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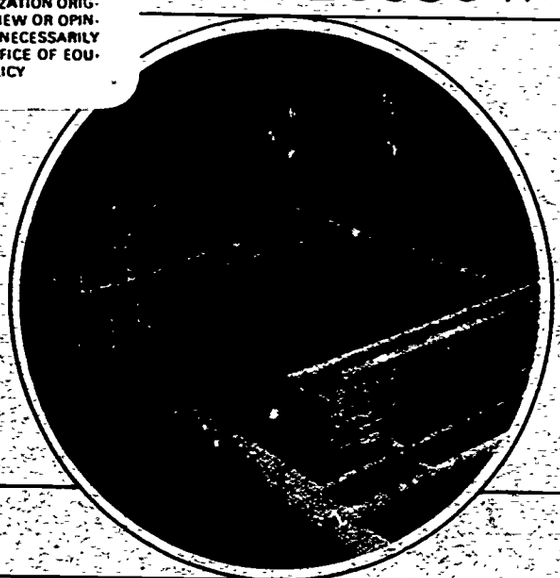
ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the training of students from the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in a special institution in the Soviet Union established for the purpose, the Peoples' Friendship University. Since its founding in 1960, this unique institution has been the subject of considerable interest among educators and others concerned with international relations and development. Sufficient time has now elapsed to permit at least a preliminary assessment of the institution's pedagogical effectiveness and limitations. The author attempts to contribute to this kind of analysis in his review of the evidence from the university's first dozen years from 1960 to 1972. (Author/HS)

The Development of People's Friendship University in Moscow

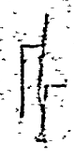


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Institute of International Studies

COVER

Model of the new campus of
scheduled for completion in 1976.
Peoples' Friendship University,



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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES' FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY IN MOSCOW

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Foreword

This study is another in a series of Office of Education publications that report on educational developments in other countries. This one focuses on a particular aspect of education in the Soviet Union—the training of students from the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America in a special institution established for the purpose, the Peoples' Friendship University.

Since its founding in 1960, this unique institution has been the subject of considerable interest among educators and others concerned with international relations and development. Sufficient time has now elapsed to permit at least a preliminary assessment of the institution's pedagogical effectiveness and limitations. The author attempts to contribute to this kind of analysis in his review of the evidence from the university's first dozen years, from 1960 to 1972.

The author, Seymour M. Rosen, has been the U.S. Office of Education specialist in comparative education for the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe since 1960. In the course of his studies on Soviet education, he has made five field trips to the U.S.S.R. during the past decade. Among his many publications since joining the Office of Education are: *The Preparation and Education of Foreign Students in the U.S.S.R.* (1960), *The Peoples' Friendship University in the U.S.S.R.* (1962), *Soviet Training Programs for Africa* (1963), and *Soviet Programs in International Education* (1971), all published by the Office of Education through the Government Printing Office, and *Education and Modernization in the U.S.S.R.*, published by Addison-Wesley (1971).

Robert Leestma
Associate Commissioner for International Education

Contents

The development of Peoples' Friendship University of Moscow

FROM 1960 TO 1972

Peoples' Friendship University *(Universitet druzhby narodov)* was founded in Moscow in 1960 to train foreign students from the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The writer reported on the university's establishment in *The Peoples' Friendship University in the U.S.S.R.*,[1] published in 1962. In January 1972, the writer visited the university for a third time to note and report on the progress it has made since its founding. One index of its growth is student enrollments, which have increased from 600 in 1961 to 4,600 in 1972. Another is the new campus.

During the writer's first two visits to Peoples' Friendship University, in March 1961 and March 1965, the university was housed in three dispersed, nondescript old buildings in Moscow. The main school building, eight stories high, and a smaller building had formerly been military schools. The third building, which served as a dormitory, had formerly been military barracks.

By January 1972, the university was still using the old buildings, but had a new campus under construction and partly completed in the southwestern outskirts of the city. The faculty (or department) of medicine was operational on the new campus, as were some dormitories and apparently parts of other faculties. Plans, which had proceeded slowly, included provisions for buildings for each university faculty, a museum, workshops and laboratories, a computer center, a clinic for medical students, experimental farm plots, dormitories for 4,200 students, a campus club seating 1,500, and a stadium seating 5,000 for international sports competition. The new campus was scheduled for completion by 1976.

In the 1970's, therefore, the Soviet Government was endorsing its international school experiment of 1960 by continuing to bear the costs of increasing students and staff, maintenance of the existing plant and equipment, and substantial new construction.

[1] Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office. OE-14073.

