

THIS IS THE USSR



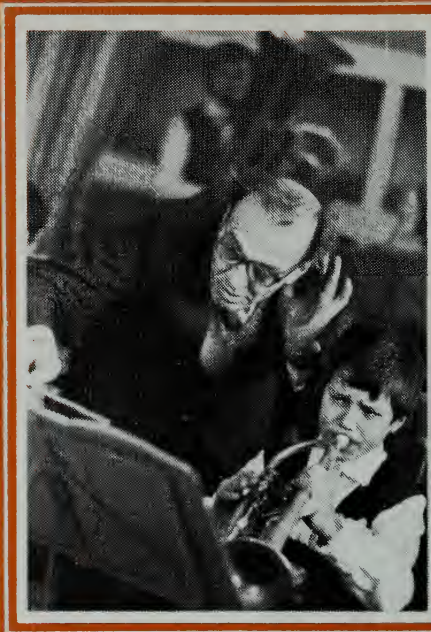
ultural Life



The state concerns itself with protecting, augmenting and making extensive use of society's cultural wealth for the moral and aesthetic education of the Soviet people, for raising their cultural level.

From Article 27 of the Constitution of the USSR

THIS IS THE USSR



CHIS

Gavriil
PETROSIAN



ultural
Life

Literature
Book-Publishing
Theatre
Cinema
Fine Arts
Architecture
Music
Circus
Libraries
Museums
Protection of
Cultural Heritage
Unions of
Professional People
Cultural Foundation
of the USSR
Folk Crafts
Amateur Talent
Groups
Contests, Festivals
and Fairs
International
Cultural Exchanges
Culture, the
Messenger of Peace
and Goodwill



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By the time of the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917, the more than 100 nations and ethnic groups of the Russian Empire were on quite different cultural levels. Some of them, such as the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Georgians and the Estonians, were advanced in literature and the arts.

Others, for instance the peoples in the North Caucasus, had neither alphabets nor professional artists and musicians of their own.

In those days the idea of bringing all of them up to the same high cultural standards seemed utterly unrealistic. However, the Soviet State, a union of peoples based on a degree of mutual aid hitherto unknown throughout history, managed to achieve it.

This was thanks to the enthusiasm of the masses wishing to gain access to art and education, which were previously the privilege of the chosen few.

Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Communist Party and the Soviet State, assigned a key role to culture in his plans for building socialism in Russia. Lenin's concept of culture was comprehensive, extending from the ability to read and write to making even the highest artistic values accessible to the masses. The cultural transformation of society boils down to moulding a new type of man, a comprehensively developed personality.

Lenin's thesis of bringing art closer to the people and the people to art; and of making all cultural achievements accessible to the entire population became programmatic. It was extremely difficult to carry out this task in a country like pre-revolutionary Russia, where most of the people were illiterate.

Within a short space of time, the socialist cultural revolution benefitted the people greatly. Illiteracy was stamped out. The standards of education were raised. About fifty peoples and ethnic groups received alphabets of their own and thereby the opportunity to develop their own literature. A material basis was laid for cultural advancement through opening thousands

of schools, and setting up more higher educational establishments and theatres. The new, socialist intelligentsia came into being.

The advancement and mutual enrichment of various cultures became a characteristic phenomenon under socialism. Each culture draws on the aesthetic and artistic values of other peoples while exerting its own beneficial influence on them.

This mutual enrichment is promoted by the ten-day and month-long festivals as well as days devoted to the literature, theatre and music of various republics* held on the territory of their counterparts. And the best of everything becomes a common possession.

Soviet culture is a culture for all; it is for the people and is developed by their efforts.

The present-day approach towards cultural problems in the Soviet Union is based on the furtherance of the Leninist principles of the attitude to art. These principles are marked by treating art as a specific sphere of human activity deserving exceptional tolerance and care.

By virtue of its considerable direct influence on man, Soviet culture today is an important lever for the revolutionary changes taking place in the country. Its main task is to develop cultural education in such a way as to serve man and his interests more fully and satisfy his spiritual requirements.

It is necessary to enable people to give full play to their abilities and make their lives fuller and more diversified.

This book is about multinational Soviet culture today, its achievements and problems—some of which are being solved and some of which remain to be solved later.

* The USSR consists of 15 Union Republics.

Literature

In pre-revolutionary Russia, literature was published in only 13 languages. At present, works of fiction come out in 92 ethnic languages of Soviet peoples. Significantly, about 50 peoples and ethnic groups have developed their written languages only in Soviet times.

Soviet literature is not only Russian literature. It is also literature published in the Ukrainian, Estonian, Georgian, Uzbek, Tatar, Jewish, Udegei and many other languages of Soviet peoples.

Literature is judged by its writers. So what is Soviet literature today and who represents it?

Opinion polls conducted by Soviet and foreign researchers have revealed, with a fair degree of certainty, 20 Soviet writers whose works became particularly popular in the 1980s. They are Vasil Bykov (1924), Chinghiz Aitmatov (1928), Fyodor Abramov (1920-1983), Victor Astafyev (1924), Vasily Belov (1932), Yuri Bondarev (1924), Nodar Dumbadze (1928-1984), Ana-

toly Ivanov (1928), Yuri Nagibin (1920), Valentin Pikul (1928), Pyotr Proskurin (1928), Valentin Rasputin (1937), Vasily Shukshin (1929-1974), Yulian Semyonov (1931), Georgy Markov (1911), two brothers, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky (1925), (1933), Konstantin Simonov (1915-1979), Alexander Chakovsky (1913), Yuri Trifonov (1925-1981), Yevgeny Yevtushenko (1933). According to the State Committee of the USSR for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade, the most popular writers in 1986-1987 were Anatoly Rybakov (1911), Daniil Granin (1918), Vladimir Dudintsev (1918) and Alexander Bek (1902-1972).

The list contains the name of only one poet—Yevgeny Yevtushenko—and this is linked with a decline in the readers' interest in poetry. There is also, however, a different point of view: the well-known poetess Bella Akhmadulina does not believe that the interest in genuine poetry has declined. What has

declined is the interest in pseudo-poetry while genuine poetry continues to enjoy respect as before. And the facts are on her side. Books by Pushkin, Lermontov, Blok, Yesenin and Akhmatova sell out like hot cakes. Bella Akhmadulina's own works are also difficult to come by.

A number of critics believe that the 1970s and the 1980s did not produce any noticeable figures in poetry. So Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Robert Rozhdestvensky (1932), and Andrei Voznesensky (1933), representing the poetry of the 1960s, continue to be in the lead. "The last 15 to 20 years have been marked by 'dead calm' or 'stagnation' and the weak winds of public opinion could not kindle the flames of poetry," says Anatoly Bocharov, D.Sc. (Philology).

And yet the main problem now in literature, and in poetry in particular, is that of quality, the fight against drabness. About 3,000 titles of poetry books come out in publishing houses every year. And of course far from all of that Mont Blanc finds its way to the reader's heart.

Some of the books have been written by people who have no right to call themselves poets. They are obviously doing something which is not in their line, discrediting art in the reader's eyes. The Russian writer Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) once observed that if someone hung on to a job which was alien to him, he

would inevitably become a bureaucrat. And there are far too many such bureaucrats in literature even for such a large country as the Soviet Union.

Evidently, it is only natural that Western publishers should be interested in the above-mentioned authors and that their books are more often translated into foreign languages than works by other Soviet writers. All that is genuinely national becomes international, as a rule.

Books by Soviet authors are published abroad in 47 languages while the Byelorussian* writer Vasil Bykov is one of the most widely read authors in the world, according to UNESCO.** This is very significant since just a short while ago Soviet works of fiction were published very scantily in Western countries.

But let us get back to our list. What do these authors choose as the subjects of their works? Let us make use of the characteristics given by the West German Sovietologist Klaus Mehnert and then supplement them with our own comments.

Fyodor Abramov—"a peasant family in the Far North."
Chinghiz Aitmatov—"Kirghizia*** and the whole world."
Victor Astafyev—

* Byelorussia is one of the 15 Union Republics in the USSR.

** UNESCO—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

*** Kirghizia is one of the 15 Union Republics in the USSR.

“difficult but dear childhood.” Vasily Belov—“village stories.” Yuri Bondarev—“war-time reminiscences.” Vasil Bykov—“occupation and captivity.” Nodar Dumbadze—“southern humour under the clouds.” Anatoly Ivanov—“a gigantic canvas portraying half of the century.” Yuri Nagibin—“short and clear prose.” Georgy Markov—“Siberia.” Valentin Rasputin—“the destinies of those living on the banks of the Angara river.” Vasily Shukshin—“Chekhov-style scenes in Siberia.” Konstantin Simonow—“Reports from the war front.” Arkady and Boris Strugatsky—“a fantasy”. Yulian Semyonov—“a political novel with the touch of a thriller.”

Even these characteristics, which are short, to say the least, indicate that one cannot say that Soviet literature knows only one tune. And its multinational nature gives it a particular tinge, a richness of colours, plots, images and subjects.

So what do Soviet authors write about? Their subjects are love of one's country, individual and team, man and nature, duty and love, the meaning of life, career-seeking and intellectuality, production and private life, crime, science fiction and satire. In a word, anything that is linked with life, that has something to do with it. But there are also forbidden subjects. You will not find pornography in Soviet

books—we prefer love. Nor are there any motifs of racism or nationalism, the propaganda of war or hatred. This is a tradition stemming from 19th-century Russian democratic literature. But there are also common tendencies. Take any book by a Soviet author, and it will practically never insult your conscience. It may insult your taste, but never your conscience.

One of the most widespread misconceptions about Soviet literature is that it has no connection with what preceded it. This is not true of course. Continuity, however, is far from meaning immobility.

Soviet literature develops the traditions of realism first and foremost. But it does not neglect other trends either, inheriting everything progressive and life-asserting that has happened and continues to happen in world literary history. Such authors as Rasputin, Belov, Astafyev and Aitmatov made use of the experience of the outstanding Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov (1905-1984) in their works. And even such a “superoriginal” poet as Andrei Voznesensky drew his inspiration from the works by Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930) and Boris Pasternak (1890-1960).

To dispel any suspicion of boasting, let me tell the reader that we have our share of bad writers in the Soviet Union. But when the literature of any country is presented, people usually talk about what is

worthwhile. There's no point in wasting time on anything bad. All the more so because nowadays a barrier is being put up against "drab" books which, we hope, will prove insurmountable.

One of the characteristic features of the current changes in Soviet literature is the disappearance of "blank spots." They are being "removed" in three major areas.

First, more and more attention is being paid to events which have not been covered in literature until recently. These are the violations of socialist legality during the Stalin personality cult and the events of the recent period of stagnation. They are dealt with in such works as *A New Appointment* by Alexander Bek; *The Aurochs* by Daniil Granin; *White Robes* by Vladimir Dudintsev; *The Executioner's Block* by Chinghiz Aitmatov, *A Sad Detective Story* by

Victor Astafyev and *The Children of Arbat* by Anatoly Rybakov.

Second, the works of authors who were subjected to reprisals and disgrace during the Stalin personality cult are now seeing the light of day. Among them are Osip Mandelshtam, Marina Tsvetayeva, Varlam Shalamov and Mikhail Bulgakov.

Third, the works of writers who emigrated for various reasons are also being published. Among them are Vladimir Nabokov, Georgy Ivanov and Igor Severyanin.

Some Western observers view restructuring in literature and the corresponding disappearance of "blank spots" as an entirely new phenomenon without precedent in Soviet practice. In fact, however, it simply means the restoration and further development of the Leninist traditions of confidence in the people.

Book- Publishing

In 1564, Ivan Fyodorov printed the first Russian book, *The Apostol*, in Moscow. About 500,000 titles came out in tsarist Russia over the following three and a half centuries.

Over the 72 years of the Soviet State more than 3.7 million titles of books and brochures have been put out in nearly 70,000 million copies. They have been published in 165 languages, including, I should like to remind you, 92 ethnic languages of Soviet peoples. According to UNESCO, the Soviet Union continues to lead the world in the output of translated literature.

The Soviet Union has more than 200 publishing houses. The number is not particularly large compared with some other countries. It should be borne in mind, however, that there are no small publishing outfits in the Soviet Union and that hundreds of titles come out in millions of copies every year.

Most of the publishing houses operate within the framework of the State Committee of the USSR for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade. In the Union Republics publishing houses are subordinate to their respective State Committees for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade. There are also publishing outfits belonging to various ministries and other departments, public organizations and unions of professional people. Many research institutes and other organizations likewise put out books and brochures.

What sort of books are published in the Soviet Union? For instance, American literature is well known to the reading public. People in the Soviet Union read Edgar Poe, Mark Twain, Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner; poets and prose writers of very different literary trends and political views, from John Steinbeck, Robert Frost, Irwin Shaw and Kurt Vonnegut to the "beatnik" ideologist Jack Kerouak.



The Progress book shop, one of the largest in Moscow, where you can buy books in many foreign languages.

What is more, the 45-volume "Library of US Literature" is also published in the Soviet Union, covering the period from the 17th and 18th centuries' chronicles to this day.

The Soviet Union also puts out books by Franz Kafka and James Joyce, Françoise Sagan and Jean-Paul Sartre, Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco. As we have said before, everything is published except for literature popularizing racism, war, violence or pornography.

So, the Soviet reader is well familiar with world literature, which is evident from the fact that books by writers from various countries are printed in millions of copies in the Soviet Union.

Over the past few years alone books by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, André Maurois, Somerset Maugham, Ray Douglas Bradbury, Hervé Bazin and Irving Stone have been published more than ten times.

During the past decade more than 400 titles (in a total of more than 254 million copies) by writers from Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, the Mongolian People's Republic, Poland, Romania, Vietnam and Yugoslavia have come into print. The literature of each of these countries is represented by its own "Library."

Works have been published by such Latin American writers as Jorge Amado,

Gabriel García Márquez, Miguel Otero Silva, Pablo Neruda, Miguel Angel Asturias, Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar.

Asian and African literature is represented by such series as Ancient Literature of the East, the Library of Eastern Classics, the Africa almanacs (writers from Nigeria, the Congo, Kenya, Senegal and other countries) and the Eastern Almanac (novels and stories by writers from India, Afghanistan, Syria, the Philippines and Burma).

Book prices are low. For instance, in a pocket-book edition a copy of Nathalie Sarraute's novel *Vous les entendez?* costs 70 kopecks while a copy of *Dubliners* by James Joyce costs 1 rouble 30 kopecks.*

Although nearly 85,000 titles of books and brochures in a total of about 2,500 million copies (that is, every fourth book in the world) are pub-

* According to the official rate of exchange, one rouble is approximately equal to 1.6 US dollars. A rouble contains 100 kopecks.

lished every year, booklovers say this is not enough. Not all books are so popular, of course. There is a particularly high demand for classics, literature on history and art, memoirs, science fiction and reference books. There are many books in the shops, but you cannot always buy what you want. Works by Pushkin, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky are sold out in a matter of hours.

Considerable changes for the better are now taking place in the book-publishing business. The publishing houses are seeking to meet the demand as far as they can, and changing their output policy. Previously, books of interest to the reader were printed in insufficient numbers. As a result, one of the first steps of restructuring in the book-publishing business was setting up an institute of book sociology. The readers' demand will now be studied.

Positive shifts are already taking place. Unpopular publications are struck off the plans. Editions of untopical literature are reduced, while

At present an average of eight books and brochures are published per year for every Soviet person. These are good figures, but they must still increase dramatically.

