

VLADIMIR LISOVSKY

SOVIET STUDENTS



questions
and
answers

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Novosti Press Agency
Publishing House
Moscow 1983



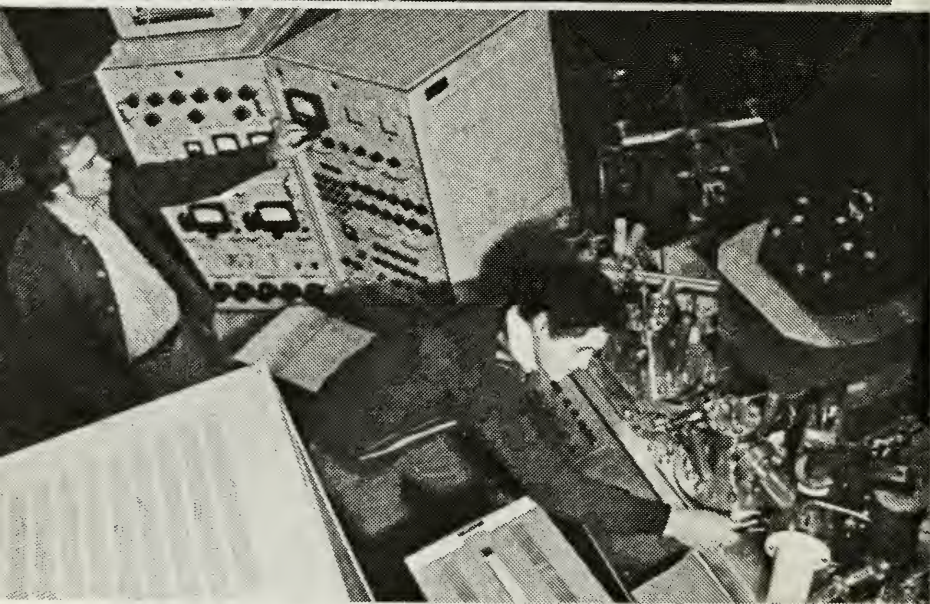
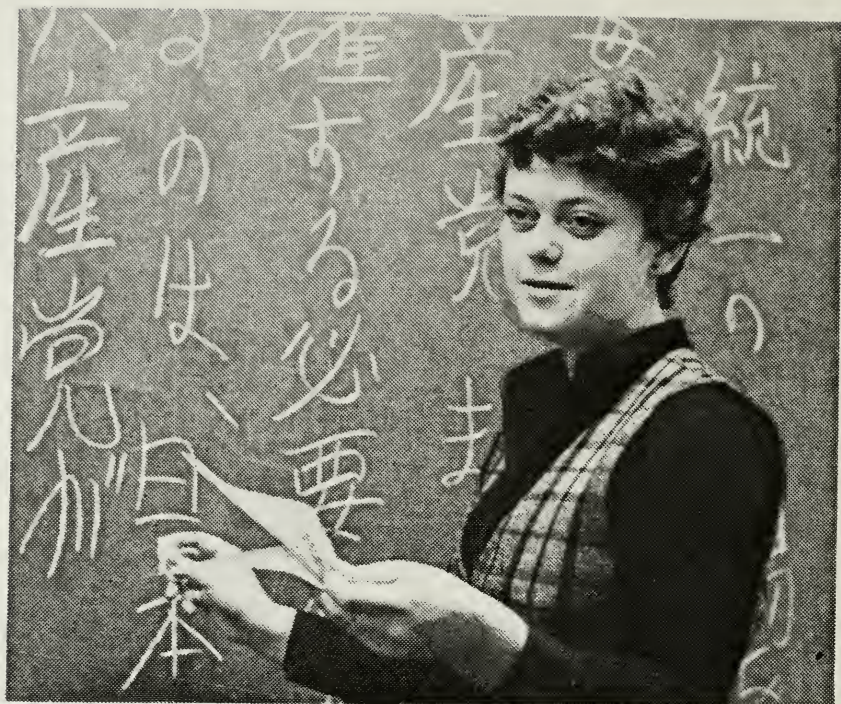


Students from Uzbekistan who joined the student construction teams working on the BAM railway in Eastern Siberia, farms in the central areas of Russia and other priority building projects. These young Uzbeks were delegates to the 19th Congress of the Young Communist League in May 1982.



Moscow University, the largest in the Soviet Union, has 29,000 students. Its teaching and research staff includes 126 members and corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences and more than a thousand professors and doctors of science. Lectures by Academician Andrei Kolmogorov of the Department of Mechanics and Mathematics are very popular.







The Asia and Africa Institute
of Moscow University.
Top left: a student from the
Japanese studies group.
Bottom: a Moscow
University laboratory.

Vajko Vooremaa, USSR
Champion and twice junior
World Champion in boat
racing, is a student of the
Tallinn Polytechnic Institute
(top right photo).



Twins Lyudmila Vasina and Larisa Novitskaya study at the Moscow Architectural Institute.

The history department at Moscow University. Here archeology students are taught the practical skills they will need at future digs as well as theory.





Students at Cheboksary University (Chuvash ASSR) preparing for their examinations.

Most students eat at canteens, which saves time, but some like to cook. A typical kitchen in a hostel (top right).

Students from other towns and cities live in hostels, two or three to a room. Yuri Konovalov and Victor Orlov, at the Moscow Institute of the Petrochemical and Gas Industry, studying for a test.





Basketball is the favourite sport of students.

Student actors (right) at the Moscow Aviation Institute with bills advertising performances by their drama group "Rossia".

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Some Moscow University students helped to build a hospital last summer (left). Others worked on the university grounds (top right).



One of the entries at a student song competition was a group from Moscow University (bottom right).



Students at Kazan University prepare for a city-wide youth festival.

Below: "No to nuclear death!" was one of the slogans at a peace rally held at Moscow University.



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Translated from the Russian by Sergei CHULAKI

Translation edited by Selena KOTLOBAI

FROM THE PUBLISHERS

We have received many letters from readers asking about the life of Soviet students and their problems. We have referred these questions to Professor Vladimir Lisovsky of Leningrad University, a well-known Soviet sociologist, and author of several books about Soviet young people, including *The Student's Personality*, *The Modern Student*, *Sketches for a Portrait* (about the ideals, interests and plans of Soviet youth), and *What It Means to Keep Up With the Times*. Together with Professor Svetlana Ikonnikova he wrote *Youth in Our Time* which was put out by the Novosti Press Agency Publishing House in 1970-71 in nine languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Czech, Slovak, Serbo-Croatian, Polish and Romanian.

The present book contains rich factual material about Soviet higher schools and about Soviet students.

Can anyone enrol in colleges and universities in the Soviet Union?

