USSR

100 Questions and Answers

What has socialism given people over the 60 years?

How do you understand "equality"?

How real are the rights and freedoms?

Why only one political party?

e you got an energy crisis?

USSR and USA: how do their living standard compare?

Part One

1917 1977

USSR

100 Questions and Answers

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This is a book about a country which occupies half of Europe and a third of Asia, altogether a sixth of the earth's land surface. It stretches over more than 172 degrees of longitude, and covers almost the entire width of the northern hemisphere. Its farthest limits to east and west are so far apart that when dawn is rising in one, dusk is falling in the other. It takes an express train more than a week to travel across the whole breadth of the land.

Eternal Arctic ice in the north contrasts with the Transcaucasian subtropics to the south, the sultry Turkmenian deserts, with the Siberian taiga which stretches as far as the eye can see. The Pamir and Tien Shan peaks pierce the clouds, while there are smooth-rolling plains in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The diversity of the country's landscape and climate is truly boundless. When the May sun warms the air to 30 C in the Central Asian valleys, in the Far North the cold is so severe that metal becomes as brittle as glass and machinery breaks down.

This is a book about a country which is often still called Russia. But this is not quite correct. Russia or, rather, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) is merely one, though the largest, of the fifteen equal Union republics of which the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is comprised.

The USSR's 260 million citizens speak 130 languages and have five different alphabets. That, however, does not prevent them from understanding one another perfectly, from jointly tackling the most difficult undertaking and producing the country's wealth and developing the new, Soviet culture.

This is a book about a country which, sixty years ago, set out upon the unprecedented road of building a socialist society. At that time it lagged technologically and economically some fifty or a hundred years behind the industrialized capitalist countries. Three-quarters of its population could not even read or write. Add to this the country's utter economic ruin, the famine and poverty—the terrible consequences of the First World War and the Civil War. And then the hostile encirclement by the capitalist powers bent on stifling in its infancy the first state of the workers and peasants in the world.

This and much else had to be overcome by the peoples of a country that seemed to foreigners to be a mysterious sleeping giant. At that time, sixty years ago, there were very few foreigners who believed that the social "experiment" could succeed.

Under the leadership of the Party of Lenin, the Soviet people embarked upon a hitherto untrodden path. They succeeded, surmounting all difficulties, in building a developed socialist society. Their successes, and the mistakes unavoidable for a trail-blazer, provided historical experience useful for other peoples today.

This is a book about a country which accounts at present for roughly a fifth of world industrial output. It now leads the world

— in steel and oil,
— in tractors and mineral fertilizers,
— in capital investments in the national economy and scale of housing construction,
— in stable growth rates of production and the standard of living.

The Soviet Union has become a leader of scientific and technological progress. It has more researchers and engineers than any other country in the world.

The USSR ushered in the space era. The world's first artificial satellite was made in the USSR. Its space rockets were the first to overcome the earth's gravity and travel interplanetary flight paths. Yuri Gagarin was the first earthman to fly in space.

The Soviet people are enjoying the benefits of socialism ever more fully. The country long ago put an end to economic crises, unemployment and inflation. The prices of consumer necessities and fares and rents are stable and, as a rule, are among the lowest to be found anywhere in the world.

This is a book about a country which ever since its emergence has been persistently and tirelessly pursuing a policy of peaceful co-existence with states of differing social systems, and of vigorously working for disarmament, and for broad co-operation of all nations on the basis of equality and mutual advantage.

The USSR bore the brunt of the Second World War, making the decisive contribution to the rout of fascism.

Victory in the war was secured at the cost of enormous loss of life and material damage. It took an immense effort for the country to heal the terrible wounds sustained by the economy and to restore the pre-war level of production.

The Soviet Union is the subject of endless questions abroad—questions which are put to Soviet citizens travelling in other countries on official business or as tourists, and questions which are also sent in to Novosti Press Agency by readers of our magazines, books and other publications. We have selected from this mass of questions a hundred of the ones most frequently asked and which seem to us to be the most important ones to answer to provide the questionnaire with a clear idea of Soviet home and foreign policy.

The book does not claim to be exhaustive. Rather, we hope it will be the beginning of a dialogue with our readers, whose further questions we shall be glad to answer in our subsequent issues.

I. THE SOVIET STATE, THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE TRADE UNIONS

What has socialism given to the people over the past 60 years?

This question invites a long discussion, and we deal with it in greater detail in other parts of this book. But briefly, the achievements of socialism can be summed up as follows.

Socialism has turned into reality what people could only dream about in the old days:

— it has made the Soviet people the genuine, collective masters of their country;

— it has freed them from all forms of exploitation;

— it has eliminated class, racial, national and other privileges and ensured actual social equality;

— it has created an entirely new type of democracy which has given each citizen the opportunity to take part in the running of factories, cities and in fact the whole of society;

— it has provided Soviet citizens with real opportunities to have jobs in line with their specialization, and put an end to unemployment and poverty;

— it has made education and the highest achievements of world culture available to all;

— it has established a nation-wide free medical service to serve the entire population;

— it has set up a democratic social security system and provided modern, low-rent housing for Soviet citizens;

— it has proclaimed as its key task the harmonious development of the individual, and has been purposefully and consistently pursuing policies to this end;

— it has built up a strong economy, raised living standards, and freed Soviet citizens from anxiety about the morrow, giving them confidence in the future;

— it initiated the policy of peace and co-operation between nations, and has always consistently and tirelessly pursued this policy.

You describe your State as being a state of the whole people. How does it differ from the dictatorship of the proletariat?

First of all let us explain the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat". This is a term in political science signifying the wielding of state power by the working class. Socialist society is not established all at once. Between capitalism and socialism there lies a transition period of revolutionary transformation of the former into the latter. The state in that period is described by Marxism-Leninism as the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

In other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule of the working class which, in an alliance with the peasantry, and with the participation of the working people generally, builds a new society, a society without exploitation.

What are the objectives and functions of this rule?

The main purpose the proletariat seeks to achieve—and so the main purpose of its rule—is a constructive one. It is the creation of a new, socialist, economy, the abolishing of antagonistic classes and the elimination of the sources of man's exploitation of his fellow men, and a cultural revolution.

To achieve these objectives, the workers' government in Russia had to nationalize the economy with all possible speed, destroy the existing and set up a new machinery of State. Inimical elements of the old society opposed to the Soviet bodies of power, that is, those living on unearned income, such as rentiers, capitalists, landlords and others, were deprived of the right to vote. These persons did not exceed two or three per cent of the population. But the other 98 per cent—the overwhelming majority!—for the first time received the real possibility of taking part in the running of the State. In the State Duma of the tsar's making there were just about a dozen workers

and next to no peasants among more than 400 members. The rest were landlords, clergymen, members of the capitalist class and merchants. After the victorious socialist revolution, workers and peasants ran the Soviets (or councils), new bodies of state power at all levels, providing effective democracy for the overwhelming majority of the population.

However, former capitalists, engineers and army officers were not barred from taking part in the life of the country. They were offered jobs, and many of them co-operated with the Soviet government. In 1919, for instance, about 35,000 generals and officers formerly of the tsar's army, were in active service in the Red Army.

History records a number of instances where revolutionary violence has been exerted by the working class with the object of seizing power from the exploiters. But this is not enough. Force must continue to be employed to defend the revolution against its enemies. Consider the Paris Commune of 1871, the first state of the dictatorship of the proletariat in history. The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie launched a civil war against the proletariat, and liquidated the Commune in a bloodbath.

Recall, too, in Russia, in the first years of Soviet power, the numerous plots and revolts against the revolutionary reforms, and then the Civil War itself—all inspired by the Russian and world bourgeoisie. Take the ruthless suppression of the proletarian revolutions in Germany in 1918 and in Hungary and Latvia in 1919. The revolutionaries, unlike the bourgeoisie, did not always bring the full weight of their power to bear on their antagonists, and this was their undoing.

The Russian proletariat, too, treated the vanquished exploiting class mildly. After the 1917 October revolution, for instance, nobody disbanded the bourgeois parties. And only sabotage and White terror by the bourgeoisie (the attempt on Lenin's life and the assassination of some prominent Soviet leaders) forced the Soviet government to take counter-measures. In a country where the bourgeoisie behaves sensibly, Lenin said, the tasks of the proletarian government will be easier and the proletariat will not have to resort to force.

Today, a developed socialist society, as described by Lenin in 1918, has been built in the Soviet Union. It is

defined as one in which socialism has taken firm root in all spheres—political, economic, social and cultural—of the life of society.

With the building of socialism, the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat gradually turns into a state of the entire people, a political organization of the whole people with the working class playing the leading role. As the exploiting classes are abolished, the function of suppressing their opposition becomes redundant, and the main functions of the socialist state, those of organizing and running the economy and promoting education and cultural progress, develop in every possible way. This is the principal difference between the state of the entire people and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What is democratic centralism? Is centralism compatible with democracy?

Democratic centralism is the major principle of the structure and operation of the Soviet state. It implies:

— that all bodies of power, from the highest to the lowest, are elected;

— that they report regularly to their electors and the bodies over them;

— the subordination of the minority to the majority;

— that the decisions of superior bodies are binding on the bodies under them.

Taken together, these essential conditions guarantee that democracy, i. e., the effective political power of the majority, the working people, and their initiative and participation in the process of government, is exercised in practice, that it is a reality in everyday life.

Centralism, we believe, does not oppose but supplements democracy. To be more exact, they are mutually complementary. Democratic centralism implies the most extensive and free discussion at the stage of drafting decisions. The decisions finally adopted after such discussion are taken by the majority for the majority, and are binding for all. Violation of the will of the majority is violation of democracy. This procedure is observed both for state economic development plans (which have the force of law) and for other laws.

The principle of democratic centralism cements the

Soviet system from top to bottom and vice versa into an integral whole.

Is centralization or decentralization of government the prevalent tendency in the USSR?

Need the two be opposed? The structure of the Soviet political system is such that the tendency is for them to move towards each other, as it were. On the one hand, there is a continual improvement of the centralized administration of the social life of society, and on the other, there is a constant growth in the jurisdiction and initiative of the lower bodies of power as more and more working people take an ever greater part in the country's political life.

The interests of the socialist state, whose main goal is to ensure rising living standards for the people, require a concentration of forces and resources with a view to their most efficient utilization. With the growth in the scale of economic and cultural development, the role of centralized administration also increases. In economic management, centralization is essential for the carrying out of major national programmes, and for co-ordinating sectional and territorial development and long-term plans with current planning.

But centralized management is just one side of the matter. The Central Committee's Report to the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union reads: "Another, very important link in the improvement of economic management is the *improvement of the organizational structure and methods of management*. We shall have to reinforce both principles of democratic centralism simultaneously. On the one hand, centralism must be developed and a barrier thereby raised to departmental and parochial tendencies. On the other, it is necessary to promote democratic principles and local initiative, and to relieve the upper echelons of management from petty matters and ensure speed and flexibility in decision-making."

The development of democratic principles is especially well illustrated in local government. Recently the powers of local Soviets were considerably increased. They were made responsible for all establishments and organizations serving the local population, and for all state housing. They participate in the planning and co-ordination of

the operations of the plants and factories on their territory.

Another illustration is provided by the extensive and many-sided work conducted by the trade unions. Practically no question of importance bearing on plans, wages, output quotas or the distribution of incomes is decided without their participation. Various public organizations are yet another important avenue of citizens' participation in the management of society. Together with the trade unions, which have a membership of more than 113 million, they embrace almost the entire adult population of the country.

I have heard that work is under way on a new Constitution for the USSR. I would be interested to know what changes are going to be made in the present Constitution, and why.

A new Constitution has been drafted. The work was done by a commission headed by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Leonid Brezhnev.

The draft was published at the beginning of June and it will be discussed on a nation-wide scale.

The existing Constitution was adopted in 1936. It reflects and gives legal expression to the victory of socialism in the USSR, formalizing its basic principles.

But life is moving forward. In the past forty years Soviet society has become much more mature.

In place of the foundations of a socialist economy we now have a developed and technically well-equipped socialist economic system.

An active process is taking place whereby the differences between town and country, between the working class and those working the land are becoming much less marked. A steadily increasing proportion of the population is engaged in intellectual work. Physical work is increasingly acquiring features of brainwork.

There has been a great stride forward in the educational sphere. The country now has universal ten-year secondary education to the age of seventeen. Two-thirds of the working population have a secondary or a higher education.

Over the years there has been an appreciable drawing together of all classes and social groups, and Soviet society is growing more and more socially uniform.

Millions of men and women are drawn into taking part in the everyday management of the affairs of society and into the area of decision-making.

A developed socialist society has been built and tasks involved in the building of communism have begun to be tackled.

The international position of the USSR has changed fundamentally. A world socialist system has emerged.

The draft Constitution reflects these changes and at the same time it sums up the main ideas of the previous Soviet Constitutions, and the constitutions of other countries of socialism.

"...What is new in the draft is essentially an extension and deepening of socialist democracy," L. I. Brezhnev pointed out. Above all, it is a further development of the democratic principles of the formation and functioning of the Soviets. Ways of strengthening the bonds between the Soviets and the people have been outlined. The draft broadly reflects the important role played in the country's life by the trade unions, the YCL, co-operative and other mass organizations and production work collectives.

The provisions in the present Constitution on civil rights are substantially extended. The general principle of equality of the citizens is proclaimed, while the provisions regarding specific social and economic rights affecting the very foundations of human life (for example, the right to work, rest and leisure, health protection) are developed and extended. The political rights and freedoms of Soviet citizens are defined in greater detail than in the previous Constitution.

In the draft Constitution the duty of the citizen to work honestly and conscientiously and defend his Homeland is emphasized. The duties of safeguarding the interests of the Soviet state, of helping to maintain public order and protect public property, of protecting nature and guarding its wealth and preserving cultural values are formulated as constitutional provisions. The draft proclaims it a duty of Soviet citizens to educate children and bring them up as worthy members of socialist society.

The draft includes a chapter on "Social Development and Culture" which points out that the state shows con-

cern for the development of education, science and art and for the improvement of the working and living conditions of the people.

A further strengthening of socialist law and order is clearly reflected in the draft Constitution.

The basic features of the federative structure of the Soviet Union, the soundness of which has been fully confirmed in practice, are preserved

The draft reflects a new stage in the development of the Soviet national economy, it points out that the economy of the USSR has become a single national economic complex incorporating all the elements of social production, distribution and exchange in the country. The draft also endorses such an important principle of socialist economics as the combination of planned centralized management with economic independence and initiative on the part of enterprises and production associations.

