Soviet schools are different from ours. Still, America could lose the technological war unless we act.

**Soviet Mathematics Education: A Response**

Wirszup makes a strong case that the Soviet Union has deliberately set out to train its citizenry in mathematics and science for the technological world. From my experience this is not a supposition but a fact. In contrast, the backwardness of American schools in this regard is shocking. Unless American educators begin to address this issue, we will eventually lose the technological war with the Soviets, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Germans, and others.

However, I would like to make three points. Many are likely to put Wirszup’s argument into a cold war perspective and some no doubt are hoping for a post-Sputnik “reaction.” The problem should not be viewed in such a simplistic fashion. Recent technological advances are forcing upon the whole world demands for a more quantitatively-skilled populace. It is important for citizens in all countries to live and deal with the emerging technological world. This demand should be seen as an economic problem, not an ideological problem.

Additional training in mathematics and science is an important component of meeting such demands for more qualified workers, but it is not the only component. In fact, the Soviet approach described by Wirszup of expecting all students to cover an increased amount of formal mathematics (particularly calculus) has not been a success. All countries, including the Soviet Union, are struggling with how to include ideas about computer literacy, mathematical modeling, statistics, and so on in school programs. In particular, the Soviets are now quite concerned about the

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