

in Soviet Russia. We were terribly alarmed when Russia beat us to important space developments—to the point that many of our people recommended abandoning cultural aspects of our educational program.

It is time for us to take stock. We are in a prime position to be outdistanced—and soon—in the realm of the cultural development of the people of our country, which we have proudly believed to be a world leader in providing for our citizens the means for making a living and making life worth living.

Now, back to the Soviet Union. Contrary to the popular impression in the United States of America, there is no evidence that there is overconcentration on science and similar areas of education at the expense of the arts and cultural development of the Russian people. In an interview with a member of the recent U.S.A. Mission on the Arts to Soviet Republics, Mrs. E. Furtseva, Minister of Culture, who is a member of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union, the question was raised as to whether, in these days of somewhat spectacular developments in the field of science, the educational authorities of the Soviet Union are deemphasizing education in the arts in order to carry on an accelerated program of science and mathematics education. Assurance was immediately forthcoming that under no circumstances is the program of education in the arts being neglected, deemphasized, or curtailed in favor of an accelerated program in any other part of the curriculum. If there is acceleration it would seem that it is in the direction of more and more time being devoted to educational pursuits in all fields.

The foregoing statement is taken from a report based on the official visit to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics prepared for the Music Educators Journal, the official magazine of the Music Educators National Conference, by Miss Vanett Lawler, executive secretary of MENC, who was a member of the mission. The mission officially represented the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and went to the Soviet Union as a functioning part of the 1959 cultural agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union and Department of State of the United States. The two other delegates were Mayo Bryce, specialist in fine arts, U.S. Office of Education; Ralph Beelke, executive secretary, National Art Education Association of the NEA. (The complete, official report of the mission will be published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The mission visited the U.S.S.R. for slightly over 4 weeks during the latter part of September and most of October 1960.)

In the light of the discussion at this time, it would seem that Miss Lawler's report is of more than passing interest. Permission is asked, therefore, to make available copies of this pamphlet in which Miss Lawler's report is reprinted in full. It merits careful reading.

Although the title of Miss Lawler's report deals with "The Arts in the Educational Program in the Soviet Union," there is much more involved than pertains directly or exclusively to the Soviet schools or curriculums per se. Perusal of this lucid and objective analysis of current facts is illuminating indeed.

However, our appeal for public support is not predicated on the premise of beating Russia, but rather on a basis of the genuine need for creating a proper Federal climate for one of the greatest opportunities before us, which is the cultivation of the cultural interests and life satisfactions of the citizens of the United States in a truly American way.

MOBILIZING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

An experiment worthy of reviving at this time was initiated by the Music Educators National Conference in 1932 and 1933. When the great depression was threatening all aspects of American economy, schools, and communities, entire States and regions were coping with problems which made it seem appropriate to many citizens to eliminate all expense except the needed requirements of food, clothing, and shelter.

Leading organizations throughout the United States rallied to the call of a committee organized by the Music Educators National Conference. It now seems appropriate to tell something of that story here. Particular attention is directed to the statement following under the heading "A Cultural Arts Platform for the United States of America." It should be noted that 85 organizations subscribed to and supported this platform.