This is the first draft Constitution which includes a chapter on "Foreign Policy". It says that the Soviet state consistently pursues the policy of peace and that it advocates the strengthening of the security of nations and broad international co-operation.

Would you please explain why there is only one candidate for election to a Soviet.

This is not stipulated by the law, which does not limit the number of candidates that may stand, but is an established practice, a tradition.

In bourgeois countries too, of course, only one candidate of a party usually stands in a constituency. Normally there are as many candidates for a seat as there are parties contesting the election. We, however, have only one party—the Communist Party—so that where it nominates a candidate there is only the one candidate for the seat.

I might be argued that in the capitalist countries independent candidates may also stand. This is so. But we also have independent candidates, although they are not described as such. Here, too, a candidate need not necessarily be a member of the political party. Candidates are nominated to represent an electoral district. Usually in the course of an election campaign the Communist Party, the trade unions, the Young Communist League and other public or

ganizations agree on which electoral district a candidate will stand in, and on the candidate for this district. And where the candidate is not a member of the Party he is unfailingly supported by the Communists. In the 1975 elections to the local Soviets, for example, over two million deputies were elected. Less than half of them were Communist Party members.

In one of your booklets you claim that the State in the USSR is ruled by workers and peasants. Does this mean that you deny the role of professional MPs?

The great majority of Soviet deputies are indeed representatives of workers and farmers. The deputies exercise their parliamentarian duties in addition to their normal work, and without pay.

This system suits us best. Why? Because we consider that it best ensures the exercise of democratic principles in government and in deciding all the important matters of State. The voters are able to keep an eye on the activities of the representative they have elected to government, to see how he fulfils the mandate which they gave him during the election campaign and which he is to carry out.

No less essential from the standpoint of the democratism of bodies of state power is that deputies (MPs) are, in fact, genuine representatives of the working people, of the majority.

But when we look at professional MPs, the example of the bourgeois countries shows that they are usually representatives of the wealthy classes rather than of the working population.

We do not consider such a system to be democratic.

At this point it may be asked how a non-professional MP can make decisions on a professional level on important public matters. Will he be well-informed enough and experienced enough if he spends much of his time, say, at the bench or in the fields?

This is a reasonable question. The point is, however, that in selecting candidates, the nominating bodies carefully weigh up their qualities—in the political and moral spheres, and in their work—and take into account what

experience the person nominated has of work in the Party, trade unions and lower-level Soviets, his organizing abilities, and so on. As a result, candidates and deputies are usually those who have been accepted after close scrutiny by their electors, and so can be expected to be fully competent to deal with important public matters.

In addition, deputies have ample opportunity to consult specialists such as lawyers, economists, statisticians, etc. in government departments, and can therefore get whatever facts or advice they may need—for example, in drafting legislation.

While exercising their parliamentary functions deputies are freed from work without loss of pay, and may use all modes of transport free of charge. They also enjoy special immunity under the law.

You write that a deputy who has broken the commitments he assumed during the election, can be recalled by his electors and replaced by another deputy. Does this mean that on being elected a deputy he does not automatically become a representative of the nation and thus independent of his electorate?

We have partly answered this question. It is quite correct that on being elected a deputy to a Soviet he does not become independent of his electorate. He cannot act against their will.

Our system of representation rejects the idea that a deputy should be able to ignore the opinion of his electors if he thinks that their opinion conflicts with the national interests.

We consider that a deputy must be responsible to the electorate and accountable to them. The collective opinion of the electorate is an expression of their most important needs and demands. The electors send their representative to a body of power (a Soviet) so that he can carry out their wishes and their instructions as he is bound to do in a system of democratic government based on genuinely democratic representation.

The essence of socialist democracy is the drawing of as many people as possible into the government of the State,

and this, of course, presupposes that they not only have the right to elect their representatives to a body of power, but also to co-operate with them actively in carrying out the tasks of government and also the power to control their activities.

Every year all deputies report to their electors on what they have been doing in their official role and how they have carried out the instructions they received from their electorate at the time of election. If a deputy has fallen short of the expectations of his electors, and does not carry out his duties the way he should, the electors have the right to recall him and call a new election. Such cases are not frequent but they do occur. During the past ten years some 4,000 deputies (out of the two million deputies elected to Soviets at all levels) have been recalled.

Is there any difference between your parliament's two chambers, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities? Which of the two is more important?

The rationale for the USSR Supreme Soviet's bicameral system will be found in the country's federal system and its multinational population. The Soviet of the Union represents the interests of the entire Soviet people, the Soviet of Nationalities, those of the country's various nationalities.

Hence the different ratios of representation. The Soviet of the Union has one deputy from each 300,000 of the population generally; in the Soviet of Nationalities each national republic, regardless of size or population, has 32 deputies. Thus the huge Russian Federation, with its population of 135 million, and tiny Estonia with a population of only 1.5 million each have the same number of deputies. The same rule holds for the Autonomous republics, Autonomous regions and National areas, which have respectively eleven, five and one deputies each. Of the 1,517 deputies returned to the Supreme Soviet at the last, June, 1974 elections, 767 were elected to the Soviet of the Union, and 750, to the Soviet of Nationalities.

Otherwise, the two chambers are identically organized and operate on the same pattern. Both are elected at the

same time and in full for four years on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage by secret ballot. Each elects for the entire term a Chairman and four Vice-Chairmen and forms provisional and standing commissions.

The two chambers jointly elect a Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and set up all the highest bodies of government. Thus, they form the Council of Ministers, elect the Supreme Court, and appoint the Procurator-General, who are fully accountable to the Supreme Soviet, which may dissolve or dismiss them at any time.

The Soviet system of popular representation has no division into upper and lower chambers of parliament. Both chambers enjoy equal rights, and the decisions they each take have the same force. Both have equal powers to initiate laws. In accordance with the USSR Constitution, a law is considered adopted if passed by both chambers by a simple majority vote in each.

As a rule, the two chambers inaugurate and close their sessions at the same time. However, this does not mean that they sit at the same time. Each chamber endorses its own agenda and procedure. Matters may be considered at joint or separate sittings. Laws, ordinances and other decisions are adopted similarly, with, for the most part, discussions conducted separately and decisions taken at joint sittings.

In the event of disagreement between the two chambers the Constitution provides a special conciliation procedure. The issue in dispute is submitted to a conciliation commission, which the two chambers form on a parity basis. However, should this body fail to reach agreement or should its decision fail to satisfy either chamber, the matter in question is again referred to the chambers for fresh discussion. Should no agreement be reached this time, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, acting in conformity with the Constitution, dissolves the Supreme Soviet and appoints new elections. Thus neither chamber can dictate to the other.

This organizational structure enables the USSR Supreme Soviet to consider and adopt laws, economic programmes, budgets and other decisions with an eye to both the country's entire interests and the specific interests of the various Union and Autonomous republics, Autonomous regions and National areas.

Why does the Supreme Soviet of the USSR meet for only several days at a time, while the parliaments of capitalist countries hold their sessions for months?

Foreigners sometimes have the idea that the responsibilities of the USSR Supreme Soviet are simple and require little time for their fulfilment, that the deputies come to Moscow twice a year, endorse legislative acts and then go back home, that their parliamentary activities stop at that.

Of course, this is not the true picture at all.

The USSR Supreme Soviet holds two sessions a year, each session lasting several days. But each such session is preceded by the long and painstaking work of drafting the legislation to be submitted to the delegates for discussion and passage.

What does this preliminary work consist of?

Out of the 1,517 members of the USSR Supreme Soviet, about 1,000, i.e. two-thirds, are members of 28 standing commissions of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities. These commissions are the working bodies which study all questions within the competence of the Supreme Soviet. The standing commissions take part in the drafting of laws, they supervise the operation of laws previously adopted by the Soviet parliament, examine the reports of government ministers, etc.

For example, over the three summer months (June-August) of 1976, when the members of parliament in many countries went off for holidays, the members of the standing commissions met in the Kremlin six times in preparation for the coming session of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Standing commissions made a study of the measures that had been taken in Azerbaijan in the sphere of environmental protection, including protection of the waters of the Caspian Sea. Some 80 deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet took part in this work. Among them were oil workers Israfil Guseinov and Ragil Ibraghimov and the Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia, Yevgeny Kharadze. They visited the area in question, made a careful study of the collected material, and submitted the results of their investigation to the Commission for Nature Conservation. The suggestions and recommendations made by the deputies were duly taken account of in the subsequent consideration of this matter by the Sup-

reme Soviet, the government and the appropriate ministries and departments.

In addition, the USSR Supreme Soviet appoints special commissions for the study of questions that do not come within the competence of the standing commissions.

I have read a brochure on your local Soviets but I got no answer to the question that interests me. How do they differ from town councils in Britain or France, let us say?

In contrast to capitalist countries, we have no division into the government bodies that consist of appointed officials and the self-government bodies that deal with local affairs under the supervision of the above-mentioned authorities. The very notion of "administrative guardianship" over local self-government is alien to the Soviet state system.

Nor are there any higher and local authorities the interests of which would clash. All local executive bodies are elected by the Soviets and are accountable to them in everything they do.

Local Soviets deal with and take decisions on practical matters concerning industrial and agricultural production, public education, cultural questions, health, social security, trade, catering and other services, town improvement, housing construction, the municipal economy, and the preservation of law and order.

Unlike town councils, Soviets have sole charge of the land on their territory (there are no private landowners), and their activities embrace all areas of the life of society. Soviets also differ from the town councils in capitalist countries by their composition. The majority of Soviet deputies are workers and farmers. More than a quarter of the deputies are under the age of thirty.

Much of the detailed work of local administration is done by standing committees of local Soviets, and these committees are continuing to improve the functions and methods of their work. They represent one of the main forms of deputies' activities. Altogether, local Soviet standing committees account for about 1,800,000 deputies, or more than three-quarters of the total number of deputies. The committees are also assisted in their work by

some 2,600,000 activists representing broad sections of the public.

To sum up, local Soviets have full jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to their territory as outlined above. This is their principal distinction from town councils in capitalist countries.

The Bolshevik Party emerged as a revolutionary party, a party that opposed the entire system of government in Russia. Then it became the ruling party in the country. Has it retained its revolutionary spirit in these new circumstances, and, if so, in what way is this spirit manifested?

Since the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the CPSU) became the ruling party, its revolutionary spirit has been manifested in the first place in its leading role in the revolutionary activities that have transformed Soviet society into what it is today. This revolutionary spirit can also be seen in the way in which the Party has carried out its internationalist duty to the revolutionary movement throughout the world.

On the domestic scene the revolutionary character of the Party has manifested itself in the impressive rate of industrialization of the country, in the transformation of its agriculture, in a cultural revolution, in the creation of the firm material and technical base of socialism, in the solution of the nationalities question, in the building of the developed socialist society we have today, in other words, in all those many things we have already spoken about, all those many things which are the direct result of the revolutionary activity of the Communist Party, activity that has its roots in the revolutionary ideas of the October revolution.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is a Leninist party. A whole epoch of world history is closely associated with Leninism, an epoch of fundamental revolutionary changes in the social make-up of the world. Our Party has always extended and will continue to extend its moral, material and political support to peoples fighting for their freedom and independence, fighting imperialism and neo-colonialism in all its forms. "We are acting as our revolutionary conscience and our communist convic-

tions have prompted us to act", said the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Leonid Brezhnev, at the 25th Party Congress.

This loyalty to the principles of proletarian internationalism is the best expression of the revolutionary character of the Communist Party. The people of Vietnam, Chile, Laos and Angola, and of many other countries that have received all-round assistance from the Soviet Communist Party hail its revolutionism.

Why is there only one party in the USSR? Does socialism exclude a multi-party system?

The fact that there is only one political party, the Communist Party, in the Soviet Union is a result of specific historical circumstances.

Before the 1917 October revolution there were quite a few political parties in Russia. Some of them, the conservatives, were upholders of tsarism, while others pursued reformist policies. The party of Communists alone sought to revolutionize society and abolish economic, social, political and other forms of inequality. The Communists' programme met the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people.

The Communists were above all the party of the working class. There were other democratic forces as well, which reflected, in particular, the views held by a part of the peasantry. The Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), for instance, enjoyed considerable influence. Far from refusing to act jointly with them, the Communists considered it necessary to form an alliance with them.

After the victorious October revolution, too, the Communist Party was prepared to continue that alliance. As it commanded an absolute majority in the supreme body of state power—the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (which had been elected by a Congress of Soviets and comprised 62 Communists, 29 Left Socialist Revolutionaries and 10 representatives of other three parties)—the Communist Party was entitled to form a one-party cabinet. Nevertheless, it invited the Left SRs to take part in the government.

In the latter half of November, 1917, pressed by the rank and file, many of whom were inclined to join the Bol-

sheviks, Left SR leaders agreed to the Bolsheviks' proposal. They declared themselves "prepared to follow a Soviet policy". The newly-formed government included seven SR representatives.

It soon transpired, however, that the Socialist Revolutionaries had not the least intention of co-operating with the Communists in carrying out a programme of socialist reforms. As early as March, 1918, they left the coalition government on their own initiative, and in July of that year staged an armed revolt in Moscow against the Soviet government.

The petty-bourgeois parties were not forced to disband, as some Western historians try to have it. They left the political scene after having compromised themselves in the eyes of the people. The very course of developments obliged the Communists to assume sole responsibility for the country's future.

But the single-party system is not necessarily typical of socialist society. In a number of socialist countries, e. g., Bulgaria, Poland, the German Democratic Republic and others, operate multi-party systems. Their principal feature is that the Communist and Workers' parties play the leading role in a popular front uniting democratic parties and public organizations whose objective is the building of socialism.

If practically all Soviet citizens share Communist views, why is it that only 16 million of them belong to the Communist Party?

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union does not set out to include all the adult population of the country. It unites on a voluntary basis the more politically aware and active representatives of the working class, the farmers and the intellectuals. To be a CPSU member, it is not enough to recognize and share the Party Programme and Rules. One must take an active part in the building of communism, personally work in one of the Party organizations and carry out Party decisions.

The greater role being played by the Party in the life of society, its growing prestige and influence are not achieved by a mere mechanical expansion of its membership. Following a political course that meets the vital interests of the

people, is what ensures the Party the entire Soviet people's support and trust. It is significant that many citizens, not belonging to the Party, describe themselves as "non-card-carrying Communists", expressing in this way their solidarity with the policy pursued by the Party.

When you refer to the Communist Party's leading role, what is meant by this expression?

We mean first of all that the Party acts as the political leader of the people, and lays down the direction of society's development.