Nearly every Soviet family has a collection of books numbering from several dozen to hundreds and even thousands of volumes. There are more than 40,000 million books in private collections, which is almost seven times more than in all the state repositories.

those of books in high demand are increased. It is becoming much more common to see interesting publications in book shops, although only for a few days—they are sold out very quickly. Many popular books are put out by several publishing houses at the same time.

The gems of Russian and Soviet classics are now published in enlarged editions. This has become one of the

ways of reducing the book shortage. A subscription to three volumes of Pushkin's works was conducted without any limitations and the edition of 10.7 million copies was planned accordingly. That was followed by a subscription to Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry (six million copies). Selected works by Gogol, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov are also to be published that way in the near future.

The All-Union Society of Booklovers is one of the mass public organizations in the Soviet Union. It has 18 million members. Its main mission is to assist book publishers, libraries and other cultural institutions, to popularize and spread books, and arrange lecture tours and meetings between writers and readers.

The Society embraces 15,000 booklovers' clubs. It also has outfits for book repair.

Every year its organizations turn over more than a million books to rural libraries, hospitals and so on free of charge.

The Society's budget is made up of small annual dues paid by individual members and much larger contributions from group members—factory or office staffs. The money goes to meet organizational and other needs, for instance, setting up book museums and writers' memorial complexes.

The Mass Media

Millions of Soviet people start their day with a fresh copy of a newspaper or magazine. The country publishes over 8,000 newspapers with a circulation of about 200 million copies. There are also 3,700 district and city newspapers. Their circulation is 36 million copies. Many factories and offices

put out their own small newspapers which are often called "factory newspapers." The Soviet Union leads the world in newspaper circulation.

* * *

The newspapers Pravda, Trud, Komsomolskaya Pravda and Pionerskaya Pravda have a circulation of over 10 million copies.

* * *

The country puts out over 5,000 magazines and other periodicals with an annual circulation of 3,200 million copies. At present there are more than six newspapers and magazines issued per Soviet family. Periodicals come out in 55 languages of Soviet nationalities.

The mass media employ 100,000 journalists and six million freelance correspondents.

* * *

The Soviet Union operates an integrated television network embracing 117 TV centres. Besides Central Television, programmes are also broadcast in the constituent republics and by local stations. The relay stations of the Orbita space system make it possible to transmit TV programmes to all the cities and most of the rural areas. Since the country stretches across 11 time zones from West to East, the two programmes of Central Television are relayed in such a way that residents in most areas can watch them at a convenient time.

* * *

All-Union Radio today comprises 170 radio committees in the country broadcasting about 1,000 hours a day in 70 languages. There are fourteen programmes of Central Radio Broadcasting, including their schedules for the remote Eastern regions, which makes up 231.2 hours of daily broadcasts. Nowadays one can listen to the radio round the clock.

Theatre

The theatrical system in the Soviet Union is very ramified and diverse.

The state became fully responsible for the development of this art in 1919 when the theatres were nationalized. Having pledged to finance the theatres, the Soviet government made them accessible to all and refused to regard the theatre as a form or source of revenue. The price of theatre tickets in the Soviet Union remains among the world's lowest to this day.

The concentration of theatres in the Union Republics is as follows: the Russian Federation, the largest of them, has 340 theatres, the

Ukraine has 88 and Kazakhstan has 36. Georgia and Uzbekistan have 31 each, Armenia and Byelorussia have 17 each. There are also 15 theatres in Azerbaijan, 13 in Tajikistan, 11 in Lithuania, 10 in Latvia, 9 in Estonia, and 8 in Kirghizia. Moldavia and Turkmenia have 7 theatres each.

People in Estonia are the most avid theatre-goers—the Republic boasts 1,022 visits for every 1,000 residents. It is followed by Latvia—957, Georgia—718 and Armenia—651.

Interestingly enough, in approximately ten small towns with theatres of their own, the

	1940	1960	1980	1986
Total of theatres	908	502	604	640
including:				
opera and ballet	39	32	44	48
drama, music	693	363	387	398
for children and youth	176	107	173	194
Number of visits, million	84.2	91.2	120.1	126.0

number of visits per thousand residents has topped Moscow's level. Incidentally, in the number of theatres in proportion to the population Moscow ranks only fifth among the country's cities with more than a million residents, and considerably lags behind a number of European capitals.

Prior to the 1917 October Revolution only nine out of Russia's numerous nationalities had professional troupes giving performances in their local languages. At present performances in the Soviet Union are given in 47 languages. Kazakhstan, for instance, had no theatre at all before the Revolution. At present, as we have mentioned, the Republic has 36 theatrical companies, including the German Drama Theatre in the town of Temirtau. All of its actors have been trained in the Shchepkin School at the Maly Theatre in Moscow.

The achievements of the multinational Soviet theatre are evident from its successful guest performances in many countries. For instance, the British acknowledged that the Georgian Shota Rustaveli Company of Tbilisi performed Shakespeare's tragedies in Great Britain almost better than the great playwright's compatriots. The company reaffirmed its high reputation at a festival in Mexico. The newspaper *Excelsior* commented: "It's the best theatre we have seen."

The troupes of the Moscow

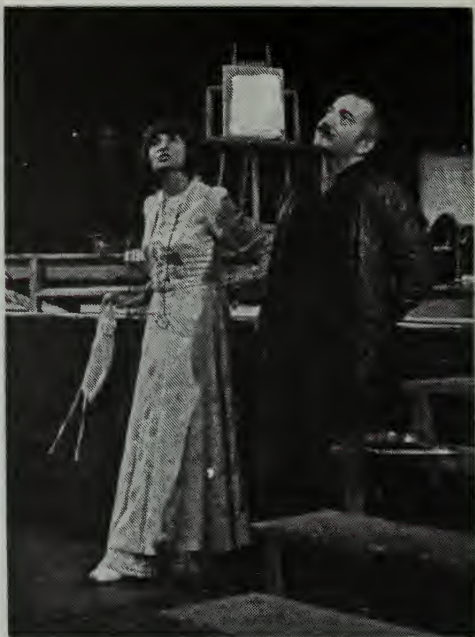
Art Theatre, the Mayakovsky Theatre, the Theatre in Malaya Bronnaya and the puppet theatre directed by Sergei Obraztsov are known in many countries and are also a big success on their guest tours.

It seems everything has been said about the masterly performance of the Bolshoi opera and ballet troupes. The names of the widely known ballet master Yuri Grigorovich and the brilliant Maya Plisetskaya. Natalya Bessmertnova, Yekaterina Maksimova and Vladimir Vasilyev, Lyudmila Semenyaka and Irek Mukhamedov speak for themselves. The same is true of the names of such opera soloists as Yelena Obraztsova, Irina Arkhipova, Vladimir Atlantov, Yevgeny Nesterenko and Zurab Sotkilava.

The theatrical satirists are now having the most difficult time of all. Abstract satire and exposure obviously stand to lose when compared with the concrete, highly critical material appearing in the newspapers and magazines and in the documentary cinema. In this field the need for new forms and approaches to the subject is particularly acute.

The life of the Soviet theatre, however, is far from being one long success story. The theatre "missed" the television revolution and the information explosion and failed to take fully into account the spectators' intellectual re-orientation. The

The Shota Rustaveli Theatre in Tbilisi (Georgia). A rehearsal is being staged by the Chief Director Robert Sturua.



A scene from the play A Dog's Heart (after Mikhail Bulgakov) at the Moscow Young Spectators' Theatre.





The play Speak Up at the Yermolova Theatre (Moscow) is a big success with audiences.



Actors of the studio theatre Na Dostkakh (On the Boards) in a scene from a play based on early works by Dostoyevsky.

unprofessional and semi-professional theatrical studios have proved much more versatile. Their activities have become a factor of major social significance.

Naturally, the winds of change have also affected the theatrical art. More than 80 companies are now being experimental. They are granted self-government and independence in shaping up the repertoire, establishing contacts with authors and managing their finances. Other rights have also been extended.

The bureaucratic ways and inflexible structures are being broken down. The chief directors are no longer appointed. They are elected by the companies. New productions are dealing with sore subjects and broaching acute problems which are being discussed and talked about.

The public and the spectators are building great hopes on the current restructuring in the theatre.

The small studio theatres, which have long and successfully been running on a voluntary basis, can now switch over to a collective contract system, that is, sell tickets and have a money fund of their own. There are several such theatres in Moscow alone, for instance, Na Doskakh (On the Boards), In the Southwest, At the Nikitsky Gate, and Man, to mention but a few.

At different times the Soviet theatre has produced such eminent reformers as Konstantin Stanislavsky, Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Alexander Tairov, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Ruben Simonov and Kote Mardzhanishvili.

At present, too, the Soviet Union boasts a whole constellation of interesting directors who can do a great deal and who have proved it. These are Georgy Tovstonogov, Oleg Yefremov, Mark Zakharov, Andrei Goncharov and Robert Sturua. There are also interest-

Actors in the Soviet Union are trained at 12 theatrical schools of higher learning. Among them are the Studio School at the Gorky Art Theatre in Moscow, theatrical schools at the Maly Theatre of the USSR and the Vakhtangov Theatre, the Lunacharsky State Institute of the Theatrical Art and the Leningrad Institute of the Theatre, Music and Cinematography.

There are also theatrical schools in Kiev, Minsk, Tbilisi, Tashkent, Alma-Ata and Yaroslavl.

ing playwrights such as Victor Radzinsky, Lyudmila Petru-
Rozov, Mikhail Roshchin, shevskaya and Alexander Bu-
Mikhail Shatrov, Edward ravsky.

Ballet dancers are trained at 18 schools of choreography in the cities of Leningrad, Moscow, Perm, Kiev, Minsk, Riga, Tallin, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Baku, Tashkent, Alma-Ata, Frunze, Voronezh, Saratov, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk and Ulan-Ude.

In addition, there are departments of choreography at the Mikalojus Čiurlionis Art School in Vilnius and at the Specialized Music School in Kishinev.

The oldest schools of choreography are the Vaganova Ballet School in Leningrad (founded in 1738) and the Moscow Ballet School (founded in 1773).

Cinema

When Sergei Eisenstein made his film "Battleship Potemkin" in 1925, Berlin forbade its screening, London refused to accept it while New York had it sent out of the United States. Nevertheless, it was precisely "Battleship Potemkin," a classic example of new revolutionary art, that became the first Soviet film to break through the blockade of censorship and to be screened around the world with great success. It was followed by such pictures as "Mother" by Vsevolod Pudovkin, "Stride, Soviet!" by Dziga Vertov, "Arsenal" and "The Earth" by Alexander Dovzhenko and "Chapayev" by the Vasilyev brothers. Today, they have all become world classics.

Among the outstanding Soviet film directors, who have contributed a good deal to the progress of national cinema, are Grigory Kozintsev, Sergei Gerasimov, Grigory Alexandrov, Nikolai Shengelaya, Leonid Trauberg, Yuli Raizman, Mikhail Romm, Mark Donskoi and Ivan Pyryev.

At present the Soviet Union annually produces about 150 feature films, over 100 films for television, more than 1,000 documentary and popular science films, and over 130 animated cartoons. Soviet films are screened in 134 countries. They have fetched quite a few prizes at the most prestigious international festivals.

For instance, in 1987 "Repentance," directed by Tenghiz Abuladze, won three prizes (including the special Grand Prix of the panel of judges) at the Cannes International Film Festival alone. It also fetched a special prize at a festival in Haugesund, Norway, and two prizes in Chicago. In 1988, Tenghiz Abuladze received the Lenin Prize.*

"The Theme," directed by Gleb Panfilov, received the Grand Prix and four special

* The Lenin Prize is one of the highest awards in the Soviet Union for outstanding achievements in various fields of activity.

Stills from the film "Letters from a Dead Man" directed by Konstantin Lopushansky.



prizes at an international festival held in West Berlin.

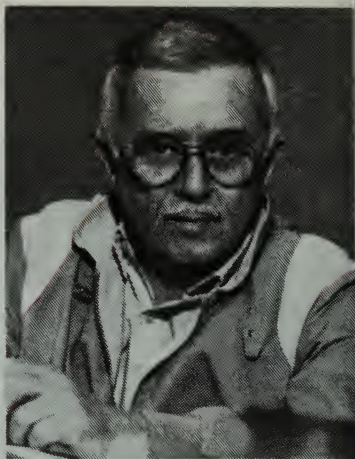
"Letters from a Dead Man" by Konstantin Lopushansky was awarded prizes for excellent direction and camera work and the Grand Prix of international critics at the Madrid festival.

"My Talisman" by Roman Balayan and "Cycle of Life" by Lana Gogoberidze won the main prizes of the Istanbul and Tokyo festivals.

The special prizes of international festivals in Moscow, West Berlin, Venice, Damascus, Rio de Janeiro, Locarno and São Paulo were awarded to "The Messenger" by Karen Shakhnazarov, "The Lantern" by Agasi Aivazyan, "Plumbum, or Dangerous Game" by Vadim Abdrashitov, "Mirages of Love" by Tolomush Okeyev, "Kin-Dza-Dza" by Georgy Daneliya, "The Long Farewell" by Kira Muratova and "The Legend of the Suram Fortress" by Sergei Paradzhanov.

Soviet documentary film makers have also scored a noticeable success on the world scene. For instance, Yuris Podnieks received a prize for outstanding achievements in documentary cinema from the International Association of Documentary Film Makers for his direction of the picture "Is It Easy to Be Young?"

The Soviet cinema, however, also has quite a few problems. One of them is the declining attendance. According to statistics, there were 20 attend-



The director of the film "Repentance," Tenghiz Abuladze.

ances per person per year in the early 1970s. Today the figure is already down to 14.

The decline of interest in the cinema is happening in other countries too. Nevertheless, Soviet experts believe that the problem of attendance can be solved.

"Buying a ticket for a Soviet film," one of the film critics observes, "the spectator must be confident that he will see a work of art. It should not necessarily be a masterpiece, but it should be a good film both from an ideological and professional point of view, an honest and sincere film, saying something new both in its material and in its interpretation. And such films can be made only by gifted people."

The cinema is now going through the process of restor-

ing aesthetic justice. Tribute is being paid to those talented artists whose works were either kept in the shade or have not been screened for years. The unjustifiably overpraised films are being reassessed. This reappraisal, though belated, is necessary nevertheless. "Blank spots" are disappearing in the cinema too. Professional exactingness is rising.

Many hopes are being

pinned on a new base model for the Soviet cinema and on replacing administrative methods with economic ones.

The first results of the current reform will make themselves felt in 1989. And it is the films of that year, showing the first major results of the restructuring, that are going to answer the question of whether viewers will return to the cinema.

Film Projectors

	1940	1960	1980	1986
Number of film projectors, thousands	28.0	103.4	152.6	152.7
Cinema attendances, million	900	3,611	4,259	3,882

Cinematographers are trained at two schools of higher learning, the Moscow Institute of Cinematography and the Leningrad Institute of the Theatre, Music and Cinematography. In addition, film actors are also trained at theatrical schools of higher learning.