Any citizen of the USSR with a complete secondary school education can enrol in a higher school provided he has passed the entrance examinations.

One of the principles of Soviet public education is equality of all citizens in getting an education regardless of race or nationality, sex, attitude to religion, property and social status.

While secondary school education is compulsory, college education is not. Not everyone wishing to enrol in a college can do so, for the number of places at Soviet higher educational establishments is regulated in accordance with society's needs for specialists in different fields. The number of applicants per place available at colleges and universities varies, depending on the popularity of the profession in question, on the general demographic situation in the country, and on the number of colleges in a particular town or region. Over the past several years the number of young people seeking admission to technical colleges has been much lower than to liberal arts colleges where there are often as many as 100 applicants for one place.

The age limit for applicants to daytime divisions is 35; for evening and correspondence divisions there are no age restrictions. Education at all higher schools is free of charge.

How can young people find out about the curricula at colleges and universities and about entrance requirements?

All higher educational establishments in the Soviet Union hold "open house" days every year, usually in spring. The exact dates are announced in the papers.

On such days senior pupils of secondary schools can go to any college, find out about the kind of training it offers and about entrance requirements and seek career guidance from members of the faculty. They are taken on a tour of laboratories and various premises and meet with college students.

Komsomol committees at some big universities set up "little faculties" specially for senior pupils of secondary schools. At Leningrad University, for example, the number of pupils attending classes at its ten "little faculties" each year comes to about 2,000. Here they not only find out what courses are offered by different departments at the university but also get a rudimentary knowledge of different subjects. These classes help them to choose their future profession and prepare for entrance examinations. The classes are free of charge and are conducted either by young instructors or by senior students.

Each year about 350 senior pupils of village schools in the Orel Region (Russian Federation) enrol in similar preparatory departments set up at the Teachers' Institute in the city of Orel. Here the classes are conducted by experienced instructors from all departments of the institute. The students study pedagogical theories and learn to work with children.

At the Medical Institute in Minsk, capital of Byelorussia, there is a "Young Medic" club attended by 170 senior pupils of secondary schools. They learn about the latest achievements in medicine and biology and do practical work in groups organized by various departments. They also learn to administer first aid, and do some work as orderlies at clinics attached to the institute and the first-aid station. The more capable of the club members are recommended for admission into the institute. Such recommendations are not obligatory but are taken into consideration by the admission board studying the results of the entrance examinations.

These forms of career guidance have proved extremely helpful to young people.

Are there any privileged groups of applicants to colleges and universities? And if so, who are they?

To enter a college or university one must pass the required entrance examinations. Of those who have passed the examinations preference is given to applicants who have worked for not less than six months in a field related to the subjects taught at the given college. Another privileged group consists of demobbed servicemen. They have often thought more carefully about their choice of a future occupation and take a more serious attitude to studies than pupils just out of secondary schools. However, they need help because over the years of work or army service they may have forgotten some of the things they learned at school. For this purpose most colleges have special preparatory departments for ex-servicemen and workers; this evens out their chances of passing entrance examinations.

Secondary school pupils who graduated with top marks and were awarded a gold medal also enjoy certain privileges. For example, they are required to take only the examination in the subject they intend to specialise in. Those who get the top mark do not need to take the other examinations. Those who get a lower mark (but not lower than point 3 on a 5-point scale; point 3 and point 4 are considered passing marks) must take the examinations in all the other required subjects and are then admitted or rejected like all the other applicants, depending on their individual performance.

There are four examinations which an applicant

is supposed to take. However, if his school-leaving certificate has an average mark of 4.5 points or higher, he needs to take only two of the examinations. And if on these he scores a total of at least 9 points, he is admitted without having to take the other two examinations.

Yet another privileged group consists of the best factory workers and collective farmers who want to improve their knowledge and skill in their field of specialisation and who have the necessary scholastic documents and recommendations from their place of work. They compete for enrolment only among themselves and do not take the entrance examinations together with other applicants.

How would you describe the curricula of Soviet colleges and universities?

The curricula of Soviet colleges and universities, which take into account the latest achievements of science and technology, are aimed at providing students with the necessary amount of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in their chosen profession. Worked out by the Ministry of Education they are uniform and are followed by most higher schools. However, some leading educational establishments in the country have their own curricula. Universities with a large staff of highly qualified instructors draw up curricula generally of a higher academic standard corresponding to their resources.

In 1984, new curricula will be introduced. From 1981 the curricula for first- and second-year students at Leningrad University have provided for a transition from the traditional information-oriented to a problem-solving approach in instruction. Under the new programmes, students have more time for independent work (under the supervision of instructors if necessary) and are encouraged to begin independent research as early as possible. This means that students spend up to 20 per cent of academic time doing independent work. Obligatory classes are thus reduced from 36 hours to 30 hours a week in the junior years and down to 20 hours a week in the senior years.

Is class attendance compulsory at Soviet institutions of higher learning?

Attendance at lectures is obligatory for all students. If a student is regularly absent from classes without good reason, he may be expelled. Every group in each year of studies has a prefect (elected by the students) who keeps track of attendance and reports to the dean's office.

If a student has missed many lectures and classes, he may not be allowed to take the examinations, which means that he may lose his student's allowance during the next term. He can take his examinations only at the next examination session.

In some instances, with the permission of the departments they are enrolled in, students with outstanding academic records may follow an individual study program. Such students have a less rigid schedule and can attend any lectures of their choice. But they must not miss any seminars or laboratory and practice classes.

In spite of strict rules students sometimes cut classes and skip lectures in order to see a film or go to a cafe. This happens especially if the lectures are dull. On the other hand, students sometimes go to lectures that are not included in their program because a particular lecturer is known for his brilliant delivery. For instance, the hall was invariably packed when Professor Ditmar Rosental read his lectures on Russian language and literature at Moscow University. He was one of the authorities in this field and was the author of most of the textbooks on the subject. The same can be said about Academician Andrei Kolmogorov, also

of Moscow University, who is a leading Soviet mathematician. The personality of a lecturer has much to do with student attendance records.

What are "preparatory departments"? Who studies there, and what advantages do such departments offer?

Most colleges and universities in the Soviet Union have preparatory departments which are set up for collective farmers, armymen, demobbed servicemen and workers with a service record of not less than a year, who wish to receive a higher education. The preparatory departments help students to refresh their knowledge in subjects they had studied years before and thus enable them to take the entrance examinations.

The course of study at preparatory departments lasts one year, and at the end of the year the students take their graduation examinations. Those who do well on these examinations are enrolled in the college without having to take the entrance examinations.

Graduates of preparatory departments account for 18 to 20 per cent of the total number of students enrolled in higher educational establishments.

I understand that the Soviet Constitution guarantees the right to education and the right to a choice of an occupation. How realistic is all this?