Communism is built on the basis of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory. A purposeful, theoretically substantiated approach underlies the management of all processes involved in the building of communism. Now, that the material and technical base of the future society is being laid, the theory of scientific communism assumes ever greater importance. We are moving along an untrodden path, building a society new to the world. This is what makes it so important for us to contribute creatively to Marxist-Leninist theory, draw lessons from the building of socialism and communism in the USSR and other countries, and thereby arrive at an optimum unity of theory and practice. The successful development of communist society depends on it.

The growing scale and complexity of the tasks involved in building communism poses ever greater demands in the way of the political, organizing and ideological guidance of the whole of the immense work involved in creating the new society. The Party leads the Soviet people towards one goal.

I have often read that Communists in the USSR enjoy much greater privileges than other citizens. Is this true?

If by privilege you mean a chance to get something that others cannot get, then Soviet Communists have none. People who try to use their membership in the Party to get extra benefits are expelled from it.

To be in the Party means always to put the people's interest before one's own. One can be an expert in one's line, a

good worker and a good citizen without carrying a Party card, but one cannot be a Communist unless one sets an example to others in work, in public activity and in one's private life.

If that is a privilege, Communists do enjoy it.

What is the relationship between the Soviet State and the trade unions in your country?

To begin with, Soviet trade unions and the labour unions of the capitalist countries operate in fundamentally different conditions, and therefore the way they function cannot be judged by the same criteria.

Trade unions in the Soviet Union are set up at industrial enterprises which do not belong to private individuals, as is the case under capitalism, but to society as a whole. They operate in a state of working people whose object is to promote the well-being of the working man, materially and culturally. Consequently the interests of the Soviet trade unions and the interests of the Soviet State are identical.

More than that, the Soviet State assists the trade unions in a number of ways. In the first place it gives them material support. The Soviet State provides trade unions with working premises, it pays the maintenance cost of cultural centres and libraries, sports facilities, etc. It makes available to the trade unions sanatoria and holiday homes, and it provides funds for the entire complex of cultural, educational and sports activities.

The Soviet State has given the trade unions extensive rights. Thus, all questions pertaining to work and pay, questions that immediately concern the interests of the working man, are resolved by competent state bodies only jointly with the trade unions. In addition, the trade unions participate directly in the management of production: there are more than 70 listed cases when the management can act only with the consent of the trade unions, and there are a further 20 listed cases which are the exclusive concern of the trade unions. The trade unions also take part in the drawing up and implementation of the USSR's national economic plans.

The Soviet trade unions may, and do, initiate legislation. The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions

(AUCCTU), which is the highest trade union body in the country, took an active part in the elaboration of the "Basic Labour Law of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics and the Sovereign Socialist Republics", the "Regulations on the Rights of the Local Trade Union Committee at Factories and Plants", and the national pension laws. They participated in the drawing up of government decrees on pay rises, and in many other instances involving legislative action by the Soviet State.

And, finally, the State has turned over to trade union control a part of the national budget concerned with social security. This means that the trade unions are responsible for drawing up this budget and administering it. In 1977, the social security budget stood at 29,800 million roubles (compare with the 17,200 million roubles appropriated for national defence).

From whom does a Soviet trade union protect workers?

To answer the question briefly, one can say: from excessive zeal and from bureaucracy, whether departmental or on the part of individual managers, who distort the policy pursued by the Party and government for the democratic management of production and who, being incapable of organizing production properly, seek to fulfil the production plan by hook or by crook, ignoring labour laws and the terms of collective agreements.

Other protective functions of the Soviet trade unions are that nobody can be dismissed from his work without the consent of the trade union; and no shop or factory can be put into operation without the prior approval of the trade union as to working conditions, safety, etc.

The appointment of managers must also have trade union consent. And the union may demand the dismissal of a manager who has broken the labour law or the terms of a collective agreement. Such dismissals at the insistence of the unions do occur, but they are rare. This is because the majority of Soviet managers either started on their careers as ordinary workers or come from working-class families, and this reduces the possibility of serious conflicts arising between management and workers.

Can workers have the state economic plan changed if they think its targets are unrealistic?

Yes, and such cases do happen. If a factory or plant is given a production plan with impracticably high target figures, the factory management and the trade union committee have the right to have it corrected.

But, as a rule, the opposite is the case. It frequently happens that state production plans cannot envisage all the latent possibilities for raising production, something that only the appropriate working collective—the factory workers and the factory management—who receive their assignments from government planning departments are equipped to know. In such cases the trade union organizations draw up their own, revised, plans. Such plans serve the interests of both the workers and the Soviet State. Those who meet the upwardly revised target figures get bigger bonuses. Thus, in 1976, about 14,000 such plans were adopted.

Are there laws in the Soviet Union that limit the rights of the trade unions?

Over the past 60 years there has not been a single law passed in this country that has curtailed or aimed to curtail the rights of the trade unions in the slightest degree. Trade unions do not have to register with any government body and neither their activities nor their budgets are subject to government control. Trade unions are independent organizations and operate in accordance with the Rules of Trade Unions of the USSR and the Rules of Branch Unions.

May Soviet citizens set up organizations of their own and print periodicals?

They certainly may and they widely use the right. In this country there are various public organizations. Apart from the trade unions, there are: youth and sports organizations; composers', writers', journalists' and artists' unions; co-operative associations; cultural, technical, scientific, religious and other societies.

The right of Soviet citizens to unite in public organizations is guaranteed by the USSR Constitution. Voluntary

societies and organizations maintain contacts with similar organizations abroad and act as hosts to visitors from other countries. They belong to appropriate international organizations. Mass organizations may sponsor legislation and nominate candidates for election to bodies of state power.

State bodies place at the disposal of public organizations buildings, means of communication, printing houses, stocks of paper, etc. i. e., provide them with material conditions for publishing their periodicals, books and pamphlets.

To illustrate, there is the Leninist Young Communist League (YCL or Komsomol), which unites 34 million young men and women of the country. The Komsomol directs the work of the young pioneers' organization of 23 million schoolchildren. It has at its disposal extensive facilities for many different forms of activity among young people: it publishes some 226 newspapers and magazines for schoolchildren and the youth, with a total circulation of over 70 million copies; it also has three publishing houses which put out about 50 million copies of books and pamphlets annually.

II. ECONOMICS, PLANNING, EMPLOYMENT

How has Soviet industrial output grown in relation to world industrial output over the past 60 years?

The following table shows the growth of the USSR's share in world industrial production and its growth as regards several key indicators relative to the United States:

Share of the USSR in world industrial production	1913	1975
	4%	20%
Output in the USSR expressed as percentage of USA output:		
industrial output	12.5	over 80
power output	8	50
oil production	27	120
steel production	15	128
production of artificial fertilizers	3	125
production of cement	13	188

Pre-revolutionary Russia reached the peak of its economic development in 1913. Then came the First World War, the Civil War and foreign military intervention, all of which threw the country's economy back for many years. It was not until 1926 that the Soviet Union regained the 1913 level of industrial development.

The difficulties and complexities that attended the country's economic development can be summed up as

follows. Nearly twenty years were lost fighting wars that were forced upon the Soviet Union, and in making good the war-devastated economy. Hence, on normal reckoning, it took the Soviet State not 60 years, but a mere 40 years to achieve its present level of economic development.

It is precisely this dynamic rate of development that frightens the proponents of the capitalist world whose economy has been virtually marking time over the past decade. They would like to slow down the rate of our economic development by a further massive build-up of arms that would force us to spend more on defence at the expense of our economic progress. And to justify their insane desire for yet more and more arms, they hypocritically talk about a "Soviet military threat".

The year 1975, the figures for which we have compared with those for 1913, was the last year of the ninth five-year plan period. The current tenth five-year plan (1976-80) has even higher economic targets. By the end of the period annual grain production will have increased by 40 million tons; the output of steel will have grown by 27.2 million tons, that of oil by 149.2 million tons, natural gas by 145,700 million cubic metres, and electric power by 341,400 million kilowatt-hours.

Who owns and administers the land, mineral resources and basic means of production in the USSR?

The land and the mineral resources in our country are national property. The land is administered by elected government bodies, the Soviets of Working People's Deputies. Land cannot be bought or sold. It cannot be an object of speculative deals. Building sites for factories, houses, roads, etc. may not be bought but are allocated free by the Soviets.

Land cultivated by collective farms is also national property, which the state has made available to the farms, free, for use in perpetuity. The other means of production, such as machinery, buildings, repair shops, processing enterprises, etc., are owned by the collective farms. Many large agricultural enterprises—hothouses, machine shops, etc.—are owned by several collective farms on a co-operative basis.

Most industrial enterprises are owned by the state and operated by appropriate departments of ministries which may be at USSR or republic level. Local industrial enterprises and everyday service establishments are for the most part run by local Soviets.

What is the distinction you make between private and personal property?

We call private property that which derives from the exploitation of the work of others and which serves the aim of exploitation. No such property exists in the USSR.

There is citizens' personal property. Its source is their own work, and its purpose is to satisfy their material and cultural needs. The real incomes of Soviet people have been rising at a rate where they double every fifteen years. An increasingly greater proportion of incomes is spent on durable consumer goods such as furniture and carpets, cars, TVs and tape recorders, pleasure boats, and personally owned houses. By the way, of the more than two million flats and one-family houses built in the Soviet Union each year, four-fifths belong to the state and the remaining fifth are citizens' personal property.

A person can do what he likes with his earned income, pension, scholarship grant or other allowance paid by the state. Things bought with that money are personal property, the rights to which are guaranteed under the law. Their owners may sell them, give them away or leave them to their heirs.

In the Soviet Union, land, mineral resources, industrial establishments, and the basic means of production may not be sold or owned as personal property. A collective farmer may own the technical facilities he needs to cultivate his own personal plot. But he is not permitted to employ hired labour.

Is enterprise appreciated in the Soviet Union?

Very much so and it is actively encouraged. But only when it serves the interests of society.

For instance, a manager displays a special capacity for making the best use of the funds allotted for the running of his factory; he is efficient, resourceful and capable

of taking independent decisions so as to ensure fulfilment of plan targets in the best possible way. All of this is welcome.

But should he use his talents for personal gain, or promote his particular establishment at the expense of others, that is, to the detriment of society and the state, he is in for trouble. Far from being encouraged, such "enterprise" may have legal consequences.

Under a capitalist free-enterprise system the shop owner always sees to it that there are enough goods on his shelves, for these are the source of his profit. And the factory owner and the wholesale dealer do their best to satisfy the demands of the shop owner with the same aim in mind. It is difficult to understand how your people can work for the good of society lacking the profit motive.

We try to cultivate in people, right from an early age, the desire to place the interests of society above their own. This does not mean, of course, that we ignore the personal interests of people, for these play an important role, too. Therefore one of the most important tasks, in our opinion, is to achieve the greatest possible degree of harmony between the personal and public interests of Soviet citizens. However, we do not see any reason why the two should conflict. The manager of a Soviet store tries to run the shop in his charge so that it makes a profit. The more goods he and his assistants sell over and above the plan target, the higher the bonus they get for their work. So a Soviet manager, too, has a personal interest in having a wide variety of goods on the shelves of his store. The same applies to the factories which manufacture and deliver these goods. The better they work, the higher the remuneration of the people involved in the production, delivery and sale of goods, and the more society (i. e. the customers) benefits from this work. By meeting and exceeding the targets for the production and sale of goods the people engaged in this activity also serve the interests of the Soviet state. So our people have both a personal and a social motive for their work, and the two are complementary.

How is the problem of ensuring employment solved in the Soviet Union, and what is the difference between your approach to it and that of Western countries?

The problem of ensuring employment (full employment) in the USSR was solved half a century ago. This is reflected in the Constitution of the USSR, which ensures for every citizen the right to work.

In our view, the right to work is a yardstick of democracy in any country. Without guaranteed employment a person cannot have any assurance that he will be able to provide for himself and his family; he becomes a toy in the hands of his employers, who must be obeyed blindly, and he runs the risk of finding himself at any time among the army of unemployed. There are eighteen million fully unemployed (fifty million, including the members of their families) in the capitalist countries today, living on relief or receiving no aid.

It is not accidental of course that guarantees of the right to work are absent from the constitutions of capitalist countries. To abolish unemployment in the capitalist world would mean to abolish capitalism: private ownership and the anarchy of private enterprise bred by it would have to be replaced by common ownership of the means of production and by a planned economy.

State planning on a national scale enables our country to co-ordinate the demand for labour with the available manpower at any given time, including in the long term, and to locate new factories where it is possible to draw more workers into production.

There are some areas of the Soviet Union where special measures have to be taken to ensure full employment, but, unlike the capitalist countries, the main problem with us is a shortage of workers rather than of jobs. For over 30 years now, the demand for manpower in the Soviet economy has outstripped the supply.

How can you ensure that people work if nobody is afraid of losing his job?

We rely on a conscientious attitude to work based on social awareness—not discipline induced by fear. We believe we are justified in this policy, although it has to be admitted there is room for improvement.

In our country, where full employment is ensured and where there are more jobs than workers to fill them, a person really has no fear of unemployment. The things that impel him to work well are the material well-being of his family, which is directly affected by his work performance, and moral incentives—the awareness that increasing national wealth leads to higher living standards for all. Of course, there has to be a sufficiently high level of this awareness. Regrettably, with some people it is not always on a par with the level of democracy in our society.

However, we try to resolve this problem not by curtailing democratic rights (such as guaranteed employment) and freedoms (such as freedom from unemployment), but by raising the level of social awareness of the people. We consider our way to be the only one acceptable to a socialist state.

One of your goals has been to bring the economic development of the republics up to about the same level. But surely this can only be achieved at the expense of the more industrialized areas. Is this justified?

It is justified when you are guided by long-term national considerations.

At the time of the October revolution the peoples of Russia were at widely different stages of development socially and economically. The European part of Russia and the Urkaine were to some degree industrialized; Byelorussia and Transcaucasia were far behind, and the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan were still living under feudalism. The Russian working class and its political party considered it their internationalist duty to help the backward outlying regions of the country to close the gap as soon as possible.

With the implementation of the first five-year plan (1928-32), the volume of industrial output in the old industrial areas of the USSR doubled, while in the outlying republics it increased by 3.5 times. In the Central Asian republics the growth was still higher—approximately five times. High rates of growth were maintained in subsequent five-year periods too, partly as a result of centralized planning and a unified technological policy. But the most important factor was still the centralized redistri-

bution of the national income. As an illustration of the assistance given, the budget of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic in the first five-year plan period was 417 million roubles, but only 127 million of the sum was covered by the republic's own income.

The Soviet economy generally is characterized by high rates of growth. But in some areas and republics there was phenomenal economic growth, thanks to the Leninist policy of giving priority to building up the economies of the weaker republics.

