

## The Cultural Revolution in the Village School: S. T. Shatskii's Kaluga School Complex, 1919-1932.

by WILLIAM PARTLETT  
(Christ Church, Oxford)

The upbringing of our youth is a question of life and death for the republic.  
L. Trotskii<sup>1</sup>

Upon seizing power in 1917, the Bolsheviks faced a rural population that was indifferent, if not hostile, to their policies.<sup>2</sup> To consolidate their power and establish legitimacy, the Bolshevik leadership embarked on a messianic quest to convert the rural population to Bolshevism.<sup>3</sup> Dubbed the 'cultural front', this project was seen as a process of bringing 'culture' to a backward peasantry.<sup>4</sup> One of the most dramatic goals of this project was the fundamental transformation of human nature and the creation of a 'new man' – *homo Sovieticus*.

The village school was at the centre of this process of rural cultural transformation. In Bolshevik eyes, the village school was a crucial institution for destroying the old peasant world of 'icons and cockroaches'<sup>5</sup> and building a new generation of convinced socialists. Perceiving youth as their natural allies in the countryside, the Bolsheviks envisioned the village school as a crucial institution in their attempt to bring rural areas into harmony with the new ideological framework. As Lenin proclaimed, 'The school alone can secure the triumph of the revolution'.<sup>6</sup>

How did the Bolsheviks view the role of the village school in this process? And what were its ground level effects? Was the school an effective agent of Bolshevik transformation? Did young students become Bolshevik partisans in the village? The answers to these questions and many others remain largely unknown. Indeed, scholars have mostly ignored questions surrounding the role of the village school in transforming rural Soviet Russia.<sup>7</sup> Using previously uninvestigated archival material, this article will attempt to provide answers to some of these questions.<sup>8</sup> By looking at the First Experimental Station – an educational complex spread throughout the Kaluga province – it will attempt to piece together the Bolshevik approach to rural schooling and its effects at the popular level.

### *The First Experimental Station*

Amidst the flames of the Russian Civil War, an unprecedented and radical new educational experiment began. In 1919, a group of ambitious Tsarist intelligentsia started a project that they had long dreamed would transform the lives of the Kaluga peasantry. Armed with progressive educational ideas, boundless optimism, and faith in the power of enlightenment, their ultimate goal was fundamentally to reshape the way children and the village saw the world and themselves.

This project – named the First Experimental Station (FES) – was headed by Stanislav Shatskii. Shatskii had been a leading participant in the late Tsarist explosion of educational experimentation and reform, setting up a network of children’s clubs and progressive schools, and lecturing widely on educational issues.<sup>9</sup> Despite his initial opposition to the Bolshevik seizure of power, he had seized the opportunity provided by the Bolshevik Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) to pursue his most ambitious educational scheme. He would now be able to place the school at the centre of a complex of educational institutions that would enlighten the rural pupil and culturally transform the village.<sup>10</sup>

Divided into Moscow and Kaluga sections,<sup>11</sup> his school station was vast, employing hundreds of teachers, incorporating village and city schools, and demanding a large amount of resources from the government. The focus of this paper will be the rural branch of this school station, located in the Maloiaroslavets and Borovskii areas (*uezdy*) of the Kaluga province (*Kaluzhkoie otdelenie*). The site of the majority of the practical work of the FES, the Kaluga branch included fourteen primary schools, one secondary school, a central school-colony ‘The Invigorating Life’ (*Bodraia Zhizn’*)<sup>12</sup>, six kindergartens, three regional libraries, seven reading houses (*izba-chital’nia*), a set of children’s clubs, and a pedagogical training centre.<sup>13</sup>

Reflecting the central importance of the Tsarist intelligentsia to early Bolshevik visions of cultural change, this Kaluga branch of the FES soon became the flagship of Narkompros’s approach to rural educational and cultural change between 1919 and 1927. Every year, thousands of teachers, officials, and cultural workers visited the FES, hoping to export its ideas and approaches to their respective localities. FES teachers and administrators also gave presentations at educational conferences, consulted widely with international educational experts, and actively sought to spread the experience of the station.<sup>14</sup> Shatskii himself became one of the leading bureaucrats in Narkompros, taking a chief role in the Chief Educational Soviet (GUS), which formulated programmes for the new Soviet schools. Finally, the FES enjoyed high-level support within the Party and,

even during times of incredible financial hardship, received considerable financial and administrative support from Moscow.<sup>15</sup>

This rise to prominence took place despite the fact that very few of the personnel or leadership of the FES were Party members, or showed enthusiasm for many of the more doctrinal aspects of Marxism or Communism.<sup>16</sup> This apparent anomaly – the Party enlightenment apparatus allowing an educational institution staffed by non-Party members – was the result of two chief factors. The first factor was the nascent Soviet state's need for 'bourgeois specialists' to assist the Bolshevik state in consolidating its position in the country. Shatskii and his colleagues were classic examples of 'bourgeois specialists'. As A. Lunacharskii, the Commissar of Enlightenment, said, 'A whole group of specialists joined us according to the order of Vladimir Ilich...and one of the best is comrade Shatskii'.<sup>17</sup>

The second, and vastly more important, factor was the shared values for education and enlightenment that existed between many high-ranking Bolsheviks in Narkompros and the non-Party intelligentsia. Many of the senior Party leadership – the so-called 'Old Bolsheviks' – were members of the Tsarist intelligentsia (albeit with a radical bent) and agreed with Shatskii and his administration on the need for cultural transformation in the village. Consequently, some of the most vocal supporters of Shatskii included well-placed 'Old Bolsheviks' such as Lunacharskii and N. Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and leader of the Chief Committee for Political Enlightenment (Glavpolitprosvet).<sup>18</sup> Even Lenin, on hearing about the work at the station, commented 'This is a real matter and not mere gossip [*boltovnia*]'.<sup>19</sup> This common vision for education was also revealed in Narkompros's 1918 'Declaration on the United Labour School'. This statement, outlining the direction of the new Soviet labour school, drew heavily from Tsarist reform pedagogy.<sup>20</sup>

Other views existed within the new Soviet state on the correct upbringing of the rural child in post-Revolutionary Russia. While Shatskii's system represented the central *state* policy on education, officials within the party apparatus were developing a parallel approach. More practical, class-oriented, and ideological, this party-based vision sought to inject its approach into the school through youth organizations such as the Pioneers (7-13 year olds) and the Communist Youth League (Komsomol) (14-18 year olds). Each primary school was to have a Pioneer cell, where children would collectively learn communist values and beliefs. At the same time, local party organizations established Party schools (*agitpunkty*) for the local population that often competed with Narkompros's enlightenment institutions. The industrial lobby (Vesenkha) also lobbied for educational control, setting up its own set of worker schools.<sup>21</sup>

However, in the village, the role of the Party and the industrial lobby in education and enlightenment was dwarfed by that of the state between 1919 and 1927. The Pioneers and Komsomol were very weak in the village.<sup>22</sup> The industrial lobby's attempts at opening workers' schools in the village were largely unsuccessful. Although these corporate interests could snipe at Narkompros for ignoring more practical forms of education, they could do little about it.