Fine Arts

Soviet multinational fine arts have attracted attention since the first years of the USSR's existence. Suffice it to recall the success of Soviet artists at international exhibitions in Italy and France in 1924, 1925 and 1927. The foreign press spoke highly of the works by Pyotr Konchalovsky, Igor Grabar, Martiros Saryan and Pavel Kuznetsov. Some of their canvases were purchased by leading West European museums. One of the attractions at the international exhibition in Paris in 1937 was the sculptural composition "The Worker and the Cooperative Farmwoman" by Vera Mukhina. Later, too, Soviet art had something to show at international exhibitions. This is evident from the success of works by Vladimir Favorsky, Artur Fonvizin, Nikolai Romadin and items made by folk craftsmen.

Nevertheless, the 1970s and the early 1980s had a negative effect on the general development of painting, sculpture

and drawing. The reasons are well known: the penetration of bureaucratic thinking into the artistic community and the gradual emergence of the "elite" among painters and sculptors, which was beyond criticism. Creative competitions in fact ceased to be competitions, for the aspirants had unequal chances from the very start. As often as not, works were selected not on their merits but depending on the ranks and titles of the artists. Canvases dealing with historical and other vital subjects, which educated viewers on the ideals of the time, were pushed into the background. Countrywide discussions of the designs of monuments and memorials were no longer held. Time-serving and dilettantism, under cover of dealing with "topical issues," ousted original, talented works from exhibition halls.

Just a short while ago fine arts were by far the most criticized field of artistic activity in the Soviet Union. It was maintained that they were slow in

restructuring themselves, that braking tendencies were strong there, and that they failed to take into account changes taking place in the country's life and in the people's hearts.

At present, fine arts are going through a kind of boom. New interesting trends and names have appeared on the scene. Canvases by formerly well-known Soviet masters, whose works frightened bureaucrats in art, have been extricated from the storerooms to the light of day so that people can see them.

Just like in other spheres of artistic activity, values are being reappraised in fine arts too. Earlier the emphasis was on popularizing the usual, which never went beyond the framework of the accepted. At present, however, unusual art

and unconventional creative ideas, going beyond ordinary conceptions, can also express themselves. It has become clear that it is wrong to divide art into "left" and "right" or to attach labels.

Art shows are now arranged with greater ingenuity. For the first time in many years, sale exhibitions and auctions are being held, including those attended by international firms. The idea is to make every art show a sale exhibition in the future. Spectators themselves now determine in many ways "who is who," and the artists will have to reckon with it.

Exhibitions of works by young artists have become quite interesting, and clearly indicate that at present no one is preventing them from experimenting and searching for

The highest scientific body in the field of fine arts is the Academy of Arts of the USSR. It embraces the leading figures in fine arts and supervises the training of artists.

The Academy incorporates the Research Institute of the Theory and History of Fine Arts as well as two schools of higher learning, the Surikov Institute of Art in Moscow and the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in Leningrad. Both also have secondary art schools for children.

In addition to that, there are also 11 art institutes in other cities as well as two more academies of arts in Riga and Tbilisi. A short while ago another two art institutes were opened in Moscow and Krasnoyarsk, in Siberia, to enable a greater number of gifted people to receive a higher artistic education.

new methods. They use highly original and innovative techniques to draw visitors into a creative dialogue with a work of art. These include new, peculiar layouts, concerts and theatrical performances, demonstrating the harmony of different arts.

The essence of the current restructuring in fine arts is that painters and sculptors turn to themselves first of all to reappraise what they have done up to now and what they should do in the future. This is not a revision of themes or subjects. It is a revision of one's attitude to creative endeavour, it is the restructuring of the inner world. And this is linked more than anything with abandon-

ing stereotypes which have been shaping up in the mind for years.

It is now fair to say that remarkable changes are taking place in Soviet fine arts. New works have been offered to spectators by such painters as Geliy Korzhev, Dmitry Zhilinsky, Yevsei Moiseyenko, Tatyana Nazarenko, Ilya Glazunov, Akop Akopyan, Igor Obrosof, and sculptors Oleg Komov, Yuri Chernov and Gediminas Jokubonis. Little known artists or those who have stayed in the background for a long time have begun to display their works more often. And a heated debate is going on.

Architecture

There is a formula that architecture is a science plus technology multiplied by art. An architect must combine the qualities of a scientist, an engineer and an artist. This is particularly true today. Only the harmonious coexistence of all these components can produce a Master.

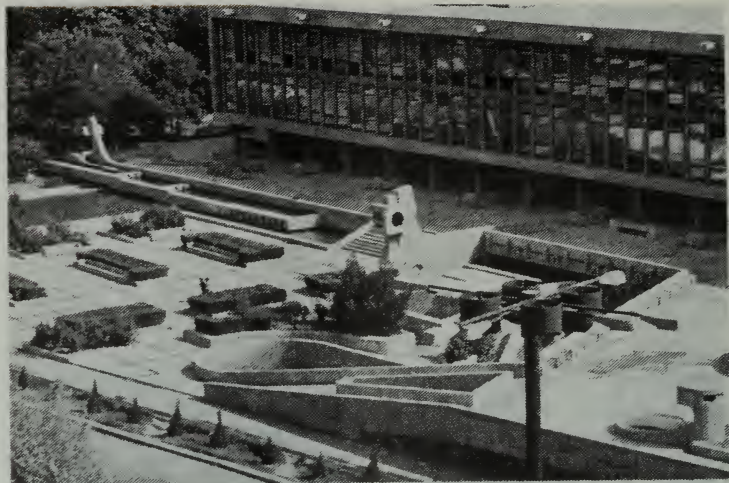
Those who founded Soviet architecture were precisely such masters: Alexei Shchusev, Ivan Zholtovsky, Vladimir Shchuko, Lev Rudnev and Konstantin Melnikov. Their creative endeavour laid the foundations for the architecture of socialist Moscow and transformed the appearance of other Soviet cities. Their best creations, which have become part of the cultural heritage of the entire Soviet people, are marked by genuine talent and high-class professionalism.

The innovative works of Soviet architects in the 1920s and the 1930s exerted a noticeable influence on the shaping of the present-day architectural style and the develop-

ment of 20th century town-building concepts.

World War II inflicted incalculable damage on the Soviet Union, and utilitarianism was for a long time the keynote of postwar designs. The architects were hurrying and they were being hurried. The challenge was to provide homes for the people ruined by the war and create at least the minimum of amenities for those working on construction sites in remote areas, for instance, Siberia, with its rigorous climate. And perhaps today we should not simply criticize those more than Spartan standardized buildings that were put up in the country's vast expanses in those times.

Of course, there were excellent examples of high-class architecture even in those days, despite all the drawbacks of standardization. This is evident from the buildings constructed in such new towns as Shevchenko, Navoi, Togliatti and Akademgorodok (Academician Town), near Novosibirsk. Suffice it to recall the ar-



The State Library in Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenia.

chitecture of Navoi and Shevchenko, two towns built in the desert. In 1976, their designers received the prestigious Patric Abercrombie Prize from the International Union of Architects.

The State Library built in Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenia, became one of the landmarks of Soviet architecture. It was designed by a team led by Abdul Akhmedov. It is a piece of architecture specially adapted for a city with a hot climate. The building has several patios and open verandahs. Its monolithic ferroconcrete framework can withstand strong earth tremors. Akhmedov made the whole thing look original not only by the design of the building itself, but also of the space around it, decorated with fountains, an-

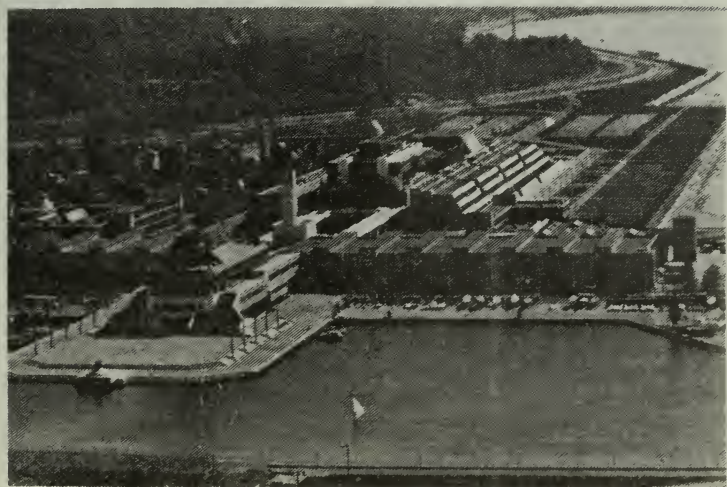
cient jars found in archaeological excavations, weeping willows and pines. The interior is quite modern, but the simple concrete walls and panels are covered with excellent decorations in local style. The library complex embodies a real harmony of different arts. When it appeared, people began to talk about the Ashkhabad school of architecture. Significantly, the building attracted the attention of architects from many countries long before the construction was completed and its pictures appeared in the pages of professional foreign publications.

Soviet architecture has every reason to take pride in the residential areas in Zelenograd (near Moscow), Lazdynai in Vilnius (Lithuania) and in the rural town of Vertilishki



A new residential area in Minsk—Zelyony Lug (Green Meadow).

The yachting centre in Tallin.





The village of Juknaičiai (Lithuania).

(Byelorussia). So in fact there are examples to be followed. Take, for instance, the new large Zelyony Lug (Green Meadow) residential area in Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, and the Lenin Palace of Culture and the yachting centre in Tallin, the capital of Estonia. As for the designers of the township of Juknaičiai in Lithuania, they received the Lenin Prize for their work in 1988.

All these projects show how modern industrial facilities can be used to produce original artistic solutions with pronounced local colouring.

There are successful examples of housing development in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Donetsk, Tbilisi and Yerevan. However, architecture with such power of expression has not yet become the norm.

The main task for Soviet architecture today is to enhance quality. The idea is to make new residential areas look diverse, instead of totally identical, and give full play to traditional ethnic features, so that the classical triad—usefulness, strength and beauty—can fully manifest itself in large-scale construction.

Music

Of all the Soviet arts, music has achieved by far the greatest success on the world scene. And this success is equally shared by the composers and the performers. Evidently, the international language of music, accessible to any audience, has contributed a good deal to that. From the very outset three stars shone brightly in the firmament of Soviet musical culture—the composers Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitry Shostakovich and Aram Khachaturyan.

Among the outstanding performers who have gone down in history are the pianists Henry Neyghaus, Emil Gilels and Lev Oborin, the violinists David Oistrakh and Leonid Kogan, the conductor Yevgeny Mravinsky and the singers Antonina Nezhdanova, Leonid Sobinov, Valeria Barsova, Sergei Lemeshev and Nadezhda Obukhova. The incredible talent of the outstanding pianist Svyatoslav Richter is unfading. The conductors Yevgeny Svetlanov and Gennady Rozhdestvensky

enjoy international recognition. A new generation of performers has also made a name for itself on the international scene.

Soviet music, both multinational and multi-genre, has been enriched by a number of outstanding works in recent years. These include the choral cycles "The Pushkin Garland" and "The Night Clouds" by Georgy Sviridov, Rodion Shchedrin's operas and ballets, Valery Gavrilin's symphony-performance "Chimes," and symphonies by Andrei Eshpai and Giya Kancheli. The new works by Alfred Shnitke, the oratorio "Faust" and choruses to the lyrics of the outstanding Armenian poet of ancient times Grigor Narekatsi, have also attracted a good deal of attention.

Some composers combine the traditions of "serious" music with the democratic nature of modern variety shows. The works of Raimonds Pauls are very interesting in this respect. He can compose instrumental pieces, jazz improvis-



The composer Georgy Sviridov.

ations and also rock music.

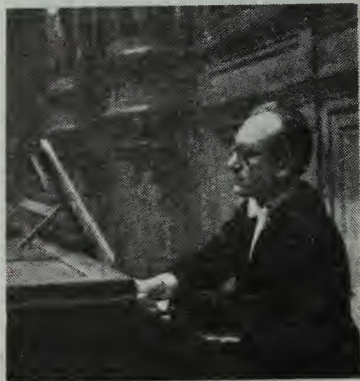
However, despite the undoubted successes, various phenomena have appeared over the past few decades which have slowed down the development of musical culture. Some of the composers showed signs of inertness. They rejected modern genres and innovative tendencies. Many works, especially those written by young authors, were not performed in concerts for years. Composers did not always manage to adapt to the changing tastes. As a result, there were not enough highly professional works in the variety show business and interest in serious music also began to decline.

The first years of perestroika have already had a beneficial effect on the development of all the music genres. Radio, television and concert organi-

zations have submitted to the judgement of audiences those works which had been kept "in the shadow," as it were, for a long time; for instance, pieces written by such composers as Edison Denisov and Alfred Shnitke. Compositions whose only merit is their "topicality" are heard less and less frequently. There is a clear orientation towards the tastes and wishes of the public at large, including young people. Many songs by poet-singers such as Bulat Okudzhava, Vladimir Vysotsky and Yuri Vizbor have become widespread, as have rock music concerts. There are amateur song groups in 150 cities.

Earlier it was a narrow group of people, considered "the musical community," who had the decisive say in judging various phenomena. At present the phrase is acquiring its genuine meaning. It is a real

Rodion Shchedrin is known not only as a composer, but also as an interesting performer of his works.



THIS IS THE USSR



The art of Soviet ballet dancers has won recognition in many countries. In the picture: soloists of the Bolshoi Ballet Alla Mikhailchenko and Irek Mukhamedov.

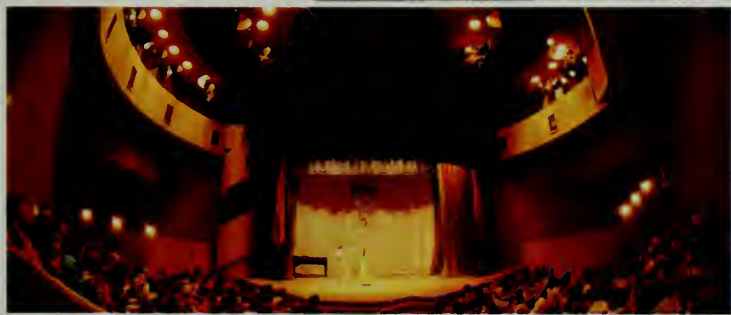


THIS IS THE USSR



The Soviet theatre includes the operas of the Bolshoi starring eminent singers, the art of the outstanding director Georgy Tovstonogov of Leningrad and the creative quests by actors in youth studios.

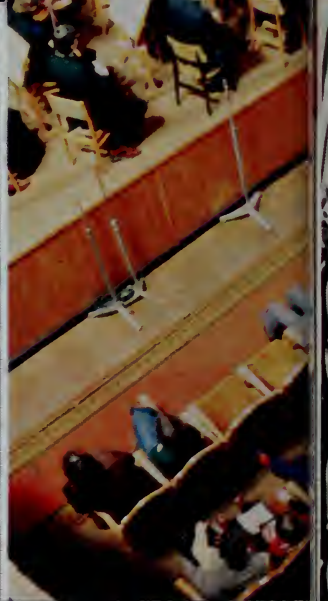




THIS IS THE USSR



The pianist Svyatoslav Richter and the director of the Moscow Virtuosos orchestra, violinist Vladimir Spivakov, are well known to music lovers in many countries. As for the boys' choir from the city of Sverdlovsk (the Urals), their whole life is still ahead of them.







THIS IS THE USSR



Soviet museums keep dozens of millions of works of art, historical documents, and objects of everyday use from bygone eras.

