sent to shop, ask for the change, check with him....Do this until the time when he has worked out strict rules of honesty. This checking must be done very tactfully so that the child will not think that he is somehow suspected.

## **Care**

...A good manager must learn to notice ahead of time what needs to be replaced or repaired, must learn to buy only what is really necessary, not buy casually what he sees in the stores or someone's home....Not all care is good.... Our kind of care must be relaxed...the ability to choose what is needed...to look ahead. It must not be like greed. The child should display this care more in relation to other members of the family than to himself and especially in relation to things of general family use. In this care there is an important beginning of planning, foreseeing. Parents should teach their children to plan...from time to time, they should discuss various needs of the family and work out a plan for satisfying them.

## **Thrift**

This is one aspect of care. Care is manifested in the ideas and thoughts of man, thrift is manifested in his habits. One may be a very careful manager, yet have no habits of thrift. Such habits must be developed early. Even a young child should know how to eat without soiling the tablecloth or his clothes, know how to use things without spoiling or breaking them...This thrift must be applied not only to family things but those of others and especially to objects of general use. Never allow the child to be careless with things on the street, in the park, in the theater.

## **Responsibility**

Responsibility consists not only in the fact that a person fears punishment, but just in the fact that, without punishment, he feels uncomfortable if he spoils or destroys something. This is the kind of responsibility we must develop in the Soviet citizen and this is exactly why it is not necessary to punish a child or threaten punishment for spoiling things, but necessary that the child see for himself the harm he did by carelessness and that he be sorry for it. It is necessary, of course, to tell the child about it, to explain the result of his carelessness. But it will be most useful if the child feels the results through his own experience. If the child breaks a toy, for example, do not hurry to buy a new one and do not throw it away. Let it be in sight and in need of repair for some time. Father or mother should discuss the repair of the toy so that the child will see that he has given trouble to his parents and that they are more careful with his toys than he is.... If there is a correct collective

tone in the family, it will not be hard to develop a feeling of responsibility in the child.

### **Ability to Orient Oneself**

...What is this ability? It consists in knowing how to see and to understand all the details in a given situation. If a man is doing something, he must not forget that behind him are on the other side of him are people who are also busy. It is not possible to orient oneself if the person is only accustomed to see what is before his eyes and not to see or feel what is being accomplished around him...When doing one task, the child must not forget all his other business and the people around him.... To develop this ability, it is useful to give the child not only one order but two or three, to give combinations of directions.... This ability is developed by continual exercises in housekeeping chores, in knowing all the details and aspects of housekeeping.

### **Organizational Ability**

This is needed to carry out long-term jobs in the family... Even seven year olds, often even younger children, should be given very long-term tasks, for example watering the flowers, keeping the books in order, feeding the cat, looking after younger brother. The matter of spending money is very important....Every family should give the child some independence in spending money for the satisfaction of his own and, in some cases, the family needs. Once or twice a month he should be given a definite sum of money with exact indication of what it should be spent for. The list of such expenditures should depend on the age of the child.... For a boy of 14, for example, the list might consist of buying notebooks, carfare, buying soap and toothpowder for the family, money for movies for himself and his younger brother. The older the child the more complicated the list.

One must see that the boy or girl carries out the task, not misusing or wasting money for pleasure and not for the business assigned.... Sometimes the child does not take his responsibility seriously enough.... Then simply talk with him, call attention to his mistake and advise him to correct it. In any case, do not bore the child with continual checking... even more with continual suspicion.

Every parent can find many varied exercises for training his children to be good managers...The family economy should be organized collectively, quietly, and in a disciplined manner so that there will be no unnecessary tension or whining and so that there will be a cheerful, friendly striving to better the life of the family.

So the family economy is the place to develop: collectivism, (i.e., real solidarity with the work and interest of other people, with the interest of society as a whole); honesty (i.e., an open sincere attitude toward people and things); care and thrift, responsibility, the ability to organize and to orient oneself. The family economy must be the economy of a collective and be handled quietly, without tension.

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## Lecture 6 WORK EDUCATION

One cannot imagine bringing up Soviet children without work. Work has always been the basis for human life, the creator of man's well-being and culture.

In our country, work has ceased to be exploitative. It has become a matter of honor, glory, heroism and valor. Ours is a worker's government and the constitution states that "he who does not work shall not eat."

Let us try to analyze in detail the concept and the meaning of labor in the family.

First, I want to remind parents particularly about the following fact. Your child will be a member of a working society, consequently his significance in that society, his value as a citizen will depend exclusively on his being able to participate in social labor, how well prepared he is for this. On this will depend his material well-being and his welfare.

