



# What Ivan Knows That Johnny Doesn't

*Arther S Trace Jr.*

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## **What Ivan Knows That Johnny Doesn't** Arther S Trace Jr.

By the time American schoolchildren get Jack and Jill up that hill, Soviet children of the same age will probably be discussing the hill's altitude, mineral deposits and geo-political role in world affairs. This profoundly disturbing book is a comparison of American and Soviet school curricula and textbooks. It proves that the sciences and mathematics are not the only subjects in which our children lag behind. By the time the American fourth grader has learned to read 1500 words from his typical classroom reader, a Soviet student in fourth grade will be expected to read at least 10,000 words and will be ready to plunge into history, geography and science. Why does Ivan at the age of nine have a reading vocabulary so much larger than Johnny's? Could it have anything to do with the fact that from his first reader on, Ivan reads Tolstoy and Pushkin and Gogol while Johnny follows the adventures of Jerry and the little rabbit that goes hop, hop, hop? If a Soviet student undertakes to learn English as his foreign language – as 45 per cent of those in the regular school do – he will study it for six consecutive years starting in the fifth grade, and he may well have read more literature in English by the Tenth grade than an American student will have been assigned by the twelfth grade. The cold, harsh facts are presented in contrasting programs of study and textbook selections, covering reading lessons, literature, foreign languages, history and geography. Tables of contents from actual Soviet and American school books appear side by side at the end of various chapters. Here for the first time is a fascinating report on the approaches used in Soviet schools which tells us how and what children under communism are being taught today to prepare them for the world leadership tomorrow. The authors offer suggestion on how we can strengthen our schools to meet the Soviet challenge – and fulfill our obligations to our children. No citizen – parent, educator, or just plain taxpayer – can afford not to read it.

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