

## SOCIOLOGY

# Old-Type Russian Leaders

New privileged classes in Russia are producing a minority intelligentsia, resembling their pre-revolutionary ancestors in character, who may become the dominating force.

► THE SOVIET UNION may some day be ruled by men who are more like their pre-revolutionary ancestors than their Communist fathers.

These men are the children of the new privileged classes in Russia who are known as the Soviet "Golden Youth."

They are as yet a minority. But they are the intelligentsia and can become a dominant force in the Soviet Union. Already, the "Golden Youth" enjoy "preferential access to education and to posts of responsibility, and a privileged and sheltered life in their youth."

They, as the product of the new upper classes in Russia, have acquired some of the style of life of the class they dispossessed.

The possibility that the new privileged class in Russia may become a significant force in that nation's future was suggested in a case history of a member of the "Golden Youth" who defected to the West.

The study, one of a series, was reported to the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (July) by Helen Beier and Raymond A. Bauer of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University.

The subject of the study, who has been given the fictitious name Oleg, is described as representing a "mode which will be of increasing importance in future generations." What makes Oleg different from the present Russian leaders is that he is closer to the traditional Russian character than they are.

A distinction is made in the report between this classical Russian and the "New Soviet Man." The traditional upper class Russian, particularly the one belonging to the intelligentsia, is pictured as marked by underlying passivity, lack of discipline and as one who projects grandiose, impractical plans that are never followed up.

On the other hand, the ideal image of the "New Soviet Man," known as a "careerist," is one who has an iron will, is relatively unscrupulous, is marked by concentration of both energy and interests, and has a great deal of self-discipline.

The authors of the case history suggest that the "more overtly disciplined members of the elite" have developed a veneer of toughness as a reaction against the traditional passivity of the Russian character.

They state that Oleg is a product of a very restricted subculture in the Soviet society, one of the "homeless cosmopolitans," who has been influenced more by Western ideas than has the average Russian citizen.

When he is young, he is sheltered from the realities of Russian life and readily embraces Communism. However, when he

comes face to face with the realities of Russian life and matches them against his early Communist indoctrination, his youthful enthusiasm for Communistic ideology is challenged.

"If present trends continue," the scientists conclude, "the future Soviet upper classes will become increasingly stable and will consist less and less of persons who have risen from the ranks. Should this actually occur, we may also anticipate the possibility that the upper classes will consist of an increasingly smaller proportion of men who have the traits of personality characteristic of the 'careerist' and that more of them will approximate Oleg."

If this happens, the Harvard people state, men assuming important positions in the Soviet Union would not be adapted to the hard-driving pace now looked for and employed by Russia's present leaders.

"The crucial question, of course, is whether the Soviet leadership, faced with such a prospect, will be able to offset the process of social ossification sufficiently to permit a flow of recruits from the lower classes who are not dominated by the passivity that was observed in Oleg."

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# Happy Home Children Date Earlier, Oftener

► DATING begins earlier, is more frequent and goes along more smoothly among children from happy homes than from unhappy homes, Dr. Judson T. Landis, associate professor of family sociology at the University of California, reported at the American Sociological Society meeting in Washington.

Dr. Landis said a study of the dating histories of 3,000 students in 11 colleges and universities showed that adolescents from happy homes had less difficulty making friends of the opposite sex than did those from unhappy homes; their self-evaluations were more adequate; they had a closer relationship with their parents, received more detailed sex information from parents, and had developed more accepting attitudes toward the place of sex in marriage.

Generally adolescents from unhappy homes have less confidence in associating with the other sex, date fewer partners, but go steady with the ones they date. A far larger percentage of their dating is steady.

"The child of a successful marriage lives with a man and a woman who have developed good feelings toward the other sex," Dr. Landis said in interpreting his findings. "The child consciously accepts what he lives with and he therefore has some advantage toward establishing the same type of relationship himself with the other sex."

Science News Letter, September 10, 1955



**FIRST FLIGHT**—The Bell XV-3 convertiplane, developed for the Army, is shown here in its maiden flight. After vertical take-off, the convertiplane was maneuvered as a helicopter. It features combination rotor-propellers that tilt forward from helicopter position to become airplane propellers for long-range, high speed flight.