Thus, despite criticism from Party ideologues (particularly within the Party apparatus), the FES became Narkompros's 'micro-model' for village enlightenment and education until 1927.<sup>23</sup> In fact, while other experimental school stations were forging new forms of industrial and city-based education, the term 'Shatskiism' became widely used in pedagogical journals to signify Narkompros's central strategy for rural schooling.<sup>24</sup>

Using Shatskii's school complex as a case study, this article will first seek more closely to understand this central educational strategy for rural educational transformation. Through studying the underlying philosophy and methods of the FES's educational approach, it will hope better to understand the mechanisms for rural cultural transformation. Secondly, by examining teacher's reports, school surveys, and other primary source documents, it will piece together the practical effects of this strategy at the ground level. In so doing, this article will comment on envisioned and actual rural transformation, childhood experience, and the rural experience of Communism between 1919 and 1927.

#### *A strategy for rural transformation*

Shatskii's educational approach was a radical strategy for *social* cultural revolution. Instead of imparting basic technical knowledge (aiding economic cultural revolution) or political literacy (facilitating political cultural revolution), his school system fundamentally hoped to alter children's beliefs, attitudes, values, and norms of behaviour. This educational vision sought to teach children to live. As Shatskii said, 'Our goal is not to teach children, it is to improve their lives'.<sup>25</sup> Seeking the creation of a harmonious, well-rounded (*vsestoronne*) child, the school was to organize and develop all aspects of a child's life. Shatskii's ideal was a hard-working, clean, healthy, inquisitive, societally-minded child (*obshchestvenno*), who appreciated beauty, music, and literature. As he described it, 'a highly cultured child with calloused hands [*mozoli na rukakh i vyschaia kul'tura*]'.<sup>26</sup>

To do this, the school must provide the child with an uninterrupted (*nepreryvnyi*) education. Such an education required the school not only to organize children's lives

within the walls of the classroom, but also to organize all other influences on childhood life (parents, teachers, the local population). This ambitious goal placed the school at the centre of a complex of institutions that would attempt to alter the cultural life of the entire locality.

If you place before the school the goal of participation in the construction of life, then you need to agree that the school does not do this alone. It is able to complete this task with the elements of social life, which in the wide sense educate children – this is the family, children’s society, and societal organization. And we need to work with these...<sup>27</sup>

The school-complex was to accomplish this integrative goal through the systematic study of both the child and his or her surroundings. ‘The school, organizing children’s life, should study the elements, from which this life emerges’.<sup>28</sup> This scientific investigation would allow the school-complex to merge with and culturally alter outside life.

The teacher was at the centre of this scientific process. Because each locality had a different set of influences, no set programme was issued. In this decentralized approach, the teacher was to adapt the programme to the outside environment, becoming ‘the organizer of children’s matters ... and observer-researcher of children’s lives’.<sup>29</sup> With such a teacher organizing and coordinating the life of the school, the school would constantly adapt to changing conditions, imitating life and providing children with a ‘living school’. This organic curriculum would allow the children and teacher to exist as a collective, giving both children and teachers the opportunity to realize the potential of their powers of exploration and development.

The teacher was to base his or her scientific study of the child on the organization of the basic influences on childhood development. Shatskii pointed to three main types of influence on the child. First were the natural influences on childhood development, including light, air, food, and warmth. Second were the material factors of development: the family budget and the organization of survival. Third were the societal influences on the childhood development such as norms of behaviour, speech, and habits.

All school-based activity, including previously separate disciplines such as reading and mathematics, was to be tied to these three categories: nature (natural influences), labour (material factors), and society (social influences). This approach, called the ‘complex method’, rejected individual subjects (such as history, chemistry, etc) on the grounds that they artificially carved up knowledge into separate disciplines. Instead, the new approach sought to reveal the interconnectedness of knowledge and its relevancy to everyday life by organizing knowledge into theme-based modules.

Labour was the basis of all school life in Shatskii’s schools. Labour methods would allow children actively to take part in school life, using their powers of experimentation and observation. Rather than memorizing and compiling large amounts of pre-set information, this approach would give children a ‘chance to learn how to acquire knowledge, to practice the techniques of work itself, instead of acquainting themselves exclusively with the dubious results of other people’s work’.<sup>30</sup> According to Shatskii, the child used six different types of labour to organize the influences on his or her life: physical, intellectual, social, societal, creative-artistic, and game-based. The school program was to organize these influences rationally (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1. FES School Programme.

<b>Influences on a child’s life</b>	<b>Natural: air, light, food, warmth</b>	<b>Material: instruments, materials</b>	<b>Social: speech, clothing, habits, beliefs</b>
<b>Physical work</b>	Personal hygiene habits: e.g. hand washing	Work in the garden or workshop	Physical education, sport.
<b>Intellectual work</b>	Writing: essays describing health benefits of personal hygiene habits	Mathematics: quantification of work in the garden	Reading: literature – learning correct speech patterns, learning about outside influences
<b>Social work</b>	Sanitation commissions	Agricultural cooperatives	General meetings, discussions
<b>Societal work</b>	Spread of hygiene habits to the family and village	Presentations on crop growth	Discussions with family on superstition
<b>Artistic work</b>	Free drawing	Musical lessons	Plays, dramatizations
<b>Games</b>	Free physical motion and exercise	Free interaction with material forms	Free form of social interaction

The foundational aspect of the school programme taught children to use their physical activity to organize the natural influences on their development (see top row of figure 1). The most basic form of this type of physical work was personal hygiene habits. Indeed, teachers were to encourage regular habits of hand-washing, ear-washing, or the use of appropriate light for reading (to name just a few), stressing the health and developmental advantages of these new patterns of behaviour.

Teachers also were to instruct children in how to use their physical labour more efficiently in order to organize the material influences upon them. This included better

ways of growing crops and efficient methods for working with materials such as wood, clay, and sand in the workshop. Finally, physical work was to help structure social interaction. In this case, the school should organize a regimen of physical education (*fizkultura*) and sport, teaching children comradeship and to work as a team, while at the same time ensuring physical fitness and promoting health.

In the new approach to intellectual labour, the traditional school disciplines – divided into separate subjects such as reading, writing, history, geography, and arithmetic – were now to be employed in the mental understanding and categorization of the influences on childhood life. This approach sought to teach children how to think, rather than giving them pre-set knowledge.<sup>31</sup> For instance, in order to organize the natural influences on their development, children were to analyze their school or home environment and judge its influence on their development. Tying this to literacy, children were to write essays describing the health implications of their home environment. Material development (such as crop growth) might be linked with scientific or mathematical knowledge. Finally, reasoned class discussions about village superstitions or religious belief could help organize the social influences on children. Ultimately, children were to recognize how reading, writing, historical, scientific, and mathematical skills could be used in categorizing, analyzing, and understanding the outside world.

Social-interactive work sought to develop children's social skills, teaching them to work with others in the pursuit of a goal. Here, teachers were to reveal the best ways for children to organize themselves and work productively with others in the creation of a collective. Such collective organization would allow children to organize the influences on their lives efficiently. Sanitation commissions were envisaged as ways of organizing natural factors on development such as dirt, pests, or unsanitary water. Agricultural cooperatives (*tsvetochnaia komissia*) would help children collaborate in improving their material lives. General meetings dealt collectively with antisocial behaviour such as hair pulling, hooliganism, and alcoholism. Thus, peer pressure and social conditioning were to be contained in a rational collective, in order to organize the influences upon children's life.