Naturally, this affected the progress of the more industrially advanced parts of the country, but only in the short term—while the disparity between them and the less developed republics remained substantial. Past that point, it became possible to concentrate the efforts of all republics on other problems, no less important and relevant, in the name of their common prosperity. This was done by pooling efforts and by economic specialization.

Do the state plans cover every aspect of life in socialist society?

No, and nor were they ever intended to.

Public ownership of the land, mineral resources and means of production makes it possible to carry out planning on a national scale. The socialist state shapes its economic and social policies proceeding from the fundamental, long-term interests of the entire people. It satisfies basic social needs by a planned use of resources and rational distribution of the productive forces. Planning, a cornerstone of Soviet economic management, has brought about an important result. Socialist society has been rid of economic crises, unemployment and inflation—those concomitants of the economies of the capitalist countries.

Our state, however, does not set itself the impossible task of planning and regimenting economic and social life down to the minutest detail. The state central planning agencies work out the national requirements for coal, oil, steel, grain, etc., and decide on the necessary appropriations, and from there local initiative takes over. It is decided locally how the plan targets can best be fulfilled and how to use the allocations most efficiently. In other words, initiative is called for within the framework of the

plan, initiative which is encouraged in every way for the further development of society.

Can socialist planning replace capitalist competition?

First of all, what is capitalist competition? It is the struggle which takes place between industrial or trading concerns and between individuals in what the West likes to call a "free market", but that we call conditions of anarchy, where one man's gain is another man's defeat or ruin.

As Ashley Montagu wrote in *The American Way of Life*, "A principle of the American way of life is the idea of competition. This takes the simple form of going out and doing better than the other even if you have to do him and his family injury in the process. *That* can be none of your concern. After all, you have *your* family to think of. This kind of indifference to the consequences to others of one's competitiveness is inherent in the principle of competition." *

Competition belongs in a society where private property dominates, and the rule is "every man for himself".

Competition may stimulate enterprise, innovation, and efficiency. But not only that. It also engenders avariciousness, ruthlessness, indifference to the public interest, self-seeking.

Since we have no private, capitalist property, there is no soil for competition. In place of private ownership, we have public ownership. Soviet factories have only the one owner, the people, and do not have to struggle against each other. They do not have industrial secrets that have to be kept under lock and key. Every advance in technology, in the organization of labour, etc. introduced at some enterprise becomes common property. It is easy to see that in Soviet conditions it cannot be otherwise, for it benefits all.

At the same time we do have competition, and encourage it, in what is known as the socialist emulation movement. Under this movement millions of people—in a workshop or on a farm or a railway—strive to emulate the best

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* Ashley Montagu. *The American Way of Life*, New York, 1967, p. 106.

workers; they compete to fulfil the plan ahead of time and with less effort than others, and to raise quality and reduce costs. They look for better and quicker ways of doing things, make suggestions and come up with inventions. The material remuneration of those taking part in the emulation movement is commensurate with the effort contributed by each to the common cause. Every person is interested in raising the efficiency not only of that portion of his work which yields higher earnings, but also that which goes into the common "kitty", or social funds, eventually to return to him, his family, his mates and his fellow citizens in the form of modern apartments, free health service, free school and higher education, etc.

Besides individual workers and teams, whole establishments, cities, regions and republics take part in the emulation movement.

In this movement some forge ahead and some lag behind, but nobody is ruined in the process. The best results and methods become common property. Those left behind learn from the winners. The industrial "atmosphere" is therefore one of assistance and co-operation. The moral code of the builder of communism is, "One for all and all for one".

The story of a turner, G. Nezhevenko of Odessa, now a pensioner in receipt of a special pension awarded to distinguished workers, is typical in that respect. Nezhevenko's father was a blacksmith before the revolution, renowned for his skill, and he kept his professional secrets strictly to himself. When he shoed a horse, he would look over his shoulder to see if anyone was watching. His son was a qualified turner. (The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia mentions him in connection with a cutting tool he invented which brought about a real revolution in the turning trade.) He is a frequent visitor at many factories where he teaches his methods of high-speed metal-cutting. He also heads advanced training courses for workers at a factory making radial machine tools.

The example of the Nezhevenkos, father and son, demonstrates the importance of the surrounding social conditions and the psychological climate in which a person lives. Social conditions may stifle the good qualities in a man, or they may, on the other hand, help them to develop.

Does centralized planning not act as a brake on local initiative?

Let us take a concrete example. The plan for the tenth five-year period (1976-80) was approved by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 29, 1976. Approximately a year before, Soviet newspapers printed the CPSU Central Committee's draft guidelines for the economic development of the USSR for the next five years. The draft was studied and discussed at local level throughout the country, and over one million suggestions, additions and amendments were received from groups and individuals. The more important of them were incorporated in the "Guidelines for the National Economic Development of the USSR for 1976-1980", adopted by the 25th CPSU Congress. Other essential suggestions were forwarded to various establishments to be considered and appraised.

On the basis of the Guidelines, the USSR Council of Ministers worked out the draft State Five-Year Plan, divided into years, and according to ministries and Union republics. At that stage all ministries and departments of the USSR, republican Councils of Ministers, central and local economic agencies, the USSR Academy of Sciences and other bodies took part in the work.

It was continued in the committees of the Supreme Soviet, and only after that was the Law on the Five-Year Plan adopted by the Soviet parliament.

Even a brief outline like this shows that the plan is not drawn up by a handful of leaders; a great many men and women are involved in the drawing up, discussion and approval of the plan—people who will then be putting the provisions of the plan into effect.

If everything is co-ordinated in your national plans, why should they be overfulfilled?

It is not so much necessary as desirable. Each national economic plan contains production targets which, if exceeded, can only benefit everyone. In general, in the modern world, one cannot have too much oil, coal, housing, consumer goods, etc. Hence the targets set for the industries working directly for consumption are minimum ones.

Does this mean that plan targets are deliberately set

at a low level? Not at all. In every branch of the economy and at every enterprise there are additional reserves for boosting production which it is difficult to foresee at the time the national plan is being drawn up. It is highly desirable that such reserves be utilized, and there is always initiative from the shop floor for exceeding the plan, since, apart from other considerations, the workers receive bonuses for greater output. Of course, it would not be sensible to produce additional motor cars without tyres, or houses without windows, or to build power transmission lines where there is no power to be transmitted. It is only expedient to produce something over and above plan when this is done all along the technological line and—what is more—when the product is in demand.

It is widely known that all the previous Soviet five-year plans were overfulfilled. In 1976, the first year of the current five-year period, the value of output in excess of the plan came to more than 5,000 million roubles. This sum represents an increment to the national wealth produced by the Soviet people through their own initiative. The sum is sufficient to build more than half a million flats, or six hydroelectric power stations, each the size of the mammoth Bratsk station on the River Angara in Siberia.

What is the difference between a collective farm and a state farm?

State farms are state-owned enterprises, like factories, mines, etc. And collective farms are collective self-administered economies, or production co-operatives. There are some 28,000 collective farms and 18,000 state farms in the Soviet Union.

On a state farm, all means of production are state property. Those engaged in state-farm production enjoy absolutely the same rights and are covered by the same system of social security and pensions as factory workers, being a part of the working class. The entire produce of a state farm belongs to the state.

A collective farm operates on a quite different basis. There the means of production, except the land, are the collective property of the farmers who are members of the farm. The produce obtained from collectively-owned fields or livestock belongs to the collective farm, which

decides how to dispose of it. It keeps a part for its own needs or distribution among its members; it sells another part to the state, and it may sell the rest at collective-farm markets or through trading co-operatives. Some collective farms run shops of their own in cities and towns or keep stalls in market places.

A state farm is managed by state-appointed executives, while collective farmers elect their managers.

Collective farms have their Rules, a sort of constitution governing collective-farm life. The highest administrative body of a collective farm is a general meeting of its members. It elects a Board with Chairman at the head--a collective executive-administrative body which attends to the daily operations of the farm and represents it in its relations with government bodies, public organizations and other collective farms. A general meeting also elects inspection bodies which are independent of either the Board or chairman, and which are accountable only to the entire membership of the collective farm.

State and collective farms work under a plan. Planning at state farms is directly co-ordinated with the national economic development plans. Planning at collective farms is rather different.

On the one hand, the state cannot tell a collective farm how much to produce and how much to sell or to keep for its own needs. On the other, the state must know beforehand what it can expect. The point is that the share of collective and state farms in Soviet agricultural production is approximately equal, so the contribution made by the collective farms to the national economy is very large. Anarchy in collective-farm production would preclude any planning on a national scale.

Practice has prompted a system with the help of which the state secures a set quantity of produce from collective farms without encroaching upon their independence in making decisions and without violating the principles of collective-farm democracy.

This is how it works. A collective farm concludes with the state for some years ahead a form of supply contract known as the "fixed plan". This stipulates a minimum production figure which is well within the capacity of the collective farm to meet, and which the state can rely on. All that the collective farm produces over and above

this minimum, the state undertakes to buy at premium prices. This makes it advantageous for the collective farm to expand and intensify production.

The collective farms have become large, highly mechanized agricultural enterprises. A collective farm today averages 6,500 hectares (16,000 acres) and has about 5,000 head of livestock. The average state farm is approximately twice this size.

The development of collective farms and the growth of the country's economic potential have made it possible to carry out important social measures, introducing guaranteed wages and a system of pensions and social security for collective farmers. All this has helped to even out differences in living and working conditions between collective farmers and state-farm workers, and to reduce still further the disparity in living conditions between town and country.

How do you explain the fact that tsarist Russia exported grain and the Soviet Union has to import it?

Between 1909 and 1913, when Russian capitalism was in its heyday, the country exported an average of 11 million tons of grain annually. Grain at that time was practically all that the peasants produced, occupying 88.5 per cent of the arable land, and bread was their principal food. The fact that grain was exported does not mean that tsarist Russia had a surplus. In 1911, 30 million people (20 per cent of the population of Russia) went hungry. However, the world market situation was extremely favourable, and Russian grain exports reached a record figure of 13.5 million tons.

Today, grain output has trebled compared with the period before the revolution, and yet the Soviet Union buys grain. Why?

In Soviet times the diet of the population has changed radically. In 1913, annual per capita consumption of bread was 200 kilograms, and of meat, 29 kilograms. Now it is 142 kilograms of bread and 58 kilograms of meat. Bread has ceased to be the main daily food, ceding its place to animal products of higher nutritive value. But in order to develop livestock farming intensively with the aim of meeting the increasing demand for meat, large quantities of grain are needed for fodder.

Academician Nemchinov, a leading Soviet economist, has estimated the country's total demand for grain as a ton a year per inhabitant. The following table gives the relation between the production of grain and population growth in the USSR:

Years	Average Annual Grain Output (million tons)	Increase (per cent)	Year	Population Growth (millions)	Increase (per cent)
1961—1965	130.3	—	1966	232.2	—
1966—1970	167.6	22.7	1971	243.9	5.0
1971—1975	181.5	7.7	1976	255.5	4.7

The decline in the rate of growth in grain output in the first half of the 1970's was due, as is known, to crop failures caused by disastrous droughts that hit the country. But even so, there was an increase in the output of grain. With due account for the crop failures, it can be seen that grain output in the USSR is growing at a much higher rate than the population, and the indications are that the ultimate objective of a ton per head will be attained in time. Meanwhile we continue to need grain for fodder. This has nothing to do with bread as such. Even the lowest grain output in the past ten years (140 million tons in 1975—the result of the drought) is still considerably more than is needed to ensure, all over the country, a fully adequate and uninterrupted supply of bread and other foods made from flour.

No acute shortage of fodder grain was felt until the Soviet Union began putting its livestock farming on industrial lines. It is significant that in 1960, when gross grain output amounted to just 125.5 million tons, 6.8 million tons was exported and only 0.2 million tons imported.

Now that more than 100 million tons of grain a year is needed for fodder, it is difficult to meet this demand in full without imports, even with a grain output of 220-235 million tons a year, which is considered high by current standards. That is why the Soviet Union is buying grain.

It should not be forgotten that it not only buys but also sells grain even in drought years, faithful to commitments assumed earlier. This, however, refers not to fodder but to "food" grain.

Why are grain harvests in the USSR lower than in Western Europe and the United States?

Natural conditions are the main reason.

In the United States, half of the arable land receives at least 700 millimetres of precipitation a year. The main grain-producing areas in Belgium, West Germany and France are usually equally well off. Only one per cent of the arable land in the United States is situated in a zone of insufficient moisture, while Western Europe does not encounter this difficulty at all as a rule. Characteristically, the 1976 drought was regarded there as the "climatic catastrophe of the century".

Two-thirds of the grain crops in the Soviet Union are obtained in what is known as high-risk zones. Forty per cent of the arable land receives less than 400 millimetres of moisture a year, while the optimum, 700 millimetres, is received by only one per cent of the arable land.

And insufficient water is not the only scourge for Soviet farming. In 1976, for instance, there was sufficient rain, but the weather was too cold for the crops. Then again, in winters with little snowfall, the crops sown in autumn often freeze. As for the North and Siberia, the conditions for grain growing are difficult almost every year. Late spring frosts end at the beginning of June, while early autumn frosts sometimes start at the end of July.

On balance, experts say, the bioclimatic potential in the Soviet Union's farming zone is only a half that of the United States and Western Europe. Hence lower harvests.

If there is a drought, the field will burn out regardless of who has sown it, a collective farmer or a private farmer. When, in 1976, France failed to obtain a good harvest because there was no rain, and had to resort to imports, clearly the weather was to blame.

But when the Soviet Union suffers a drought, we find the Western media blaming the Soviet social system, or the collective-farm system.

In the 1971-75 period, grain yields in the USSR rea-

ched on the average almost 1.5 tons per hectare; they were as high as 1.6 and 1.7 tons per hectare in the best of those years. As for the areas with agricultural conditions more or less comparable with those in the United States and Western Europe (e.g., the North Caucasus, the Crimea, the south of the Ukraine, and the Baltic area), grain yields there have long climbed over the three tons per hectare mark, which is somewhat lower than the yields in some countries of Western Europe but higher than in the United States.

Pursuing a policy of further intensification of agriculture, investing enormous sums for this purpose, increasing further the production of machinery and fertilizers, and carrying out the largest land improvement programme in the world, the Soviet Union aims to make its agriculture independent of the vagaries of the weather.

How do the numbers of persons "fed" by a US farmer and a Soviet farmer compare?

The United States has four million farmers for a 212 million population, and in the Soviet Union, 24 million are engaged in agriculture for a 260 million population. Ergo, one Soviet farmer feeds eleven persons, or nearly one-fifth of the number fed by one US farmer.