AIMS OF THE UNIVERSITY

In February 1960 Premier Nikita Khrushchev announced establishment of Peoples' Friendship University for the purpose of giving aid to Asian, African, and Latin American countries in training engineers, agricultural specialists, doctors, teachers, economists, and other specialists. One year later the university was named additionally after Patrice Lumumba, the slain Congolese leader *(Universitet druzhby narodov imeni Patrisa Lumumby)*. It is currently referred to both as Peoples' Friendship University and Lumumba University.

Admission to the new university was to be open to groups or students not covered by sponsorship of their home governments or acceptance in regular Soviet universities. That is, "many talented young people coming from poor families" who ordinarily would be "deprived of the possibility of realizing their wish to study in the Soviet Union" and who would not be normally considered to meet the necessary qualifications for admission to higher education, would have the opportunity of attending the new University of Friendship of Peoples in Moscow.[2]

In recent years, students have been recruited by various methods, including home government sponsorship and recommendation by national societies for promoting cultural relations with the Soviet Union, as well as by the earlier prevailing methods of applications to Soviet embassies abroad or directly to the university. In addition to students from developing countries, some students from Japan are also enrolled at the university.

The range of student views on the purposes of the university is fairly broad, from adulatory statements of selfless Soviet support in helping them develop skills, primarily expressed by students while living in Moscow,[3] to highly derogatory statements of being used for political purposes, expressed by some ex-students after leaving the U.S.S.R.

It is evident that the university is used for political and propaganda purposes, but it is also clear that it serves as a serious academic institution. (This paper is primarily concerned with the development of the educational function.)

The university was set up in part to meet certain problems of train-

[2] Excerpts from Premier Khrushchev's speech (as carried by Radio Moscow on Feb. 22, 1960) at the University of Jogjakart, Indonesia, are quoted in the writer's *The Peoples' Friendship University in the U.S.S.R.* op. cit. p. 3.

[3] A volume of student endorsements, *We Are From Friendship University*, was published in English by "Progress" Publishers in Moscow, undated but apparently in 1965. Another volume featuring photographs of the students was published with Russian, English, French, and Spanish captions by "Progress" Publishers, Moscow, in 1969.

ing foreign students in regular Soviet higher education institutions, in a period when the U.S.S.R. first began to admit substantial numbers of students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is probable that among these problems was the difficulty such students experienced in adjusting to regular Soviet university work in classes attended predominantly by Russian students and with course content shaped to the backgrounds of Soviet students and to the needs of the Soviet economy.

COURSES OF STUDY

Faculties

In the first year of operation (1960-61), all students at Lumumba University were enrolled in the preparatory faculty, where they received intensive Russian language training, 4 hours a day, 6 days a week in small classes of five or six students. Academic studies in the regular higher education faculties began in the 2nd year of operation (1961-62). A few Soviet students were also admitted, evidently to develop specialties as applied to underdeveloped foreign areas, to help the foreign students adjust to the Russian language and environment, and to forestall criticism that a purpose of the university was to segregate foreign students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The six specialized faculties in which the university's students were enrolled in 1961-62 (paralleling the regular Soviet system of student admission to a specialized program from the 1st year of undergraduate work) were the faculties of engineering, agriculture, medicine, physics-mathematics and natural sciences, history and philology, and economics and law. These faculties and the preparatory faculty for incoming students continue to operate today.

Duration of Courses

The course of studies, following a year at the preparatory faculty, continued into the early 1970's to be of 4 years' duration (5 in the faculty of medicine), or about 1 year less than regular Soviet higher education programs. It is evident that this shorter course, for foreign students with weaker academic backgrounds than their Soviet counterparts, could not maintain standards comparable to similar courses in regular programs of Soviet universities. Therefore, to strengthen study habits, attendance at lectures is required of students and examinations are given at the end of every semester. The regular Soviet four-point grading system applies—"excellent," "good," "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory."

Specialized Fields of Study

In engineering, specialized fields of study taught at the university include machine construction; power machine building; industrial and civil construction; hydrotechnical construction (e.g., irrigation, hydroelectric power station, and river and ports engineering); geology; mining; and utilization of mineral resources, petroleum, and gas.

In mathematics, specialization may be in differential equations, geometry and algebra, theory of probabilities and computer mathematics, and mathematical analysis. In physics, the student may specialize in radio physics or theoretical physics; in chemistry—organic, inorganic, analytical, or physical chemistry; in medicine—general medicine, surgery, public health, or pharmacology.

Agricultural studies can range from botany to zoology; studies in economics, from the planning of industry to the planning of agriculture. The fields of law and history are focused on their international or global aspects, presumably from a Marxist-Leninist point of view. Russian language and literature allows for specialization in literature and linguistics or in journalism.