We know very well that all people are endowed by nature with almost the same work capacity, but that in life one works better than another, some can do only simple jobs, others more complicated and valuable work. These various work qualities were not given by nature but were developed during the course of their lives, particularly in youth.

So preparation for work is preparation... not only of a good or bad citizen, but also for a future standard of living and wellbeing.

Second, one may work because of need... in the history of man most work has been of this character, necessary to keep from dying of starvation. But even in olden times people tried to be not just manpower but creative power. Under conditions of class inequality and exploitation this was seldom achieved. In the Soviet Union all work must be creative work since it is for the creation of social wealth and culture. To teach children to work creatively – that is the task of the educator.

Creative work is possible only when man approaches it with love, consciously sees joy in it, understands its use and necessity, when work becomes for him a basic form of expression of his personality and tal-

ents. Such a relation to work is only possible when one has learned to work intensively, when no labor seems unpleasant if it makes sense.

Creative work is completely impossible for people who approach work with fear of exertion, of sweat, who stop to consider every step to see how soon they can get away from work and start something else.

Third, for man-power, not only a good worker but also a good comrade is needed. That is, a good relationship with other people must be developed – this will be real moral preparation. The man who tries to shirk, who uses the fruits of other's labor...is immoral in Soviet society. On the contrary, mutual work in the collective, constant helpfulness, is the only way one can create correct relations among people....

Fourth, it is wrong to think that only muscular qualities sight, touch, manual skills – are to be developed.... The physical element is necessary, of course.... But it is spiritual development which gives rise to harmonious labor and should be characteristic of Soviet man, that which distinguishes the citizen of a classless society from the citizen of a class society.

Fifth, work has not only social-productive significance, it has also great significance for the life of the individual. We know how much more cheerfully and happily people live who know how to do many things, who succeed at everything, are not defeated by any obstacles and know how to master situations. On the contrary, we are sorry for those people for whom even the smallest difficulty becomes an impasse, who cannot look after themselves and always need a nurse. They live under uncomfortable conditions, disorganized and messy, if no one helps them....

It is incorrect to think that by work we mean only physical labor. With the development of machine production physical labor is gradually losing its importance. The Soviet government is trying to eliminate heavy physical work. We see this in construction of brick houses, in our factories.... A real creative worker, a Stakhanovite, owes success least of all to his muscles. He organizes his success, adopts new methods... tools... new devices...

There should be no essential difference in Soviet training between physical and mental work. In both, the organization of manpower is most important, its real human aspect.

In work education, some task should be given the child that he can accomplish by using one method or another. This need not be completed in a short space of time but may take a month or even years. It is important that the child have freedom in choice of means and be responsible for fulfilling the job and for its quality. It is of little use to



say, "Here is the broom, sweep the room this way." Better to entrust the child with the task of keeping the room clean, let him decide how to do it. In the first case you are giving only a physical task; in the second, there is need for organization, thought. The more complicated and independent the task, the better from the pedagogic point of view...

Participation in the work of the family must begin at a very young age.... Of course, the child must not be over-burdened with work – the work-load of parents and child should be very different... if there is a domestic worker in the home, children must by all means be accustomed to helping her. Parents must see that the houseworker does not do jobs which the children could and should do. (If mother and father are doing the work, enlist the children.)

Remember that when children are studying in school they are rather heavily burdened with homework. Of course, this must be considered very important and take first place. Children must be helped to understand that in school they are carrying out not only an individual but a social function and that they answer for success in school work not only to their parents but to society as a whole. On the other hand, it is wrong to let school work become so important that everything else is brushed aside. Separating children from the life and work of the family collective is dangerous. An atmosphere of collectivism, of mutual help, must always permeate family life....

The child should learn to carry out even tasks which seem boring to him at the moment, to understand that the important thing is not the entertaining quality of the work but its use, its necessity. Parents should develop patience and the ability to carry through unpleasant jobs without whimpering. According to the child's growth, if the social value of the work is clear to him, even unpleasant work will bring him joy.

If there is not enough interest or necessity to arouse the child's desire to work one may apply the method of request. A request...offers the child free choice...It should be made so that it seems to the child that he is fulfilling the request because of his own good will, not pushed into it.... It is best to use the method of request only when you know that the child will willingly fulfill it....

It is true that in our country exploitation of man by man in production is impossible... Our children must be brought up so that no taste for exploitation will be developed in them at home... Parents must be careful to see that an older brother does not use the labor of a younger except in mutual work so that there can be no work inequalities at home.

Now as to the quality of work. Demand the highest quality of work which it is possible for the child to achieve with his strength and understanding.