In societal work, the school programme taught children to take the skills learned in school and use them to transform their surroundings. Thus, the school was to encourage students to transfer the skills that they learned in the school to their families and to the village. This could include children giving presentations to villagers on the importance of good hygiene or of fertilizer in crop growth. It could also include anti-religious rallies or discussions within the household on the scientific reasons why superstitions were untrue.

All of these sought to transform the child further, by involving him in the actual process of altering his environment.

The next type of labour was artistic labour. Less utilitarian than the previous areas, this kind of labour was to help a child develop his aesthetic and emotional sides. For Shatskii, art was ‘not a simple amusement, but the most real requirement, entering deeply into the personal life of the child’.<sup>32</sup> As he wrote,

We make little use of the power of the emotional impact of the living word, we strive more than anything to get our audience to think, forgetting in the process about their feelings, experiences, psychological states...the teacher must be able not only to awaken ‘the lofty thoughts’ but also to ‘inflame their hearts with words’. In other words, the pupils’ minds and feelings must be in harmony and the intellectual and emotional spheres must complement one another.<sup>33</sup>

Singing and free drawing were to be used in the classroom to strengthen children’s aesthetic qualities while developing their creative skills. At the same time, schools were to encourage children to participate in plays and dramatizations. Indeed, artistic work was an important part of the outreach program of the school. These societal artistic events would strengthen feelings of solidarity and collectivism amongst students, while also revealing to them their imaginative and creative powers.

Finally, games were, as Shatskii called them, the ‘laboratory of childhood’.<sup>34</sup> In game-based activity, children were thought to exist completely freely within their surroundings. They were best able to express themselves using their instinctual powers of exploration. Thus, games would help the school develop children’s spontaneous and instinctive reactions to their natural, material, and social environment, ensuring that the school would not limit their freedom to interact with the outside world.

The school was also to involve itself in life outside regular school hours. As a result, children’s clubs were designed to structure children’s leisure time. Pre-schools were to be opened for children aged three to eight. Practical summer work was to be organized for students and also members of the local population. Finally, the school was to help coordinate a network of reading huts, libraries, adult literacy classes, and theatre circles, which would provide enlightenment to the local population. The work of all of these institutions would be tied to that of the school.

Taken as a whole, this system of education drew its inspiration from many different sources. Its emphasis on experimentation and science drew on the enlightenment-era

belief that reason could unleash the potential of man. Further, the importance placed on allowing the child to develop freely into a collective-minded and well-rounded child reflected the utopian assumption that, freed from capitalism, children would be spontaneous socialists. The importance Shatskii placed on the surroundings in childhood development echoed the Marxist idea of environmental conditioning. In addition, the importance placed on stimulating children's interest corresponded with the importance of self-initiated revolutionary activity in liberal Bolshevik circles. Finally, the weight assigned to teaching children how to think and assess knowledge rather than simply memorize facts reflected the utopian dream of a fundamental reorganization of society. Taken together, they represented a humanitarian and non-violent strategy for cultural and social cultural revolution in the Russian village.

### *The battlefield*

This complex and ambitious vision of education faced real life in the Borovskii and Maloiaroslavets areas (*uezdy*) of the Kaluga province. The population of these two areas was undergoing rapid change. Prior to 1914, industrialization, a dense population, poor soil, and proximity to Moscow meant that a majority of working age men took factory jobs in the city. Those left behind – women and children – often combined their earnings from the land with cottage industries. These communities began to demand primary schools for their children. In response, the local intelligentsia and clergy built cultural institutions. In 1914, there were three local libraries and two people's houses. Literacy rates were on the rise.<sup>35</sup>

However, these new institutions had a limited effect. Schools only provided children with basic literacy skills: many children attended for just two years (a phenomenon known as *vtorogodnichestvo*). Literacy was largely confined to the male population. People's houses were often used as tea houses (*chainaia*).<sup>36</sup> Most peasants still lived in small, unsanitary huts (*izby*). Water supplies were unclean, epidemics were common, and the region had the highest infant mortality in European Russia. Children were regularly malnourished, which stunted their growth. Science was regarded with distrust: most peasants believed in the powers of witches and local shaman. Farming techniques remained primitive: most villagers still used the three-field system, and the plough was a recent advance.<sup>37</sup>

War and revolution provided still more change. Industrial collapse forced most of the many working age men to return to the village or join the Red Army. The deterioration of trade also deprived many families of extra earnings from cottage industries. Many were forced to return to full dependence on the traditional three-field farming system. As the

Tsarist system of village control collapsed, the peasant commune (*mir*) took firmer control of the local governance of the village.<sup>38</sup>

*The implementation (1919-1927): supply problems*

The village schools in Shatskii's system fell far short of the ideal of 'five classrooms, a dining room, kitchen, workshop, recreational hall, library, and a flat for teachers'.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the majority of the sixteen primary schools were in peasant huts (some rented), which had significantly deteriorated during the Civil War period. They were hot and humid in the summer, and very cold in the winter. These schools also suffered from the same problems as traditional peasant huts: they were dirty, badly ventilated, and cramped (*tesno*).<sup>40</sup> For instance, the school in Lubitsa measured 7.29m by 7.29m by 3.195m, for thirty-seven children with one teacher.<sup>41</sup> The school at Piatkino had a kitchen in the classroom where food was prepared.<sup>42</sup> Most schools were in desperate need of repair.<sup>43</sup> Material conditions did not improve considerably after the Civil War ended: under NEP, Narkompros was forced to reduce overall educational spending and the FES, despite its privileged position, received less funding.

Shatskii's progressive school system required numerous teaching aids, such as specialized books, tools for physical work, workshops, and musical instruments (to name a few). However, even the most basic of teaching tools were also largely non-existent: pencils, notebooks, and books were in short supply. Dobrinskaia school had two books, no pencils, and no paper in 1919.<sup>44</sup> Food provisions sent to schools were often scanty or non-existent.<sup>45</sup> There were also furniture shortages – most schools had tables, rather than individual desks.<sup>46</sup> Many teachers had serious difficulties in finding housing and often had to walk miles to school every day.

The FES was to provide a ceaseless education, organizing children's lives throughout their childhood. However, this vision was unworkable in the village. Most schools remained faithful to the traditional school calendar: starting in mid September and lasting until early May. Late harvests delayed the start of term as children were required to gather the crops.<sup>47</sup> It was common for schools to close down for weeks if the local population needed the children for labour. School holidays still marked religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. Later in the period, summer school was begun. However, it generally lasted from early May to mid June, as children were needed to collect the harvest in July, August, and September.