Article 45 of the Constitution of the USSR reads:

“Citizens of the USSR have the right to education. This right is ensured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education, and broad development of vocational, specialised secondary, and higher education, in which instruction is oriented toward practical activity and production; by the development of extramural, correspondence and evening courses; by the provision of state scholarships and grants and privileges for students; by the free issue of school textbooks; by the opportunity to attend a school where teaching is in the native language; and by the provision of facilities for self-education.”

This constitutional right means that every citizen is entitled to develop his abilities and talents and to have a job that best accords with his inclinations and training.

Article 40 of the Constitution of the USSR guarantees all citizens employment and pay in accordance with the quantity and quality of their work, and not below the state-established minimum, including the right to choose their trade or profession, type of job and work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, with due account of the needs of society.

For young people in this country the problem is not how to get a job in accordance with their specialisation, but rather how to choose, out of thousands of trades and professions available, the one which will become their lifelong occupation.

Young people may develop a liking for a certain occupation largely under the influence of their parents, teachers, friends, the books they read, the television programmes they watch, etc.

In a recent poll carried out in Sverdlovsk among 2,518 parents of schoolchildren, 83.7 per cent of the parents wanted their children to have a higher or specialised secondary education. The high prestige enjoyed by specialists arouses in young people a desire to receive a higher education. This, however, creates certain problems.

It is true that the scientific and technological revolution calls for the training of highly skilled personnel. But Soviet colleges and universities cannot, at least in the foreseeable future, accept all those who wish to enrol, because with the present structure of the Soviet economy the number of mental workers needed constitutes about 12 per cent of the country's able-bodied population. If all young people enrolled in colleges and universities after leaving secondary school, our country would have 2.5 times as many brainworkers as now, and many of them would have to look for jobs outside the field they are trained in.

Of course, choosing a profession is not always easy for a young person since his knowledge of various professions is still very limited. It is therefore important that he should be given occupational guidance so that he can make the best of his talents and energy. The psychological aspect of occupational guidance is also taken into consideration.

That is why psychologists, sociologists, and medical experts devise tests and give recommendations as regards suitable occupations, which are then made practical use of, when a young man chooses a profession.

There are job placement bureaus in every town and rural district in the country. These bureaus receive information on vacancies at factories, plants, organisations, etc., and young people who come here usually have several jobs to choose from. In fact, there is such a wide choice that before making a final decision the job-seeker can consider not only such factors as wages and opportunities to improve his skills and to continue his education, but also how near a prospective job is to his home, the possibility of taking up sports and availability of recreation facilities.

What rights do the national minorities in your country have in getting a higher education?

As said earlier, one of the fundamental principles of public education in the USSR is equality of all citizens in receiving an education, regardless of nationality or race, sex, attitude to religion, and social and property status. This principle has been consistently observed in the Soviet Union.

As is known, many nationalities in Czarist Russia did not even have a written language of their own.

Today each Union and Autonomous Republic has its universities and pedagogical, polytechnical, engineering, agricultural, fine arts and theatrical colleges. In Central Asia and Kazakhstan alone there are 126 higher educational establishments with a total enrolment of more than 700,000 students. Much work is being done to train national personnel for scientific and scholarly work at universities in the Yakut, Chuvash, Mordovian, Udmurt, Chechen-Ingush, Karelian, Bashkir, Daghestan, Mari, Komi and other Autonomous Republics.

Instruction at colleges and universities in the Union Republics is in Russian and in the native languages. Each student is given a choice of the language of instruction.

Altogether there are more than 890 institutions of higher learning in the Soviet Union, with the student body being made up of members of more than 100 big and small nations of the country. All students have equal rights and opportunities. Conditions are created at colleges and universities that enable every student to develop his talents.

Are there any restrictions on enrolment in Soviet institutions of higher learning?

Anyone with a secondary education can enrol in a college or university. The only restriction here is the age limit, and that only for those who want to study in daytime divisions where students under 35 years of age are accepted. There are no age limits for people applying for enrolment in evening or correspondence divisions at the same universities and colleges.

For some professions, there are special requirements concerning the health of an applicant who may be rejected if doctors pronounce him unfit for his future job.

Foreign nationals residing in the Soviet Union can enrol on the same basis as Soviet citizens.

Can a worker get a higher education?

Of course, he can. Young workers can enrol in daytime divisions as well as in the correspondence and evening divisions of colleges and universities. Most of those seeking admission to evening and correspondence divisions are young workers who wish to improve their knowledge and skills. There are more than 2,200,000 such students who combine work with study.

Such worker applicants are entitled to a 15-day unpaid leave for preparing for entrance examinations. This period does not include the time it takes to get to the college in question and back. Out-of-town applicants can stay in college dormitories during the examination period.

Applicants from among factory workers and collective farmers enjoy a number of privileges, as we have already mentioned. If a worker is sent by his factory to study at college full time, with his work interrupted for the duration of the course, the factory pays him an allowance.

In their senior years those who work and study at evening or correspondence divisions of a college or university are entitled to one day off each week for studies and also a four-month paid leave for preparing and defending their diploma project.

Is it true that there are special educational establishments for the privileged part of the intelligentsia?

In the first place, there is no such thing as a privileged part of the intelligentsia in this country. All citizens of the USSR have equal rights and opportunities according to the Constitution.

Secondly, we have no special educational establishments, or special departments in any of our colleges and universities. All those seeking admission to higher educational establishments take entrance examinations in accordance with an established procedure. Certain privileges are enjoyed by young people with a work record (including factory workers and collective farmers), and demobbed servicemen. The preparatory departments at most of our colleges and universities have been set up primarily for those who, after finishing school, have worked for some time and have, naturally, forgotten some of the things they had learned at school. The preparatory departments help these young men and women to fill the gap in their knowledge, also to learn about the latest achievements in science and technology, and to prepare for college life.

What are the entrance requirements of art and music schools and of the liberal arts colleges?

It takes special talents to become a professional actor, a stage director, a painter, or a sculptor. This is why applicants are required to take part in competitions in which future painters and sculptors display their works and future actors and stage directors are given an audition consisting as a rule of three stages. So the more talented of the applicants are selected and the less capable are eliminated. The former take the remaining part of the examinations while the others are excluded from further examinations. Those wishing to enrol in departments of journalism are required to write an essay and a composition and to present to the examination commission their earlier published articles and other literary works.

Many school leavers dream of a movie or stage career without having the talent for it. They are mostly carried away by the "glamour" of the profession. The examinations and contests help eliminate thousands of such applicants and, at the same time, single out the more gifted and promising.

After they have gone through the competitions and have been interviewed by members of the examination commission, the applicants then go on to take the regular entrance examinations.

They say that in summer Soviet students work at building sites. Who and what makes them do that?