Both outstanding architectural ensembles and modest buildings can be museums—anything that

*bears the imprint
of the talent and
memory of past
generations for
the benefit of the
present and
future ones.*



THIS IS THE USSR



Stone ornaments of the citadel in Baku, old Russian icons, monuments of wooden architecture in the country's European North... To protect them from the destructive effect of time, it is necessary to pool the efforts of many art conservation experts.



THIS IS THE USSR



Fine arts are becoming more democratic. They are leaving exhibition halls to fill the streets, where budding artists and amateurs hold their small displays and where you can have your own portrait painted in a matter of minutes.







The Pushkin Poetry Festival stands out among the numerous literary occasions marked in the Soviet Union every year. The Festival is held in early June when the poet's birthday is celebrated.

Vasil Bykov

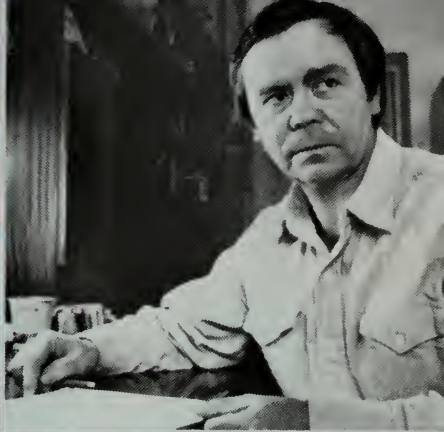


Vasily Belov

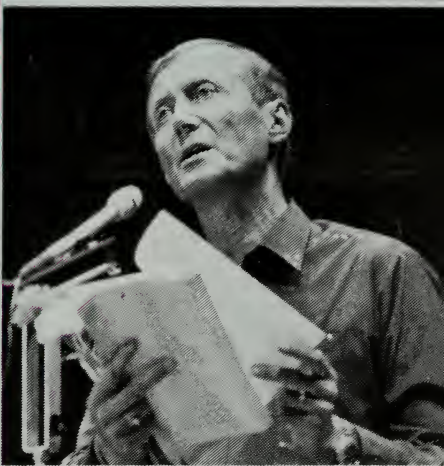




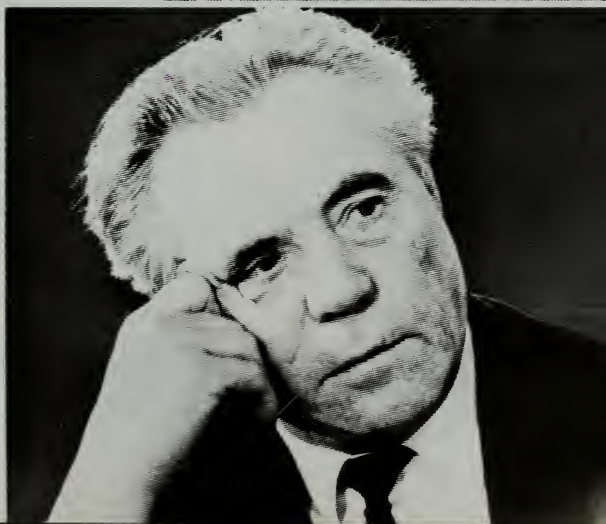
Chinghiz Aitmatov



Valentin Rasputin



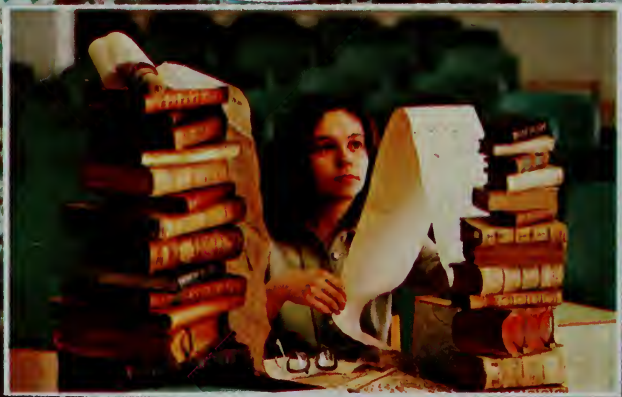
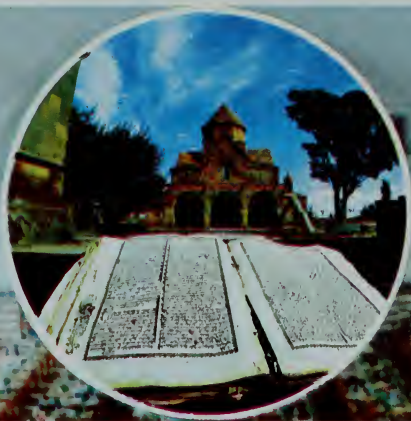
Yevgeny Yevtushenko



Victor Astafyev



There are 330,000 libraries in the Soviet Union. They boast 5,600 million books ranging from ancient manuscripts and incunabula to the latest publications.





According to UNESCO, the Soviet Union is the land of the most avid readers in the world.





THIS IS THE USSR



The role of the radio and television in bringing nations closer together and in promoting better understanding among them has particularly increased in recent years. Television and radio space bridges between various cities in the Soviet Union and other countries have won considerable popularity.



THIS IS THE USSR



The circus art is one of the most popular in the Soviet Union. Spectators in many other countries have also been able to see the excellent performance of Soviet circus actors.



THIS IS THE USSA



The performances of Soviet star singers, Valery Leontyev, Laima Vaikule, Alla Pugacheva and various rock groups, are always a success and not only at home. They have won prizes at international song festivals and received invitations from foreign recording companies.



THIS IS THE USSR



Over 30 million people in the Soviet Union go in for amateur activities in their leisure time. They demonstrate their art at song and dance festivals, folk talent holidays and contests of masters of various crafts.







THIS IS THE USSR



Masterpieces of embroidery and weaving made by women in the Carpathians, famous painted ceramics from Gzhel, lacquered miniatures from Mstera,



*chased items from
the Caucasus and
painted Russian
clay toys. These
are just a few of
the 200 folk crafts
existing in the
Soviet Union.*





A Russian round dance performed by the Beryozka dance company.

community now, embracing both music lovers and professionals. The success of composers writing variety music is very significant in this respect. Take, for instance, Alexei Rybnikov, the author of the rock opera *Unon and Avos*, and Alexander Zhurbin who wrote the rock opera *Orpheus and Eurydice*.

Nevertheless, there are plenty of problems in the music world. To begin with, it is apparent that the very system of concert organization has become obsolete. It is a cumbersome, complex set-up with weak internal links and numerous intermediate stages leading up to a performance.

Second, there is still a gap between "serious" music and mass audiences. And, as the well-known composer Rodion Shchedrin has observed, "the composers' guilt is obvious. They have been wandering far too long away from the people's requirements in the impassable thickets of technical quests forgetting that music is also daily bread."

The theatres are doing a great deal to popularize Soviet music. Many music theatres stage contemporary operas and ballets. Besides the widely known ones such as the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad and the Shevchenko Theatre in Kiev, the company of the Chamber Music Theatre in Moscow under the direction of Boris Pokrovsky is also doing a very good job. Among



Raimonds Pauls during a performance.

its latest productions is the performance "We Play Shostakovich" to the music of the outstanding Soviet composer.

The first All-Union Festival of Music Theatres was held in Minsk in early 1988. Companies from Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Tallin, Odessa, Saratov, Tashkent, Tbilisi and Sverdlovsk gave 19 opera and ballet performances.

The festival showed that the music theatre was on the upsurge. There appeared a constellation of notable artists among the choreographers such as Nikolai Boyarchikov and Boris Eifman of Le-

ningrad, Mai Murdmaa of Tallin and Valentin Yelizaryev of Minsk. The opera troupes which delighted spectators with a wide variety of forms and genres gave many interesting performances. The experi-

mental, romantic, psychological and comedy theatres were also represented, as well as a combination of opera and ballet, and it was decided to make such festivals a regular affair.

The Soviet Union has a widely developed system of musical education making it possible to discover talent at a very early age. There is a large network of music schools accepting children from the age of six after an audition. Seven-year music schools function in every city district and in rural areas. Their graduates can enter secondary music schools. Young people who had no primary musical education in their childhood can attend evening classes. The USSR's 21 conservatoires have ten-year boarding schools for particularly gifted children from all over the country, who continue to study there after graduation. One can also get a higher musical education at the music teachers' training colleges and institutes of arts as, for instance, the Gnesins Institute in Moscow and the Far Eastern Institute of Arts in Vladivostok. All in all, there are 11 such music schools of higher learning countrywide.

The All-Union Music Society, founded in 1987, is called upon to bring together all those active in the music world throughout the country. Its aim is both to bring music within the reach of as many people as possible and to support professional musicians. Its members intend to expand the traditions of mass singing and revive the once-popular music playing at home. They deal with questions of folk heritage, and try to cultivate the taste of listeners, especially among the younger generation. The Society also deals with guest performances and concerts, the supply of high-quality musical in-

struments to performers and the provision of concert halls, and assists in the creative cooperation between professional musicians, music lovers and amateur performers.

The Society has already begun to establish contacts with its counterparts in other countries. International courses and seminars for young performers have been operating in the Soviet Union since 1988. An international contest and festival of ballet dances, a parade of brass bands and several exhibitions of musical instruments have already been held on the Society's initiative.

The founders of the Society, the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, the Central Committee of the Young Communist League and the Union of Soviet Composers, have all pledged their financial support for three years. Over that time the Society is to build its own commercial base and go over to complete self-financing.

Circus

The Soviet Union has 70 permanent and 17 tent circuses. In view of the enormous popularity of this art, however, their number is clearly insufficient for such a vast country. The Soviet Union holds one of the world's leading places in circus attendance—75 to 80 million spectators a year. The figure could be much bigger if the circuses functioned at least in all large cities.

The Association of State Circuses is an enormous enterprise employing 5,500 artists. Its repertoire includes over 1,300 items. That would be enough for one circus for 16 years if the programmes changed every three months.

The Soviet circus boasts several dynasties of performers whose members have been in the limelight for decades. Among them are the Durovs, the animal trainers, the Kios, the conjurers, the Kantemi-rov, the horsemen. Clowns have been an invariable success all along. Such performers as Yuri Nikulin and the "sunny" clown Oleg Popov

have become popular both inside and outside the Soviet Union. Another clown, Yuri Kuklachev, now dominates the arena with his cats. Andrei Nikolayev has won the Grock golden mask, the most coveted prize of the festivals of the European circus art.

Naturally, just like any other sphere of culture, the circus has its problems. But there have been achievements too, which is evident from a string of international awards. For instance, two items staged by the director Tereza Durov at the International Competition of Circus Actors "Circus of Tomorrow" in Paris in 1987 took the gold and silver. The same year the Association of Italian Journalists twice violated its long-standing traditions. First, it gave awards for the best circus performance in May, although it was customary to determine winners at the end of the season. And, second, it was won by a foreign troupe, the Soviet circus performers, for the first time in the history of that non-

attending competition.

A team under the direction of Vadim Stankevich won the Silver Clown Prize at the 1988 International Competition of Circus Actors in Monte Carlo for its item An Air Flight. The Prize is awarded to the best performers regardless of their genre. Soviet artistes had created their own blend of aerial and equestrian acro-

batics. For the first time they performed extremely difficult tricks incorporating flights in the air on a platform raised under the roof of the big top. Experts also noted the long distance of the flights which was 14 to 15 metres—something hitherto unknown in the world circus. Gymnasts flew over the entire arena while performing triple somersaults.

The State School of Circus and Variety Show Actors in Moscow graduates 80 to 100 performers every year. The Circus Department has 400 students. Besides Moscow, such schools also function in Kiev and Tbilisi.

Libraries

The Soviet Union boasts more than 330,000 public, scientific, college and university, school and other libraries. Their repositories have more than 5,600 million books. The number of readers is 234 million. Library membership is free.

The Lenin State Library in Moscow is the largest in the country, and one of the biggest in the world. Its repositories contain about 36 million books and manuscripts, 25 million domestic and 11 million foreign publications in 92 languages of Soviet nationalities and 247 foreign languages. The library admits up to 8,000 readers and lends up to 40,000 copies of various publications every day.

Among the country's largest book depositories is *the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library* in Leningrad boasting 25 million copies of various publications and manuscripts.

Eight million books are kept at *the State Scientific and Technical Library* in Moscow.

It has more than 300,000 readers, not only Muscovites but also people from other cities. It was one of the first libraries in the country to introduce an automatic information and search system. The required books can now be found in three to five minutes with the help of an electronic catalogue.

The Scientific Library in Novosibirsk is widely known for its unique repository containing more than 8,000 extremely rare publications on science and technology.

The All-Union State Library of Foreign Literature boasts a vast collection of works of fiction from around the world and books on every field of knowledge. It has more than five million books in 135 languages, from medieval incunabula to modern publications. Up to 2,000 people visit its nine reading halls every day. The library lends about three million books, magazines and newspapers a year. It also exchanges books with 1,300 organizations in 93 countries.

All the major libraries exchange books so that they can lend readers the publications they need from other repositories.

Moreover, Soviet libraries exchange literature with 4,000 libraries, publishing houses and scientific centres in 140 countries. Every year they send abroad 1,200,000 books and copies of magazines while receiving 900,000 copies in return.

On average, every reader at a public library in the Soviet Union reads 22 books a year. The ratio is about the same in most of the Union Republics, which shows that the cultural

requirements of people living in different regions are leveling off.

About 70 per cent of librarians have either higher or specialized secondary education.

New publications are added to the book depositories every year. The number of readers is growing, so there is less and less space in the buildings constructed for the libraries many years ago. The problem is being tackled. New buildings are going up and the old ones are being modernized and expanded. The libraries are also being provided with up-to-date equipment.

Museums

Russia, a huge country, had 213 museums shortly before the 1917 October Socialist Revolution. Most of them were art museums and they were generally located in big cities. Over the first decade of Soviet government their number trebled countrywide.

At present the Soviet Union has a total of more than 2,000 state museums and about 12,000 museums run on a voluntary basis by enthusiasts at schools, colleges and universities, enterprises, etc.

Prior to 1917 few peoples in the Russian Empire had national museums of their own. At present there are all kinds of museums in the capitals of the Union and Autonomous* Republics and

* There are 20 Autonomous Republics in the Soviet Union.

in all the regional centres. These include historical, literary, theatrical, ethnographical and memorial museums as well as museums of arts and industries, to mention just a few.

The high attendance is far from being the result of a "museum boom." It is a natural phenomenon stemming from the cultural and social evolution of the Soviet Union. There are many factors behind the growing influx of visitors. Cultural institutions are accessible to all, living and cultural standards are going up and tourism is also on the upswing.

Admission fees at most of the museums are never above 30 to 50 kopecks for adults and 10 kopecks for school pupils and students. At some admission is free.

	1940	1960	1980	1986
Total of museums	991	929	1,526	2,021
Attendances, million	34	50	156	196

A number of sociological surveys have revealed that museums are now visited by quite different people. They are educated and well informed. Significantly, only four to five per cent of the polled visitors said that they had gone to the museums by chance.

Every year the museums add numerous exhibits to their collections which has brought the present total to 60 million. The additions are made through purchases, gifts, archaeological excavations and exchanges with museums in other countries.

The Leningrad **Hermitage** with its world repute ranks first among the art museums. It is one of the four biggest museums in the world (together with Louvre, New York's Metropolitan and the British Museum). The Hermitage boasts 2.7 million exhibits of Russian and foreign art including masterpieces by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Rembrandt, Titian, Rubens, El Greco, Velasquez and French Impressionists. Its collection also includes works of classical art, scythian antiquities and Oriental art.