This is the way it is often presented in the Western press. And on the face of it, this is how it seems. But the comparison is not valid, as we shall see.

The members of the "Pobeda" (Victory) collective farm in the Ternopol Region of the Ukraine number 1,500 people of 136 specialities. Among them are mechanical engineers, a safety expert, fitters, turners and milling-machine operators working at the farm's repair shops, and electricians serving 500 motors. Further, this number includes managers, economists, book-keepers, cooks and waitresses at the farm's dining rooms, night-watchmen, cleaners, truck drivers, concrete layers, masons and carpenters belonging to the inter-farm construction organizations; foresters looking after the collective-farm forests; operators serving the radio and telephone systems on the farm. In Soviet statistics, they are all referred to as farmers.

But under American statistics, all such workers are put in the different categories of administration, transpor-

tation, communications, construction, forestry, etc. That is, they are not included among the farmers.

We are not quarrelling with the so-far-indisputable fact that in labour productivity in agriculture the Soviet Union lags behind the United States. The ratio between the average annual output of farm produce in the two countries in 1971-75 was 100 : 85. But to claim that the produce obtained in the United States and the Soviet Union is the result of the efforts of four and 24 million farmers respectively is a gross misrepresentation of the situation.

Why do you call your tenth five-year plan a plan to achieve efficiency and high quality? Did you not set yourselves such tasks before?

We did, but never so emphatically or on such a scale as now.

Many Western experts admit that the efficiency of the Soviet economy is increasing much faster than that of the capitalist economy. The fact that in some sectors of Soviet industry the scale of production and the quality of some products are so far lower than in highly industrialized capitalist countries is due to the extremely unfavourable initial level of this country's industrial development and a number of other objective reasons which we have already mentioned in other answers.

On the other hand we can also point out that no other country has equalled the USSR in producing nuclear reactors, turbines and generators of such great capacity and advanced technology as those operating at the world's largest power stations constructed in the USSR. Soviet drilling, metallurgical, welding and other equipment is on a par with the world's best.

All this was achieved in the period of our extensive development—when the economy mainly expanded. At the time that path of development was necessary and was considered to be the main, the leading one. However, even then we paid no small attention to the quality of what we were making. It is enough to point out that it was at the concluding stage of our extensive development that we achieved signal successes in space exploration.

Then it became important to determine as precisely as possible the moment when the national economy should be

redirected from extensive to intensive development. That has been done. What does this signify?

It means, in the first place, that whereas in the previous, ninth, five-year plan period, capital investments in the economy grew 50 per cent faster than the national income; in the current five-year period their growth—practically for the first time in the history of the Soviet economy—will be lower than the growth of the national income. The economy will become less capital-intensive.

And with regard to quality, in the one year, 1976, the output of industrial products rated as of the highest quality grew by 30-60 per cent, and we expect this growth to continue in subsequent years as well. As a result, by 1980, the volume of products of the highest world standards will have grown by several times, compared with 1975.

The current drive for efficiency and high quality in the country's economic development, as outlined by the 25th CPSU Congress, is aimed at meeting the growing requirements of the Soviet citizen, at securing a further and rapid improvement in his living standard.

Don't you think the current building of sports facilities in Moscow for the 1980 Olympic Games too extravagant?

No. For two reasons.

For one thing, even before the decision was taken to hold the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, the city already had, to all practical intents, all the sports facilities needed for such an event. Moscow has been venue of the USSR Games finals, (which compare in scale to the Olympics), of the University Games, of many world and European championships and other international contests. Among its sports facilities, many of which measure up to international requirements and can be used for the Olympics, are 69 stadiums, over 1,300 gymnasiums, 22 competition-size swimming pools, two indoor tennis courts, two cycling tracks and a rowing canal.

Secondly, all that we are now building in Moscow for the 1980 Olympics will be of use after the Games, and would have been built even without the Olympics—under Moscow's master plan which has set a per capita optimal 3.5 square metres for sports facilities, or a fraction over tre-

ble the area we have now. Nor will the building of sports facilities stop after the Olympics end. This event has been responsible not so much for additional unplanned expenditures as for compelling us to speed up construction of various projects. However, it has on no account reduced the planned housing programme.

"We have no intention of outdoing our predecessors in the construction of mammoth sports installations, but rather aim to do what we find expedient", says Ignaty Novikov, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and Chairman of the Soviet Olympic Organizing Committee.

What is being built for the 1980 Olympic Games?

An Olympic village of five high-rise blocks of flats, which after the Games will comprise a new 120-hectare residential district. A 10,000-bed hotel complex. A 1,500-channel automatic international telephone exchange. An automated games administration and information system. A multi-purpose indoor arena. A canopied stadium. An equestrian sports complex.

Muscovites will undoubtedly find all these facilities a most welcome addition, irrespective of the Olympic Games.

III. NATURAL RESOURCES AND SCIENCE

To what extent has your country been hit by the energy crisis?

It has not been hit at all. The Soviet Union has enough natural resources to meet its needs and is not dependent on imports of raw materials and fuel.

Just as the entire economy of the country is developed according to a national plan, so is the fuel-and-energy industry. Our system of planned economic management makes it possible to co-ordinate needs with the available resources, discover in good time where shortages might occur, and prevent the emergence of crisis situations.

As a fundamental and indispensable branch of the economy, the fuel-and-energy industry receives paramount attention and its development is accorded top priority.

The production of fuel and energy in the USSR is shown in the following table:

	1965	1970	1975	1980 (plan)
Oil (million tons)	243	353	491	640
Coal (million tons)	578	624	701	805
Gas (thousand million cubic metres)	128	198	289	435
Electric power (thousand million kwh)	507	741	1,039	1,380

There are no people in this country interested in creating artificial difficulties in order to push up the price of

oil, coal and electrical energy, or in promoting a one-sided development of the country's fuel industry in favour of their own products, or people who would profit from artificially boosting the consumption of particular fuels such as oil, etc.

Government planning and decisions ensure rational use of all the USSR's mineral resources. Exploration of the country's underground wealth is done on a scientific basis under a comprehensive plan which covers all stages, from basic research to trial drillings. Large funds are allocated for these purposes. Newly discovered deposits of oil, coal and gas have moved the Soviet Union into first place in the world for the production of these fuels.

However, the successes of the geologists represent only the first stage. The deposits discovered then have to be worked—which often presents formidable difficulties. Major underground deposits have been discovered in sparsely inhabited areas difficult of access in Siberia, the Far North and in the Central Asian desert. Both development and transportation—often to destinations thousands of kilometres away—require enormous outlays both in labour and money.

No deposits, no matter how rich, are inexhaustible. So what we try to do is to discover new resources at a faster rate than current extraction. That is why the Soviet Union, which has already achieved a most favourable situation compared with other countries, continues to carry on prospecting and development at a high rate.

People in the United States and other countries have to contend with quite a few difficulties in the event of a cold winter. As a result of a sharp drop in the temperature in January and February, 1977, four thousand establishments suspended work, three million people were laid off, and the air-temperature in homes and offices went below comfort-level. Do you have the same problems in your country?

Cold winters are also a big problem here, and might be expected to be a much more serious problem than in other industrially advanced countries because of our country's geographical position. When, early in 1977, the air-temperature in the United States dropped to mi-

nus 10-15 degrees Centigrade, the temperature in some parts of the Soviet Union stood at minus 40 degrees. However, what happened in the United States did not happen in this country. None of our establishments suspended operations, nobody was laid off, the air temperature in our homes and offices was not allowed to go down, and the prices of fuel and electric power did not go up.

For example, Muscovites used twice as much gas in their homes when the weather was particularly cold, but continued to pay the usual fixed charge of 16 kopecks (21 US cents) per person per month regardless of the actual amount of gas they used. The same applies to hot water (89 US cents per person per month), and central heating (1 dollar 18 cents per person per month). Neither were the prices of electric power or petrol changed, because all the extra expenses in connection with heating buildings in the cold winter months were borne by the Soviet State.

Preparations for the winter are made in the summer. Huge quantities of gas are pumped into underground reservoirs to be used in the coldest months of the year. The maintenance work on the boiler facilities and heating systems is done before the autumn comes. Transport facilities, and particularly special snow-clearing machines are also made ready for the winter.

What is done in your cities to protect them from pollution?

The measures taken in that respect may be illustrated by Moscow's example.

In Moscow, 4,500 small boiler plants have been closed and replaced by heating plants fired by gas instead of coal. As a result, the rate of air pollution has been sharply reduced. Today practically all apartment and other buildings in Moscow have central heating supplied by gas-fired stations. All heating plants are equipped with dust and gas catchers.

Many factories have been moved out of Moscow and sited so that they are spaced well apart. Thanks to new and modernized motorways and limitation on the use of heavy lorries within city limits, air pollution by exhaust gas has been materially reduced.

Similar measures have been effected in Leningrad,

Novosibirsk and many other large industrial centres. It is much more difficult and costly to keep the air clean there than at other, less industrialized, places. In Moscow again, for example, in the past five years (1971-75) the expenditure on air-pollution control amounted to roughly 8.5 million roubles, not counting the planting and tending of trees and shrubs, reconstruction of thoroughfares, moving factories to new sites, and so on, all of which cost ten times as much.

A factor of major importance for ensuring good air for the city is the expansion of the area under parks and gardens. Cities are encircled by vast park and woodland belts. Moscow, for instance, has a green belt of 175,000 hectares (440,000 acres).

Our country is the first to have set statutory limits on permissible concentrations of harmful substances in the water, soil and air. The national economic development plan includes a section each year on nature conservation and the rational use of natural resources, specifying measures for the protection of the waters, forests and air, reproduction of the fish stock, conservation of the mineral wealth, and so on.

How is environmental protection organized in the USSR?

By 1980, the last year of the current five-year plan period, the country's industrial production will have increased by more than a third. But this will not result in a corresponding pollution of the environment.

How is this possible, it might be asked, especially in view of the worsening of the ecological situation in many industrialized countries? It follows from the experience of industrial development in socialist conditions and has definite material and legal guarantees.

The experience consists above all in the planned and rational use of natural resources. For instance, even the first state plan (for the electrification of Russia) contained provision for preventing water pollution. It was planned to "disperse industry" all over the country to ensure better use both of new natural resources and natural purification basins.

Ever since then budget allocations for environmental protection have been included in the plans for each particular industry. As a result, even with the growth of the national economic potential as great as it has been, the country has preserved a relative environmental balance.

The material guarantees are included in the five-year plan itself. As much as 11,000 million roubles has been allocated directly for environmental protection for the 1976-80 period. If we add to this the allocations to combat water and wind erosion, and for afforestation work, etc., and also the amounts allocated locally for such purposes, the total comes to about 50,000 million roubles, or 2.7 per cent of the national income of the USSR.

The plan envisages a comprehensive approach to the siting of industrial enterprises and the rational use of all natural resources—ore, timber and water, etc., as in the case of the enterprises of the Ust Ilim territorial-industrial complex in Siberia, for example. Extracting techniques are also to be changed considerably. In the near future up to 80 per cent of iron ore, 75 per cent of non-ferrous ores and more than 50 per cent of coal will be produced by the open-cast method in order to reduce mining losses to the minimum.

This comprehensive approach ensures the efficient utilization of every mineral. It has been estimated, for example, that the ores of the eleven principal non-ferrous metals can yield another sixty elements.

Initial steps have already been taken, for instance in Kazakhstan, at the Ust Kamenogorsk lead-and-zinc plant, where the raw-material utilization factor has already been brought up to 93 per cent and the yield of non-ferrous metals has been greatly increased. At the Balkhash mining and metallurgical complex the extraction rate of useful elements is almost 100 per cent. This approach forms the basis of the technological policy adopted for the utilization of natural resources and results in a significant reduction of pollution levels.

The legal guarantees consist of a series of laws and government decrees enacted in recent years. There are the basic laws, for instance, covering land use and the exploitation of water and mineral resources, forest protection, and public health, and special government decrees on conservation measures relating to the Caspian, Black, and

Baltic seas and the Sea of Azov, and the basins of the rivers Volga and Ural and of Lake Baikal.

Other nature protection measures include legal constraints under the Labour Law prohibiting the operation of new or reconstructed industrial establishments which do not provide for adequate purification, neutralization and trapping of harmful waste materials. Exceptionally low concentration limits have been set for 487 effluents and 145 substances ejected into the air.

Criminal law and administrative law play a prominent part in the protection of the environment. Under their provisions persons guilty of polluting inland waters with oil and other noxious products may be heavily fined or possibly imprisoned.

Notwithstanding all such measures, however, the impact of industry generally on the environment is such that ecological regulation within the limits of individual countries is no longer sufficient. This is why international co-operation in this field is of such great importance.

Such co-operation is exemplified by the work being carried out by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). Within its framework, a special council has been set up to deal with questions relating to environmental protection, and a programme is being carried out in which scientists are co-operating on nearly 160 ecological problems. Also, the production of purifying plant and equipment and the special instruments needed in this field has been started on a co-operative basis.

Co-operation among the CMEA countries sets an example to other countries to join in the fight to protect the environment. For example, representatives of the USSR and a number of Baltic states have signed a convention on the protection of the marine environment of the Baltic Sea, and Czechoslovakia and Sweden have concluded an agreement on scientific and technological co-operation in protecting the environment.

Doesn't the state planning system interfere with the progress of science, with its free development?

"This is interference in the free flight of creative thought, in its inner logic which is not to be confined within the limits of any 'assignments'."

That was what some said in 1927, when a general meeting of the USSR Academy of Sciences approved the Academy's first post-revolutionary constitution to replace the old one of 1836. The new constitution promulgated the planning principle in research. The very idea of any "regulation from above", of "the government being in command of the front of research", seemed preposterous to many. Before the 1917 socialist revolution scientific research had followed individual inclinations rather than national programmes. Researchers worked separately, isolated from each other, the government showing little interest in what they were doing.

As early as April, 1918, under Lenin's guidance, a plan was drawn up for the extensive development of science, and for the study of how to bring electric power to industry, transport and agriculture, of how best to combine the utilization of raw materials and energy and to place industrial enterprises in the country in the most rational manner.

Over the last sixty years scientific research has achieved unprecedented scope, contributing immensely to the economy. Major scientific and technological problems closely related to the overall plans for the country's development are tackled by the joint efforts of large scientific bodies comprised of specialists in many lines. The work of a wide network of scientific centres is co-ordinated by the USSR Academy of Sciences, the Committee for Science and Technology of the USSR Council of Ministers, and corresponding agencies in the Union and Autonomous republics.