Nobody makes them do that. It is a purely voluntary matter. Moreover, far from everybody wishing to join such building teams are accepted. As a matter of fact there are several times as many volunteers for such jobs as there are jobs. That is why students sometimes hold special contests to qualify for joining such teams.

This is how this patriotic movement known as the third or labour semester started. In 1959 the students of the physics department of Moscow University decided to spend their summer vacations building homes and working on virgin lands in North Kazakhstan. Young men and women volunteered to go to Kazakhstan thousands of miles away from home in order to try their mettle and see what they could do. "We shape a new life in the steppes, and the steppes will shape us!" was the motto in those years. That was the romantic period of this movement. Later, in the mid-1960s students put forth another slogan: "The romance of work must also be practical!" Students began to learn building trades since construction projects needed not only unskilled labourers but also specialists. They organised special courses in carpentry and joinery, masonry, house painting and plastering. Summer work by students has since then been planned by leading government bodies, including the State Planning Committee of the USSR.

Each work team is now assigned to a building project and is provided with living accommodation, the necessary equipment, etc.

Work on these building sites is voluntary and the students themselves decide all questions relating to organisation of work, leisure-time activities and performance of everyday chores. They maintain a high level of discipline, each member being accountable for his actions to the whole team. For example, right from the start they decided to introduce "dry law" banning alcoholic drinks. This rule holds to this day.

The students themselves decide how many hours they should work in order to finish the building project on time, how to divide their responsibilities, how to share out the money they have earned and how much should be donated to public organisations such as the Peace Fund.

Now a few words about the motives of the students for joining such work teams. The main motive, according to numerous surveys, is a desire to be of use to society. Other motives include a desire to earn money, to have a good time with friends, to see new places and to put themselves to the test in difficult surroundings.

You may wonder why this form of socially useful labour should appeal to students. In the first place they feel responsible for the work done, they can see the results of their efforts. By the end of the summer vacation each work team has something to show for it: a school, a food store, a cow shed, or a road.

In recent years, more and more students work in summer in the field of their study. For example, in 1980 a group of students, all YCL members, at the Volgograd Civil Engineering College set up the country's first students' building organisation. Here the third labour semester was integrated with the regular academic program, thus enabling students to take turns and work on construction jobs the

year round. This round-the-year labour semester operates on a schedule that enables each student group to spend a month working on the building project that the newly-formed building organisation is responsible for.

The organisation has put up multistory buildings, the building that houses the panorama of the Battle of Stalingrad, the boat station in the river port of Volgograd, and a bridge over the river Don. The organisation carries out complicated technical tasks and helps students acquire theoretical knowledge and practical experience in various fields of civil engineering.

This students' building organisation is still something rather unique, for most students join regular work teams in summer. And, as said earlier, they do so not only in order to earn money. Here is an example. A few years ago the editorial office of the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* received a rather unusual letter. It read in part: "We live in the Azov Children's Home. We have many friends. Recently we have acquired another friend: a whole work team made up of students of the Taganrog Radio Engineering Institute. The team calls itself Arkadi Gaidar* Communist Team. The students invited us to visit them in Taganrog** where we attended a roll-call ceremony held by young pioneers, in which we also took part, and then gave us the keys to a brand-new bus. We couldn't believe our eyes: a real bus! After all, a bus is not just a television set! It must have cost a lot! The students said that they paid for the bus with the money they had earned by working on the con-

* Arkadi GAIDAR (1904-1941) is one of the best loved Soviet children's writers. He died in battle in 1941, the first year of the Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany.

** A port on the Sea of Azov in the south of Russia.

struction project of the Azov baby food factory—pouring concrete, digging the foundation pit, and laying bricks. One of the boys asked them: 'Didn't you want the money yourselves?' 'Yes,' said the students. 'But you need it even more than we do! We like our new friends, the students. They come to see us quite often, and we go to Taganrog to see them in our new bus.'

There are 62 volunteer student work teams in the Rostov Region. Eight of them work on construction sites, and the other 54 work on farms.

Some work teams include, besides Soviet students, students from other countries who are enrolled in Soviet colleges and universities.

How do Soviet college graduates go about finding jobs? Are there any guarantees that they will have jobs in the field of their specialisation?

They don't have to look for jobs. A few months before graduation a student is offered a choice of jobs in line with his specialisation. This is done with account taken of his personal inclinations and wishes, whether he is married, and other circumstances.

The Soviet economy develops in a planned way, and its requirements for specialists in different fields are taken into consideration over a long term. The country's uniform public education system is geared to these requirements which are specified each year by government ministries and departments.

This is how it works. The ministries and departments send job placement requests to all colleges and universities where they are considered by state commissions made up of representatives of the relevant ministry and of the college or university (rector, dean and leaders of public organisations functioning within the college or university, including members of the student self-governing board).

The senior student graduate gets a job placement request and is told about the conditions offered by the factory or organisation such as wages, the type of work he is expected to do, living accommodation, etc.

Travel expenses to the organisation where the graduate is to work are paid by that organisation,

which also provides him with what is called a re-settlement allowance amounting to half of his future monthly pay. After the student has graduated he is entitled to a vacation which is also paid for by the organisation where he is to work. Under the law the same organisation is obliged to provide the young specialist with living accommodation. Incidentally, if the organisation fails to fulfill any of its commitments to the young specialist, that is, if it does not provide him with living accommodation or if it pays a salary or wages lower than the amount previously agreed on, he can break the contract and demand a new job placement. If the organisation honours all the terms under the contract, the young specialist is to work there for three years during which according to law the administration cannot dismiss him.

After a person graduates from college and starts working, what opportunities does he have to improve his skills?

After a person starts working he never really stops improving his skills. The Soviet system of public education takes into account the requirements of the scientific and technological revolution and creates the necessary conditions for working people to upgrade their skills. In this case they either stop working altogether or combine work with study.

Specialists with a higher education can take a refresher course at any one of the more than 50 specialised institutes and their branches of which there are 80. Engineers, agronomists, doctors and teachers take a refresher course about once every five years. The administration of factories and other organisations encourages this because it needs skilled personnel. Refresher courses are free of charge. At every factory, plant and research establishment there is a council of young specialists (a public organisation) which helps college graduates just starting to work to adjust to their new surroundings and to improve their knowledge and skills.

Can a student change his field of study, and can he transfer from one college or university to another?

After a student has completed the daytime division of a college, he can, if he wishes, after working for about a year, apply for admission to the evening or correspondence division of any college. In some cases, where for health or other reasons a young graduate cannot work in his line of specialisation, he can study another subject at the daytime division in some other college.

Yes, a student can change his speciality, and in fact this happens fairly often. In such cases he transfers to another college or another department after completing his first year of study. All he needs to do is to write an application and obtain the mutual consent of the two colleges or departments involved.