The Hermitage also holds first place in the number of attendances. About 3.5 million visitors pass through its 353 exhibition halls every year. The museum arranges more than 34,000 guided tours and over 1,200 lectures a year.

The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow is second only to the Hermitage in the num-

ber of its collections of works of foreign art. When the museum was opened in 1912 it had 9,000 exhibits. At present they exceed 560,000. Among its chief treasures are an ancient Egyptian collection with a series of excellent Fayumic portraits, considered among the best in the world, and the largest collection of Impressionists outside France. About 1.5 million people visit the museum every year and it arranges up to 6,000 guided tours and more than 600 lectures.

The Tretyakov Picture Gallery is one of the most popular museums in the country. It houses a collection of works of Russian and Soviet art. When its founder Pavel Tretyakov, a merchant and patron of the arts, donated his collection to the city of Moscow in 1892, it held about 2,000 works of art. At present the gallery boasts 60,000 extremely valuable exhibits, icons, canvases and drawings. Approximately two million people visit it every year. A large-scale effort is under way to expand the exhibition area. Several extensions are to be added to the present building where extremely rich collections will be put on display.

The State Russian Museum in Leningrad is the world's largest museum of Russian art. Unlike the Tretyakov Gallery, it is not limited to keeping and collecting paintings and icons. The museum boasts huge collections of Russian sculptures



The State Tretyakov Picture Gallery.

and works of decorative, applied and folk art from the 11th century to this day. The Russian Museum also functions as a scientific and consultation centre for other art museums collecting and studying works of Russian and Soviet art. It boasts about 400,000 exhibits.

The collections at the **Moscow Museum of the Arts of the Peoples of the East** are also rather interesting. The name no longer fully reflects the reality, for the museum now holds works not only of Oriental but also of African art. The pride of the collection are works by Indian masters dating back to the early 1st century A.D., which are masterpieces of world importance.

There are also many pieces of art from Japan, China and Iran.

Among the museums dealing with historical subjects the **State Historical Museum** in Moscow deserves particular mention. It boasts world-famous collections of ancient archaeology, the archaeology of the Volga river basin and Siberia, a collection of ancient manuscripts, numismatic collections and an extremely rich collection of fine and applied arts. Over two million people visit the museum every year.

The museums of the **Moscow Kremlin** enjoy enormous popularity among Soviet and foreign visitors. Some of the chief attractions are the world-famous Armoury, the museum

of 17th century applied art and way of life and several old cathedrals. The Armoury features the treasures of the Moscow Grand Princes and Russian tsars such as parade and combat weapons made by Russian, West European and Eastern craftsmen, a unique collection of gold and silver items from the 12th-20th centuries, a collection of table clocks and pocket watches made by Russian and foreign craftsmen, Byzantine cameos and samples of luxurious Russian, Byzantine, Iranian, Chinese, French and British cloths. Among the exhibits are the coronation robes of Russian tsars and tsarinas, the thrones of tsars Boris Godunov (ca1552-1605) and Peter the Great (1672-1725).

The Armoury boasts the world's largest collection of carriages—Russian, German, Austrian and French. Among them is a British-made carriage presented to tsar Boris Godunov by Queen Elizabeth I. One of the gems of the collection is the cap of Monomach, the old golden crown whose origin is the subject of many legends. The Kremlin museums feature unique masterpieces of Russian and foreign art, while the cathedrals display old Russian paintings.

The Vladimir-Suzdal Museum Reserve was established in 1958 on the basis of the best monuments and museums of the old Russian towns of Vladimir and Suzdal. It embraces dozens of architectural

The Yasnaya Polyana estate museum. The desk in Leo Tolstoy's study.



masterpieces in both of them. The cathedrals have big displays of old Russian paintings dating from the 12th century, including works by the outstanding Russian artist of the Middle Ages Andrei Rublev (ca1360-70-ca1430). The Museum Reserve is often visited by both Soviet and foreign tourists.

Archangelskoye. This estate situated near Moscow is justly considered one of the most harmonious palace and park ensembles in Russia. In the 19th century the estate was owned by Prince Yusupov, a rich Russian aristocrat. He collected many valuable works of art there, including canvases by Rembrandt, Tiepolo, Van Dyck, Lorraine, David and Boucher. He also planted an excellent park and built a theatre whose sets were made by the famous Gonzaga. The estate is now under government protection and thousands of visitors come there to admire the splendid ensemble created by many unknown serf craftsmen.

Of the memorial museums **Yasnaya Polyana**, Leo Tolstoy's estate near Tula, south of Moscow, is by far the best known. The museum embraces the mansion, the building that housed a school for peasant children and also the park with Tolstoy's grave. The total area of the Museum Reserve is 387 hectares. The mansion boasts furniture preserved from Tolstoy's days, a library with 22,000 books, his

personal belongings and portraits of Leo Tolstoy and members of his family painted by the outstanding Russian artists Ivan Kramskoy, Nikolai Ge, Ilya Repin and Valentin Serov.

The specialized museums are represented by the country's largest **Polytechnical Museum** in Moscow. Its exhibits show the development of technology throughout the centuries, including those related to the history of pottery, blacksmithing, foundry, the radio, lighting, mechanics, etc. Repositories of this type include the Tsiolkovsky Museum of the History of Space Travel in Kaluga, the Museum of Silkworm Breeding in Tbilisi and others situated in various cities.

An entirely new type of museum, the historical revolutionary one, came into being in Soviet times. One of them is the **Central Lenin Museum** in Moscow founded in 1935. Its chief attractions are documents and other items donated by Lenin's relatives, friends and comrades-in-arms. The museum has 35 halls featuring over 12,000 exhibits. It is only a small part of the total, for the repository has more than 400,000 different items in storage. About two million people visit the museum every year. The museum has a series of displays showing Lenin's revolutionary activity from the late 19th century to the end of his life (1924). The exhibition and the storerooms also contain a variety of gifts sent from

many foreign countries. The museum has branches in Leningrad, Ulyanovsk, Kiev, Baku, Tbilisi, Lvov and a number of other cities.

As we have mentioned, there are thousands of museums run on a voluntary basis at factories, schools and cooperative farms. These are the so-called people's museums, as local residents take a direct part in their organization and running. Rural picture galleries enjoy particular popularity and many collectors, artists and unions of professional people help them acquire new exhibits. These museums, in their modest way, are doing a very important job bringing genuine art within the reach of the general public. In fact, it is a new type of cultural and educational work which has emerged on the grass roots initiative.

In the Soviet Union museums are subsidized by the state. Acquiring new exhibits also presents few problems. Just like other countries, however, the Soviet Union has a "storage problem." It is being tackled, but it has not yet been solved. The storerooms of the Soviet museums contain enormous wealth, yet only 10 to 15 per cent of the exhibits can be put on display. The most important task is to make all

those exhibits "visible," to have them on show to visitors constantly and not just from time to time. How is this problem being solved in the Soviet Union?

To begin with, the exhibition areas are being consistently expanded by setting up new museums and galleries and enlarging the existing ones. The area grows with every passing year, but the problem cannot be solved in this way alone.

Second, mobile exhibitions have long since become a regular affair in the Soviet Union. Not everyone can visit this or that museum. And a travelling exhibition can come from large cities to the remotest areas which have no museums of their own. And so one can often see truck, railway carriage and steamship museums.

Third, many large museums donate works of art from their storerooms to their counterparts in the provinces and also to people's museums, thus helping them make up new collections.

Museums in the Soviet Union today are no longer just repositories of mankind's cultural treasures. They are centres of education and of moulding the human personality.

Protection of Cultural Heritage

The Soviet State began to protect the relics of the past immediately after the 1917 October Socialist Revolution.

In November 1917 an appeal was posted up in all the streets and squares of Petrograd (now Leningrad), the then capital of Soviet Russia, from the City Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It said, among other things: "Citizens, the old masters are gone leaving behind an enormous legacy. It now belongs to the people. Citizens, protect this legacy, protect pictures, statues, buildings—they are the embodiment of your spiritual strength and that of your ancestors."

Ten days after the revolution the newly formed people's Commissariat (Ministry) for Education published a message in the *Izvestiya* newspaper to the workers, peasants, soldiers, seamen and the rest of the citizens of Russia which said: "The working people have inherited enormous cultural wealth: buildings of marvellous beauty, museums full of rare

and beautiful things which instruct and exalt the spirit, libraries of enormous intellectual worth, etc. All that now truly belongs to the people. All that will help the poor man and his children to quickly outstrip the former ruling classes in education and become a new type of man owning old culture and creating a new hitherto unknown one. Comrades, it is necessary to protect this possession of the people with a vigilant eye."

Care for cultural heritage became one of the main tasks from the very first days of the state of workers and peasants. Specialized bodies were also set up in the provinces: committees were formed by the departments of education to deal with the affairs of museums and the protection of monuments of art and relics of the past, the folk way of life and nature. They had extensive powers. A comprehensive state system for the protection of historical and cultural monuments was set up for the first time in world practice.

In September 1918 Lenin signed a decree prohibiting the export and sale abroad of objects having particular artistic and historical value. And the following month the Council of People's Commissars (the Soviet government) decided to make the first state inventory of all monuments and material cultural treasures.

A total of 2,350 individual monuments and 520 estates were registered in the first five post-revolutionary years. Between 1918 and 1923 one hundred and twenty charters of immunity were issued on historical estates and 480 on private collections.

Immediately after the revolution, however, there also emerged other views on the attitude towards cultural heritage.

One such view voiced by the anarchists and various "Leftists" was that the new society could be built only on a new site and that the entire culture of the past should be destroyed so that it would not leave us any reminders. This nihilistic attitude to the past was regarded in "Leftist" circles as a sign of a true revolutionary spirit.

It must be pointed out that the leaders of various Leftist artistic groups had gained some influence at a number of cultural institutions at one time. They in fact incited acts of vandalism against cultural heritage calling for the destruction of the canvases painted by old masters and for wrecking

the Bolshoi Theatre, old palaces and cathedrals. Russian and ancient sculptures were thrown out of the halls of the Academy of Arts. Many artists adhering to realism were ostracized.

Another point of view chiefly advocated by conservative-minded members of the former ruling classes was that it was necessary to preserve the "entire" heritage of the past. However, the adherents of this view sought to use the past to promote their own political and ideological interests, in fact accepting only those things which strengthened their class positions. Accordingly, they rejected all that ran counter to their interests, no matter what value any particular idea or work of art might have for the whole of mankind.

It was Lenin who expressed the Soviet point of view on cultural heritage with the utmost clarity. "Proletarian culture," Lenin underlined, "must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society... You can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind."

At the same time Lenin strongly opposed the unconditional acceptance of old culture. In his view, adhering to this standpoint was tantamount to losing class criteria.

The idea was that continuity did not mean the automatic acceptance of the culture of the past. It required critical analysis and a creative transformation.

Lenin's point of view won the day. Efforts to preserve cultural and historical relics got under way all over the country. Various legislative acts of that period not only helped preserve major artistic treasures, but also laid the foundation for further steps to be taken in this field.

Every year the state invests considerable amounts of money in the restoration and protection of monuments. For instance, 1,200 million roubles has been spent on that over the past decade alone. Many outstanding sites of historical and cultural interest have been renovated in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Novgorod,

Tallin, Tbilisi, Yerevan and Samarkand. The scope of restoration work is growing; it amounted to 190 million roubles in 1986, for instance. In 1990 the sum is to reach 300 million roubles, to be brought up to 500 million roubles by the year 2000.

It might seem that there should be no problems in the Soviet Union concerning the protection of monuments. Both the state and the vast majority of the population are unconditionally in favour of effectively safeguarding the relics of the past. The land on which monuments stand belongs solely to the state. In principle there are no major difficulties with financing restoration work. And there is vast experience in this field—the Soviet Union was the first country to set up an integrated state system for protecting mon-

Estimates show that the Soviet Union has 250,000 historical and cultural monuments. Approximately 200,000 of them have been officially registered and placed under state protection.

The Russian Federation, the largest Union Republic, has 38,000 monuments under state protection. One hundred and fifteen cities in the Russian Federation have been formed into a special group in which construction and modernization can only be conducted taking strict account of the preservation of their historical features. More than 85,000 monuments have been placed under state protection in the Ukraine. Over 20,000 places of historical interest are on the government register in Armenia.

uments. The importance of this protection is emphasized in Article 68 of the USSR Constitution. We should add to this that representatives of the Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments, which is a public organization, have the right to veto both construction and modernization in historic cities.

Unfortunately, however, laws are not always observed. As often as not, investments are not used in full. Those who break the law practically get away with a quick fright or pay a token fine.

In addition, the relics of the past also have outright "ideological" opponents, although they are not numerous. In their view, we would do better to build new apartment houses instead of spending money on modernizing and protecting buildings where Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Tchaikovsky and other outstanding people used to live or which they used to visit. Sometimes this is said in all sincerity. But more often it is sheer demagoguery. For places associated with the names of our great predecessors are not so many, and they are vital for both this and the coming generations. Society is formed and united not only by textbook history, but also by the history of the original.

Today—and we have to admit it with regret—some of the estates linked with the names of outstanding cultural

personalities or scientists go to ruin from neglect. Factories and plants, highways and livestock farms move in closer and closer to them. So what is the matter? The matter is, first of all, that restoration is the province of some people, financing is the province of others, and the future of the monuments in general is the domain of still others. What is necessary is to change the obsolete system and decide what sole organization should be given genuine powers and take over all the functions of protection and supervision. That is the only way to amend the situation radically.

The Soviet Union has excellent art conservation experts. Thousands of canvases, sculptures, items of glass, bone, wood and lots of jewellery and manuscripts pass through their hands every year. Many of their works are justly considered unique. Their prestige among their foreign counterparts is high. They saved the canvases of the Dresden Picture Gallery, barbarically thrown into damp mined adits by the Nazis in the last days of World War II. They "helped" the pictures of the famous Uffizi Gallery when a flood came down on Florence. They assisted in setting up restoration centres in a number of developing countries and are consulting their West European counterparts on a whole range of problems.

The research being carried out by the All-Union Institute

of Restoration and the Grabar Restoration Centre as well as by experts at the Leningrad Hermitage is of international importance. Suffice it to mention their effective recommendations for protecting museum exhibits from microorganisms, light, temperature and moisture. Indeed, the Soviet Union has excellent art conservation experts, but there are not enough of them. There are 10 monuments for each expert on average. The number of monuments being placed under state protection is growing steadily, while the number of art conservation experts is increasing slowly.

The protection of monuments is today at the centre of public attention in the Soviet Union and it is necessary to find a comprehensive solution to the problem. And in the new atmosphere of openness and intolerance of bureaucrats and procrastinators, we can no longer shut our eyes to the actions of economic managers who are prepared to tear down any historical "obstacle" in order to fulfill a plan.

And we do have grounds for optimism. This is evident from many publications in newspapers and magazines about the rescue of monuments, the effective action taken by the public and about the picketing of historical sites by activists from various public organizations.

Here is just one case in point. A short while ago workmen laying a new sewage pipe

towards the building housing the Moscow Art Theatre in the city's historical centre came across the remnants of an old bridge under the ground. In olden times that bridge gave its name to one of the most ancient streets in Moscow—Kuznetsky Most or Blacksmiths' Bridge. Just a few years ago the event might have passed unnoticed in the life of Moscow society.