In 1919, the FES employed twenty-nine teachers. Joining twelve teachers who were already working at these schools was a group of seventeen new teachers. The old teachers

were often highly sceptical of Shatskii's system of education, preferring to ignore the new directives and teach as they always had. The new teachers, on the other hand, were split into three groups. Five were experienced progressive teachers from Shatskii's Tsarist-era school colony 'Children's Work and Relaxation' (*Detskii trud i otdyx*), six were from other school departments under Narkompros control, and the remainder were Moscow schoolteachers. They were not prepared for the school life that they would face: only five had any experience with the abstract programme of Shatskii's school system and none had considerable experience in living and teaching in the Russian village.<sup>48</sup>

*School life: impact of the new school on childhood experience*

Physical work was perhaps the most successful aspect of the new programme. In the early period, the most basic elements of physical work fitted with difficult conditions both inside and outside the classroom. In establishing itself in the village, the school's first and most important goal was to provide malnourished children with food (usually lunch, but also breakfast in some cases).<sup>49</sup> Hot meals were critical in securing attendance: unless the school fed children, the family needed children to help the survival of the family. Despite the often problematic distribution of food, teachers successfully tied the distribution of food to personal hygiene habits, requiring children to wash their hands before food was handed out and stressing the importance of keeping the food area clear of dirt and insects.<sup>50</sup>

Poor sanitary conditions in the schools also required children to engage in other labour-based chores that were tied to hygiene skills. As a result, children frequently cleaned floors, washed windows, and boiled water. Amidst growing epidemics, this work often had life or death consequences: in one school, children took turns boiling the water to avoid the transfer of disease.<sup>51</sup> The central importance of basic physical work and basic hygiene habits – largely driven by shortages and difficult conditions – led to a marked spread amongst children of new personal hygiene habits. These had a considerable impact on children's health. A doctor's report from 1923 described lower incidences of malnutrition, intestinal worms, and disease in comparison with 1919, citing improved hygiene and sanitation practices as the chief cause.<sup>52</sup>

With the end of the Civil War and the recovery of the countryside, physical work began to expand. The most successful aspect was implemented during summer school, between early May and mid-June, when children worked in their family gardens, the school garden, and with animals. In this work, children were encouraged to experiment with different amounts of fertilizers and agricultural techniques. For instance, in the summer of 1925 in Mikhailovka, the students divided their plot into different strips to examine the

influence of fertilizer and ploughing on plant growth (table 2). Children were then taught the scientific reasons for the differential crop growth.

Table 2: Experimental field, Mikhailovka school.<sup>53</sup>

Strip #1: Without fertilizer
Strip #2: With an average amount of fertilizer
Strip #3: With a large amount of fertilizer
Strip #1: Without being ploughed
Strip #2: Average amount of ploughing
Strip #3: Large amount of ploughing

Work with materials in the workshop was largely unimplemented. This was chiefly a result of shortages of basic tools and materials. Furthermore, the organization of sport or organized gymnastics was also unsuccessful. In these cases, teachers simply did not have time to institute these methods.

The successes of the physical work programme transformed classroom experience. New hygiene habits established new patterns of childhood behaviour that reached far outside the classroom. In some cases, the health benefits of these new habits suggested serious weaknesses in traditional village habits. In one essay a child wrote that old village habits and traditions should be forgotten because they were no longer useful.<sup>54</sup> Summer work with crops and flowers advanced children's scientific and agricultural knowledge.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, it transformed the experience of schooling: many were drawn to these more active methods, enthusiastically noting down the advantages of these new activities in their essays and journals.<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand, intellectual work, despite the fact that it comprised the majority of organized class time, proved very difficult to implement effectively. Indeed, altering the methods for instilling basic skills – such as literacy and numeracy – provoked considerable opposition from both parents and the local community. Teachers were often reminded in meetings by parents not to forget literacy. Even some students themselves challenged the new approach to learning literacy.<sup>57</sup>

There were practical problems with the new methods for intellectual work as well. First and foremost was the shortage of teachers. Most teachers were forced to teach many groups at one time. As a result, they often assigned intellectual work to children as independent work (usually traditional exercises) while they worked with other groups

(often in the same classroom).<sup>58</sup> Teachers did not have time to check this work, so much of it was left incomplete or uncorrected.

In other cases, shortages of teaching aids such as books required teachers to use traditional teaching aids such as the *azbuka*, the alphabet learning book that was inherited from the Tsarist period. In many cases, these exercises did not stimulate the child's interest or allow children to interact concretely with knowledge. In other cases, teachers used shortages to justify continuing to teach literacy and numeracy in the traditional way. For instance, in at least two schools teachers taught children to read and write using the Gospels.<sup>59</sup>

At the same time, with the abolition of exams, dictation, and rote memorization, teachers lacked the mechanisms for ensuring order in the classroom. A report by a top FES official reported near anarchy in many of the classrooms in 1922.<sup>60</sup> Poor discipline further hindered the instruction of basic skills. This teaching deficit was made worse by the fact that many children, who had received no instruction for two or three years on account of war and revolution, had very weak skills and needed serious attention. One teacher's report describes how a fourteen-year-old would exchange *ch* with a *t* sound in every word he spoke.<sup>61</sup> In such conditions, it would have been difficult to teach literacy and numeracy using traditional methods; with the often chaotic and uneven implementation of the progressive method, it was almost impossible.

As the Civil War ended and NEP began, Shatskii and his administration realized that the intellectual part of his school programme was failing to instil basic skills. Shatskii himself admitted that 'It is not possible to talk about the new school if the student is not literate'.<sup>62</sup> As a result, Shatskii directed teachers to devote special time to teaching basic knowledge (such as grammar). This violated the fundamental principle of his school – that children should not be given pre-set knowledge – but was seen as a necessary compromise in order to ensure children's basic skill development. At the same time, to ensure that the complex method was better implemented, he and his administration issued plans for introducing these skills. Most notable was E. Fortunatova's detailed plan for the teaching of Russian using the complex method.<sup>63</sup> They also set a minimum level of knowledge and skills for finishing primary school.<sup>64</sup> These changes violated the principle of decentralization and local flexibility but were also seen as a crucial part of securing basic skills.

This introduction of more rigour into the classroom helped teachers. The successes of basic physical work also helped teachers make more liberal use of the complex method.

One example from an exhibition in 1925 demonstrates how mathematics was tied to summer work:

1. One chicken gives 15 eggs; 100 give 1500.
2. Each egg costs 3 kopeks; 1500 cost 4500 kopeks, or 45 roubles.
3. 10 chickens in the summer are able to give 50 chicks, if one chick costs 50 kopeks, then 50 chicks will get 2500 kopeks, or 25 roubles.<sup>65</sup>

In another case, teachers used children's meetings to encourage good handwriting and organized thinking. In an example from 1925, teachers created a set of rules for how students should copy down the minutes of a meeting:

- Questions should be written cleanly and exactly.
- Every question should be on a new line.
- In front of every question should be a number.
- After the question write the first name, last name, and date.<sup>66</sup>

Intellectual work became split between 'old school' methods – such as copying, dictation, and rote learning of mathematical tables – and teaching tied to the complex. This created an odd blend of old and new in the classroom: teachers would often move from using the old *azbuka* to teach literacy to free discussions of hygiene and the effect of the revolution on the countryside.<sup>67</sup>

This divided classroom time helped slowly raise the level of basic skills, but as a compromise it did not please either side. Staunch progressivists complained that, in classroom practice, these traditional methods often took far more time than the time appointed to them. This reduced the time apportioned for the progressive method.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, those wanting children to learn literacy and numeracy were unhappy with the schools' continued external focus and use of the complex. Inevitably, this would lead to less class time for literacy and numeracy and, consequently, weaker reading and writing skills in children. The controversy over the place of the complex method in intellectual work would plague Shatskii's station until it closed.