I understand that Soviet colleges and universities have trade union organisations. What are they for, and who belongs to them?

Students and instructors join trade union organisations on a voluntary basis.

The trade unions take part in deciding all important questions such as the enrolment of students, granting of state allowances to students, providing graduates with jobs, and questions relating to dormitory accommodation, recreation facilities for students and faculty members, leisure-time activities, etc.

A 12-day holiday spent at a hostel, which includes room and board, costs a student a mere seven roubles (about 10 US dollars). The actual cost is of course much higher, and the difference is covered by the trade union with money from the state social insurance funds. Students and other members of the trade union pay nothing into the social insurance fund; the money used by trade unions for the maintenance of health resorts comes from the 30-billion rouble state social insurance fund. The trade union organisation of a college or university has its own fund made up primarily of monthly membership dues paid by students and faculty members amounting to one per cent of their allowance or salaries. One-third of the trade union dues paid by faculty members goes into the budget of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, while the trade union dues paid by students are under the control of the local trade union committee.

Through the trade union committee students and

faculty members have an opportunity to take part in deciding questions concerning their college or university. Any student or instructor can seek advice and assistance from the trade union committee and put before it suggestions and proposals which are carefully considered. For students the local trade union committee is just another form of their direct participation in public life.

Now a few words about the structure of the trade union organisation at colleges and universities. The smallest, basic unit is the student group headed by the trade union organiser who is elected by members of this group. Next comes the trade union bureau, and then the trade union committee which runs the trade union affairs of the whole college or university. Any student or instructor who is a member of the trade union is eligible for election to the committee. The main principles that ensure democracy in trade union organisations are openness about their activities, the right of each student and instructor to be elected to any post in the trade union organisation, free exchange of views and the observance by the minority of the decisions taken by the majority.

What happens if a student gets poor in one or more subjects?

At Soviet institutions of higher learning there are two kinds of examinations: tests for which a student gets either a "satisfactory" or an "unsatisfactory" mark, and examinations proper in which he receives one of four marks (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory). At first he takes the tests, and if he passes them he takes the examinations. If a student fails at one or two examinations or tests, he may be allowed by the Academic Council (made up of students and members of the dean's office) to take the examination (or test) in the same subjects again during the next semester. But if he fails for the second time and also if he makes a habit of asking for re-examination, he is expelled from college.

Students who get "unsatisfactory marks", the most common reason for expulsion, usually lack a serious attitude to their studies (cutting classes, etc.)

Before expelling a student, the Academic Council tries to find out why the student in question has made a poor showing, and, when necessary, helps those lagging behind by arranging tutorial sessions with instructors and fellow students.

In exceptional cases a student may take a prolonged academic leave for health reasons or because of family circumstances and repeat the course the following year, take the examinations again, and then transfer to another college.

A survey of 2,252 cases of those students who did not complete their studies at Leningrad University in the 1972-1977 period shows that 56.2

per cent of the students were expelled for failing to meet academic requirements and 6 per cent regularly cut classes. There were also those who left the university voluntarily—they transferred to another college or moved to another city.

Recently students at eighteen Soviet colleges have been asked this question: "If you were the dean, what would you do to raise academic standards and improve student discipline?" Many students replied: "I would be more strict with those who are not conscientious, who don't really want to study. I would expel them so that the country won't spend its money on loafers."

What is the Students' Scientific Society?

Back in the 1930s Moscow University and following it other major colleges and universities organised a new form of research work: they set up a Students' Scientific Society (SSS). The statute of the SSS of Moscow University (1935) read: "The aim of the SSS is to help train highly skilled specialists (teachers, research workers) by acquainting them more widely with achievements of advanced scientific thought, by fostering in them habits of independent research. . ."

Today all institutions of higher learning in the country have such societies. The main task of the SSS is to encourage students to do independent research work as early as possible. The activities of the SSS are directed by a Council made up of the best students of senior years.

SSS members carry out research in a field of their choice, under the guidance of their instructors. They also present scientific papers at seminars and conferences, and work in different research departments of the college on a contract basis. Research results obtained by the SSS are used in practical work, and some innovations are patented.

Since 1972 nationwide students' contests in scientific achievements have been held. Winners at such contests are awarded medals and citations.

What is student self-government?

Student self-government is well developed in Soviet colleges and universities. It encourages initiative, fosters a spirit of independence and sense of responsibility and develops organisational skills.

Student self-government enjoys a legal status which is defined in the "Fundamentals of Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics on public education", in which it is said that secondary school pupils and college students have the right, through their social organisations, to take part in discussing questions of improving the academic process and ideological work, questions of academic progress and discipline and questions concerning campus life.

At all colleges there are scientific and educational commissions made up of students and instructors, group prefects and members of the dean's office, the YCL organisation and the local trade union organisation. Such commissions discuss and submit to the administration and the Academic Council suggestions and proposals on improving the academic process and on leisure-time activities of the students and faculty members. An important feature of the work of these commissions is that students as well as members of the dean's office have the right to decide which students should be granted allowances and how much and who should be deprived of them because of poor academic performance. The commissions can also ask the administration of the college to replace an instructor who does not measure up to the required high standards.

Every dormitory has self-governing councils

whose members see to it that the place is kept clean and orderly. Another important function of these councils is to arrange meetings with writers, composers, etc.

In most colleges and universities there are reception commissions usually consisting of senior students and postgraduates. They do not conduct examinations, but have meetings with future freshmen, tell them about the college or university, about the subjects they will major in and also about difficulties they might encounter in the course of studies, and ask them why they have chosen this particular college or university. It sometimes happens that after such talks some of the young people realise that they have made a wrong choice and withdraw their application for admission.

These are the main features of student self-government which, as we have shown, covers all aspects of student life and aims above all to help future specialists to carry out their responsibilities and acquire knowledge and experience in scientific, organisational and educational work.

Do college students have any kind of privileges?

In this country all types of education and vocational training are free of charge. Students in daytime divisions get a state allowance and are guaranteed jobs in their field of training. In addition, they have many other privileges.

Out-of-town students are provided with dormitory accommodation for which they pay a mere three roubles (about 4.2 US dollars at the rate of exchange for March 1, 1983) a month. The dormitories have all the necessary household facilities including a kitchen where students can cook their own meals. Most students have their meals in college canteens, where prices are 50 per cent lower than at ordinary canteens, the difference being covered by the trade union.

Students in the daytime divisions can buy tickets for long-distance trains and airline tickets at a 30-50 per cent discount.

Students at evening and correspondence divisions (i.e. those who combine work with study) are entitled to an additional paid leave for taking examinations and for preparing and defending their diploma projects. Senior students in evening and correspondence divisions are entitled to an additional day off (at their choice) once a week for studies.