Do not scold or punish a child for bad work. Only say simply and quietly that the work has not been satisfactorily done, that it must be done over or corrected.... We do not recommend either encouragement or punishment for work. The solution of a work-problem should give the child satisfaction.... The consciousness of work well done should be enough reward. Your approval of his inventiveness and resourcefulness must be enough recompense. But be careful not to overdo your approval. Do not praise the child for his work in front of your friends or acquaintances....It is not necessary to punish a child for bad work or work incompleting. It is most important in such a case to see to it that the work is nevertheless completed.

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## Lecture 7 SEX EDUCATION

Sex education is considered one of the most difficult pedagogical problems and there has been more confusion and more wrong ideas about this question than about any other. And yet the problem is not really so difficult in practice; in many families it is resolved very simply. (Sex education becomes difficult when it is overemphasized, undertaken apart from general questions of child education.)

The problems of sex education in the family will be correctly solved if the parents have a clear conception of what they are seeking to achieve. If the goal is clear to the parents, the road to its achievement will also become clear.

Every human being attaining a certain age, lives a sex life but sex life is lived not only by mankind – it is a necessary part of the life of most living substance. The sex life of man should be essentially differentiated from the sex life of animals. Sex education should be concerned with these differences....

Man has developed not only as a zoological species but as a social being. During the course of this development mankind has worked out standards of morality in many spheres of human relationships including that of sex. In a class society, these ideals are often violated. Such violations are inherent in the very structure of the family in such a society, that is, in the position of women and the despotic power of the male. We know that in some countries buying and selling of women goes on even now; in polygamy women are looked upon only as objects of

man's pleasure; in such ugly practices as prostitution man simply buys woman's favor. We know, too, of situations where husband and wife are compelled to live together whether they want to or not.

The October socialist revolution freed the Soviet family from bondage, freed woman from many forms of degradation by man.... Only after the October revolution could sex life approximate the ideal about which mankind has dreamed.

Some people wrongly understood this new freedom. They decided that sex life should be carried on in the haphazard changing about of married couples, so-called "free love."

Such sex life unfailingly coarsens human relationships, vulgarizing them and leading to disintegration of the individual, to unhappiness, to the destruction of the family and orphaning of children....

In his relations with women or men, a Soviet man may not ignore the requirements of social morality which always stand guard over the interests of the whole society. In the sphere of sex, this social morality makes definite demands on every citizen. Parents must bring up the children so that they will become people whose behavior does not conflict with social morality.

In matters of sex, social morality demands that the sex life of human beings, men and women, be in harmony with two aspects of life: with the family and with love. Social morality recognizes sex as truly moral when it is based on mutual love expressed in the family; that is, in the open civil union of man and woman, a union which has two aims: human happiness and the bearing and rearing of children.

The aim of sex education then must be to bring up children so that only in love will they be able to find a satisfying sex life, and so that this satisfaction, this love and happiness, will be realized in the family....

Correct sex education, like all character training, is achieved at every step if the general organization of family life is right, if a real Soviet man is growing up under the parent's guidance....

Therefore, some special methods of sex education are not the decisive factor but the entire point of view, the picture of the bringing up as a whole. And so by developing honesty, industry, sincerity, straightforwardness, habits of cleanliness, of telling the truth, respect for other people – for their experience and for their interests – love of country, devotion to the ideas of the socialist revolution, we are, at the same time, educating the child in sex relations. Some of these methods are more pertinent than others to sex education but all taken together contribute to your success...to bringing up the future husband or wife....

There are also special methods particularly intended for sex education. Some people think only of these and consider that they contain the greatest wisdom of pedagogy.... Some proponents of these theories state that all upbringing of boys and girls is, in essence, sex education.... They worry for fear the youth will not be wisely prepared, will be ashamed, see something secret in sex life. They say that if the child understands everything and if all is explained, if he sees nothing to be ashamed about in sex, he has been correctly brought up in this sphere....

Such advice must be considered cautiously.... True, the child often asks where babies come from, but the fact that the child is interested in this question does not mean that, at an early age, everything must be made completely clear to him in detail. It is not only in matters of sex that there are some things the child does not know.... We do not rush to burden his mind with things beyond his understanding.... There is no special pressing interest in sex questions in the young child. This arises at puberty...questions about the "secrets" of childbirth do not contain sexual curiosity.... If we begin to give intimate details about the relations between men and women we encourage curiosity about sex and arouse the child's imagination too early....