However, today it serves as a sort of confirmation that the problem of monument protection has become very acute. The mass media literally came down on the builders demanding that they should treat the historical relic with care. And the work was suspended. The old five-arched bridge was preserved to be fully restored later. In the near future it will form part of the present-day street as a monument to the past.

What is more, several former street names have been restored in Moscow by the City Soviet to meet Muscovites' wishes. The matter was raised by the city patriots, members of the Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments. They said, quite rightly, that the old names formed part of the same inviolable cultural heritage as the architectural ensembles of the past.

At present dozens of millions of people of all age groups and professions are actively involved in the protection

of monuments. And as before, the state does not intend to spare any expense. What is more, it regards the problem as a matter of urgency and great importance.

Societies for the protection of historical and cultural monuments are functioning in all the 15 Union Republics. The main task of these public organizations is to draw the general public into playing an active and direct role in protecting and restoring the relics of the past and helping government bodies in this effort. Any individual can join such societies, and they also have group membership: the staffs of state enterprises, offices, schools or cooperative farms. The society's budget is made up of entrance fees and annual membership dues. In addition, a considerable income is derived from the issue of guidebooks, albums, postcards and souvenirs. Large donations are made by the group members. Most of the money is used to restore architectural monuments. So the funds raised by the public add a great deal to the millions of roubles allocated by the state from its budget every year for the protection and restoration of monuments.

The societies have extensive powers in all the Union Republics. For instance, alongside government bodies they examine all blueprints for construction and modernization in the cities and other populated areas where historical monuments are situated. At present not a single town-planning decision is made without the public's involvement. If an architect's design entails pulling down a monument without justification, representatives from the protection society have the right to veto the scheme.

The activities of the protection societies have come under sharp criticism of late. Their leadership was accused of inertness and an excessively "peaceful" disposition. Dissatisfaction with the performance of the societies in the republics and their inability to rally young people around and put their

energies to good use have brought to life a string of so-called informal associations. For instance, a group calling itself Mir (Peace) has successfully taken part in restoring the Pushkin Memorial on the Moika Embankment in Leningrad. A youth association named Spaseniye (Salvation) is also functioning there. In the city of Tobolsk a society named Dobraya Volya (Goodwill) is also engaged in restoring historical monuments. Similar associations are successfully operating in other cities too.

Unions of Professional People

Writers, painters and other artists traditionally enjoy particular esteem, confidence and respect in the Soviet Union. The finest representatives of the creative arts are widely known in the country and receive more letters from the public than members of the Soviet parliament. Their fellow-citizens do not only seek advice on creative matters, but they share their most intimate secrets, and sometimes write to them as to their closest and dearest friends. It is a long-standing tradition.

Professional people form public organizations or unions. The latter play a considerable role in the life of Soviet society and are increasing all the time. Their links with audiences are expanding continuously. Under the present conditions of perestroika and glasnost the activity of artists influences the people's life-style and makes them take part in society's affairs more than ever before.

Writers often address their readers and appear at readers' conferences held at factories,

schools and libraries. It has become common practice now. According to the British prose writer Charles Snow, such discussions are one of the most pleasant Soviet customs. The Composers' Union regularly holds its recitals in large auditoriums. Every year thousands of painters, graphic artists and sculptors go to various parts of the country helping to set up amateur studios and museums on a voluntary basis and acquainting people with their art. Theatrical companies and literary magazines are expanding their patronage of industrial enterprises and construction sites.

Often the legislative and executive bodies of the Union and Autonomous Republics, ministries and other departments make decisions on matters raised in writers' essays, articles contributed by various artists or appeals from professional unions. One only has to leaf through the files of the Soviet press to see that this is the case.

Of course, an artist influ-

ences life by his art first and foremost. However, the high prestige of the creative intelligentsia and its professional unions also stems from their active social positions.

The state and the public pay serious attention to the requirements of creative artists. That is why a painter, a writer, a sculptor, an actor or a composer can devote all his time to creative endeavour without worrying about the material side of life. Hollywood film makers, once visiting the Soviet Union, were surprised to note that everybody in the country was doing his job:

dancers were dancing, singers were singing and actors were acting in films.

It is not easy to join a professional union. To become a member of the Union of Writers, Composers, Artists or Cinema Workers one has to be an acknowledged master in his art. Candidacies are examined by commissions made up of leading professionals. The applicant must prove his right to membership by works of a genuinely artistic standard.

So what are the unions of professional people? How are they structured and what are their forms of activity?

Union of Soviet Writers

Founded in 1934.
Membership more than 10,000.

Before the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers numerous groupings and associations were formed such as Proletkult (Proletarian Culture), RAPP (the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers), Pereval (the Mountain Pass), Kuznitsa (the Smithy), to mention just a few.

In time, the need arose to bring all Soviet writers into a single union of creative artists. With this aim preparations were started under the direction of Maxim Gorky for holding the First All-Union Congress.

The forum met in Moscow from August 17 to September 1, 1934. The conference hall was decorated with portraits of

Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Molière, Gogol, Cervantes, Pushkin, Heine and Balzac. Soviet literature emphasized its inseparable link with culture, both national and worldwide.

Russian writers made up a third of the delegates. Representatives from the country's other national literatures accounted for two-thirds. Even at its first forum Soviet literature appeared as multinational in form and socialist in content. The Congress adopted the Charter of the Union of Soviet Writers. Socialist realism was accepted as the principal style of Soviet literature.

At present the Union of Soviet Writers includes 15 Unions of Writers in the

Union Republics, 20 Unions of Writers in the Autonomous Republics (corresponding to their number), and writers' organizations and branches in autonomous regions, territories and large cities. Its members represent 88 nationalities.

The All-Union Congress, the highest leading body of the Union, is convened every five years. All day-to-day activities between congresses are conducted by the Board and the Secretariat. The latter includes representatives from all the Unions of Writers of the Union Republics.

The Eighth Congress of Soviet Writers convened in June 1986 passed in an atmosphere of democracy and openness. It revealed two tendencies—the writers' dissatisfaction with their work and the realization of the artist's increasing role in the life of society. The speakers criticized the conservative thinking entrenched in the Union, bureaucracy and inertness. It was also underlined that, in its best works, Soviet literature had done a great deal to assert the ideals, objectives and changes which are now being fulfilled in society.

The Congress produced tangible results. New people with acknowledged prestige came to the leadership of the Union of Writers, literary magazines and publishing houses. Readers, who used to complain about the monotony of magazine publications, are now crying that they do not have enough

time to follow everything that is of interest to them.

At present the prestige of an office no longer prevails over literary prestige and it has become much more difficult to pass off topicality for artistry.

The Union of Soviet Writers puts out 16 newspapers in 15 languages of Soviet nationalities and over 120 literary magazines and almanacs in the languages of Soviet peoples and other nations. The Union's central publishing house Sovetsky Pisatel (Soviet Writer) every year turns out over 500 titles in a total of more than 25 million copies, one-third of them being translations from the languages of various Soviet nationalities. The Union's organizations in the Republics have publishing houses of their own.

In the Soviet Union an author receives royalties for his book regardless of the number of copies sold. Whether this is good or bad, whether this corrupts the writer or whether it helps his creative effort, is now the subject of debate. Popular writers say that this system is entirely wrong, while their average counterparts consider that any change in it would be a blasphemy.

The Literary Fund of the USSR, functioning at the Union, concerns itself with the writers' living conditions. This large organization has considerable financial resources, everyday services, medical and other institutions. The Literary Fund of the USSR, together

with its organs and enterprises, is exempt both from government and local taxation. Its finances are made up of regular deductions made by publishing houses putting out fiction and editorial offices of magazines, of the income derived from its institutions and money coming from other sources.

Every year thousands of writers go to different parts of the country to gather material for their work. The Literary Fund spends a good deal of money on financing such trips for creative purposes. It also supports many writers financially while they are busy writing their books and provides them with either free or reduced-price accommodation at guest-houses for literary workers.

The Fund provides full financial support for the Gorky Literary Institute and the Higher Literary Courses attached to it, writers' suburban settlements, their societies and book shops.

The Fund also has a department providing everyday services for disabled war veterans and the widows of writers killed in action as well as catering for writers of advanced age. In keeping with the deci-

sions of the Presidium of its Board, descendants of the classics of national literature also enjoy the right to material assistance. Such assistance is given to the descendants of Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and the classics of the literature of other nationalities.

From 1988 the total annual spending of the Literary Fund is expected to reach 22.9 million roubles.

Soviet writers are maintaining and developing broad links with their counterparts in other countries. These contacts figure prominently in international cultural exchanges. The Issyk-Kul Forum, the meetings of writers and world cultural personalities for exchanging views on the most urgent issues, has won a good deal of prestige and popularity. The forum was set up on the initiative of the prominent Soviet writer Chinghiz Aitmatov.

Hundreds of foreign writers come to the Soviet Union every year at the invitation of its Writers' Unions. Soviet writers, for their part, annually take part in international conferences on creative matters and literary discussions and go abroad to gather material for their works.

Union of Soviet Artists

Founded in 1957.
Membership over 20,300

The Union of Soviet Artists was set up on the basis of various organizations which

have existed in the Union and Autonomous Republics since 1932.

Just like the other unions of professional people, it has a multi-tier structure. The Board elected by the All-Union Congress determines the overall guidelines for the Union's activities. There are also the elected boards of the Unions of Artists in the Union Republics, which have very broad autonomy, as well as of the regional and city organizations. Each of them arranges exhibitions independently.

At present the Union of Soviet Artists incorporates 15 Unions of Artists in the Union Republics as well as the unions in territories, regions and cities.

There are 1,390 young artists and art critics in the Union of Soviet Artists which also has a youth association attached to it. Over the 15 years of its existence the youth association has gained considerable popularity. It attracts young artists by the variety of its activities (exhibitions, contests, study trips and work in creative groups, entirely financed by the Union and under the guidance of well-known artists).

Women account for a quarter of the Union's membership (5,703). They go in for all fine arts.

Exhibitions have always figured prominently in the Union's activities. More than 5,000 art shows are held every year. They are visited by more than 12 million people. The exhibitions are divided into

All-Union, Republican, inter-Republican, regional, city, group and personal displays.

The Union exchanges exhibitions with foreign countries on a wide scale. Over the past five years 234 exhibitions of fine arts have been sent abroad from the Soviet Union and 107 foreign exhibitions arranged in Soviet territory.

The Union has its own publishing facilities, the main one being the *Sovetsky Khudozhnik* (Soviet Artist) publishing house in Moscow. The Union's views are set out by its two magazines, *Tvorchestvo* (Creativity) and *Dekorativnoye Iskusstvo* (Decorative Art). Together with several other organizations the Union also takes part in publishing two more magazines, *Iskusstvo* (Art) and *Yuny Khudozhnik* (Young Artist).

Together with the Academy of Arts of the USSR, the Union concerns itself with artistic education. For instance, a promising experiment has been carried out in general education schools on the initiative of Boris Nemensky, the prominent painter and teacher, one of the leaders of the Union of Soviet Artists. The curriculum he has compiled provides for teaching fine arts two hours a week (instead of one) from the first to the tenth forms (at present the subject "fine arts" is taught only from the first to the sixth forms). According to Nemensky and his colleagues, general education schools should teach children the fun-

damentals of culture, and extramural activities should help in their creative efforts, while professionals should be trained at art schools.

What are the requirements for joining the Union of Artists? An applicant must have a higher artistic education (an exception is made only for masters of folk art) and must have produced works to a high artistic standard. A painter, a graphic artist or a sculptor files an application for admission and submits his best works as well as recommendations from three Union members. The application is considered and the works are discussed by an authoritative commission.

The artist's material security is largely ensured by the Artistic Fund, the creative and material base of the Union. The Fund has a variety of enterprises and workshops all over the country dealing with painting, sculpture, graphic art, design and applied art. They work on orders received from public and government organizations. The Fund fills orders for erecting monuments and making monumental paintings, takes part in decorating large economic exhibitions, etc. Every Union member has the right to

work in the Fund system.

The Artistic Fund, just like the full-time staff of the Union, is maintained by the income from its enterprises. In addition, it receives two per cent of the cost of any work of art sold with its assistance. The Fund also employs non-members of the Union and folk artists.

The Fund supplies artists in every field with raw materials, and builds art shops, guest-houses for artists, everyday service facilities, exhibition halls, showrooms and workshops. It also provides artists with sick benefits and ensures old-age pensions.

The Fund network, with its 500 organizations and enterprises, employs more than 62,000 people, from artists to general workers.

So, there are two levels of artistic life, as it were. The Union of Artists is engaged in purely creative activity, organizing exhibitions both inside and outside the country, arranging meetings and discussions on creative activity, publishing magazines and popularizing fine arts, while the Artistic Fund, working under its direction, constitutes the economic foundation for that diversified artistic life.

Union of Soviet Architects

Founded in 1932.
Membership over 20,000

The Union of Soviet Architects is a public creative organization embracing prof-

essionally qualified architects who are actively engaged in architectural, building, re-

search or teaching work. In some cases the Union also admits prominent specialists in kindred professions, scientists and artists, who have substantially contributed to the development of architecture.

The Union funds are chiefly made up of membership dues, deductions from designing outfits which employ architects and proceeds from various contests.

The latest Eighth Congress of Architects in June 1987 was marked by an atmosphere of very serious dissatisfaction with their performance. They were criticized for designing faceless, standardized apartment houses, for creating an environment unacceptable to man, for destroying relics of the past in putting up new buildings, for their inability, and at times reluctance, to correctly combine new housing estates with the old ones.

The architects did not deny their guilt. Speakers at the Congress, however, also point-

ed to the obstacles which today's architects cannot overcome on their own. Architecture has been separated from art: architects have had no opportunity for artistic creation for the past 30 years. The prestige of the profession has declined.

The State Committee for Construction for decades refused to acknowledge the importance of architecture as an art and ignored the ideological and artistic problems involved. The architect was given no time for the "throes of creation," for inspiration.

It was demanded that the architect should be granted managerial status so that he could be the genuine director of the entire construction process and not remain totally subordinate to the builders.

The Congress adopted encouraging resolutions which should help the development of architectural creative endeavour and enhance the role of the architect in society.

Union of Soviet Composers

Founded in 1932.
Membership 3,000

This Union embraces professional composers and musicologists. In principle its structure is no different from that of other unions of professional people. The Union has the Music Fund which has considerable financial resources and property, formed out of deductions from the royalties paid to composers for the per-

formance of their works. That makes up about five million roubles a year or about half of the Fund's revenue. A large income is derived from various enterprises belonging to the Fund which function in dozens of cities throughout the Union Republics. Finally, its financial resources are also formed out of membership dues (six rou-

bles a year), although they make up an insignificant percentage.

All creatively active composers and musicologists can claim assistance from the Fund. In some cases assistance is also given to young composers who are not yet Union members.

A composer can receive a loan to be refunded in one year when he is working on a new piece of music. A refundable loan is also granted for two years for purchasing a musical instrument, and both refundable and non-refundable loans are provided in case of financial difficulties.

The Fund also pays for composers' professional business trips when they familiarize themselves with the life of cities and villages, gather musical folklore, arrange recitals of their new works, cooperate

with theatres and concert organizations, and assist amateur talent groups.