A closer look at a specific curriculum points up in more detail the similarities and differences between study at Lumumba University and at a regular Soviet higher education institution. Table 1 compares the 4-year curriculum for the specialty "Industrial and Civic Construction" taught at the engineering faculty of Lumumba University with the 5-year standard curriculum for the same specialty taught at any regular Soviet engineering institute. (The 4-year curriculum in the engineering specialty at Lumumba University follows 1 year at the preparatory faculty, for a total of 5 years spent by the student at the university.) Table 1 has been set up to match course titles wherever possible. A number of titles are similar.

It is immediately apparent in table 1 that the standard "social science" courses (history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, political economy, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and fundamentals of scientific communism), required of all Soviet students at regular higher education institutions, have been omitted from the Lumumba University engineering curriculum. Soviet leaders have been particularly sensitive to charges of indoctrination and have either eliminated or at least reduced the number of formal courses devoted to it at the university.

In the engineering and science courses, these subjects have been eliminated, though ideological elements may be introduced indirectly in some basic courses. The specialties in the faculty of economics and law retain courses in political economy and philosophy.

An obvious saving in time in the engineering as well as in other curriculums in Lumumba University results from eliminating a regular

course in physical education. The school does, however, provide physical education in the initial preparatory year of studies (before the 4-year curriculum), and gymnasium facilities are available for all students. Also, the university's athletic club is popular with students as well as faculty.

The course content may vary somewhat between regular Soviet higher schools and Lumumba University because one of the university's objectives is to tailor subjects to the needs of the students' home countries. The university emphasizes training that can be applied meaningfully in the home countries; and thus the training reflects the difference in levels of economic development between the home countries and the U.S.S.R. While regular Soviet students are studying the more advanced aspects of a field, Lumumba University students are studying its more practical aspects. For instance, while the regular engineering schools give more emphasis to architecture, the Lumumba University curriculum gives more emphasis to hydraulic machines and fundamentals of water supply and drainage. Some efforts, on the other hand, have been made in the recent curriculum to introduce Lumumba University students to the basics of modern, theoretical subject matter (e.g., elements of computer mathematics and probability theory).

Lumumba University students, like regular Soviet students, receive some "production practice," or on-the-job training in industrial plants or on farms. In the Lumumba University curriculum under review, such training is for 15 weeks, as compared with 28 weeks in the regular Soviet engineering curriculum. This practical training is described as follows for various fields in the university:

> On-the-job and field practice is of prime importance for training competent personnel.
>
> More than 210 industrial units, experimental farms, research institutions, hospitals, museums, situated in 35 cities, towns and other population centres in nine Union Republics of the country, provide facilities for practice by the undergraduates of all the main Faculties. The students of the Faculty of Engineering, for example, do practical work at the Likhachev Automobile Plant and the "Krasny Proletary" Machine-tool Plant in Moscow, the Nevsky Engineering Works in Leningrad, and the Turbine Plant in Kharkov; the chemical students, at the Kaluga Synthetic Fragrant Substances Factory and the Severodonets and Nevinnomyssk Chemical Factories the medical students, at the best hospitals of Moscow; the prospective agronomists, at the Krasnoarmeysk ricegrowing farm in the Kransnodar Territory, the cotton plantations of the "Pakhta-Aral" farm in the Uzbek SSR, the "Salibauri" teagrowing farm in the Georgian SSR; the economists, at the planning commissions of Union Republics, the planning departments of industrial units; and the law students, in various judicial bodies.
>
> The main objective of practice is to consolidate theoretical knowledge, obtained by the students from academical studies, by directly participating in, and thoroughly analysing, the daily activities of the industrial unit, administrative office or institution at which the students are taking their course of practice.[4]

[4] *The Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University for 10 Years.* Moscow, 1970. pp. 7-8.

TABLE 1.—Curriculums for the engineering specialty of Industrial and Civil Construction at Lumumba University and at a standard Soviet engineering school: 1967 and 1971, respectively.