There are other reasons for opposing too early discussion of sex questions with children: frank and premature discussion of these questions leads the child to a coarse, rationalistic view of sex, lays the foundation for the cynicism with which adults sometimes so lightly share their very intimate sex experiences with others. In these discussions, sex life is presented in a narrow physiological form, not ennobled by the theme of love....

When talking with an older son or daughter about sex life, its dependence on love can be established and a deep human, esthetic and social respect for these questions can be developed....

Sex education should be education for love, the cultivation of deep feeling, which beautifies the whole of life, its strivings and hopes....

How can this kind of sex education be carried on? Examples are most important. Genuine love between father and mother, their respect for one another, helpfulness and solicitude, observable manifestations of affection and tenderness; if this has been under the eyes of the children from the first years it will be a great factor.

Another important factor is the general development of the feeling of love. If the child has not learned to love his parents, brothers, and sisters, his school, his country; if crude egotism has begun to develop, it is hard to believe that he will be able deeply to love the woman he chooses. Such people often appear to have very strong sex feelings, but

are inclined not to respect those who attract them, not to value their spiritual life or even to be interested in it. Therefore, they lightly transfer their affections and are often not far from depravity. This happens, of course, not only with men but also with women.

Love that is not sexual, friendship, long-lasting attachments to certain people, experienced in childhood, love of country instilled at an early age – this develops the capacity for high social relationships with women friends, and without such relationships it is difficult to acquire discipline and control in the sphere of sex....

We advise parents to pay serious attention to the question of children's feelings toward other people and toward society. Be careful to see that children have friends – brothers, comrades, that their relations to these friends is not casual and egoistic....

A boy or girl should be accustomed from childhood to order, not be indulged in a disorderly and irresponsible way of life; such habits will be carried over to the relations between men and women....

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## Lecture 8

### DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL INTERESTS

Parents who think that cultural education is the exclusive obligation of the school and society and that the family need do nothing in this area are mistaken. One sometimes sees families who pay attention to the children's food, clothing and play.... but who say that the child has enough culture in school....

Cultural education in the family is easy if parents believe that culture is necessary – not only for children!....Where parents themselves do not read newspapers or books, do not go to the theatre or movies, are not interested in exhibits or museums, obviously it will be difficult to carry on cultural education for the child. Such parents would not really try to do so, their efforts would be insincere and artificial; the child would understand that his parents do not consider this really important.

On the contrary, in those families in which the parents themselves are living active, cultured lives, where papers and books are a necessary part of their existence, where questions of theatre and movies are touched upon in a lively way at home, there cultural education will take place when the parents may not even be thinking about it....

Cultural education must begin very early, when the child is not yet literate, when he can only observe, listen and talk a little.

A well-told story is the beginning of cultural education. Every family should have collections of stories on the bookshelf... Perhaps the

parents know stories heard in their youth. ...The choice of the story is of great importance. We must throw out stories about evil forces, devils, baba yaga (witches), goblins, etc.... The best stories for the very young are animal tales... In general one should choose stories which stimulate energy, faith in one's own power, an optimistic view of life and hope for the future. Sympathy for the oppressed must not be accompanied by pictures of despair...

A significant turning point appears at the time of learning to read. Usually this happens in the children's collective – in school. The child enters into the realm of books and the printed word, sometimes reluctantly, surmounting the technical problems with difficulty. We must not force the child, but not encourage laziness either; we must encourage him to struggle. Books with large print and many illustrations must be acquired at home. Even if the child cannot read them yet, they will stimulate an interest in study and a desire to learn to read....

The general cultural tone of the family has a great effect on the child's school work, on the quality and vigor of his study....

## **Newspapers**

Even when children can only listen to reading, newspapers make an impression.... Reading the newspaper should not be done apart from the children; parents can find material which can be read aloud and discussed in their presence, even if it is not especially written for children.

It is even better if the reading is done in such a way that it does not seem to be directed especially to the children. They will listen even more attentively if it is done casually. In any paper there will be international affairs, heroic achievements of workers.... The family discussion of what is being read should be free, never formal, or in a special pedantic tone.... It is even better if such talks arise unexpectedly, apropos of some household event, or one may simply ask what there was of interest in the paper....

## **Books**

Acquaintance with books must also begin with reading aloud and later, even when the child can read well, reading aloud should continue, should be part of the general family program and should become a habitual and constant part of both leisure and work days. If parents do the reading at first, the task will be taken on by the children later. Reading aloud should not be done especially for the child but for the family circle, to stimulate collective opinion and expression of ideas. Only with

the help of such collective study may we direct the reading taste of the child and develop in him the habit of reading critically. In addition to reading aloud one must inoculate the child with a desire to sit down by himself with a book....