The state has given the Union of Soviet Composers and the Music Fund, just like the other unions of professional people, the right to build and maintain their own apartment houses, office buildings, guest-houses and holiday hotels, rest-and-cure centres, clinics, country houses, boarding houses for elderly musicians and health-building camps for children. The Fund has its own publishing houses, libraries, gramophone record libraries, sheet music shops, printshops, recording studios and workshops for the repair of musical instruments. Just like the funds of the other professional unions, the Music Fund is exempt from all government and local taxation.

Union of Soviet Journalists

Founded in 1959,
Membership over 85,000

This Union is the largest association of professional people in the country.

Its main task is to help make improvements in the mass media, raise the journalists' professional skills, develop their creative initiative, sum up and disseminate the best experience of the Soviet press.

The Union admits professional journalists from the press, radio and television, news agencies and publishing houses, as well as news photo-

graphers and artists. An applicant must have high professional skills and have some printed publications to his credit as a journalist. As an exception, the Union may also admit those who, while not permanently employed in the mass media, have displayed high journalistic skills and actively and regularly take part in the work of newspapers, magazines, radio or television.

In 1987 the Central Committee of the CPSU and the

Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution on measures to extend the material facilities of the Union of Soviet Journalists and improve its operating conditions. The Soviet Journalists' Fund was set up. Beginning from 1988

the Union is to receive investments for improving and extending its material and technical facilities, and the construction of guest-houses, holiday hotels and holiday centres.

Union of Soviet Cinema Workers

**Founded in 1965.
Membership over 6,500**

This is a comparatively young organization of professional people. Its founding Congress was held in November 1965. In keeping with the Charter, endorsed by the Congress, a Fund was also set up to promote the members' creative activity and to give them financial and other everyday assistance. The sources of the Fund are membership dues and deductions from the proceeds made by the office publicizing the art of Soviet film, from lectures, magazines, workshops, etc. The Fund is used to finance professional business trips, low-cost reservations at the guest-houses for artists, and to give both refundable and non-refundable loans. Assistance from the Fund is also given to particularly talented young specialists who are not Union members, but who have graduated from the Institute of Cinematography or the Higher Courses of Stage Direction.

At the latest, Fifth Congress of Cinema Workers held in May 1986 the key issue was the

restructuring of the cinema and developing its base model. The administrative methods of managing film-making are to be replaced with economic ones combining the principles of state control and public activity. The reform in the cinema means creative and economic autonomy for the studios, democratic forms of decision-making and creating the most favourable conditions for talented artists.

The new model clearly defines the functions of the State Committee of the USSR for Cinematography and those of the Union. The former holds production facilities and can exercise the strategic management of the industry. For instance, it forecasts the work to be done by the studios and coordinates their activities. The State Committee also deals with personnel training and filling government orders. Full responsibility for making a film, from conception to production, rests with the studio.

The base model puts an end

to the situation in which an artist was defenceless before a bureaucrat and gives full play to individual endeavour. The Cinema Fund is also facing new tasks. It is now going to influence the creative process itself, supporting those who are experimenting and search-

ing for new methods in the cinema.

This new model and the atmosphere of openness are helpful in many other ways too. Film workers now have a vested interest in dealing with acute problems because they solve them themselves.

Union of Soviet Theatrical Workers

Founded in 1986.
Membership over 50,000

In late 1986 the theatrical societies already existing in the Union Republics pooled their efforts to form the Union of Soviet Theatrical Workers. The All-Union Conference held in Moscow in May 1987 adopted the Charter of this new organization of professional people.

The new Union not only has extensive rights. It also has great responsibility in directing the creative process. The future of the theatre is now decided by the people of the theatre themselves and not by bureaucrats.

One of the key issues now is a kind of reform in the theatre, a comprehensive theatrical experiment. The idea is to give companies broad autonomy in creative, organizational and financial matters.

The Charter of the Union regulates its relations with the Ministry of Culture of the USSR and its international activities, in particular, the right to send Soviet theatrical work-

ers abroad and receive their counterparts from other countries.

The Union has helped to set up a new theatre in Moscow called the Theatre of Friendship of the Peoples of the USSR. The idea is to stage the best performances from the Union Republics there as well as those of foreign companies. The company which was given the honour of opening the first season at the Theatre of Friendship of the Peoples of the USSR was the Shota Rustaveli Georgian Academic Theatre. It staged *King Lear* in a production by Robert Sturua.

The Union is also to help co-ordinate the activities of the theatres in the Union Republics and promote their ties. Among its short-term plans is a scheme for holding a world theatrical festival in Moscow every four years, which is an old dream for many theatrical personalities.

Union of Soviet Designers

Founded in 1987.
Membership about 2,000.

This is the country's youngest union of professionals. The decision to set it up was made by the Designers' Congress in Moscow in April 1987, which also endorsed its Charter.

Design in the Soviet Union has travelled a long and thorny path. It was founded in the 1920s by such prominent artists as Vladimir Tatlin, Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko, El Lisitsky and Lyubov Popova, to mention just a few, who called themselves representatives of "production art." They were supported by constructivist architects as well as by such cultural personalities as the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, the theatrical director Vsevolod Meyerhold and the composer Dmitry Shostakovich. So "production art" was born as a cultural movement in the stream of new artistic endeavour. But it was isolated from industry, and industry itself was in a shambles in those days. Following the long years of World War I, the Civil War and foreign intervention,* the burning issue of the day was to put out every-

day consumer goods, of which there was an acute shortage, and not to promote "production art."

When realistic tendencies, in their most simplistic interpretation, began to get the upper hand in art in the 1930s, the "productionists" were in general labelled as "formalists" and their movement was ostracized. Engineering design, however, especially in transport, did make some progress. The first streamlined locomotives came into being. The first underground railway line laid in Moscow was marked by rather modest and expressive beauty. The design of underground railway cars has stood the test of time and basically remains the same to this day.

Design in transport also continued to develop successfully after World War II. The Soviet-made Pobeda car with a completely new body form without flaps over the wheels proved to be ahead of the world trends in car manufacture and sparked off numerous imitations.

The All-Union Institute of Technical Aesthetics was set up for the first time in 1962. The bulletin *Tekhnicheskaya Estetika* (Technical Aesthetics) began to come out in the early 1960s, later to turn into a monthly with the same title. By the time the Designers'

* The Civil War and foreign intervention in Soviet Russia (1918-1920)—the struggle of workers and peasants against the forces of external and internal counter-revolution.

Congress was convened the country already had a whole string of designing outfits such as artistic groups and departments at factory level and specialized designing offices.

Besides two industrial art schools of higher learning in Moscow and Leningrad, other higher art schools also began to teach industrial design as well as the design of household items from the early 1960s. Such schools are situated in Tbilisi, Lvov, Riga, Kharkov, Minsk, Alma-Ata and other cities.

The need for pooling the designers' creative efforts has become particularly acute in view of expanding trade and economic relations, the emergence of joint enterprises and the development of export trade. The formation of another union of professional people brought the long-awaited democratic principles into the development of design and strengthened the designers' prestige. It is helping to raise the artistic level of Soviet industrial products and make them more competitive.

It seems that there has never been a case in world practice when fashion designers of two countries shared their plans and developed new collections on a parity basis. This unprecedented experiment, however, has now become possible—it was initiated by the Union of Soviet Designers and the American Owen & Breslin Company.

Cultural Foundation of USSR

This public organization was set up in November 1986 on the initiative of prominent men of art and science backed by the wide sectors of the public. Its founders are about 50 public organizations and government offices, including unions of professional people, large museums, the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Novosti Press Agency, to mention just a few.

The chief aim of the Foundation is to assimilate, reveal and augment the historical and cultural treasures in the country. The idea is to make better use of the wealth of national and world culture for meeting present-day needs and promoting the high intellectuality of the population and their best moral qualities. These activities include care for historical and cultural monuments, assistance for gifted youngsters, the aesthetic education of young people and support for various good undertakings.

Many of the Foundation's events, such as charity con-

certs, auctions of works of art and exhibitions, have been arranged on the initiative of the general public. Incidentally, the Foundation has a "bank of initiatives" accepting interesting suggestions.

The activities of the Foundation are based on the idea that citizens should play a direct part in attaining the concrete objectives of cultural development. They have the right to combine the roles of spectators and listeners with a direct involvement in artistic life.

The Foundation has three sources of revenue. They are contributions from the founders, income from exhibitions, production and the publishing business, and also donations and gifts from Soviet and foreign citizens. The Foundation has its own account in the State Bank of the USSR (No. 702) as well as another account, No. 70200002, in the Bank for External Economic Activity.

The Foundation is working on the basis of long-term pro-

grammes. They cover the problems of cultural heritage and the present, the revival of the traditions of the study of local lore, the development of folk crafts, folklore, etc. One of the programmes is called "Pushkin in the Hearts of the Generations." Another programme, "Youth and Culture," deals with the aesthetic and moral upbringing of the younger generation and supports everything that is healthy in various youth movements.

The Foundation's plans include organizing patronage over the monuments of national culture outside the Soviet Union.

The organizations' inter-

national ties make it possible to give Soviet people greater access to the achievements of world culture while familiarizing the public in other countries with the Soviet Union's cultural wealth. One way of doing this is to exchange exhibitions. In addition, the Foundation assists efforts to return to the country works of art, archives and other relics of national culture which are now abroad. The Foundation cooperates with UNESCO, the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture, the European Cultural Foundation and many other international and national cultural organizations.

Folk Crafts

There are about 200 folk crafts in the Soviet Union and more than 500 associations for craftsmen. Their membership is very diverse, varying from several dozen to several thousand.

Specialists with an artistic education, including those in decorative and applied art, are trained at 16 schools of higher learning. Besides them, there are also 10 specialized secondary schools and their network is going to expand. The Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Turkmenia have their own art schools which are doing a good job. However, there is a strong gravitation towards folk art; the demand for it is very high and growing every year. That is why vocational schools are now playing an important role in this field. Their students are taught concrete types of folk art such as wood and bone carving, miniature painting, embroidery and carpet making. Such schools are functioning in areas which already have developed folk crafts.

A number of general edu-

cational schools, besides giving their graduates secondary education, also provide them with certificates in various trades, for instance, the certificate of a "master-engraver." At practical lessons pupils are taught various types of folk art. This experience is widely disseminated.

The art of Palekh lacquered miniature painters is known not only in the Soviet Union but also far beyond. The village of Palekh is situated in Ivanovo Region, northeast of Moscow. The ancestors of the present-day craftsmen were icon painters. In the 19th century, however, their art fell into decline under the pressure of serial production. In fact, it was doomed. And it seemed to many that the 1917 October Socialist Revolution would bring the end nearer. The revolution, however, breathed new life into the ancient Russian art. The Palekh masters began to look for new forms of application for their traditional craft.

In 1924 several farmers set

up an Association of Ancient Painting, which marked the birth of present-day Palekh. In the very same year variously-shaped painted lacquered boxes made in that village created a furore at the International Exhibition in Venice. Later they made a triumphant tour of such European capitals as Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and London, and also visited New York. Since then "Russian lacquers"—thousands of caskets, powder cases and snuff boxes—have been going to 50 countries every year.

Earlier Palekh was just a village. Now it is called an "academy." It has four museums, a secondary school, an art school and art workshops. Millions are made in foreign currency from the sale of lacquered miniatures. More than 160,000 tourists and foreign guests visit Palekh every year.

When people in other countries speak of "Russian lacquers," they usually mean Palekh's art. Any casket with a miniature is described as made in Palekh. It would be more correct, however, to consider Fedoskino, a small village near Moscow, the birthplace of the lacquered miniature. This craft has been developing there for about 200 years now. Furthermore, craftsmen in Palekh paint in tempera while their counterparts in Fedoskino use oil. Perhaps, there is only one thing common to both the famous crafts: their items are more and

more difficult to come by. They are in great demand both inside and outside the Soviet Union.

Painted ceramics from the town of Gzhel near Moscow are no less popular. The local production association puts out about two million of them a year. Most of them come out in small series. There are also unique, hand-made china services as well as tiles for stoves and fireplaces. Large trading firms in 26 countries, filling orders from their customers, regularly buy Gzhel chinaware decorated with attractive blue paintings.

Articles made by folk craftsmen in the villages of Kubachi and Untsukul in Daghestan, in the Caucasus, are also quite popular both in the Soviet Union and other countries. In general, the Caucasus is famous for its chasers and goldsmiths.

The Central Asian Republics boast excellent craftsmen specializing in gold embroidery, carpet making, pottery, and bone carving. The art of blue ceramics once well known in Fergana, Uzbekistan, has now been revived.

Among the chief attractions at recent exhibitions have been chased articles from Buryatiya, an Autonomous Republic in Eastern Siberia.

The drive to popularize the achievements of folk art is also gaining momentum. Over the past five years there have been more than 400 folk art shows

in the Soviet Union and over 50 exhibitions in other countries.

Of course, there are problems in this field, too. A string of folk crafts have got "under the wheels" of industrial progress—they are being absorbed by the souvenir industry. Excessive mechanization in some of the crafts is also posing a danger. In addition, a number of folk crafts find themselves under the supervision of various ministries which have nothing to do with creative arts. This state of affairs is actively opposed by the general public, the Union of Soviet Artists, the Academy of Arts of the USSR and other organizations.

There is a view that works of folk art "do not sell" and that shops are overstocked with them. In fact, however, year after year the demand for works of traditional folk arts—Khokhloma and Gorodets paintings, lacquered miniatures from Kholui, Mstera and Fedoskino, Zhostov's trays, Rostov's enamel and hand-knitted downy shawls from Orenburg—is not met. In the meantime, millions of roubles worth of machine-made em-

broidery and fancy cloths, chiefly made by a photoprinting method, have not indeed been sold. Mechanization has turned them into mass-produced goods which are in little demand.

Some of the folk crafts have been "industrialized" so much that it is hardly possible to bring them back to the old system of workshops or studios, and sometimes there is no need for that at all. A number of items of folk art serve purely utilitarian purposes. Wouldn't it be simpler then to use printed or stamped patterns in this case? However, there must be a section of time-honoured manual production alongside the machine line so that artists can carry on the traditions of their craft.

The public is demanding a radical solution to the problem of folk crafts. What they need is a single body capable of supplying them with raw materials and equipment, arranging the study of traditions and the training of specialists. That is precisely how the problem is formulated by the USSR Academy of Arts and the Ministry of Trade. And today there is reason to believe that it will be solved.

Amateur Talent Groups

The development of amateur talent activity is inseparably linked with the problem of free time. This time can be conditionally divided into three parts: leisure, entertainment and development.

According to the Institute of Sociological Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the "amount of free time" in the Soviet Union is no less than in the United States and greater than in other highly developed capitalist countries. However, what counts is not how much free time you have but how you use it. More and more leisure is becoming a powerful stimulus for the development of talent and broadening one's outlook.

The purport and the qualitatively new feature of socialist culture is that it is not only created for the entire population, but also by their own efforts. And, what is more, they have the opportunity to go in for direct creative endeavour in the cultural field. A striking case in point is the development of large-scale

amateur talents in the Soviet Union, without which the advancement of present-day Soviet art would be simply inconceivable.

According to statistics, over 30 million people* go in for amateur activities in the Soviet Union. In fact, however, the number of those involved in one way or another is much greater.

Amateur activities are chiefly concentrated at community centres. Every factory, every big village has such a centre known as a club or a house of culture, a kind of "diversified" leisure complex taking into account the various interests of workers, collective farmers and members of their families.