What, then, does the planning principle imply? The scientists are not requested to discover such-and-such by a certain date, of course. What is done is this: the general objectives of research are determined, the main lines are singled out and work is assigned to individual research centres in order to co-ordinate efforts and help concentrate them on the most promising lines. The Academy must define the overall strategy of research, analysing and forecasting the trends and co-ordinating the individual plans of its workers and centres in accordance with the national programmes.

This planned approach to science has fully proved itself. But, it might be questioned, perhaps it is not so necessary now that there are millions of scientists and specialists working in the USSR economy? On the contrary,

planning is even more necessary. Should these millions act each on his own, without co-ordination, there would be disproportion, with some lines of research outpacing others, and wasteful duplication of effort.

It has been estimated that better organization alone could make science four or five times more effective without additional investment. This objective is given special attention in the five-year plan for 1976-80.

Why was it necessary to set up large scientific centres in Siberia and other parts of the Soviet Union?

As far back as 1931 the Academy of Sciences, at its general meeting, decided to set up local comprehensive scientific bases which were to become the future research centres of the Union republics and the Autonomous republics. Such bases were established in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and in the Khibin mountains on the Kola Peninsula. Branches of the Academy of Sciences were also established in Transcaucasia, in the Urals and in the Soviet Far East. In 1936, the Academy had six branches in different parts of the country, and their number continued to grow.

However, the Second World War interfered with this process though it did not stop it altogether. After the war, in the 1950's a start was made on developing the eastern regions of the Soviet Union with their tremendous natural wealth. This could be done only with the help of science. Decentralization is one of the ways of improving the efficiency of science. In 1957, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR set up its Siberian division. By 1961, Academies of Sciences were established in all the Union republics of the Soviet Union.

With the wide variety of natural conditions in the USSR, each region has its own strategy of economic development which is determined by national five-year plans. Long-term economic forecasting also plays a significant part in mapping out regional strategy, and this is largely the concern of local centres such as the Siberian division of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

Scientists from the Russian Federation played an important part in setting up and organizing major scientific research centres in the Union republics and Autonomous republics, and in training local personnel.

Are Soviet scientists free to pursue an independent line of research?

This is really more a question of possibilities.

Today, the development of productive forces and of science has reached a level at which it is utterly impossible for Lomonosovs or Edisons to appear and, singlehanded, concern themselves at the same time with physics, chemistry, electrical engineering, space or nuclear theory. Even a scientist who gains personal international recognition with the award of, say, a Nobel Prize, has behind him dozens if not hundreds of colleagues, scientific teams, laboratories, research centres and even government agencies. He is connected with them and is dependent on them. In conditions of the scientific and technological revolution there can be no isolated scientists conducting experiments on their own and at their own expense. Because of this no modern scientist, whether Soviet, American or any other, enjoys absolute freedom.

Every scientist is free to formulate ideas. The most promising of them are selected after being discussed by the team, laboratory or institute. So on the basis of individual ideas, collective plans are drawn up which are included in a still larger programme of research summing up the suggestions made by all scientific centres in a given area of knowledge.

Is the vast expenditure of money on space research justified?

Space research is a costly matter without doubt. However, over the first decade after the launching of the first earth satellite, the cost of each of these exploratory probings of space was reduced many hundreds of times. And the cost of delivering payloads into orbit will be slashed again when space ships are used repeatedly. This day is now not far off.

Not only will space research be fully economic in the direct sense, but it will also yield a profit. Even now weather and communications satellites fully recover the money spent on them, including launching. For example, our satellite weather forecasting service is estimated to save the nation 500-700 million roubles annually. With the aid

of pictures taken from space reserves of subterranean water and mineral resources have been discovered.

Another important area of research done with the help of space satellites is cartography and land surveying. One satellite, in 24 hours of photographing in day-light conditions, can cover the whole surface of the planet. It would take at least one thousand aeroplanes to do the same job in the given time.

Space technology promises equal benefit to the national economy. In earth-bound conditions it is impossible to maintain weightlessness, for instance, or deep vacuum for any length of time. However, in the weightless and rarefied conditions of space, it is possible to produce substances of exceptional purity, or to weld materials in a way that cannot be done on earth. The development of super high-strength monocrystals promises a veritable revolution in electronics and radio-engineering, in communications and in laser and computer techniques. According to the specialists, hundreds of tons of valuable materials worth many thousands of millions of roubles will soon be produced in outer space.

The results of space research are also finding medical application. The instrument used for keeping track of the number of meteorite particles hitting the surface of a space craft has served as the basis for a device which helps diagnose the early stages of certain nervous diseases by registering muscular tremors. A pump used in some rocket systems may be used as the basis for an artificial heart. A switch like the one on the ear-piece of spectacles worn by cosmonauts, which is turned on by a mere movement of the eye, is now in use for operating the mobile chair of a paralysed patient.

The money invested in space research is thus put to good use. And we can confidently say that space is a good field of investment.

Is it correct that while the Soviet Union leads in some branches of science and technology, it lags behind in others, less prestigious?

However much the Soviet Union spends on science (over 17,000 million roubles a year), and however diverse the lines of research, Soviet science can hardly claim to

lead the world in every area of fundamental and applied knowledge.

In the first place, the available funds and number of specialists are not enough to ensure the same high rate of advance over the entire front of scientific research. As the national income grows, more is spent on science. This expenditure will continue to increase, as investment in science yields a greater return than investment in any other sphere.

In principle, the Soviet Union, which possesses one of the greatest scientific and technological potentials in the world and a powerful economy, is able to develop research on quite a broad front. Nevertheless, a choice has to be made as to the main lines of advance. What determines this choice?

First of all, the needs of the economy. Secondly, the general significance of the problems—the promise they hold out. Lastly, the scientific interests of the country's leading scientists. What does this mean in practice?

The plan drawn up by the Academy of Sciences for the tenth five-year period covers more than 500 fundamental problems. Of course, it cannot lay down what end result is to be achieved in the five years in any of these. The central place in the plan belongs to long-term programmes of comprehensive research in molecular biology, the physiological and biochemical principles of the functioning of the human organism, the physics of elementary particles, the atomic nucleus and plasma, quantum electronics, chemistry and chemical engineering, mathematics and mechanics, and automatic control.

Work will be continued in the field of space exploration, which is regarded by some as a prestige activity. But this is not how Soviet scientists look at it. The value of the use of spacecraft in the exploration of the earth's natural resources, in meteorology, oceanography, communications, and in other fields is self-evident. For instance, pictures of the Altai Mountains (South Siberia) taken by the "Salyut" space station, revealed the block structure of the territory, not shown on geological maps before. The new evidence has facilitated the estimation of the probability of finding mineral deposits in the area. Such examples are numerous, despite the fact that space geology is yet in its infancy.

It is not for any considerations of prestige that we design and build such giant undertakings as the Kama Motor Works, power plants like the Sayano-Shushenskaya, with a capacity of 6.4 million kilowatts, or such blast furnaces as the one at Krivoy Rog, with a capacity of 5,000 cubic metres. The scale of the Soviet economy and its growing needs make them economically necessary.

The Soviet Union is well provided with natural resources. Even so, much money and effort is invested in the search for new sources of energy. We were the first to build a thermal-neutron, and then a fast-neutron, power plants. The successes achieved by Soviet science in mastering controlled nuclear fusion are well known. Much depends on the solution of this problem if the energy shortage which threatens mankind is to be averted.

Many key discoveries, it is said, lie at the crossroads of different sciences. To this one may add that they also lie along the lines of broader international co-operation in research. Regardless of whether the Soviet Union leads or does not lead in a given line of research, it is ready for the broadest international co-operation, which will greatly facilitate the solution of many important problems.

IV. LIVING STANDARDS

When speaking about living standards, the criteria used in America and in the Soviet Union, differ. How can they be compared?

Indeed, different criteria are used by the two to describe the standard of living enjoyed by their citizens. In the United States the standard of living is likely to be measured by the number and cost of motor cars, while in this country we quote the value of free services provided to the population.

There is no gainsaying that many things are important in one's life, including desirable things such as motor cars. And in that respect the United States is still far ahead.

However, we believe that living standards cover a much wider field than material possessions. After all, to enjoy a full life, contentment and security, one must have something much more essential—good health, education, guaranteed employment of one's own choosing, a guaranteed adequate family income, and material security in old age. These basic ingredients of human well-being are enjoyed as a practical reality by Soviet citizens.

The logic of our reasoning about living standards and the quality of life might be described like this.

As long as all are well in the family, its well-being is little affected by the state of the public health service, the cost of staying in hospital, the prices of medicines, etc. But, unfortunately, we are not always well. For this reason, one cannot be indifferent to anything connected with the organization of the health service.

A Soviet citizen knows that his illness will not affect his family's well-being. He will be treated free of charge, whatever the cost to the state. Neither his stay in hospital nor the advice of the most eminent specialist will cost him a kopeck. During his illness he will not be fired from his job (this is prohibited by law) and he will draw sick pay as of right without having had to join some insurance scheme or other.

With regard to education, we believe that the opportunity to study anywhere at all, from a secondary school to Moscow University, should not depend on family income, and that educational institutions should not be divided into ones for the priviliged that are exclusive and accessible only to the few, and others that are accessible to all. Free tuition in all kinds of education is guaranteed.

Now let us look into a family income and see how it is spent.

In the United States an average family can spend only 40 per cent of its income on whatever it needs, the other 60 per cent being consumed by such things as taxes, social insurance payments, doctors' fees, tuition, rent, etc.

In the Soviet Union, an average family is free to spend 80 per cent of its income just as it wishes.

The concept of "standard of living" is a complex one that must take into consideration not only the present, but also the past and the future. Possible fluctuations in incomes, prices and rates are of the greatest importance. Is one able to feel secure about the future, or is it necessary to be prepared for a "rainy day"? In other words, what lies ahead?

In our country the standard-of-living curve points steadily upwards. With retail prices, rent and other charges being stable, personal incomes have doubled in the past 15 years and continue to increase.

It should also be borne in mind that the statistical average family in Western countries is often an abstraction, not found in real life. How can one average a millionaire and an unemployed worker whose unemployment benefit has ceased, the owner of an expensive villa with a swimming pool and the person who has no home at all? Both contribute to the statistical computation, which conceals vast disparity in their living standards.

At a given stage of its development, society has at its

disposal a certain sum of material goods. To date, this sum is greater in the United States, for instance, than in the Soviet Union. This disparity has emerged historically and cannot be ascribed to "imperfections" of socialism. On the contrary, socialism is consistently and quickly narrowing this gap, and, moreover, distributes the wealth at its disposal equitably among its citizens.

Are we content with the level we have achieved? No, this is but the beginning. We aim to produce more in the way of material goods, and we will produce more, more cars, too. Our population bought 64,000 cars in 1965 and about a million in 1975. We shall go on developing motor transport, but not to the detriment of public transport or the environment, or at the risk of being overtaken by an energy crisis. And, of course, we are not going to make a car the gauge of our living standards.

Can the Soviet economy develop without inflation?

This is just the way it does develop. Only the wars imposed on us, causing a budget deficit, bred inflation. Except for short periods early in Soviet times and during the Second World War, we have had neither any excess of state expenditure over income nor inflation.

The overall price index today is one quarter lower than it was 25 years ago and is approximately the same as it was in 1970.

How are stable prices of consumer necessities ensured in the USSR?

In 1976, 99 per cent of foodstuffs and 92 per cent of goods other than food were sold at the same prices as in 1970.

This is possible only with centralized planning of prices. The planning system and the incentive system applying in industry are such that a factory does not make its profit by raising the price of its products but by reducing production costs. In other words, prices do not grow because the Soviet national economy has no mechanism which could serve to inflate them. In the absence of such a centralized planning system nothing else, not even the most perfect methods of price control, will be of any avail.

In the Soviet Union, prices are fixed by the State Price

Committee and its agencies. This Committee acts as a sort of agent between producer and consumer. Were the factories to fix prices on their own, the result would be inflation-breeding anarchy. The Committee authorizes wholesale, retail, state purchasing and other prices and rates to be paid for electricity and heat, transportation and services. At the same time it continually revises prices, rates, extra charges and discounts in line with changing conditions bearing on the production and sale of individual kinds of goods and services. Changes in prices involving budgetary losses are introduced by the Committee after approval by the USSR Council of Ministers.

The level of prices of different goods in the Soviet Union is determined in large measure by their social significance. For instance, meat and meat products, milk and dairy products and many kinds of fish and fish products, children's clothing and footwear, school and college textbooks, toys, copy-books and other writing materials, medicines, cotton fabrics, and many other goods are sold at stable prices which are below their actual cost. State subsidies in this sphere run into tens of thousands of millions of roubles annually. The state makes good some of its losses by fixing high prices for jewelry, natural furs and other luxuries, and also for spirits.

The main source of the subsidies, however, is the profit made by the state enterprises. In this way the state recovers the losses it has incurred on the consumer's behalf.

In a capitalist country if you have money you can buy anything. Why isn't it the same in the Soviet Union?

One can buy what there is for sale. In the Soviet Union, as we have already said, not everything is for sale (land and means of production, for example). The restrictions we have stem from the specific features of the socialist system and socialist way of life.

There are other, temporary, limitations, springing from a shortage of some goods on the market. It was not possible for the Soviet Union to achieve abundance all at once, starting out as it did in conditions where there was not even enough of the bare necessities. Bread, homes, schools and hospitals were needed more than such things as mink coats

and diamonds. As the public wealth increased, many luxuries ceased to be such and became consumer goods, for instance, radio and television sets, washing machines, refrigerators, cars, fashionable clothes, pleasure boats, and so on. This process is continuing, although some things are still hard to get in the USSR whether you have the money or not. It is not because they are not sold, but because there is not enough (natural fur, say) to satisfy the demand.

How much do Soviet citizens pay in rent?

By far the greater proportion of Soviet citizens live in flats and houses provided by the state, the rent for which, together with the charges for electricity, gas, central heating and water, does not exceed an average 4-5 per cent of the family budget. For half a century—since 1928—it has not changed, although housing has been much improved. Eighty-seven flats in 100 have running water, 80 have central heating, 86 have flush toilets, 74 have bathrooms and 88 have gas laid on in their kitchens. Not many countries have such a high percentage of homes equipped with all modern conveniences. And the rate of gasification—about five million flats a year—is more than twice as fast as the rate of housing construction.

In the USSR housing construction is not a commercial operation but a social service, just as education and health.

In co-operative housing, which accounts for about seven per cent of housing built in the Soviet Union, flats are paid for in a somewhat different way. Co-operative apartment blocks are built by state building organizations on bank credit, while the land on which they are built is provided free.

Co-operative housing is costed in the same way as government housing. Those joining a building co-operative make a down-payment of 20-30 per cent of the total cost. The rest is covered by credit repayable over 10-20 years with interest at one per cent per annum.