However, the experience of children was transformed. Released from exams, rote-based learning, and harsh discipline, students now learned in a much less hostile atmosphere. Most students welcomed these changes, particularly the absence of harsh discipline.<sup>69</sup> For the bright, motivated students, the new classroom methods were an exciting way of linking knowledge to the outside world. Many of these students did learn to think freely. One student, writing on class stratification in the village, criticized Bolshevik class categorizations, arguing that poor peasants simply 'spend all their earnings on vodka...and are simply lazy' and that rich peasants (*kulaks*) were just peasants with one

horse or a cow.<sup>70</sup> However, for the less intelligent, the lack of discipline and assessment permitted persistent skill deficits, limiting their literacy and numeracy skills. Overall, the new intellectual methods and their focus on self-motivation produced uneven results.

The success of the school in organizing the social life of its students progressed with time. During the early Civil War years, discipline problems, preoccupation with the provision of food, and difficult external conditions hindered any meaningful social activities. General student meetings were conducted regularly in only three of the schools and in many cases teachers were unsure of the amount of freedom to give children.<sup>71</sup> The one success built on the widespread physical work. In almost every school, teachers appointed children to on-duty (*dezhurstvo*) posts, in which they were responsible for supervising and directing students' activity in keeping the classroom clean.<sup>72</sup>

As the schools became more systematized under NEP, the number of schools having school meetings began to increase. Eight (out of fourteen) schools began to hold general school meetings – though these were not convened regularly.<sup>73</sup> These meetings were very basic, touching on important issues in school life, such as fighting, misbehaviour, and relations between students:

Ugodsko-Zavod school, 11 February, 1925.

Orders of business:

1. Discussion of general rules for the behaviour in school.
2. Discussion of better relations between boys and girls.
3. Discussion of unity between different classes.
4. Discussion of other matters: bringing firewood, stopping fights.<sup>74</sup>

The introduction of summer work also helped organize children's social life. The most notable innovation was the widespread introduction of sanitation commissions. These commissions would go around the villages, clearing up manure, cleaning wells, and picking up rubbish. Afterwards, they would go to the river for a swim, washing their hands, faces, and bodies.<sup>75</sup>

It is hard to gauge whether this group activity demonstrated to students the importance of collective action. What is clear, however, is that some children were drawn to the idea of coordinated activity and were enjoying a sense of empowerment. New opportunities for leadership were creating a stratum of committed students who enjoyed leadership and its perks.<sup>76</sup> At the same time, it is likely that many others saw these group activities as social opportunities for making friends and having fun. Many children reported that they particularly enjoyed the post-cleanup swim in the river.

Societal work (*obshchestvennaia rabota*) also developed into a major new part of the implemented school programme. One of the most successful aspects of this was the widespread use of posters, which children placed on the walls of their home. Many of these multi-coloured signs reminded children's families about important hygiene habits. One from 1923 is particularly illustrative:

Rules of cleanliness for the house.

1. Wash the floor with a dry broom.
2. Allow fresh air into the house.
3. Do not allow food to be exposed to pests after dinner.
4. Exterminate cockroaches and other pests.<sup>77</sup>

Peasant huts were generally cleaner and children's families more aware of the new methods of sanitation.<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, there was considerable local interest in children's agricultural work. This was especially true with regard to the experimental strips in children's fields. Indeed, many interested villagers would attend exhibitions organized by the school and constructed by students, which reported the results of experimentation with different fertilizers and amounts of water. Furthermore, in other cases, children formed groups to survey the outside population. Children's journals (collections of children's work), such as the 'Invigorating Life' and 'The Colonist', are full of stories, poems, illustrations, watercolours, and short articles detailing excursions studying the literacy rates, agricultural techniques, and customs of peasants in their village and surrounding areas.<sup>79</sup>

By taking part in changing the outside world, children were in the process of transforming themselves. Societally-based work taught children to 'scientifically' categorize, compartmentalize, and define the outside village, a crucial process in transferring to children a highly critical, 'Bolshevized' view of the countryside. This societal work also helped build children's identity by defining children in relation to who they were not. For instance, outreach work brought children in contact with backward elements, such as older members of their family, priests, and 'dark' peasants. These class stereotypes were incorporated into the way children saw the outside world. A report by Rita Buresova and Manya Anisova explained how their trip was met with hostile looks from 'dark' peasants who thought they were tax assessors.<sup>80</sup>

Artistic work was taught in most schools throughout the period. Usually comprising four to five hours of class time a week, the most important of the methods were drawing, acting, and singing. Musical work, when present, was very basic: children often spent 20 to 30 minutes singing their favourite songs at the end of the day with teacher supervision.

In many areas, this method faced considerable local opposition (particularly from religious members of the population). In Belkino, for example, the teacher had to suspend singing in class because of the antagonism of the villagers.<sup>81</sup> Painting and drawing, the most popular of these methods, were widely implemented in the school.<sup>82</sup>

The artistic curriculum was also widely used outside the traditional school setting. Plays (*spektali*) were a popular artistic outreach policy, becoming an important way in which the school engaged with the outside population.<sup>83</sup> Building on a strong tradition of village theatre, such productions would often attract many local villagers.<sup>84</sup> These plays often included Russian classics like *Boris Gudonov*.

In some cases, teachers and students worked together to build dramatizations based on children's discussions. These often were based on traditional stories told to children by older members of their family. One example is a play called 'Pro Morozko'. This dramatization – based on stories that children heard from their grandmothers – tells the story of a wife who leaves home because her husband has killed her daughter (he wants a boy). The wife has nowhere to go and asks the ice spirit 'moroz' to help her. The ice spirit restores her daughter to her and she lives happily ever after in a large house.<sup>85</sup> This incorporated important parts of village life – such as the belief in spirits, justice, and the common practice of killing female babies – and represented a successful artistic merging of the school with outside life.

School-organized Soviet holidays were also important opportunities for artistic work. Ritualizing artistic expression in support of the Bolshevik regime, these new Soviet holidays were helping to create a mythical story of the foundation of socialism. They generally followed a set formula: teachers and children would organize a play, give presentations, sing songs, and display drawings. In contrast to school plays, these events did not attract many of the adult villagers: they included mainly students and local teenagers (*podrostki*) and were crucial in fostering a group-based sense of power among the younger rural population.