During their vacations thousands of students buy vouchers to health resorts, holiday homes and camping sites at a very large discount.

Students also have free use of libraries and laboratories, sports facilities and stadiums. If a student lags behind in some subjects, he can have additional tutorial sessions with his instructors, which are also free of charge.

How much does a college or university education cost, and who pays for it?

As said earlier, education in the Soviet Union is free. The education of a college or university student costs the state 6 to 8 thousand roubles; the annual cost of education of a student in a day-time division is about 1,200 roubles.

The main expenditure is on the salaries of instructors and other college employees, students' allowances, allocations for practice classes, research and books for college libraries, educational and auxiliary equipment, capital investments in buildings and dormitories and their upkeep.

Students are also entitled to free medical care and the use of sports facilities and sports equipment free of charge.

State allowances for students of colleges and universities and specialised secondary schools total more than 1.6 million roubles a year. More than 70 per cent of students in daytime divisions get state allowances. Those who score excellent marks on examinations are entitled to an allowance 25 per cent bigger than the usual one. The biggest allowance is the Lenin Scholarship which is awarded to the best students who are also active in social work. There are also scholarships named after Karl Marx, Mikhail Lomonosov and other prominent scientists and public and political leaders. These allowances are also bigger than the standard ones.

A good specialist is one who not only has a good theoretical knowledge of his field but also practical experience. What kind of practical training is offered by Soviet colleges and universities?

In the first place, all students in daytime divisions do some practical work at factories and plants, on building sites, at research institutes, schools, etc., which is related to the subjects they study. For example, future teachers conduct classes at schools and work as young pioneer leaders. Future engineers work at factories, on the shop floor as foremen and senior technicians, etc. This applies to every profession.

Secondly, major institutions of higher learning, including Moscow University, the University of Leningrad, the University of Kiev, and the Institute of Psychiatry in Leningrad, have special academic-production centres which maintain close links with industrial enterprises and research establishments.

Thirdly, students also acquire practical skills by working in summer during their third labour semester. In addition to work teams for construction jobs, there are student teams of plumbers, electricians and communications engineers. Medical students do a great deal of practical work while still at college. During the summer months they not only work in clinics, but also conduct medical examinations of the local population at building sites and give them medical attention.

What is a "vtuz" plant?

In the Soviet Union a higher educational establishment may be called an institute, a university, an academy, or a "vtuz" plant. These names appeared at different periods of Russian and Soviet history. The universities, for example, are large educational centres, which train specialists with a broad background in the natural sciences and in liberal arts. Polytechnical institutes, as the name suggests, provide training in a wide variety of technical specialities.

The "vtuz" plant is something unique ("Vtuz" is the Russian acronym of "college of advanced technology"). "Vtuz" plants are set up at the largest and the best equipped industrial plants in the country, and their purpose is to train specialists with a higher education from among the more capable leading workers. The "vtuz" at the Likhachev Automobile Plant in Moscow and at the Leningrad metallurgical plant named after the 22nd CPSU Congress, are famous throughout the country.

The academic year at a "vtuz" plant lasts ten months. A full-time student of "vtuz" remains on the staff of the plant where he has worked, and the plant provides him with an allowance which is 15 per cent higher than that received by students at other colleges.

Workers and technicians studying in the evening departments are entitled to a four-month leave for preparing and defending their diploma projects. During this period they receive their pay, but not more than 100 roubles a month.

What financial help is available to college students in the daytime division?

The overwhelming majority of students in the daytime department (70 per cent) receive state allowances. The smallest allowance is 40-45 roubles a month. In senior years it is increased by 15 per cent. Students who do particularly well receive an allowance which is 25 per cent bigger than the average one.

There are also scholarships named after outstanding personalities. Students who excel in their studies and who also take an active part in research work and the social life of their college are awarded the Lenin Scholarship. Others include the Karl Marx Scholarship and the Leonid Brezhnev Scholarship of 100 roubles a month.

A student may find it hard to live on his allowance alone, even with cheap meals subsidised by the state and by trade unions, low dormitory fees and discount tickets to health resorts and holiday homes. It is true that most students receive financial help from their parents. If a student wishes to earn some money he can do so in his spare time, but only with the permission of the student trade union organisation.

In summer students can earn money by joining work teams on building projects. Almost 8,000 students work in the non-productive sphere, namely community services, in the summer months. About 2,000 medical students go to different parts of the Soviet Union where they work in local hospitals, clinics and maternity homes. In this way they not only earn some money but also help the state since the service industry in this country is understaffed and any help here is welcome.

Do students in the Soviet Union put out their own newspapers and magazines?

Yes, they do. Every college with more than two thousand students (and most of our colleges have a student body of this size) has its own newspaper. The newspapers put out by Moscow University and Leningrad University, for example, are very popular with students and faculty members alike. The editorial board of these papers includes students; the papers also have a large corps of volunteer reporters and contributors. In addition to this, each department and even group puts out its own wall bulletin.

Soviet students have their own monthly literary and socio-political magazine called *Studencheski Meridian* with a circulation of 570,000 copies.

Student life is also widely covered in republican and central newspapers and magazines.

Are there student sport clubs? What are some of the most popular sports among Soviet students?

There are sport clubs at every college. Most of them are affiliated to the "Burevestnik" ("Stormy Petrel") voluntary sport society. But there are others. For example, all railway engineering institutes are affiliated to the railwaymen's sport society called "Locomotive". Today the Burevestnik society unites the sport clubs of 684 colleges and universities; its membership includes 2,183 thousand students, or more than 70 per cent of all students at our higher educational establishments, and about 358,000 college teachers (47 per cent of total). Those who belong to the Burevestnik society pay a membership fee of 30 kopeks a year, which gives them access to the society's sport facilities and equipment and the right to take part in training sessions conducted by experienced coaches. The Burevestnik society trains up to 1,400 masters of sport of the USSR and international-class masters of sport every year. Athletes of the Burevestnik society can be found in almost all Soviet national teams. Among the most outstanding members of the Burevestnik society are the three-time track-and-field Olympic champion Tatiana Kazankina and the world chess champion Anatoli Karpov. The gold medalists of the summer Olympic Games of 1980 include twenty-two members of the Burevestnik society, among them the discus thrower Victor Rashchupkin of the Aviation Instrument-Making Institute in Leningrad, the sharp-shooter Igor Sokolov of the Oil Institute in Ufa (capital of the Bashkir Autonomous Republic situated between the

Volga and the Ural Mountains), and the archer Ketevan Losaberidze, a mathematics teacher at Tbilisi University.

Soviet student sport clubs offer facilities for about 50 sports, including those in the Olympic class. The most popular of these are track-and-field (170,000 students), skiing (115,000), volleyball (92,000), and basketball (93,000). In the last few years many students have developed a keen interest in tennis and slalom skiing.