Private houses are also built, mostly in the countryside. They account for about eight per cent of total rural housing construction. The future house owner deposits 30 per cent of the cost (often he is helped by the collective farm on which he works). The rest is covered by State Bank cred-

it repayable over 10-20 years at 0.5 per cent interest. Quite often the state pays more than a third of the total cost of construction. The owner pays no standing charges, but he has to maintain the house at his own expense.

The free health service and education cost the State a lot of money which could be used to increase wages and salaries so that people could pay for these themselves. Why don't you do this?

Because if these social services had to be paid for while family incomes are different (and they are different under the socialist principle of remuneration for work according to its quantity and quality), they would not be equally accessible to all citizens, and this, in turn, would make economic inequality more pronounced. People with larger incomes would be in a more advantageous position with regard to education and medical assistance than those with smaller incomes.

Our aim is complete social equality. Therefore such essentials as medical services, education at all levels, housing (except for co-operative flats), etc., are purposely made independent of income. Being free, they are equally accessible to all.

Is Soviet society becoming a "consumer society"?

We take it that the question refers not to consumption as a means for the satisfaction of one's needs, but consumption as an end in itself, a cult of things.

There are no objective reasons for such a change in socialist society. The consumer mentality is essentially alien to this society which exalts man and his work, not things, and sets out to achieve a harmonious development of the individual. Soviet people are brought up in this way, beginning early in life—in the family and at school—and are influenced through literature, the mass media and participation in mass organizations.

Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that we are not entirely without people who have an obsession for "consumer" acquisition. This is because incomes (we have mentioned that real incomes in the Soviet Union double every fifteen years) grow faster than some citizens' mental horizons.

The chances for all-round development, for broadening one's outlook and taking a more vigorous part in social activities grow faster than the desire of some to use them. This disproportion may be expressed in different ways, one of them being a passion for buying things to the exclusion of all else.

Unlike the situation in the West, in the Soviet Union, when this obsession with things occurs, it is in spite of society and not as a logical outcome of its development. Hence it is also much less common in this country and is generally deplored.

Have you any fashionable resorts in your country, and, if so, who uses them?

Our most popular resorts—sanatoria and holiday homes—situated along the coasts of the Black and Baltic seas, in the Caucasus, Central Asia and in the southern Ukraine every year take approximately 50 million people, or nearly one-fifth of the population. The people going to these resorts obtain vouchers through their trade unions or through health agencies entitling them to accommodation and board.

In most cases they have to pay only 30 per cent of the actual cost, the rest being met by the unions from the social insurance funds. These funds are allocated from the state budget and distributed by the trade unions. A two weeks' stay at a holiday home subsidized in this way costs the user on the average five per cent of his average monthly wages, which, of course, is very cheap.

Holiday resorts are regarded as a social service, not as a commercial proposition for making profit.

To what extent are books, theatres, museums, etc. accessible to the ordinary Soviet citizen?

The annual attendance figures at museums come close to half the population, and at theatres, concerts and performances, the attendance exceeds the total population.

It is significant that the spread of television (in 1975, there were 74 TV sets per 100 families) has failed to diminish interest in the theatre, concerts, cinema and museums.

The results of a survey conducted among workers in Chelyabinsk Region (the Urals) show that 95 of 100 wor-

kers visit the cinema, two-thirds go to plays and concerts, and nearly all read books.

Sixty per cent of workers in Sverdlovsk and Nizhni Tagil (also in the Urals) have their own home libraries. The picture is similar in other parts of the Soviet Union as well.

Soviet citizens read more books than anybody else in the world (this is confirmed by UNESCO figures), and the average family subscribes to four periodicals in addition. They also visit the cinema more often than anybody else in the world.

The average Soviet citizen goes to the cinema 18 times a year, which is three times more than the figure for the United States, six times more than in Britain and France, and nine times more than in West Germany.

There is a twofold explanation for these facts, which testify to the broad access to cultural amenities enjoyed by Soviet citizens. The first is economic. Books, periodicals, theatre and cinema tickets, etc., are much cheaper here than in the West. A ticket to the cinema costs at most 70 kopecks (93 American cents). A ticket to the Bolshoi Theatre is at most 3.5 roubles (4.7 American dollars). Naturally, the ticket prices being what they are, neither the theatres nor museums can cover their expenses. They are subsidized by the state.

The second reason is that in socialist society the cultural development of the population is encouraged in every way, educationally as well as materially.

Are any "harmful" medicines manufactured in the USSR? How is the standard of medicines and other preparations controlled?

At no time in this country has the manufacture of any medicine or preparation in use ever been discontinued due to its revealing effects deleterious to a patient's health.

We have a very tight control over the manufacture and use of medicines, and put even reputable foreign-produced medicines and preparations to comprehensive laboratory tests.

In the USSR medicines and other preparations are tested by state agencies that do not depend financially in any way upon the places where these preparations are

manufactured and must be specially okayed by the USSR Ministry of Health before they go into use. The final approval is made by the Pharmacology Committee of the Department for the Introduction of New Medicines and Medical Equipment. The production of even a single medicine, and medicines are developed by scores of research institutions, can be started unless it is first approved by this Committee, which is subordinate to the Ministry of Health.

To illustrate we may cite the case of ftorafur, a new anti-cancer preparation which the Institute of Organic Synthesis of the Latvian Academy of Sciences developed in 1965. In co-operation with physiologists, biochemists, oncologists and pharmacologists the Institute staff spent two years analysing its properties and side effects at first on cell cultures and then on animals. All the data obtained were submitted to the Pharmacology Committee. After this body approved the preparation, the staff of the Institute of Experimental and Clinical Oncology of the USSR Academy of Medicine worked out the specific ways in which this preparation should be used and in which cases.

The results obtained through treatment of a restricted control group of patients with this preparation were again put before the Pharmacology Committee, which after a second assessment of its worth and of its effects on the human organism, recommended its inclusion in the State Register of Medicines and Preparations.

Listed in this register thus far are 2,500 medicines and preparations. For comparison note that sold in Spain, Brazil and France are respectively 25,000, 14,000, and 11,000 locally-manufactured medicines besides several thousand foreign-made preparations. We regard this not as a sign of backwardness but only as denoting our more stringent approach to new medicines and preparations. The centralized system we have for bringing them into usage is in the patient's interests. It protects him from the sort of thing that Pradal, a leading French pharmacologist, meant when he said that in his country two out of every three medicines and preparations bought are useless while some are simply harmful.

V. SOCIETY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

What classes are there in the USSR? Do any contradictions exist between them?

Soviet society is made up of the working class, the collective farmers and the intelligentsia.

There are 612 workers and 164 peasants to every thousand of the population. Today almost 37 million people in this country do brainwork.

In the Marxist view the main yardstick of class identity is relationship to the means of production.

We disagree with those who place other characteristics, for instance, type of work, first, as in that case the president and clerk working in the same corporation will fall into the same category.

It is precisely the character of ownership that defines the class structure of society and the form in which profits are obtained and allotted. The Soviet example bears this out. The abolition of private ownership of the means of production led to a drastic change in the class structure of our society. There ceased to be a landowning class and the urban and rural bourgeoisie, and the division of people into exploiters owning the principal means of production, and non-owning exploited no longer existed. The basis for class antagonisms and the class struggle was eliminated. The intelligentsia has never been viewed by us as a class, but only as a stratum of society.

The class distinctions that still exist in the USSR—in the character of work and life styles, in income levels and

the like – far from deepening, are, on the contrary, gradually disappearing.

The difference in educational levels is likewise disappearing – since all young people in town or country acquire at least a full secondary schooling. In 1939, 84 of every thousand workers and 18 of every thousand collective farmers had a higher or secondary education; in 1976, the figures were respectively 715 and 537.

As for peasant incomes, which for historical reasons, lagged for a long time behind urban incomes, are now climbing at a faster rate, with the result that the gap is narrowing.

The same holds for household comforts and conveniences, career and job opportunities, conditions for leisure-time activities, etc.

Other distinctions, especially between mental and manual labour, are also on the way out.

On the whole we are witnessing a process that is making our society more and more homogeneous, a process that stems from both objective factors and the purposeful effort of the Communist Party and the Soviet State.

Is there any truth in claims made by many Sovietologists that the USSR has an elite?

There is not a grain of truth in these claims. In this country we do not have anything in the way of an elite, to which access would be closed or be made difficult for "the lower rungs of the social ladder".

Among present members of the Soviet government, there is a former churn worker, an automatic machine setter-up, design engineer, a fitter, a locomotive driver assistant, a pilot, an electrician, a carpenter, a draughtsman, and an unskilled labourer. Seven in every ten Ministers and State Committee Chairmen began their careers as ordinary workers or farmers. More than half the deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet, the supreme body of state power, are likewise workers and farmers.

These are facts. The people who today hold the highest posts in the country were not "destined at birth" to do so. They had no special home training, no schooling at a privileged college or university, of which the USSR has none, and were not members of any exclusive private club, which

likewise do not exist in this country. Nobody ever instilled in them the idea they were born to rule and govern. They achieved high office thanks to proven organizational ability, knowledge, knowhow, industry, an unselfish and responsible attitude to others. They have not been invested with any mandate to power "in perpetuity", and comprise no special caste isolated from, and virtually unaccountable to, the rest of society. As is the rule at every other executive level, they will be relieved of their duties if they fail to cope with their responsibilities or abuse the trust reposed in them.

Do you think the nationalities question has been solved in your country?

Yes, we do. On November 15 (Nov. 2, Old Russian calendar) 1917, the eighth day after the October revolution had ended, the new Soviet government published the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, signed by Lenin, which proclaimed equality and sovereignty for the peoples of Russia, their right to self-determination including secession and the creation of their own independent states, the abolition of all national and religious privileges and restrictions, and free and unhampered development for the national minorities.

In this fashion, in the first few days after the victory of the socialist revolution, the peoples of the former Russian empire were diverted from the path of mutual enmity, hostility and antagonism and soon began to develop relations based on mutual help and co-operation among themselves. Earlier we noted the major importance of eliminating the gap in the level of their economic, social and cultural development.

The correct solution evolved for the nationalities question led to the voluntary integration of the peoples into one multinational state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the USSR, which is a federation of fifteen constituent republics.

Mutual assistance programmes enabled all these republics to build up modern key industries, train their own national skilled workers and intelligentsia, and promote their own culture, national in form, and socialist in content. Many formerly backward peoples by-passed the ca-

pitalist stage of development and embarked at once upon the building of socialism.

Kirghizia presents a striking example of the effects of the cultural revolution. Before 1917 only one out of every five hundred Kirghizians could read and write. Today, illiteracy in this republic has been virtually rooted out, and to every ten thousand of the population there are more university and college students than in the USA or France. Scientific and research establishments have on their staffs upwards of 2,400 Kirghizians with the academic degrees of Doctor or Candidate of Science.

Literature and the arts in Kirghizia have made amazing progress: where once there was no written alphabet now there is a national literature and opera and symphonic music.

There has been similar headway in the other national republics. This Soviet experience has attracted tremendous attention abroad. With the result that at the height of the tourist season thousands of foreigners flock to the Central Asian republics to see with their own eyes the changes which they had only heard or read about and which they could hardly believe.

Do you have any national privileges or restrictions?

None of any kind. Article 123 of the Constitution of the USSR states: "Equality of rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in economic, government, cultural, political and other public activities, shall be an indefeasible law."

The second part of this article stipulates: "Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on grounds of race or nationality, likewise any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, shall be punished by law."

Are "mixed" marriages common? How are they viewed in your country?

One out of every seven families in the USSR is the result of a "mixed" marriage, which are constantly increas-

ing. Thus one out of every five marriages in the Ukraine, Latvia and Kazakhstan, and one out of every four in the cities and towns of Central Asia, is mixed.

We see such marriages as contributing to social unity. The law does not impose any restrictions on them, while children born out of such marriages can choose which nationality to take -their father's or mother's on reaching the age of sixteen.

Sociologists contend that the proportion of divorces in cases of "mixed" marriages is much less than in ordinary marriages. This may be because more thought goes into the planning of these marriages.

May Soviet citizens marry foreigners?

Yes, of course. Over the last few years more than 8,000 Soviet citizens have married foreigners and have gone to live in 110 different countries with their wives or husbands.

What does the word equality mean to you?

By equality we mean the equal rights and opportunities that society grants its members without any restriction on grounds of nationality, race, religion, or social standing.

The basis of equality is the effective right to work, without which all other rights and liberties remain largely empty though fine-sounding phrases. In this country unemployment was done away with in the early 1930's. The economy's even, steady development according to plan means assured jobs in their respective trade or profession for the millions of young people finishing secondary schools or graduating from vocational schools and higher and specialized secondary educational establishments.

As was noted earlier, equal pay for equal work, free health services and free public education accessible to everyone, and social security in old age, in the event of illness, incapacity or the loss of breadwinner, and the right to rest and recreation, are all laid down in Soviet legislation and are materially assured.

But do not take this to mean we are trying to fix one

level for wages. The socialist principle followed in remunerating labour according to the amount of work done and its quality, presupposes certain differences in cash income levels between different categories of workers. Also, families with more or less the same incomes, may, depending on their size, have different per capita incomes.

Some other factors also affect the living standards of different people, families and, now and again, whole categories of workers. Take, for instance, people living in the rigorous climatic conditions of the Arctic regions, and the as yet little-developed parts of Siberia and the Far East. They have to spend much more on housing, transport, the proper clothes, and even food. This problem does not, incidentally, only apply to this country. The Soviet state is doing everything possible to provide equally favourable living conditions for all its citizens wherever they live in Moscow, Central Asia or Siberia. People working in especially rigorous climatic conditions are entitled to certain privileges such as higher pay, longer holidays, free fares, etc.

The pay rises already put through and being implemented in this current five-year period concern firstly low- and medium-income persons and families and will gradually bridge the gap between minimum and maximum statutory earnings. The increases made in pensions, grants, allowances and scholarship stipends and in the volume of free benefits and services are also bringing us closer to our goal.

As there is too little space to describe everything that the Soviet state is doing to ensure a real measure of social equality, we shall have to content ourselves with the following example. In such a vast land as the USSR, it is as yet impossible to guarantee equal job and career opportunities, identical public services and utilities or similar opportunities for cultural advancement both in a big city and a small rural community. However, every effort is being made to bridge the gap between town and country. Many measures the Party and government have worked out to provide better conditions and living standards for the rural population, or, for instance, better opportunities for young people in villages to acquire a higher or specialized secondary education, have been carried out, and many more are planned.

Who has the right to criticize and who may be criticized in the USSR?