Artistic work played a significant role in transforming school experience. The school was now involved in organizing the creative talents of children within the village. This involvement had more than just an aesthetic value. The expansion of plays helped reinforce a sense of childhood and of juvenile activity. New Soviet holidays were helping to construct a new identity in reaction to the older generation.<sup>86</sup> These Soviet holidays were not just opportunities for group-based solidarity but also a space for more traditional forms of socializing. In one report, a devoted Komsomol member reports with disgust that during the anti-Christmas holiday 'girls go the school to play and dance'. Indeed,

these celebrations were a good place to meet potential partners without the supervision of adults.<sup>87</sup>

Games in the school curriculum were largely unsuccessful due to serious opposition from the local population and difficult classroom conditions. Indeed, when present, they were usually unsupervised and took place during class breaks. In most cases, children largely played their traditional village games, which often involved dividing into two teams and some sort of interaction with a ball (*miach*).<sup>88</sup> Other games reflected the influence of children's violent surroundings. One of the most widespread was a game named 'soldiers' (*soldaty*). Here, children acted out the role of soldiers marching, barking out orders of 'left, right'.<sup>89</sup>

*Extra-school life: the school's impact on the village*

Between 1919 and 1927, the school and the local population interacted on a close basis. However, this interaction was not the simple imposition of cultural change on an inert peasant population. During the entire period, the schools in the FES were involved in an active process of negotiation with the local population. The most important institution representing the village in this process was the village gathering (*skhod*): local Soviet institutions – such as village soviets – were largely irrelevant to village administration throughout the entire period.<sup>90</sup>

In their early period, the schools of the FES relied heavily on their local village. During frequent shortages of food and supplies, the village provided critical support to the schools. In all fourteen schools, peasants brought firewood and gave what they could to allow the school to work. Also, the peasant population gave communal land to the school for planting.<sup>91</sup> The village also helped teachers, who were often stranded in the village with little food. In Piatkino, the peasants brought fruit for the teacher, designated a special week for the supply of the school, and supplied carts to move things without charge.<sup>92</sup> In Trias' one teacher reported that the peasants 'knew that I was hungry, and met with everyone asking who would be able to give what to me'.<sup>93</sup>

This active peasant support reflected the village's attitude toward the school. Rather than seeing village schools as representatives of the new Bolshevik government, peasants viewed the school as a locally governed peasant institution. As one peasant proclaimed to a teacher, 'the school is ours, and we have the right'.<sup>94</sup> The schoolhouse itself was viewed as a village cultural centre, and the village often demanded that its meetings be convened there. In many cases, the teacher had little choice but to allow these meetings to go ahead.<sup>95</sup> In other cases, villagers saw it as a religious area: in Velichkovo, the villagers

carried an icon into the new school.<sup>96</sup> In Trias', the community held an emergency meeting in the school after a Bolshevik food requisition brigade had come through.<sup>97</sup> Teachers could do little to stop incursions like this. In fact, many teachers justified their capitulation as a necessary adaptation to the surroundings. As one teacher said, 'I did not want to repeat the mistake of the old school and ignore the demands of the population'.<sup>98</sup> The Kaluga peasantry saw the control of the village as a crucial part of their attempt to consolidate their own autonomy in the post-Revolutionary chaos.

The school's status as a local societal institution meant that the entire population (not just parents) were interested in the school programme. Pedagogical questions were frequently discussed at village meetings (*skhodki*). Perhaps the most persistent complaint was that they were not teaching the 'Law of God'.<sup>99</sup> Another complaint was the lack of discipline in the new school. Many others objected to weak literacy and numeracy skills.

To make their wishes known, the local population actively blocked parts of the new programme. In Piatkino, resistance to active summer work within the school field was so strong that summer work took place in the school, ending, incredibly, with an examination.<sup>100</sup> In another case, Kosareva, a teacher at the Velichkovskaia school, reported that she had not used games in the school context because 'the population are against it'.<sup>101</sup> In other villages, locals backed teachers who used the old methods of discipline. In Samsonovo, they wished to get the older teachers back (as in some cases the FES had fired some of the older teachers). In Strelkova, the local population played teachers off against each other, actively supporting a teacher who employed the traditional methods and undermining teachers who employed the new methods.<sup>102</sup>

However, parents and the local population were not opposed to all parts of the progressive approach of the school. In particular, they were active supporters of the hygiene and sanitation efforts of the school, particularly when they recognized its beneficial impact on children's health. Indeed, in many villages, the peasant gathering requested more doctors to further their understanding of health issues.<sup>103</sup> In many cases, these basic policies were enough for parents to drop their objection to the other aspects of the school. One mother in Peredol' is reported as saying: 'we see that it is your matter and that you think more about children than we do; and for clean children we thank you (*spasibo za chistotu*)'.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, peasant resistance to the school was not insurmountable. In some cases, teachers were able to convince the peasantry that the new school approach was in their best interests. For instance, in one case, a teacher was accused of spreading communism amongst the children.<sup>105</sup> The teacher's response to this charge reflects the local peasant

population's preferred interpretation of the revolution: 'children should become used to thinking about societal matters, to think of themselves as taking part in the regeneration of the village'.<sup>106</sup> As long as Bolshevism was associated with this view of the revolution, the village was happy to support it.

Through negotiation, the schools were successful in overcoming even highly entrenched peasant resistance to their programmes. The two best examples were the creation of a summer school and pre-school education. In the case of summer school, the peasantry opposed the exploitation of their children's labour. With the pre-school, many felt that children should not be sent to school at such a young age.

Teachers addressed these village objections in both the village gathering and parents' meetings, emphasizing the real importance of these new school plans to the villagers' children. With regard to summer work, they argued that this extension of the school year would increase children's productivity within individual family gardens and thereby help the family budget. Pre-school education, they argued, helped children to acquire literacy and numeracy skills more easily in the school environment. In both cases, parents lent provisional support and spoke up in the gathering in support of these new policies. In these cases, parents (who were predominantly mothers) played an important role in tipping the balance in the gathering, as they began to support the interests of the new school initiatives.<sup>107</sup>

After showing tangible benefits, both became popular with the general population. As mentioned above, many of the local population became actively interested in the agronomy experiments that were being carried out in the school fields during summer work. This summer work was also successful in incorporating local teenagers who were too old to take part in primary school education.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, pre-school education secured local support because of its strong hygiene-based element.

Throughout this period, Shatskii's schools were able to forge an important partnership with the village. As this section has shown, this process of change was one regulated by interdependence and negotiation. The village school could not have survived without the support of the village; therefore, the village received a say over the policies implemented in the school. On the other hand, villages knew the importance of the school in providing their children with skills to adapt to a changing world; as a result, the schools were afforded an opportunity to push for more radical school reform. The extents of cultural revolution, therefore, were determined to a large extent through the contested negotiation between village and school.

### *Conclusion*

This article has considered the role of early village schooling in post-Revolutionary Russia. First, using the FES as a case study, it has sought to understand one of the central Bolshevik visions of rural cultural change. At the FES, the transformation of the village was to take place on the basis of scientific study and was to be a process of gradual cultural and social modernization. Mechanisms such as non-violence, freedom, and decentralization were to create well-rounded socialists, who would see the world in a new way. Revolution, in this view, was a cultural modernization and social emancipation of the peasantry. This radical, utopian approach to education provides another example of what Richard Stites points to as the rich legacy of utopian thinking in the post-Revolutionary world.<sup>109</sup>

Further, on a practical level, this article has described the many obstacles that this vision faced on the ground in Kaluga. Shortages and epidemics strained the teachers seeking to implement these methods. Children had significant skill deficits and were often malnourished. At the same time, the local population actively resisted parts of the new program. This peasant resistance continues from the pre-Revolutionary period, in which Ben Eklof identifies a similar conflict between state and society over the control of education.<sup>110</sup>

However, despite these limitations, the school's stated goal of merging with outside life helped forge an important partnership between the school and the local population. As a result of a process of negotiation, ground-level policy consisted of the aspects of the progressive curriculum that produced a general consensus between village and school.