Lumumba University curriculum[1]		Standard Soviet engineering school curriculum[2]	
Subject—title	Total hours	Subject—title	Total hours
		History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union	100
		Political economy	110
		Marxist-Leninist philosophy	70
		Fundamentals of scientific communism	70
		Physical education	140
Fundamentals of construction	114		
Economics of construction	64	Economics of construction	70
Technology of construction production	114	Technology and organization of construction production	112
Russian language for foreign students	164	Foreign languages	210
Higher mathematics	372	Higher mathematics	422
General chemistry	118	Chemistry	140
Descriptive geometry (100 hours); Mechanical and free-hand drawing (114 hours)	214	Descriptive geometry and mechanical and free-hand drawing	178
Organization and planning of construction	90	Organization and planning of construction	98
Physics	276	Physics	261
Theoretical mechanics	152	Theoretical mechanics	173
Engineering geodesy	82	Engineering geodesy	105
Building materials	114	Building materials	105
Resistance of materials and fundamentals of tension and plasticity theory	214	Resistance of materials and fundamentals of tension and plasticity theory	213
Fundamentals of thermotechnics, gas heat supply, ventilation and air conditioning	82	General thermotechnics, gas, heat supply and ventilation	70
Technology of metals and welding	82	Technology of metals and welding	72
Construction machine, including machine components	114	Construction machines, including machine components	106
Construction mechanics	202	Construction mechanics	220
Electro-technics and electrical supply of construction	90	General electro-technics	88
Architecture of industrial and civil buildings	142	Architecture of industrial and civil buildings	221
Hydraulics and hydraulic machines (72 hours); fundamentals of water supply and drainage (42 hours); and hydrotechnical construction (64 hours)	178	Fundamentals of hydraulics, water supply and drainage	72
Engineering geology	54	Engineering geology	56
Mechanics of soil and foundations	82	Mechanics of soil and foundations	98
Testing of construction	48	Testing of construction	42
Elements of computer mathematics and probability theory	56	Computer technology and engineering and economic accounting	42
Technology of production of reinforced concrete structures	64	Fundamentals of automatics and automatization of construction industry process	42

TABLE 1.—Curriculums for the engineering specialty of Industrial and Civil Construction at Lumumba University and at a standard Soviet engineering school: 1967 and 1971, respectively.—Continued

Lumumba University curriculum[1]		Standard Soviet engineering school curriculum[2]	
Subject—title	Total hours	Subject—title	Total hours
Reinforced concrete and stone construction	164	Reinforced concrete and stone construction	168
Wood and plastics construction	48	Wood and synthetic materials construction	84
Metal construction	114	Metal construction	112
		Fundamentals of safety and fire prevention techniques	42
		Obligatory courses established by the council of the higher education institution	98
Grand total	3,608	Grand total	4,210

[1] A 4-year curriculum following 1 year at the preparatory faculty.

[2] A 5-year curriculum.

Sources: For the Lumumba University curriculum: *Universitet druzhby narodov imeni Patrisa Lumumby, spravochnik.* Moscow, 1967. This official Soviet handbook contains a number of curriculums in the range of specializations taught at the university. The standard Soviet engineering school curriculums was confirmed by the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education in 1965, and is currently in use.

Most subjects in the curriculum of a specialty offer, besides lectures, laboratory work or seminars and practical studies, such as the use of various kinds of technical apparatus, devices, and equipment. In the total curriculum time of 3,608 hours presented in table 1, for example, 2,118 hours are devoted to lectures, 608 hours to laboratory work, and 882 hours to seminars and practical studies.

To graduate from Lumumba University, students face a State Examination board at their faculty. Before this board, appointed by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, undergraduates are required to defend their diploma projects or theses. The diploma project is defined as an independent designing or technological study, incorporating a detailed calculation and substantiation of the design or technological process, which a student prepares under the guidance of a senior faculty member. The diploma thesis is described as a piece of research accompanied by a large volume of experimental work carried out at the university laboratories or at research institutions. It is difficult to ascertain an individual student's competence by this method because diploma projects may be group rather than individual student projects, and even theses may be pre-

pared by a group. In the faculty of medicine, students take graduation examinations before the board.

Undergraduates who are successful in defending their projects or theses are granted a diploma of the university. The diploma is in Russian and one foreign language, English, French, or Spanish, according to the wishes of the graduating student. In addition he receives a first degree called "Master of Science" or "Licentiate of Science" in the relevant branch of science. Such degrees are not conferred in the regular Soviet university system.

ENROLLMENT STATISTICS

In the 1970-71 school year there were about 4,000 students at the university. Of these, about 3,000 were foreign students and about 1,000 were Russian. This enrollment ratio represented a dramatic increase of Russian students from the roughly 60 out of a total enrollment of 600 in 1960-61—from 10 percent of total enrollments in 1960-61 to 25 percent in 1970-71.

The specific data as of January 1971 showed a total enrollment of 4,125, of which 3,077 were foreign students from foreign countries and 1,048 were Russian. The foreign students included 934 from Latin America, 810 from African countries, 560 from South-East Asia, and 773 from the Near and Middle East.

Male students had outnumbered female students 8 to 1 in 1960-61, and the ratio was similar a decade later, when the number of women enrolled was only about 450. Countries with large student populations at the university included India (210), Chile (186), Syria (143), Mexico (109), Nepal (99), Sudan (95), and Kenya (81).[5] These data by country are as of November 1969.

As of December 1969, there were 225 graduate students, including 145 Soviet students and 80 foreign students. Foreign students include 15 from Latin America, 24 from Africa, 22 from Asia, and 19 from the Arab countries.

