**The Sitting of the** Teachers' Council

Situation: Teachers and other members of school personnel have gathered to discuss Oleg Ratnikov's behaviour. Oleg Ratnik-ov, a 14-year-old youth is a pupil of the 7th form. He is not only no­torious in his school, but his name is also known to many people in the district where he lives. Oleg always has his own way."Resents any advice. Talks back. Fights. Can tell lies. Seems to have lost in­terest in school. Quarrels with many classmates. Seems to be al­ways to blame. The members of the teachers' council should de­cide whether suspension from school is the only solution or whether there are any other alternatives. Ratnikov's parents are in­vited.

Characters:

1. *Peter Ratnikov,* Oleg's father, aged 45, an engineer. Spends  
   all his spare time inventing. Always busy. Rather clever, full of sar­  
   casm. No real contact with his son. Thinks that problems of bring-  
   inaup children are for school to solve. His only method of commu­  
   nication with his son is his belt or a raised voice. Demands absolute  
   obedience.
2. Алла *Ratnikova,* Oleg's mother, aged 40, a librarian. Lives in  
   so,me imaginary world of her favourite fictional characters. Very  
   shy, with a mild character, a bit afraid of her husband, is under his

thumb. Adores her son. Exaggerates his positive features (kind­ness, love for animals, ability to imagine, eagerness to help). Thinks all the rest are in the wrong.

3. *Elena Plavskaya,* aged 26, teacher of Russian Literature.  
Hates the boy. He is always "a pain in the neck", a real trouble­  
maker. His language is awful. Sometimes you can barely under­  
stand what he says. His opinions are ridiculous. He makes fun of  
everybody, teachers included. Elena thinks it necessary to isolate  
Oleg, to prevent spreading his bad influence (shoulder-length hair,  
weird clothes, misbehaviour, etc.) on other pupils. Insists on Oleg's  
suspension from school.

1. *Rita Izmaijlova,* aged 50, teacher of History, dislikes the boy's  
   behaviour and attitude towards school, her subject, and his class­  
   mates. Is irritated by his lack of discipline, responsibility and man­  
   ners. Tries to analyse his feelings and to find an explanation for  
   such behaviour. Finds his influence on the class disastrous in many  
   respects. Is not quite sure, but thinks that Oleg's suspension from  
   school and further practical training will do more good for the boy  
   than his staying on at school.
2. *Andrey Pavlov,* aged 45, a teacher of Biology, school Head  
   Teacher. Has seen many cases of the type. Rather likes the boy, his  
   devotion to his lessons, the interesting questions he asks. Thinks  
   that Oleg is passing through a difficult period of his life. Is sure  
   that he will get over it. Certainly he often behaves strangely, his  
   moods are always changing. It irritates both adults and classmates.  
   In A. Pavlov's opinion Oleg needs more contact with his father.  
   Thinks that Oleg has ambitions. Isn't it possible to give him some  
   real responsibility? Oleg may rise to it.
3. *Zoya Zubina,* aged 22, a psychologist, a university graduate  
   having just begun working. Thinks that parents and teachers must  
   remember that Oleg is "shedding the dependence of childhood  
   and entering into adulthood", where he has to be on his own. The  
   thing to do is just to do nothing. You'll find that very difficult in­  
   deed: it requires a lot of will-power and tolerance. Make Oleg feel  
   that you are **behind** him not **after** him. He certainly needs your  
   presence, but doesn't want you to live his life for him. Help him —  
   but stay in the background. Suspension from school is out of the  
   question.

Note: The group of students is divided into two teams, each of which per­forms the same role play. While discussing Oleg's problems, try to understand each other's point of view, ask questions. Try and find the reasons for Oleg's be-haviour. Disagree with some of the participants of the council sitting, support oth­ers' points of view, defend your opinion. Complain about some of Oleg's actions. At the end you should come to the conclusion as to whether or not to suspend Oleg from school. Comments from the class on each team's performance and the value of the different arguments are invited.

15. Group Discussion.

Give your own views on the problems below and speak in rebuttal of your opponent. If possible make complaints about certain points.

**Topic** 1. *Youth clubs*

Talking points:

1. Links between educational establishments and youth club  
activities.

1. Aims of a youth club.
2. Activities to be encouraged in a youth club.
3. Qualities for a youth club leader.
4. Membership.
5. The ways a youth club can interest a group of 16-year-olds  
   with no apparent interests of their own.

**Topic** 2. *Children's interest in school*

Talking points:

1. Preliminary home preparation in reading, writing counting.
2. Proper climate at home.
3. Possibility of blaming teachers, school administration; criti­  
   cism when children are present.
4. Admonitions and warnings given by parents before children  
   start school.
5. Necessity to back teachers and school staff under all circum­  
   stances.
6. Cooperation between school and parents.

**Topic** 3. *Music lessons in the process of upbringing*

Talking points:

1. Music lessons — necessity of the time or parents' vanity? ^2. The idea of a music education — to give a child an effective outlet for his feelings.

1. Parents' interest: a) a child's skill in reproducing melodies;  
   b) the effect of music on a child's feelings.
2. Practising music. Whose responsibility?
3. Consideration of children's wish to have music lessons.
4. Important factors in developing children's interest in music.
5. Time and money spent on music lessons.

16. Comment on the following quotations:

1. Children begin by loving their parents. After a time they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them. (O.Wilde) 2. The childhood shows the man as morning shows the day. (J.Milton)

1. It is a wise father that knows his own child. (W.Shakespeare)
2. When children are doing nothing, they are doing mischief.  
   (H.Fielding)