The development of amateur talents is in line with the tasks and objectives of the socialist state. Article 27 of the USSR Constitution says that "in the USSR the development of the

* As of January 1, 1988 the population of the USSR was 284,500,000.



In the foyer of the Palace of Culture of the Uralmash Production Association (Sverdlovsk).

professional, amateur and folk arts is encouraged in every way.”

Although it is not the aim of amateur talent groups to compete with professional artists, many folk companies have reached such a high standard of artistry that they are now on a par with professional teams.

The community centres' contribution to providing leisure facilities for the popu-

lation cannot be assessed solely according to the data about the development of amateur talents. People spend almost as much time visiting community centres as they do going to the theatre, the cinema, the circus, all types of concerts given by professional performers, and museums. One has to consider the hundreds of millions of those attending lectures, youth balls, parties or dances, discussions, get-togethers devoted to



A contest of ballroom dancing at the Palace of Culture in the town of Pushchino near Moscow.

special occasions and theatricalized festivals, as well as audiences at the dramatized performances and concerts given by amateur talent groups. According to statistics, sixty million people come into contact with professional art

only at community centres and hundreds of millions come to see films there.

Plans are afoot to build about 1,300 district social centres and more than 60,000 other community centres by the year 2000.

The Soviet Union has more than 138,000 community centres and 800,000 amateur talent groups, large and small, including nearly 100,000 drama troupes, more than 90,000 music groups, and over 80,000 dance companies. Every day they put on 10,000 performances attended by over two million spectators. The country boasts 500,000 registered amateur artists, that is, those who take part in exhibitions, and perhaps almost as many "lone artists" who come to the community centres only for advice.

Contests, Festivals and Fairs

The International Tchaikovsky Competition. Competitions figure prominently in the country's musical life. Dozens of them are held every year. Among the contestants are choirs, ensembles, singers, dancers, pianists, violinists and other musicians. Some of the contests have become traditional, as it were, such as the All-Union Glinka Competition of Vocalists or the All-Union Competition of Variety Show Actors. There are also new contests as, for instance, the All-Union Rakhmaninov Competition of Pianists, started several years ago.

But of course the International Tchaikovsky Competition is the chief attraction for Soviet music lovers and musicians around the world. It is held in Moscow every four years and is regarded as the most prestigious review of young musical talent in the world. Figures speak louder than words about its popularity. While there were little more than 60 musicians at the First Competition held in

1958, the Eighth Competition in 1986 already attracted over 400.

Among the winners are such outstanding pianists, violinists, cellists and singers as Van Cliburn, John Ogdon, Mikhail Pletnev, Victor Tretyakov, Vladimir Spivakov, Yelena Obraztsova, Yevgeny Nesterenko and Vladimir Atlantov.

The International Ballet Competition was held for the first time in 1969 and since then young ballerinas and dancers from all over the world have been coming to Moscow every four years. They perform on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre. Among the judges are such eminent personalities of world choreography as the legendary Galina Ulanova and Chief Ballet Master of the Bolshoi Ballet Yuri Grigovich.

The International Shostakovich Competition of Stringed Quarters originated in 1987. The venue is Leningrad. It is also expected to take place



In front of the Moscow Conservatoire during the International Tchaikovsky Competition.

One of the traditions of the contest is for both participants and judges to take a trip to Tchaikovsky's museum house in Klin (near Moscow). In memory of the visit they plant a tree in the garden of the museum.



every four years. Interest in playing chamber music, especially old chamber music, is now growing everywhere. This has also come to include the best works for a quartet.

In 1987 the first prize and the gold medal went to the quartet of the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of the Soviet Republic of Georgia. Incidentally, this interesting quartet has yet another award to its credit, the Grand Prix of a contest in France.

The Moscow International Film Festival is held every two years. In 1987 it took place for the 15th time and that year became a turning point in its history. Fundamental changes have raised its programme to a qualitatively new level dictated by the times. For instance, there will be only four awards in the contest of feature films: the grand prix, a special prize and prizes for the best performance of male and female roles. The number of films submitted to the competition has also been reduced considerably in the interests of art and quality. There were 45 feature films at the last festival. From now on there will be only twenty-seven. The panel of judges is to include only one representative from each country. The festival has become less pompous, but more creative.

The 1987 festival attracted nearly 100 countries. Among the film stars were Giulietta Masina, Marcello Mastroian-



The 15th International Film Festival in Moscow (1987). Federico Fellini and Karen Shakhnazarov (left) after the presentation of the awards for their films.

ni, Vanessa Redgrave, Nastassja Kinski, Sean Connery and Gérard Depardieu.

Over 370 representatives from film, television and video companies as well as state cinema organizations of 72 countries took part in the business activities of the film market.

The Grand Prix of the 15th Moscow Film Festival was presented to Federico Fellini for the picture "Interview." The special prize went to the Soviet director Karen Shakhnazarov for his production of "The Messenger."

The International Film Festival of Asian, African and Latin American Countries in Tashkent also enjoys considerable popularity.

It is **art festivals** that make it possible to get a closer view of the Soviet Union, its cultural wealth and multinational arts. There are several such festivals.

The spring festival of muses, "Moscow Stars," is held in Moscow every year in May. Shortly before the New Year the capital sees the opening of the "Russian Winter" festival.

In the early summer, when night practically never falls in Leningrad, the city holds its festival of "White Nights" to mark the poetical mood of the season.

These regular art festivals are extremely popular. They also attract crowds of foreign tourists. The programmes include the best of Soviet culture: opera, ballet and drama performances, the appearances of various choirs, concerts of symphony and variety show orchestras and solo performers.

The Baltic Style. This is the international folklore festival of the Baltic countries. From 1987, it is to take place every summer in the capital of one of the Soviet Baltic Republics: Vilnius (Lithuania), Riga (Latvia) or Tallin (Estonia).

The first festival was held in

Vilnius. Besides 3,000 Soviet singers, dancers and instrumentalists, performers from Sweden, Norway, the GDR, West Germany, Poland, as well as Hungary, France and the United States took part in it. The ages of the performers ranged from five and a half to 81. The festivals' openness and spontaneity—anyone who wanted to could take part in it—is what made it so wonderful.

The Moscow International Book Fair is a representative biennial forum started in 1977. Its motto is "Books for Peace and Progress." Each time more and more countries, firms and publishing houses take part in the event. While the first fair was attended by 1,535 firms from 67 countries and three international organizations, in 1987 already more than 3,000 publishing houses from 103 countries and 14 international organizations put their products on display. Among them were nearly all of the biggest publishing concerns of Western Europe and the United States.

The Fair is of particular interest to publishers from the developing countries, for it offers them ample opportunities to maintain business contacts with their counterparts in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries as well as between themselves.

International Cultural Exchanges

The Soviet Union maintains cultural relations at different levels with 140 countries. About 20,000 musicians, actors, artists and writers, representing the culture of all the Soviet Republics, travel abroad every year. And more than 150 companies and over 200 solo performers from various lands come to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union adheres unswervingly to the Helsinki spirit in its cultural policy. Its actions in this field are based on three principles now shared by the majority of the world community: cultural exchange should be an exchange of genuinely intellectual values; it should not be subject to the whims of a time-serving policy; in determining the specific content of cultural exchange every state has the right to decide independently what does and what does not correspond to its moral concepts and standards.

The Soviet Union's international contacts have broadened even more in recent years.

Not only outstanding musicians, the famous actors of the Bolshoi Theatre, the Beryozka Dance Company, the Moscow Theatre in Taganka and the circus, but also rock groups and variety singers go on foreign tours. And our borders are also open to representatives of different trends in foreign art.

The Western countries account for nearly a third of the Soviet Union's cultural exchanges. Since the Helsinki Final Act was signed in 1975, more than 130,000 Soviet cultural and artistic personalities and 2,148 performing teams have gone to European countries, the US and Canada alone, and 673 exhibitions have also been held there.

Soviet cinema workers are cooperating with their counterparts in more than 100 countries. They hold what they call "weeks of films," when they exchange films and show them for a week, have showings of retrospective films and those devoted to particular subjects, exchange films on a commer-

cial basis, co-produce films with their foreign counterparts, and also exchange creative artists. Every year the Soviet Union takes part in 400 international film festivals and other shows abroad. All in all, the Soviet Union annually sends about 200 feature and documentary films to other countries.

Television is also a major factor in cultural exchanges. In 1975 the State Committee of the USSR for Television and Radio Broadcasting maintained contacts with 50 television organizations in foreign countries. At present it keeps in touch with about 70 television and more than 40 radio organizations. These ties are formalized by long-term agreements and working protocols. Every year the Committee shows its productions at more than 40 television festivals and contests abroad. A good form of cooperation is the co-production of television films with the participation of Italy, France, Spain, Finland, Britain and the United States.

Soviet television provides viewers with ample opportunities to learn more about life abroad. About 3,000 programmes on this subject have been shown over the past two years alone. Their total

running time is over 1,000 hours. Over the same time more than a thousand representatives from Western television and radio corporations have visited the Soviet Union to prepare material on the spot. Western film crews have been assisted in making more than 600 television films and reportages about the Soviet Union—five times more than in 1975.

There is every reason to say that people in the Soviet Union know much more about life in the West than people in capitalist countries know about Soviet life. And, as before, the Soviet Union continues to publicize the cultural achievements of other nations at home on an incomparably wider scale than the capitalist countries. The Western countries, however, are showing an increasing tendency for an equitable and balanced cultural exchange. This is an encouraging development. And we owe it, in no small measure, to the changes in Soviet society and the increasing foreign interest in Soviet arts. One of the cases in point is the participation of numerous representatives from various countries in the international fairs, contests and festivals held in the Soviet Union.

Culture, the Messenger of Peace and Goodwill

On the initiative of UNESCO, the 41st session of the UN General Assembly proclaimed the period between 1988 and 1997 the World Decade for Cultural Development. The Soviet Union backed the idea of this important humanitarian action. The Soviet public shares the main objective of the UNESCO programme—to step up the collective efforts of the world community in the cultural sphere for the fuller development of the intellectual potential of every nation and every individual.

In the Soviet Union a National Committee has been set up for conducting the affairs of the World Decade for Cultural Development. Among its members are prominent public figures, scientists, writers and artists.

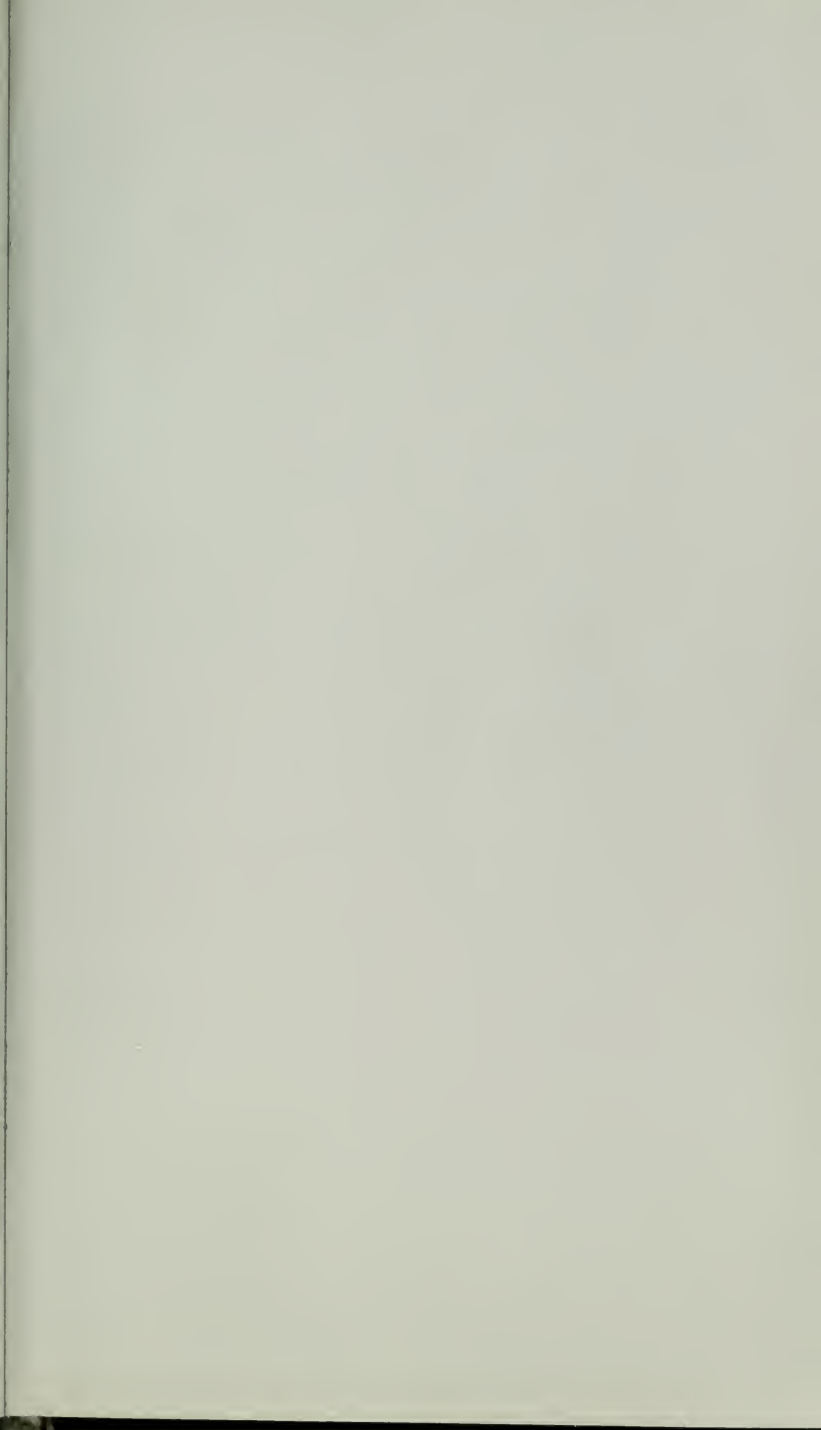
The comprehensive Soviet programme envisages holding international music and dance festivals, art and other exhibitions, meetings of young writers and an international folklore festival. A feature of

the Soviet plan is that it has linked these actions with the current perestroika and democratization of every sphere of life in the country. The programmes of festivals and shows have been compiled without any limitations on the grounds of taste or discrimination with regard to any particular phenomenon or stylistic trend.

The aim of the Decade, however, is not confined to holding festivals, exhibitions and congresses. What is necessary is to raise the people's consciousness to a qualitatively new level. The main thing is unity, which is still lacking, even among the intellectuals. It is necessary to attract the attention of everyone working in the sphere of economic, social and cultural development, on national and international levels, to the significance of culture for the life of all peoples and national progress, to the role of international cultural cooperation as a means of mutual intellectual enrichment and better understanding

among nations. The world Decade for Cultural Development should, from the Soviet point of view, become a powerful stimulus in the struggle for

peace and social progress, for rapprochement and friendship among nations, for the peaceful future of mankind.





In 1988-1989 the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House will also be issuing the following brochures in the series "This Is the USSR":
Peoples of the Soviet Union
Sports
Power Engineering
Ecology
Industry



Gavriil Petrosian (b. 1935) is the Novosti Press Agency's commentator on cultural affairs and a member of the Union of Journalists of the USSR.

Cultural Life

This brochure is about various aspects of cultural life in the USSR, the achievements and problems of multinational Soviet culture.



Novosti Press Agency Publishing House