In many cases, this partnership was forged on the tangible benefits of the new policies. This was particularly true with regard to physical work and lessons tied with practical goals. In other cases, school policy drew on existing village traditions. School sponsored plays drew a great deal of strength from village tradition. Finally, successful policy was grounded on student aspirations and desires: Soviet holidays and rituals gave children an arena for activity and socializing outside the traditional strictures of the village. This suggests that peasants were neither fully resistant to all outside change nor passive recipients of propaganda. Indeed, the cultural revolution in Kaluga during this period was implemented in a cooperative way, as children and the local population themselves became important agents of personal and societal transformation.

This view of negotiated change adds another dimension to the understanding of the reception of Bolshevism. Consider, for instance, one of the most well known arguments about the reception of Soviet propaganda in the 1920s:

Soviet propaganda taught people a political language and pattern of behaviour. First, the people came to speak a strange idiom and adopt the behaviour patterns expected of them and only then did the inherent ideological message seep in. The process of convincing proceeded not from inside out but from outside in. That is, people came to believe properly, from the point of view of the regime, not because they believed its slogans but by repeating the slogans they gradually acquired a proper consciousness.<sup>111</sup>

Although this contention may be correct, it ignores the ability of society – and in particular rural society – to resist the new ideology being thrust upon it. In other words, it ignores the fact that the elite could not simply dictate what was being incorporated by those below; instead, there was a process of negotiation. This argument suggests that the core of the new regime’s popular reception in the village would result from the interaction of elite visions with the deeply held values of the worker and peasant masses. This argument echoes Foucault’s view that power ‘comes from below’ as well as the top and that all groups are ‘involved in power relations, however unequal and hierarchical, which they do not control in any simple sense’.<sup>112</sup>

Taking this into account, what characterized the process of becoming Bolshevik in Kaluga during this short period? For some, it was a process of acquiring personal patterns of behaviour that rejected the old village traditions. Chief amongst these were personal hygiene habits. One seven-year-old child described how she perceived a Communist – ‘they wash their hands when they sit down to eat’.<sup>113</sup> For others, Bolshevism was interpreted as an opportunity for social mobility. Many children’s essays point to the economic and advancement opportunities of the new post-Revolutionary village: ‘I want to be a Communist so I can study’; ‘I want to be a communist so I can be rich’.<sup>114</sup> For still others, it was the school’s emphasis on purposeful activity. Revolutionary rituals reflected this, as children were captured by communism’s sense of change and possibility.<sup>115</sup> To students at the FES, Bolshevism meant an acceleration of forces of cultural change that were eroding the traditional village world.

However, in the crucible of Stalin’s feverish industrialization and collectivization drive of 1928-32, this humanitarian and collaborative system of cultural change was too slow, too pro-peasant, and too collaborative. The Party leadership could not tolerate a negotiated transformation of the countryside; their ideology preached the virtue of rapid, forced change. Collectivization embodied this belief in the virtues of coercion, amounting to

little more than low-level warfare against peasant self-government and administration. Amidst collectivization, the village school was no longer a place for combined cultural improvement, but an institution forging new proletarians who would join the growing industrial workforce. Both Shatskii's school station and his humanistic vision for education perished amidst this Stalinist break: the FES was finally closed in 1932.

NOTES:

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in M. David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning Among Bolsheviks, 1918-1929* (London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the peasantry interpreted the revolutions of 1917 as an opportunity to assert local autonomy. See O. Figes, *Peasant Russia: Civil War: the Volga Countryside in Revolution 1917-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> T. Shanin, in *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of the Century*, i: *Russia as a Developing Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), discusses the gulf that existed between the peasant and non-peasant population. This stereotyped Bolshevik view of the peasant world as 'other' and the desire to eradicate it were long-standing ideals of the Russian intelligentsia (of which the Bolsheviks were an extreme group). C. Frierson describes the Tsarist intelligentsia as 'distant from the village, viewing the peasantry as other, and assuming the role of the sole active agents in Russian culture who would bear the responsibility for moving it forward'. C. Frierson, *Peasant Icons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 194.

<sup>4</sup> By 'cultural front' I do not mean the limited period of cultural radicalism during the First Five-Year Plan. I am referring to the long-term Bolshevik attempt to fashion cultural transformation. See: M. David-Fox, 'What is Cultural Revolution', *Russian Revolution*, 58 (1999), pp. 181-200; S. Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). For the experimentation of the period, see R. Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> L. Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, tr. Rose Strunskii (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> From an address given to the All-Russian Congress of Enlightenment Workers in 1918. Quoted in E. M. Balashov, *Shkola v Rossiskom Obshchestve 1917-1927: Stanovlenie 'Novogo Cheloveka'* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo 'Dmitrii Bulanin', 2003), p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> L. Holmes, *The Kremlin and the Schoolhouse: Reforming Education in Soviet Russia, 1917-1931* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), investigates early Soviet schooling but his argument is largely institutional and does not look at issues of cultural production and the early school. Balashov's *Shkola v Rossiskom Obshchestve 1917-1927* investigates the role of the school in forming childhood mentality but does not take an isolated look at the village school. There is relevant scholarship on the village school and rural transformation in other time periods. Y. Slezkine's 'From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in Soviet Far East', *Slavic Review*, 51 (1992), pp. 705-30, explores the effects of Stalin's institutions of cultural change (including education) in the arctic and sub-arctic north, from 1928-1938. There is good scholarship on the effect of the school (and literacy) on rural transformation during the Tsarist period. See B. Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools, Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and J. Brooks, *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Opinion, 1861-1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

<sup>8</sup> In particular, this article utilizes an entire fond (fond 1) devoted to this complex of schools. This information is located at Nauchnyi Arkhiv Rossiskoi Akademii Obrazovaniia (NA RAO) in Leninskie Gorki (southeast of Moscow).

<sup>9</sup> See Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, for more on the explosion of Tsarist experimentation and enlightenment efforts in the late Tsarist period.

<sup>10</sup> Shatskii at first spurned Lunacharskii's invitation to join Narkompros, accusing Lunacharskii of 'pedagogical dilettantism'. See A. Romanov, *Opytno-Eksperimental'naia Pedagogika Pervoi Treti Dvadtsatogo Veka* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Shkola', 1997), pp. 146-50.

<sup>11</sup> The First Experimental Station comprised both a Moscow and a Kaluga branch. The Moscow branch was smaller and was the administrative centre, comprising the central kindergarten, a 9-year labour school, and the central Pedagogical Institute. A. M. Kuzmicheva, *Pervaia shkola Obninskaiia (stranitsy istorii)* (Obninsk: Izdatelstvo 'Larina', 2001), pp. 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> In most other literature, 'Bodraia zhizn' is translated as 'The Cheerful Life'. I feel that 'Bodraia', in this educational context, more closely translates as 'invigorating'.

<sup>13</sup> There were fourteen 'core' primary schools in the Station. Ten were established during the Tsarist period and taken over by the Station. These were the Ugodski-Zavodskaiia (1), Krivskaiia (2), Belinskaiia (3), Velichkovskaiia (4), Peredol'skaiia (5), Mikhailovskaiia (6), Belousovskaiia (7), Triasskaiia (8), Lubitskaiia (9), and Kabitsinskaiia (10) schools. Four were set up by the Station in late 1919 and 1920: Piatkinskaiia (11), Samsonovskaiia (12), Dobrinskaiia (13), and Strelkovskaiia (14). Other schools were part of the FES for part of the period: they were Ternikovskaiia, Petresovskaiia, Bolotskaiia, and Krivosheinaia *shkola*. The lone secondary school was the Ugodski-Zavodskaiia school. At its height, the FES included six kindergartens, located in Belkino, Dobroe, Krivsko, Potresove, Piatkino, and Ugodski-Zavod. Kuzmicheva, pp.16-17.