In June 1965, Lumumba University graduated its first class of students admitted to the preparatory faculty in September 1960, when the university began operation. The total of 228 graduates were from five of the six specialized faculties. The sixth, the medical faculty, had its first graduating class in 1966. At the 10th anniversary cele-

[5] Smaller figures for these and other countries are cited in "Lumumba University: An Assessment" by Alvin Z. Rubinstein (*Problems of Communism*, November-December 1971). The data he cites appear to be for the 1968-69 school year. Mr. Rubinstein's article focuses on recruitment of students and on problems of academic status and of "climate, color, and culture." The 1971 statistics cited above are from *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka i kul'tura v. SSSR* (National Education, Science and Culture in the U.S.S.R.), published by "Statistics" Publishers, Moscow, 1971.

bration in 1970, the U.S.S.R. Minister of Higher Education declared that the university had graduated over 2,000 engineers and agronomists, physicists and lawyers, economists and physicians, philologists and mathematicians for the developing countries. Table 2 provides data on the first graduating class in 1965.

The most striking elements in table 2 are the heavy dropout rate of students before graduation and the much higher retention rate of Soviet students attending Lumumba University compared with those from the the developing countries. The heaviest dropout rate was among students from Arab countries, where only about a quarter of those admitted in 1960 graduated in 1965. The best non-Soviet success rate was for students from Asia, where slightly over half the enrolled students graduated. The most successful students at the university were from the U.S.S.R. and Japan. The retention rate is slightly better than is indicated in table 2, since some of the students were enrolled in the medical faculty and not eligible for graduation until 1 year later. Also, some cited as dropouts may be repeaters, who may graduate at a later date.

In 1970 there were 579 students scheduled to graduate from 65 countries, including 136 from Latin America, 143 from Africa, 82 from Asia, 116 from the Arab countries, and 102 from the U.S.S.R. The Arab

TABLE 2.—Statistical profile of the first graduating class at Peoples' Friendship University.

Student's origin	Number enrolled in 1960-61	Number graduated in 1965 [1]	Percent of Enrollees in 1960-61 graduated in 1965
Latin America	191	58	30
Africa	140	44	31
Asia and Far East	112	60	54
Arab Countries	95	23	24
U.S.S.R.	59	43	73
Total	597	228	(2)

[1] Figures vary somewhat from those in the source given in footnote 4 in the text, which cites the same total (228) but lists 57 graduating from Latin America, 38 from Africa, 57 from Asia, 32 from the Arab countries, and 44 from the U.S.S.R.

[2] The percentage of the number enrolled in 1960-61 that graduated in 1965 was 38.

Source: U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, Central Statistical Administration. *Vysshee Obrazovanie v SSSR.* Moscow, 1961; and U.S.S.R. Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education. *Vestnik vysshei shkoly*, No. 8, 1965.

countries, which had the lowest number of graduates in 1965, had the second highest in 1970—a five-fold increase.

In June 1969, the number of graduates since the founding of the university were totaled: there were 2,335, of which 593 were from Latin America, 450 from Africa, 517 from Asia, 317 from the Arab

countries, and 458 from the Soviet Union. Some of their major fields were: International law (422), economics (217), machine-building (185), power engineering (185), construction (183), Russian and Russian literature (137), physics (135), exploitation of minerals (91), geology (75), and history (56).[8] By June 1970 about 2,900 students had graduated since the university was established.

These data indicate that home countries may benefit by graduates returning with a fairly broad range of specialties, but primarily in the engineering, medical, and law fields. Soviet student graduates in these fields presumably become useful to the Soviet Government for work in the Soviet economy generally and in underdeveloped areas, both within and outside the U.S.S.R. It is not clear what role the relatively large number of graduates in international law serve.

STAFF

Administrative

Along with student enrollment, the administrative and teaching staffs have increased in size. In 1961, the rector or president of the university had the assistance of two prorectors or vice presidents, one for academic-research activities and one for administration. By 1964, there were five prorectors: for academic and research work in the natural and technical sciences; for academic and research work in the humanities; for recruitment and foreign relations; for administrative, maintenance, and finance matters; and for extracurricular activities.

The first rector of the university was S. V. Rumyantsev, a former Deputy Minister of Higher Education and a doctor of technological sciences, who served as rector from 1960 to about 1971. By the writer's third visit to the university in January 1972, Dr. Rumyantsev had been replaced by V. F. Stanis, another Deputy Minister of Higher Education and a specialist in political economy.

