

"SATURDAY SCHOLARS" show the way

by Stanley Roberts



Teacher Hugh Ansley.

How Florida Students Meet Soviet Challenge

Here are the rigid "20 Commandments" of Russian schools that have been voluntarily adopted as a basic program by ninth graders at Winter Park's Glenridge Junior High School:

It is the duty of every school child:

1. To acquire knowledge persistently, to become an educated and cultured citizen and be of the greatest possible service to his country.
2. To study diligently and be punctual in attendance.
3. To obey the instructions of the school director and teachers without question.
4. To arrive at school with all necessary textbooks and writing materials, and be prepared for lessons before the teacher arrives.
5. To come to school clean, well-groomed, and neatly dressed.
6. To keep his place in the classroom clean and tidy.
7. To enter the classroom and take his place immediately after the bell rings; to enter and leave the classroom only with the teacher's permission.
8. To sit upright during the lesson, not leaning on his elbows or slouching; to listen attentively to the teacher's explanations and the other pupils' answers; and not to talk or let his attention stray.
9. To rise when the teacher or the director enters or leaves the room.
10. To stand at attention when answering the teacher; to sit down only with the teacher's permission; to raise his hand if he wishes to answer or ask questions.
11. To take accurate notes in his assignment book of homework scheduled for the next lesson, and to show these notes to his parents; to do all homework unaided.
12. To be respectful to the director and teachers; greet them with a polite bow.
13. To be polite to elders, to behave modestly and respectfully in school, on the street, and in public places.
14. To avoid coarse expressions, smoking, or gambling. (Coarse includes profanity, clichés, and slang expressions such as "wow," "real gone," and "yeah.")
15. To protect school property, to be careful of his personal things and the belongings of his comrades.
16. To be attentive and considerate of old people, smaller children, the weak and the sick; to give them a seat on the trolley or make way for them on the street, being helpful in every way.
17. To obey parents, to help in the care of small brothers and sisters.
18. To maintain cleanliness and order in rooms, to keep clothes, shoes, and bed neat.
19. To carry student record book with him always, to guard it carefully, never handing it to anyone; to present it upon request of the director or teacher.
20. To cherish the honor of his school and class, and defend it as his own.

SCHOOL DAYS, school days . . . now include Saturdays in Florida. At a time when microscopic cross-examinations of American education are exposing slides of deficiency, ninth graders at a Florida junior high school are engaged in an intellectual revolution.

Strictly on their own, students at Winter Park's Glenridge Junior High School flock eagerly to classes every Saturday during the school year and weekdays during Summer vacations, all at their own insistence.

These youngsters are riding the crest of a learn-it-yourself wave, buoyed up by such collective zest that Principal Adrian Stockard admits, "I feel as if I have a bear by the tail and can't let go."

For the privilege of rolling out of bed on Saturday mornings, students pay \$15 a semester for lectures in logic and philosophy. In the Summer, swimming and other vacation activities are foregone for classes in psychology, American heritage, geography, biology, and art at \$20 per class.

All of this is without academic credit, but it has answered the query that nibbled at teacher Hugh Ansley's civics class: Is the Russian educational system superior to ours? Or, as John Bowman aptly expressed it, "Are Russian students smarter than we are?"

It all started last year when 24-year-old teacher Ansley shocked his class with reports on Soviet students' grueling study habits and the alarming comparisons between Russian and American school children. Gasps of amazement buzzed through the classroom. Finally, 15-year-old Sylvia Schaffer asked, "Why can't we try those Russian ideas in our class?"

Her classmates stirred. "How about it, Mr. Ansley?" coaxed the others.

Deliberating for a second, Ansley responded quickly.

"All right," he resolved. "For the next seven weeks we'll conduct this class under the same rules used in the Soviet system." Ansley's class adopted in their entirety the "20 Commandments" that Russian students are forced to memorize and observe or be expelled.

The students called their venture the Traditional Education Experiment and decided rule violators would weed sandspurs from the school lawns as punishment; they really lived their "20 Commandments"

Results were strikingly apparent, inside and out of the classrooms. As though the fine hand of progressive educator John Dewey had wielded the hickory stick of learning, Ansley's Russian-patterned class covered the 285-page civics textbook assigned for the year in seven weeks. Grades rose 25 percent.

"Before we started TEE," 14-year-old Marcia Whitney said, "we used to just play around too much."

One boy's mother revealed that before TEE-days, her son would dodge hurriedly through the living room during her bridge games and avoid her visitors. "Now he's a perfect gentleman," she beams. "He even bows politely to the ladies."

Inspired by their accomplishments, Ansley's civics class voted to make their Soviet-style system permanent. Then, one mid-Winter morning 15-year-old Bob Andrews rose from his seat to ask, "Is there any reason why we can't have classes on Saturday?" Others in the class were interested. Ansley hurried to the principal's office and assured Stockard that he'd be willing to