It is said that all college and university students in the USSR are required to attend physical education classes. Is this true?

Yes, it is. Physical education is part of the curriculum and is obligatory for first- and second-year students. Young people in poor health join preparatory or special medical groups which have a less rigorous physical training programme. Some years ago one such group at the Medical Institute in Novosibirsk was joined by a first-year student named Victor Markin, on the recommendation of doctors. His health improved with the help of physical exercises he did in the group, and with doctors' permission he began to attend the regular physical culture class. There he developed an interest in sport and started training. A few years later he won a gold medal in a 400-metre event at the Moscow Olympics in 1980.

All sport clubs at Soviet colleges and universities operate on a voluntary basis in close cooperation with the physical education department, the trade union and YCL organisations. The student sport club holds a most important place in the physical culture program carried out at all colleges and universities. The club also organises special sport sections for those who wish to train after classes and excel in a particular field of sport.

Altogether 18,000 instructors of physical culture and about 1,700 professional coaches are on the staff of colleges and universities in this country.

How do Soviet students spend their summer vacations?

Students can spend their summer and winter vacations at holiday homes and health centres run by trade unions. About 300,000 go to sport camps each year where they take part in an extensive health-building program. A 24-day stay at such a camp costs a student 15 to 20 roubles, or 30 per cent of the actual cost, with the remaining 70 per cent being paid by the trade union.

There are more than 240 health-building centres for college and university students. Each year more than 270,000 students take a course of treatment at such centres without interrupting their studies.

Many students spend their vacations at tourist camps and holiday hostels. But there are also those who prefer to work out their own vacation plans. Together with friends they set off with tents, knapsacks and of course their guitars. They hike or thumb rides, and then take a trip on rafts or boats down a river, or climb mountains, or just lie basking in the sun by the sea.

There are also international sport camps for both Soviet and foreign students. On such vacations the boys and girls make friends, learn about the life of their age-mates abroad, about foreign lands. On parting they exchange their home addresses and keep in touch by correspondence.

Students who wish to earn some money during the vacation can do so by working on a building project, as we have already mentioned. In the summer of 1982 alone, almost 900,000 students worked on such projects, building roads, schools, hos-

pitals. One out of every five students did work related to the subject he studied at college. Some students take a job as a counselor at young pioneer camps, or as a conductor on a railway train, or as a postman, in a kiosk that sells newspapers and magazines, and so on. One can find all kinds of jobs.

Every person has his likes and dislikes, and if someone prefers to stay home and do nothing on his vacation, that is his own business.

Is there a special medical service for students?

Nearly all the major colleges and universities have their own clinics for both students and faculty members. In addition, students can go to clinics and hospitals in their own neighbourhood. Medical service throughout the Soviet Union is free of charge. Students who need regular medical treatment may be excused, with doctors' recommendation, from attending some or all classes (physical education classes, for example). Students in the daytime division undergo regular medical check-ups by highly qualified specialists.

*How do students spend
their leisure time?*

Sociological surveys have identified three main categories of leisure-time activities of Soviet students. Most students say that their favourite pastime is reading. Then come sport and tourism, and after that, visits to museums and art galleries, going to the theatre, watching movies.

Of late, discotheques have appeared and students go there to meet friends, dance and listen to music.

Students have always composed their own songs which they sing to the accompaniment of the guitar on long hikes and at parties. Many students collect gramophone records and postage stamps. In other words, their pastimes are highly varied. But there is one thing that sets the Soviet youth apart from young people in other countries: Soviet students devote much of their free time to volunteer social activities. Some of them are deputies to local and central Soviets (councils) and hold important posts in trade unions. Some give popular lectures on different subjects. In summer special groups of college and university students are organised; they go to the countryside where they give concerts and theatrical performances as well as talks on the latest developments in science and culture.

According to surveys, Soviet youth spend not less than one-third of their leisure time on self-education, learning foreign languages, and reading books on history, literature and the arts.

Are the songs which students compose and sing at tourist rallies subject to control?

What kind of control can there be? How can anyone who decides to compose a song be "controlled"? The real question is whether those who hear the song will like it. But that is an entirely different matter.

Students compose an enormous number of songs and sing them at parties, at building sites where they work, at tourist rallies, at amateur song contests, and at dormitories. Some of these songs become widely known and their authors and singers turn professional song writers and performers, such as Yuri Vizbor, Edita Pjecha, and Tatiana and Sergei Nikitin. Their songs are now known throughout the land.

Is it true that Soviet young people want to enter colleges only in order not to be drafted into the army?

No, it's not true. In the first place, college education does not exempt students from army service. When a young man reaches the call-up age (18) he is required to do active service in the army regardless of whether he is a college student or not at the time. (In some cases a student may be granted a deferment to enable him to complete his studies, after which he must do the required military service.) After doing his army service the student returns to college and continues his studies. Nobody declines to serve in the army. There are several reasons for this. The Soviet Army has never fought an aggressive war. It has always defended what is cherished by the people. Therefore young people regard service in the armed forces as their civic duty, and not as a burden. The Soviet Army was set up to defend the socialist revolution and was organised on a voluntary basis. It was only the threat of military aggression from outside that forced us to introduce compulsory military service.

Drug addiction among young people has become one of the most serious social problems in the West. Do you have this problem?

No, we have no such problem in this country. We have individual cases of drug addiction, but every measure is taken to prevent drug taking. The production of narcotics is fully in the hands of the Soviet state, and they are only produced in amounts needed for medicinal purposes. At pharmacies they are sold only to those who have doctor's prescriptions bearing a special serial number, which makes it possible quickly to identify the person who has written out the prescriptions and in what amounts. The number of such prescriptions is very limited.

Any medicinal preparation that goes on sale has been tested for its narcotic content. Use of psychotropic drugs, which can cause pathological addiction in the patient, is strictly controlled. Such drugs are prescribed in limited amounts to people for health reasons.

Any illegal production, acquisition, storage, transportation or sale of narcotics in this country is a criminal offence.

There is a special narcotics control service whose task is to register and treat drug addicts. Such addicts are put through a compulsory course of treatment at a special clinic.

As a member of the UN Economic and Social Council's Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Soviet Union consistently carries out its international commitments with regard to narcotic and psychotropic drugs control and to preventive treatment of drug addiction.

Can foreign nationals study in the USSR? What are the rules for their admission? What rights do they have, if admitted?

Foreign nationals of up to 35 years of age can apply for admission to Soviet colleges if they have a secondary education equivalent to that provided at a Soviet secondary school.