<sup>14</sup> V. Beliaev, *Stanovlenie i razvitie innovatsionnoi kontseptsii S. T. Shatskogo* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'MNEPU', 1999), pp. 177-81.

<sup>15</sup> G. Malinin and F. Fradkin, *Vospitatel'naia sistema S. T. Shatskogo* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'NA RAO', 1993), pp. 6-13.

<sup>16</sup> S. Shatskii himself only joined the Party in 1927 – remarkable for a man who took such an active role in the Soviet educational bureaucracy and who would become in Beliaev's words, 'The recognized leader of Soviet teaching'. Beliaev, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> The need for bourgeois specialists was one of Lenin's directives. Romanov, p. 150. A similar policy was being followed in the Red Army as Trotskii placed former high-ranking Tsarist officers in leadership roles within the newly formed Red Army.

<sup>18</sup> Neither Shatskii nor his closest advisors were party members. Beliaev, pp. 1-34.

<sup>19</sup> Romanov, p. 148.

<sup>20</sup> For more, see W. Rosenberg (ed.), *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> For more see Holmes, *Kremlin and the Schoolhouse*.

<sup>22</sup> Balashov, pp. 111-15.

<sup>23</sup> Beliaev, p. 177. In the pedagogical literature of the 1920s 'Shatskism' was associated with the emerging model for the village school. Romanov, p. 148.

<sup>24</sup> Much as 'Blonskiism' was used to denote Narkompros' approach to industrial education at the time. See Romanov, p. 148.

<sup>25</sup> NA RAO, fond 1, opis' 1, d. 337, l. 145. Hereafter, assume that the archive is the NA RAO, the fond number is 1, and the opis' number is 1, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>26</sup> d. 337, l. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted from R. Sokolov, *Uchastie naseleniia v vospitanii detei i podrostkov no mesty zhitel'stva*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo 'Sotsinovatsiia', 1993), p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> Beliaev, p. 128.

- 
- <sup>29</sup> S. T. Shatskii, *Pedagogicheskie Sochineniia*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), ii. 116.  
<sup>30</sup> S. T. Shatskii, *A Teacher's Experience: A Collection*, tr. Catherine Judelson (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1981), p. 180  
<sup>31</sup> Beliaev, p. 128.  
<sup>32</sup> Beliaev, p. 104  
<sup>33</sup> S. T. Shatskii, *A Teachers' Experience*, p. 19.  
<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.  
<sup>35</sup> d. 76, l. 7.  
<sup>36</sup> d. 309, ll. 126-29.  
<sup>37</sup> d. 233, ll. 303-10.  
<sup>38</sup> d. 76, l. 7.  
<sup>39</sup> d. 63, ll. 173-81.  
<sup>40</sup> d. 231, l. 2.  
<sup>41</sup> d. 229, l. 224.  
<sup>42</sup> d. 227, l. 79.  
<sup>43</sup> d. 227, l. 147.  
<sup>44</sup> d. 63, ll. 173-81.  
<sup>45</sup> d. 227, l. 55.  
<sup>46</sup> d. 227, l. 79.  
<sup>47</sup> d. 233, ll. 1-24.  
<sup>48</sup> d. 63, ll. 173-81.  
<sup>49</sup> d. 63, l. 181.  
<sup>50</sup> d. 227, l. 55.  
<sup>51</sup> d. 227, l. 76.  
<sup>52</sup> d. 309, l. 180.  
<sup>53</sup> d. 250, l. 105.  
<sup>54</sup> d. 245, l. 54.  
<sup>55</sup> d. 76, l. 53.  
<sup>56</sup> d. 246, l. 62-7.  
<sup>57</sup> d. 235, ll. 140-2.  
<sup>58</sup> d. 229, ll. 196-265.  
<sup>59</sup> d. 227, l. 85.  
<sup>60</sup> d. 228, ll. 61-4.  
<sup>61</sup> d. 290, l. 8.  
<sup>62</sup> S. T. Shatskii, *Pedagogicheskie Sochineniia*, ii. 358.  
<sup>63</sup> d. 290, l. 131.  
<sup>64</sup> d. 290, l. 137.  
<sup>65</sup> d. 162, l. 82.  
<sup>66</sup> d. 256, l. 54.  
<sup>67</sup> d. 229, l. 142.  
<sup>68</sup> d. 231, l. 37.  
<sup>69</sup> d. 246, ll. 62-7.  
<sup>70</sup> d. 246, l. 41.  
<sup>71</sup> d. 116, l. 12.  
<sup>72</sup> d. 112, l. 28.  
<sup>73</sup> d. 231, l. 7 and d. 112, l. 27.

- 
- <sup>74</sup> d. 256, l. 52.  
<sup>75</sup> d. 242, ll. 7-9.  
<sup>76</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>77</sup> d. 244, l. 19.  
<sup>78</sup> d. 309, l. 132.  
<sup>79</sup> d. 228, l. 29.  
<sup>80</sup> d. 228, d. 23, l. 11.  
<sup>81</sup> d. 112, l. 29.  
<sup>82</sup> d. 228, ll. 61-76.  
<sup>83</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>84</sup> d. 309, l. 326.  
<sup>85</sup> d. 242, ll. 85-94.  
<sup>86</sup> d. 242, ll. 85-94 and d. 31, l. 89.  
<sup>87</sup> d. 243, l. 1.  
<sup>88</sup> d. 244, l. 4.  
<sup>89</sup> d. 244, l. 28.  
<sup>90</sup> In 1924, there were 15 *sel'soviety* in the region. Not one of them was functioning. d. 233, l. 304.  
<sup>91</sup> d. 229, l. 108.  
<sup>92</sup> d. 227, ll. 9-14.  
<sup>93</sup> d. 227, ll. 36-7  
<sup>94</sup> d. 227, l. 92.  
<sup>95</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>96</sup> d. 227., ll. 84-7.  
<sup>97</sup> d. 227., l. 92.  
<sup>98</sup> d. 309, ll. 129.  
<sup>99</sup> d. 227, l. 85.  
<sup>100</sup> d. 250, l. 111.  
<sup>101</sup> d. 227, l. 262.  
<sup>102</sup> d. 227, ll. 282-4.  
<sup>103</sup> d. 309, l. 34.  
<sup>104</sup> d. 230, ll. 33-4.  
<sup>105</sup> d. 250, l. 92.  
<sup>106</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>107</sup> d. 230, l. 53.  
<sup>108</sup> d. 162, l. 13.  
<sup>109</sup> Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*.  
<sup>110</sup> B. Eklof, 'Peasant Sloth Reconsidered: Strategies of Education and Learning in Rural Russia Before the Revolution' *Journal of Social History*, 14:3 (1981), pp. 355-85.  
<sup>111</sup> P. Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 255.  
<sup>112</sup> H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: Harvester Press Limited, 1982), p. 159.  
<sup>113</sup> d. 294, l. 37.  
<sup>114</sup> d. 294, l. 12.  
<sup>115</sup> d. 294, l. 45.