

### Future Russian Drivers Receive School Training

(Editor's note: The following article appeared in a recent issue of "Safety Education" magazine. The author, Ruth Dunbar, is the education writer for the Chicago Sun-Times. It is reprinted here because of the interesting comparison it offers on driver education in this country and Russia.)

**By RUTH DUNBAR**  
It's a paradox that in Russia, where owning a car is a luxury beyond the dreams of the average citizen, schools are teaching driver training and there is no controversy about it.

But in America, where nearly every family has at least one car, many still question whether driver training belongs in the curriculum.

The U.S. Commerce department reported that as of last January, there were 500,000 passenger cars in the Soviet Union, compared with nearly 57 million in the United States. In other words, we had more than 100 times as many. The streets of Moscow are wide - empty.

Roads Well Equipped  
But in the schools of Moscow, and in other cities as well, we saw children studying driver training in rooms that were better equipped than most other rooms in school.

Usually there was a cutaway model of a car where students could see the function of all parts. Other rooms had only the front half of a car. There were spare engine parts which were passed around the classroom. In addition, there were illuminated traffic signs and teaching posters.

When we visited Russia a year ago not all schools had driver training. It is part of the new "polytechnic" or vocational program that is being introduced in all schools as rapidly as possible. In a rural area we visited they were teaching how to drive a tractor rather than a car.

**Stiff Training Course**  
Driver training is a two-year course, taught in the ninth and tenth grades. It meets either three or four hours a week. In the tenth grade, students get 10 to 15 hours of on-the-road training. At the end of the course they may take the examination for a driver's license. However, the principal of one school told us that only about 50 per cent of those who complete the course can pass the stiff exam.

The In-Service Institute for Training Teachers in Moscow also had a driver training room, where teachers could brush up on their knowledge. The director explained that the purpose of teaching driver training is not primarily to train drivers, but to give students an understanding of the automobile engine, which is basic to many other engines.

**Students Learn Mechanics**  
In the course, students have to learn not only how to drive, but they must master the theory of how the engine works. (Teachers described this and other polytechnic courses as "science in action," or "applied physics.") And they must learn how to repair the car if anything goes wrong. We were told that to get a driver's license in Russia, you must pass three tests - theory, repairing the engine, and on-the-road driving.

Material supplied by the Russian embassy shows that Russia also has many driver training establishments outside the schools. Before taking a course either to qualify as an "amateur driver" (private car) or a "professional," one must pass a medical examination where hearing, sight and condition of the nervous system are checked.

**Trained Behind Wheel**  
The training in these specialized courses seem to be much the same as the course in the public schools, except that trainees get more training behind the wheel. Amateurs get 25 hours, whereas the future professional gets a 50-hour course.

There is no question that Russia trains drivers far more thoroughly than America does. The embassy says the accident statistics show the advantages of such training, for although the number of cars in the Soviet Union is growing, the number of accidents is steadily decreasing.

### Cavities to Appear On TV Screens

New York - Dentists soon may be using a television camera for inspecting their patients' mouths, according to Electronics, a McGraw-Hill publication.

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# 12

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