Foreign nationals seeking admission to a college or technical school in the Soviet Union are not required to take any examinations. Therefore preference is given to those whose school certificates show high marks, especially in the subjects he wants to study in the Soviet Union. For future engineers the subjects include mathematics, physics and chemistry, and for physicians—biology, chemistry and physics. In all these subjects the applicants are expected to have marks at a level of not lower than 80 per cent of the highest in the marking system of their own country.

The interval between graduation from a secondary school and enrolment in a Soviet college must not exceed two or three years.

Foreign nationals who wish to study in Soviet colleges and universities on the basis of agreement between the Soviet government and the authorities of their countries, must be in good health and without any pathological condition that might be aggravated by climatic conditions or study regimes in the Soviet Union.

Foreign citizens admitted to Soviet colleges have all possibilities of studying and becoming highly qualified specialists in their chosen field. Like Soviet students, they enjoy free education and free

medical service, the free use of libraries and reading halls and sport and cultural facilities. Foreign students are provided with living accommodation at dormitories on an equal footing with Soviet students.

In admitting foreign nationals to its colleges the Soviet Union gives preference to members of the poorer sections of the population, to young people from developing countries who, because of their social status, would not be able to get an education either at home or in other countries.

Can foreign students studying in the Soviet Union choose any field of specialisation?

They can choose any speciality for which training is offered at Soviet colleges and universities and which is needed by their countries. In practice this question is decided in relevant inter-governmental agreements or in agreements between the USSR Ministry for Higher and Specialised Secondary Education and the competent bodies in foreign countries.

Young people in the West are always having some kind of idols: singers, musicians and so on. Is it the same in your country?

There are idols and idols. The world's first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin was and will always remain the idol of Soviet young people. They admire him for his courage, modesty, integrity, for his love of people, for his kindness, and they will always remember the famous Gagarin smile! A few days before his tragic death I saw him at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League. I now regret that I didn't ask him for his autograph. Gagarin will remain forever the idol of Soviet youth, their moral ideal.

And now about singers and musicians well liked by Soviet young people. According to a poll (called "Stars-82") conducted by the Leningrad youth newspaper *Smena*, the most popular singers were Alla Pugacheva, Sofia Rotaru, Yuri Antonov and Valeri Leontiev, the most popular ensembles were the "Time Machine" and "The Earthlings", and the most popular composers were Raimonds Pauls, Yuri Antonov, and David Tukhmanov. Of the songwriters first place went to the poets Andrei Voznesensky and Andrei Dementiev. Still extremely popular are the songs written by Vladimir Vysotsky who died in 1980. Polls such as "Stars-82" have the effect of making many young music lovers think more seriously about music and analyze musical events of the past year.

Unfortunately we still have some fans who besiege their idols with telephone calls and letters,

wait for them at the stage entrance after concerts, camp outside their homes, and gossip about their personal life. This is due mainly to a lack of thoughtfulness and to poorly developed interests and artistic tastes.

Is it true that the younger generation in the USSR is attracted to bourgeois life-style and is turning away from socialist way of life?

Soviet young people are fairly well acquainted with cultural trends in capitalist countries, with such Western rock-groups as the Beatles, the Uriah Heep, the Secret Service, Manfred Mann, Bee Gees, and others. Many Western films are shown in this country, some of them good, some bad. The level of taste differs, and certain sections of the youth are attracted to what are not the best products of Western culture. So one may come across a Soviet youngster wearing a West German T-shirt apparently without a thought about the meaning of the words "Visit Eros Centre in Hamburg" printed on it. I told the owner of one such shirt: "You are advertising West German brothels." The young man looked extremely embarrassed, for he didn't know the meaning of the words. But some Western journalists, on seeing such young men and women in our streets, draw the "conclusion" that the Western life-style and Western ways have a great appeal for Soviet young people.

I doubt there is a single young man or woman in the Soviet Union who would approve of such things as unemployment, the cult of violence and cruelty, a rising crime rate, unrestrained pornography, and other similar trends in capitalist countries.

Fifteen years ago the US sociologist Allen Kassof tried to make his "theory of a moral crisis" of the younger generation embrace young people throughout the world. Later, when he had come to

know Soviet young people better, Kassof told me that he was wrong.

In 1975, a book came out in the United States entitled *The Young Russians* by Georgie Anne Geyer, a correspondent of the *Chicago Daily News*. Geyer had previously made two trips to Leningrad, and I had had long talks with her. She promised to write a truthful account of the Soviet youth, but... her book was yet another anti-Communist fabrication which, incidentally, contains thirteen references to my conversations with her, and all of them distorted. Such are the "discoveries" made by Geyer who, it is said in the introduction to the book, is a leading specialist in the field.

The book records conversations which the author said she had with young people in bars and restaurants over a glass of vodka. Geyer says that this method of collecting material makes the people one talks to more open, frank and confiding. It would be well to recall the words of Alexander Herzen, the Russian writer of the 19th century: "You can always find those who are morally immature among different sections of society at any one time... No doubt they more or less represent certain common types, but they do not represent the most distinctive, characteristic features of their generation, features that express what is basic and essential to it." I find it disheartening when Western journalists try, as Georgie Anne Geyer did, to portray the younger generation in the Soviet Union as being attracted to bourgeois morality, after meeting a score or so young people who are morally immature.

If, for example, I concluded, after my visit to Sweden in 1978, Switzerland in 1981, and Mexico in 1982, that the youth of these countries were

indifferent and lacked political and moral awareness, people in this country would not only have questioned my conclusion, but would have said: "You are being unfair because young people are not all the same."

That is why when I hear somebody say abroad: "They say that Soviet young people...", I would finish up for him by saying: "... that bears walk in the streets of Leningrad..."

So, don't always believe what they say. This is my concluding answer to your questions.

Лисовский Владимир Тимофеевич

СОВЕТСКОЕ СТУДЕНЧЕСТВО. ВОПРОСЫ И ОТВЕТЫ.

на английском языке

Цена 25 коп.

0801020300

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Vladimir LISOVSKY
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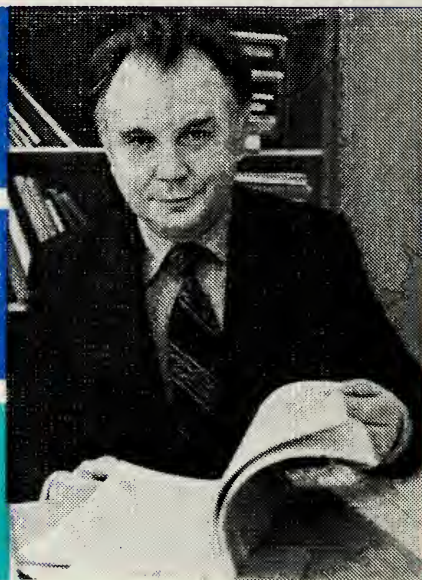
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