The governing body of the university to which the rector is responsible, the University Council, has remained much the same in composition though its size has increased during several years of operation. It consists of (1) the rector as chairman, (2) representatives of the three declared founding organizations of the university (the Soviet Committee of Solidarity of Asian and African Countries, the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions), (3) representatives of the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and of Soviet youth organizations, (4) prorectors, (5) deans of the seven faculties, and (6) representatives of the teaching staff and students.

[8] Ibid.

The University Council is responsible for confirming the university's budget and teaching and research plans, for reviewing development plans, for confirming rules of admission, and for deciding other policy matters. Its size, however, might lessen its effectiveness.

Specific problems of the university's academic and research work are reviewed by the Academic Council, consisting of the rector, prorectors, deans of faculties, heads of "chairs" (departmental units within faculties), the library director, and representatives of the teaching staff.

Teaching

The basic organizational unit of teaching staff in a specialized field is the "chair," which ideally consists of professors, docents (assistant professors), senior lecturers, lecturers, assistants, senior scientific (research) staff, scientific staff, junior scientific staff, and *aspirants* (graduate students). A chair, however, can be quite small and have omissions in one or more of these various staff levels. There are over 80 specialized chairs in the university, bearing such titles as "Chair of Microbiology" in the medical faculty and "Chair of Inorganic Chemistry" in the physics-mathematics and natural sciences faculty.

The head of a chair is a professor or docent in the specialized field, chosen according to regulations by the University Council from competitive lists of applicants. Teaching staff are selected similarly. By 1969, there were 864 teachers reported on the staff including 84 professors and 388 docents. In 1972 there were about 90 professors and 460 docents; and 56 percent of the staff was reported to have advanced degrees. The staff has gradually been strengthened by increasing the percentage of those with advanced degrees.

These teaching staff figures probably include a large number of part-time instructors who actually are staff members of various regular higher education institutions in Moscow. Even allowing for the part-time contingent, the ratio of students to teachers appears to be quite small, a situation which should improve the students' chances for academic success.

Role in the Communist System of Training Foreign Students

To understand the role of Lumumba University as only one kind of institutional arrangement for training foreign students, it must be placed in the perspective of the total Soviet educational effort for foreign students. Statistics make readily apparent that while the university is important, it is only one aspect of the system, serving a small percentage of the total influx of foreign students. Lumumba

University serves only about one-third of the students from the developing countries who are enrolled in schools in the U.S.S.R.

In the early 1970's there were over 25,000 foreign students from more than 100 countries studying in the U.S.S.R. Close to 11,000 of them were from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The great majority of these foreign students (17,400 in 1970) were studying at regular Soviet universities and other higher educational institutions, such as engineering, medical, agricultural, and pedagogical institutes. Others were studying in regular Soviet technical schools (1,372 in 1970), vocational schools, and other programs. Major differences in foreign students at regular Soviet higher education institutions from those studying at Lumumba University are that the former:

1. May come from the industrially advanced as well as the developing countries, from Communist bloc as well as non-Communist countries.
2. Generally have been sent by their governments or under bilateral agreements.
3. Probably in general are higher caliber students who not only have completed secondary education but meet the requirements for admission to regular Soviet higher education institutions.

Despite better backgrounds, foreign students at the regular Soviet universities have language difficulties similar to those at Lumumba University, and the remedy applied is similar. The preparatory faculty system, which was first used not at Lumumba University but at Moscow State University in September 1959, has now been established at 11 higher educational institutions, including the state universities at Baku, Erevan, Kharkov, Kiev, Leningrad, Minsk, and Tashkent. The students attending regular university preparatory faculties are primarily from underdeveloped areas, and as at Lumumba University, they spend a year studying the Russian language and some general education subjects.

Another major method of training foreign students is to build, equip, and partially staff educational institutions in their homelands. In 1965, the Soviet Union was either constructing or had completed facilities abroad for over 18,000 students. These facilities included the Polytechnical Institute in Conakry (Guinea) for 1,500 students, the Technological Institute in Hanoi (North Vietnam) for 2,400 students, and three schools in Algeria for 2,750 students. Technological institutes have also been built in Rangoon and Bombay.

Soviet teachers and technicians, serving in the developing countries as instructors to local students and on-the-job apprentices, number in the thousands (over 6,000 in the early 1960's). They have been sent to such countries as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Egypt, India, and Syria. Many of the problems created by teaching foreign students in the U.S.S.R., such as language, institutional, social, cultural, and climatic differences, are avoided by bringing the Soviet teachers to the foreign students instead of vice versa. In sending Soviet instructors to teach,

the problem of those who do not speak the local language is lessened by providing them with interpreters—an awkward pedagogical situation.