Parents must pay attention to what their child reads, even when he is in school... they must know how he reads...whether he thoughtlessly turns pages only for the plot... what books he chooses... whether he takes good care of them...

## **Movies**

In our time movies are an immensely important educational medium, not only for children but also for adults. In the Soviet Union all films are made in government studios and our films are a beautiful and highly artistic means of education. Nevertheless, this does not mean that children can see movies in unlimited quantity or without control.... The child may become accustomed to passive pleasure – the artistic impression runs over the surface, does not involve him, arouse any ideas or questions. Such movie-going is insignificant and sometimes harmful.... We recommend that children go to the movies no more than twice a month and see only films suitable for their age. Before the 14th or 15th year children should always go with parents or with older brothers or sisters. This is necessary, not for the control of behavior, but so that what they have seen may be a subject for discussion and conversation. The child should describe his ideas, talk about what pleased him and what did not please him, what strong impressions he carried away.... If parents see that the child carries away only external, entertaining aspects, the adventures of this or that hero, they should, by the help of one or two questions, bring to the child the deeper and more important aspects of the film. Sometimes it is not even necessary to ask questions but only to express opinions in the child's presence.

To a considerable degree parents should choose the films they want their children to see... some pictures may be beyond the child's understanding, some may arouse wrong reactions.... In choosing films, the child's school work, behavior and condition should be taken into account.

## **Theatre**

Everything that has been said about movies applies to the theatres, but the theatre much more often presents subjects unsuitable for a child. Such plays as "Othello" or "Anna Karenina" should be absolutely forbidden for middle school ages. Care should be taken in recommending

ballets also. In our society, this is achieved by forbidding admission of children to evening performances before the proper age.

The question of theatre is not difficult, for in many cities we have special theatres for children with a special repertoire. Going to these theatres is highly desirable...

Plays require a very serious and prolonged effort of attention. They are more complicated than movies.... Theatre-going needs careful planning and even more than a film a play should be discussed, analyzed....

### **Museums and Exhibitions**

Museum exhibits and art galleries are very important educational media... They help to organize the child's intellectual experiences, arouse deep feeling. One should look carefully in a museum, not merely gape.... Do not try to see too much at one time.

### **Other Forms of Cultural Education**

We have glanced at only the main forms of cultural education, those organized by the Soviet government. Parents do not need to be inventive in these areas, they only have to make the best use of all the cultural facilities of our land. If parents make full use of newspapers, movies, books, theatres and museums they will do much for their children in the sphere of knowledge and character-building....

But many parents do even more...Walks in the country, becoming acquainted with nature, with towns, with people, reconstruction, building houses, laying roads, building factories – all these are wonderful subjects for a day of leisure. But an excursion must remain an excursion, recreation – there is no need to force the child's attention and compel him to listen to speeches.

During these excursions a few words will reinforce impressions, a joke, a story drawing a parallel with the past or a humorous tale will accomplish its purpose unnoticed....

By all means the family must encourage an interest in sports and an interest that will not be that of a frustrated spectator. If your son shouts at every football match with heated intensity, knows the names of all those who have made records, and all the figures of records, but does not take part himself in even one physical culture circle, does not skate, ski, does not play volley ball – his interest in sports is nearly useless and sometimes actually harmful. There is little sense in his interest in chess if your child doesn't play it! Every family should try to see that its children become not only interested but actually participants in sports. It is better if parents themselves take part. For older parents, such a de-



mand may be too late – but young parents have every possibility and in such cases the road to sports for their children will be much easier.... Our mothers seldom participate in sport, yet this is very useful for young women. Also our girls are drawn into sports less than the boys....

There are also such types of cultural education as putting on shows at home, producing wall newspapers, keeping diaries, carrying on correspondence with friends, participation in political campaigns, improving the home, organizing children in the yard for meetings, games excursions, etc.

We must always try to achieve the greatest participation on the part of the children, to educate them not only to observe and to listen but also to hope, want, achieve, aim for victory, overcome obstacles, and to draw in their comrades and younger children.

It often happens that the first success in one type of activity or another arouses an exaggerated idea about their own abilities, scorn for others; they may expect quick victories and then will be unable to overcome obstacles....

Parents should plan for the future activities with the child and see that the plan is carried out. Reading books and papers, going to movies and theatre, etc. should be part of this plan.... Cultural education can be made very interesting if all these methods are used... It requires resourcefulness from parents.... Older children should learn to keep an album of clippings on certain subjects.... All this work should be directed toward political and cultural activity. Children should, ever more and more, feel themselves citizens of our land, see its heroic victories, its enemies, know to whom they owe their conscious, cultural life.