The Lumumba University approach of concentrating foreign students from certain areas in their own education institution seems to be a useful but limited method for foreign student training. Evidence lies in the fact that, 12 years after its inception, no little Lumumba Universities have sprung up around the U.S.S.R. The original goal of a maximum enrollment of about 4,000 at Lumumba University in Moscow has been achieved, but there are apparently no plans for setting up similar institutions elsewhere in the U.S.S.R.

Lumumba University, however, has served as a model in at least one other country in the Communist bloc—Czechoslovakia. In the fall of 1961 a new university was founded in Prague, primarily to train foreign students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It was named "University of November 17th," in honor of the Czech International Students Day, which commemorates the Nazi closing of all institutions of higher learning in Czechoslovakia on November 17, 1939.

The similarities of the University of November 17th to Lumumba University include:

1. Admissions made from direct student application to the university as well as from application through host country embassies abroad.
2. Free tuition and a stipend for living expenses for students, although the stipends provided by the U.S.S.R. are more generous. Tuition is free for students, foreign as well as domestic, in all higher education institutions of the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia. Medical care is provided free.
3. A 1-year preparatory course for study of the language of the host country and for makeup courses needed for university preparation.
4. Curriculums and syllabuses tailored to needs of the specialty in the developing countries. The University of November 17th is on a smaller scale, with fewer faculties and fields for specialization than Lumumba University.[7] Communist indoctrination is probably an element in all courses of study.
5. Dormitory accommodations and class attendance with a certain number of host country students who are developing a knowledge of the underdeveloped areas as well as subject specialties.

The chief difference is that the University of November 17th also serves as an admissions and (Czech) language training center for foreign students generally, not just for students from the developing countries, before they go on to study at various higher education institutions throughout the country.

Other Communist countries in Eastern Europe rely on a required 1-year language-preparatory course prior to study at regular higher

[7] Specialized courses at the University of November 17th, as planned, include: Civil engineering and town and country planning; agricultural engineering; medicine; natural sciences; geography and history (for secondary school teachers); pedagogy and psychology (for teachers in training colleges); public administration in the field of education planning and organization; and social studies (economics, international relations, and journalism).

education institutions as a means of processing and training foreign students generally. In Poland, this course is held at the University of Lodz; in Bulgaria, at the Institute for Foreign Students in Sofia; and in East Germany, at the Herder Institute in Leipzig. The Institute in Bulgaria, founded in the fall of 1963 is most likely to develop into another model of Lumumba University.

EVALUATIONS

Of the testimonials by students attending Lumumba University, collected for publication in Moscow for the 10th anniversary of Lumumba University in 1965, the following extracts are among the more informative.[8]

On Studies

All the subjects in the basic departments are taught in Russian, and although we had studied the language for a whole year in the preparatory department we still find it difficult to listen to so many lectures. Our studies are in the form of lessons, lectures, seminars on themes chosen by our teachers, laboratory work, excursions, etc. During class we prepare reports and write end-of-term papers. There's plenty of reading material to go through on a given theme in a relatively short time. Most of the material is in the original and with a poor knowledge of Russian it is difficult to cope with it, and there's nothing left to do at seminars but listen. (Terada Tatsuo, Japan)

On Examinations

Examinations are the students' greatest worry, for this is when they spend hours over books, and those who had been taking it easy have to work into the small hours if they are to get a pass. . . . Our teachers arrange special consultations before the exams, which means that students can ask questions and get the information they may require. Then comes the actual exam. . . . In groups of five, tense and nervous, we take turns before the examination commission of these teachers. We draw our examination cards with the questions to be answered. The commission of examiners encourages each student by asking various questions to determine his degree of knowledge. Suspense grips you till you learn the results. (Nancy Jones, Chile)

On Teachers

Our teachers are all very talented specialists. For example, we began to learn the fundamentals of mechanical drawing and descriptive geometry in Russian only five months after we had started our preliminary Russian course. It was mainly due to the efforts of our teachers that we were able to get good marks on the subject. . . . In the evenings the teachers and their assistants gave consultations and all other possible help to those who needed it. . . . In spite of our systematic studies many still found it difficult to read Russian textbooks. The professors and their assistants therefore went over all the old material, stressing the basic points as they went along. We were given every help in preparing for our exams. We derived a great deal of confidence from the individual attention given to each one of us, and what we failed to grasp was explained again and again. (Surato, Indonesia)

[8] *We Are From Friendship University, op. cit.*

On Laboratories and Equipment

The University has excellent laboratories with the latest equipment including electronic apparatus. The students of the agriculture department, for instance, have splendid laboratories for agricultural chemistry and plant physiology. The one for general physiology has electronic equipment whereas students majoring in higher mathematics, physics and the natural sciences use an electronic computer capable of making 3000 operations per second. Those studying engineering use an electronic machine to determine the structure of metals. (Laroussi Sandassi, Tunisia)

On Student Life

Students from over 80 countries are studying together and getting a good education. Despite the differences in languages and customs, we are a big friendly crowd who dine together, see plays and films, visit exhibitions, etc. . . . Ordinarily, in the evenings, the students lounge at their hostels, or go in for some recreation at the club which offers them a good choice of pastimes: TV, chess, or games in the gym. They like to be together and stay up quite late, and often end the day by throwing snowballs at each other before turning in. . . . The University authorities see to it that students all get a good rest during the holidays and arrange trips to different holiday homes in picturesque places not far from Moscow. Besides, the Soviet Students' Union invites us on excursions and tours of various Soviet republics. Let me say a few words about one of the holiday homes where 25 of us Latin Americans had a very good time. . . . (Pedro Temayo, Chile)

On Benefits to Home Country

Tunisia needs highly educated specialists to solve the many important problems of her economic development. That is w! chose agriculture—agronomists are badly needed in my country.
(Laroussi Sandassi, Tunisia)

Soon, as highly qualified specialists with five y..rs of study behind us, we shall be ready to tackle the most important tasks of our country's economic and cultural development.
(Harmono, Indonesia)

We shall soon return to serve our countries as specialists, teach our brothers and sisters to read and write, to care for the sick, and build plants and factories, dams and canals.
(Sheikno Mohammed Ali, Syria)

An evaluation by a home country receiving the benefits quoted above suggests that the training of students from developing countries in the U.S.S.R. leaves something to be desired. The *Ghana News*, issued by the Embassy of Ghana in Washington reported in 1968 as follows:

The Ghana Government is aware of the current public interest and concern over the case of the first batch of Ghanaian doctors trained in the Soviet Union who returned to Ghana a few months ago.

It became obvious shortly after the return of these doctors that their knowledge and skill did not fit them to shoulder adequately all the responsibilities that a young doctor in Ghana is of necessity called upon to discharge.

An examination arranged by the Ghana Medical School to assess the extent of their knowledge and technical performance indicated clearly that with the exception of one of them their knowledge and skills showed serious gaps in relation to the responsibilities which they would be called upon to assume.

Arrangements are therefore being made for 16 of these Soviet-trained doctors to undergo an orientation course in the Ghana Medical School for a period of one year or longer, depending upon the performance of each individual doctor to help make up for the deficiencies in their training.[9]

Similar concern about Soviet medical training, including that given at Peoples' Friendship University, was expressed in extended media discussion early in 1971 in another African country, Sierra Leone.

Allowing for excessive praise by advocates and condemnation by the disillusioned, the following appears to be a reasonable list of the strengths and weaknesses of Lumumba University after several years of operation:

Strengths

1. The provision of round-trip air fare for screened applicants, free tuition and medical care, and adequate stipends to meet living costs of students.
2. The 1-year preparatory program, which provides intensive language training with adequate language laboratory equipment and personalized instruction for students in small groups.
3. The attempt to gear curriculum and course content to the needs of students from developing countries, and the training in skills needed by students' home countries.
4. The teachers willingness to expend the extra effort needed to teach foreign students.
5. The grouping of students with similar problems together to meet their special academic needs.
6. The training of host country (Soviet) students for future work geared to the developing countries.
7. Additional uses of the university, in international faculty exchanges, annual seminars of teachers of Russian as a foreign language, etc.

Weaknesses

1. Relative isolation of the students from the academic mainstream (mitigated by increased enrollment of Russian students, who live in the same dormitory with foreign students).
2. The intensive "togetherness" of the students, who not only study and live together, but experience local culture and even vacation in groups.
3. The length of the program and other factors which contribute to the large drop-out of students; or for those who remain a full 5 or 6 years, extended separation from their own cultures.
4. The somewhat curtailed curriculum (an improvement, however, over earlier curriculums) compared to that of regular higher education institutions; and the consequent continuing concern over diploma equivalencies.
5. Attempts at indoctrination and use of some students for political purposes, thus undermining their academic experience. (There appears to have been less of this in recent years).

[9] Volume 6, No. 2, 1968.

6. Controls and restrictions normal to Soviet life but onerous to many foreign students.

Regardless of the university's weaknesses, some of which would not be considered as such from the Soviet point of view, it is evident that the Soviet Union considers the Peoples' Friendship University is fairly successful in terms of the purposes for which it was established. It has not inspired similar institutions throughout the U.S.S.R., and the Soviet Government in addition keeps training foreign students, including those from developing countries, in the regular university system. Nevertheless, after a decade of trial and error, Peoples' Friendship University is regarded by the Soviet Union as worth maintaining, adapting, and developing as a valuable alternative form of foreign student training in the U.S.S.R.

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