Each citizen is entitled to criticize the activities of any government and Party body and of any executive regardless of office.

This right is extensively exercised in diverse ways in practice. We cannot conceive of further social development without the development of criticism. It would be hard to find a copy of a newspaper or magazine which did not carry critical letters, articles and other items. On the average one out of every five items devoted to domestic issues that are featured in the leading Soviet dailies will contain criticism of something or someone. Is this a lot or a little? The USSR has 8,000 newspapers with a total daily circulation of 165 million copies, of which such leading dailies as *Pravda*, *Trud* and *Izvestia* account for 25 million. In addition, there are some special satirical publications—like *Krokodil*, or its national-language counterparts that are published in the different constituent republics—whose express purpose is to look at every aspect of our daily life with a critical eye.

Criticism is expressed not only through the medium of the press. One will possibly hear more criticism at the various trade union and Party meetings than anywhere else, on both affairs of state as well as local issues. Executives at any level, from shop superintendent to minister, are obliged to provide a satisfactory answer to any critical remarks addressed to them and report what has been done or will be done to remove the shortcomings.

The Soviet people's wide use of the right to criticize shows their deep and active interest in the life of the country and in the affairs of the factory, farm or office where they work.

The Soviet citizen feels that he takes part in the running of his country, and this in turn fosters within him a feeling of responsibility, of intolerance for anything that still stands in the way of normal life and work, that hampers Soviet society's advance towards the accomplishment of its communist ideals.

Soviet people produce the impression of feeling secure about their future. What gives them this confidence?

First of all, they can see what the future holds in store for them, as this is contained in the development programmes which the whole country discusses and does its utmost to carry out. These plans are their plans, and they rightly expect as they were responsible for drawing them up and are now carrying them out, that they will be realized.

Soviet society's political stability, its steady economic advancement and its steadily rising living standards deliver them from the threat of crises, unemployment and inflation with all the ensuing consequences.

The Soviet person's optimism, of course, also stems from experience accumulated during several generations. Despite the grim years of foreign intervention and Civil War, the economic chaos and hunger rife in the first years of Soviet power, or the superhuman ordeal they went through during the past war against Nazi Germany, the Soviet people never lost their feeling of confidence in the future. They defended their country and have built a society of advanced socialism, in which everything is done for the good of man.

This does not mean our people do not have setbacks. Who can be sure that he will choose the right career, or say, successfully present one's thesis for an academic degree? There is no way of guaranteeing protection from personal misfortune or tragedies.

Is there a conflict between the older and younger generations in your country?

If you take our society as a whole the conflict of generations is as non-existent as are its possible causes. On the other hand, there may be "local" misunderstandings and conflicts, especially when the older generation refuse to accept the life-style, tastes, fashions and fads of the young, or when the latter stubbornly insist on them. Lack of tact on either side, the desire of the younger generation to be independent before they can really stand on their feet, lead at times to family conflicts.

Yet generational differences in this country never in-

volve problems which affect the basic structure of our life. On the whole the younger generation embrace and develop the ideals of their seniors, their attitude to our social system, to life's goals and the future, and energetically carry on their work.

This common programme enables the contradictions that may erupt around various issues to be tackled before they have developed into widespread conflict and "revolt of the young" so characteristic of bourgeois society.

You say that in your country equality of the sexes is law. What is actually done to assure the equality of women?

Equality of the sexes is laid down in the USSR Constitution, is guaranteed by the relevant legislation and material facilities, and is strictly observed.

Percentagewise, women with a secondary and higher education constitute a greater proportion in this country than men. Because of the tremendous wartime losses, women account for 51 per cent of the entire workforce, earning, of course, equal pay for equal work. Note that most women employees are engaged on intellectual and mechanized jobs: thus, they comprise four of every five health-care workers, the absolute majority of those working in the field of education, two out of every three workers in the radio electronics industry, etc. More than four thousand women manage industrial plants and head administrative offices, while more than 200,000 supervise factory shops and sections or laboratories.

Soviet women play a major role in the country's political and public affairs, in the effort to strengthen peace and international co-operation and in the international women's movement. Women comprise 31 per cent of the deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet, 35 per cent to the Union-republic Supreme Soviets, and 48 per cent to the local Soviets. For the sake of comparison one might note that in the USA women comprise only five per cent of those holding jobs in federal and local government.

The experience of our country and other socialist countries shows that women can make a valuable contribution in many useful jobs as well as in the running of the government. To be more emphatic, we regard their participation

as indispensable for economic and social progress generally.

Though our achievements cannot be contested, problems still remain. These are regarded as a matter of utmost importance by the Party and State. The CPSU Programme specifically states that any vestiges of the unequal status of women in everyday life must be completely eliminated.

What is being done to this end? Over the past twenty years the volume of public services has increased sevenfold, and today kindergartens and creches accommodate twice the number of children as before. The number of such domestic aids as vacuum cleaners and washing machines has trebled over the past ten years, while the number of refrigerators has increased sixfold.

In many homes today, especially of young families, the question of "division of work" concerns both husband and wife. Sociologists have estimated that wives head two out of every five families, yet also note that domestic chores in families with children take, on the average, twice as much the wife's time, as they do of the husband's.

The tenth five-year plan has placed on the agenda a new far-reaching programme for lightening women's work, not only on the job but also at home. The two chambers of the Soviet parliament, the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities have set up special standing committees to deal with questions concerning women's working, living and general conditions and mother and child welfare.

Even though during the tenth-five-year plan period male employees will come to predominate in the workforce for the first time since the end of the war, female labour will continue to play a significant role. Much will be done to lighten their work. Of the 1,165 basic trades, some 200, regarded as being hazardous to the health or calling for strenuous physical exertion, have been banned for women, and the list is continually expanding.

A special section in the USSR's economic development programme envisages further improvement in the working, living and general conditions for female employees. They are to be entitled to a partially paid leave to take care of babies up to the age of one year and are to be allowed to work a shorter day or week, or work at home.

Further efforts will be made to ease household chores for

women. The volume of public services is to increase by 48 per cent, day-care schools will double their accommodation, while kindergartens and creches will be able to take approximately 2.8 million more children. This distinctly shows how "feminized" is the social programme of the tenth five-year plan, which will make new strides towards achieving real equality for the sexes both on a social and domestic level.

What do you do to ensure the rights of teenagers?

Before they come of age—at 18—juveniles enjoy a range of legal privileges.

For days after the October revolution the newly-formed Soviet government enacted a special decree forbidding the hiring of juveniles under 14. A special Child Defense Council was set up on January 4, 1919. In the grim period of Civil War, foreign intervention and economic dislocation, the young Soviet republic enacted and implemented a series of laws to protect the rising generation. Thus, in May, 1919, when the whole country was on the edge of starvation, free meals were provided for all children up to 14, regardless of whether their parents were for or against Soviet power.

The humanitarian laws enacted in those first years laid the foundation for further laws to uphold and protect the rights of children and teenagers. Present legislative codes contain articles specially designed for children. Thus, of the 256 articles in the Labour Code of the Russian Federation, 48 are concerned with labour protection and privileges and benefits for working teenagers and female employees with children. Thus, it has been laid down that juveniles may be hired only after they reach the age of 16. In some exceptional cases, and only then with medical permission and trade union sanction, may juveniles be hired at the age of 15.

It is forbidden to use juvenile labour on arduous, underground work or jobs that are regarded as hazardous to the health, require night-time and overtime work. For juveniles between the ages of 16 and 18 the statutory 41-hour week is reduced to 36 hours, though they are paid at the same level as adult employees with corresponding skills or qualifications.

Working juveniles enjoy so many benefits, that some managers are "tempted" to employ adults in their stead. However again the law steps in. Juveniles can only be sacked if the commissions for juvenile affairs attached to the local Soviets give their consent. And even if a juvenile is dismissed he must be at once given another job of his or her choice.

Though, as we said, a young person officially comes of age at 18, when, for instance, he is able to vote, younger boys and girls exercise many of the civil rights granted. Thus a juvenile author of a piece of writing or music is entitled to full copyright protection. Juveniles share living-space rights with their parents. Children enjoy property rights from birth—in cases, for instance, of legacies or gifts.

The fact that social maintenance and social insurance have been extended to children and juveniles is most instrumental in assuring equality for the rising generation. Like their seniors, juvenile employees are entitled to the same sickness benefits and allowances and the same annual paid holidays, while those combining work and study are also entitled to additional paid leaves for the taking of exams and the like.

The principle of equal opportunity for all children is fully operative; thus, the USSR was the world's first country to practise free education at every level, including higher education.

Is it possible to purchase weapons in the USSR?

Under Article 218 of the Russian Federation's Criminal Code, "The carrying, storing, making or selling of firearms, with the exception of smooth-bore hunting guns, and also of ammunition and explosives without express permission, is punishable by a term of deprivation of liberty of up to two years or by corrective labour up to one year, or a fine up to one hundred roubles. The carrying, storing, making or selling of daggers, cutlasses or other blank weapons without express permission, with the exception of places where the wearing of blank weapons is part of the national attire or is associated with hunting and trapping, is punishable by a term of deprivation of liberty of up to one year or by corrective labour up to a similar term or by a fine up to thirty roubles."

No weapons, except for sporting and hunting guns and

pistols, are sold in this country. However such hunting and sporting weapons may be purchased only at special shops, provided the required permit for a hunting gun, or small-calibre rifle has been issued, in the case of foreign nationals, by the USSR Internal Affairs offices, and in the case of Soviet citizens, by the local militia station where they live, provided they present a hunter's card, or the membership card of a sports club, should a sporting weapon be required.

Even then, the would-be hunter must not be under eighteen, and, if he wants to join a hunting society, must be able to show that he knows how to handle such guns.

The shops selling hunting guns register each gun sold along with the name and address as well as the number of the hunter's card of the purchaser. The respective hunting club will likewise register the serial numbers of guns in the possession of its members. Hunting knives may likewise be purchased only provided the would-be purchaser presents his hunter's card.

The sale of any type of weapon to juveniles, retarded or mentally disturbed persons, or anyone undergoing judicial inquiry or standing trial, or likewise any person previously convicted of a major offense, is categorically prohibited.

How do you combat hooliganism?

Soviet society seeks to completely eradicate crime, so it does not tolerate hooliganism, for which the law specifies various penalties ranging from a small fine up to deprivation of liberty.

We attach particular importance to such methods as social persuasion and admonition, which are exercised by what are known as community courts. Many offenders fear moral censure from their work collectives more than a legal penalty.

The effort to combat violations of public law and order is carried on not only by the militia but also by the people's druzhinas, or voluntary squads, formed of factory and office workers or of university and college students who help to maintain law and order in streets, squares, parks sports grounds and clubs.

The members of the commissions for juvenile affair that are attached to the local Soviets are not only deputie

of the respective Soviet, but also representatives of public organizations and of the educational and health-care organs. The main purpose of the extensive diversified work carried on by these bodies is not only to bring pressure to bear on young offenders violating public order and moral standards, but also to prevent anti-social behaviour and help reform unruly juveniles.

On the whole we may say that good progress has been made in fighting hooliganism. As USSR Minister of Internal Affairs Nikolai Shchelokov has said, "There are thousands of population centres where not a single major breach of public law and order has been recorded for quite a long while."

What action is taken in the USSR with respect to people who are physically capable of working but who refuse to?

The Soviet Constitution states that every person physically capable of working is obliged to, in accordance with the principle: "he who does not work, shall not eat".

Too categorical? We don't think so. Our society provides its members with numerous benefits which we mentioned earlier. It is only natural to expect a socially gainful return from every able-bodied person. Note, that we consider the housewife's chores also as socially useful work. But we find it hard to understand certain individuals, men, for the most part, who are strong and healthy and quite physically capable of working, but who refuse to. So if we take a critical attitude to these individuals, especially if they lead an amoral way of life, we feel entirely justified. Why on earth should they also be entitled to those social benefits that go to the honest worker? And also, what legitimate means of existence do they have in a society in which exploitation of another person's labour is inconceivable in principle?

We try to bring public opinion to bear on persons who frankly refuse to work, persons that we term parasites. The more so, since finding a job presents no problem, considering the number of vacancies and the assistance afforded by numerous employment agencies.

However, there are some special cases when the shirking f work is seen as socially harmful idleness—for instance,

people who must pay maintenance for their children under age, or people who engage solely in black-marketeering or other criminal pursuits. When persuasion gets nowhere with them, they are punished in conformity with the Criminal Code—but, may we repeat, not for being idle, but for a criminal offense.

Are rights and freedoms in the USSR limited in any way?

Yes, in the sense, that in this country no one may exploit another person and appropriate the fruits of his labour. Propaganda of war and of violence in any form as well as advocacy of national or religious exclusiveness are seen as criminal offenses. Equality of the sexes may not be infringed on nor may anyone be discriminated against in any field of social, or state activity or work. This is punishable by law, just as are prostitution and pornography in any form.

We view these limitations as justified as they meet the interests of the whole of society, and also, incidentally, accord with the International Covenants of Civil and Political Rights.

Are any restrictions imposed upon an editor in the USSR?

Yes, there are in conformity with Soviet laws. No editor may publish information that comprises a military or state secret, or material that would offend the feelings of religious believers, whip up chauvinistic attitudes, constitute defamation of the character, incite racism, advocate anti-Semitism, call for war, or cultivate pornography and sadism.

We believe this is likewise fully justified and essential.

Is one able to engage in religious worship in your country?

Under the USSR Constitution "Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens. The State does not interfere in the affairs of religious organizations or provide them any mate-

rial support; for their part, they do not interfere in the affairs of the state. A person may change his religion or totally renounce it, should he so desire. Whatever his decision on that issue it plays no role whatever in his life as a citizen. There is no reference to a person's religion or the absence of such in his internal passport, official forms or census files.

Discrimination against believers in this country is prohibited. Anyone guilty of obstructing religious worship and rites, provided they do not transgress upon public law and order and do not encroach upon other civil rights, can be charged under criminal law. Refusal to hire a person or admit him to an educational establishment on religious grounds, denial for this reason of any privileges and benefits to which a person is lawfully entitled, or restriction of any other civil rights, are regarded as flagrant violations of the law.

All faiths enjoy identical rights and opportunities, regardless of whether they have a small or large following. By agreement with local government bodies, any religious congregation or association, provided it has a membership of not less than 20 persons, is entitled to the free use of the land upon which its church or house of worship stands, while the building is maintained and repaired at the expense of the said congregation or association. Officiating clergymen are remunerated out of the congregation's donations and fees for various rites and services. The leasing, building or acquiring of premises for candle-making and workshops for the manufacture of various religious articles is also permitted.

The Council for Religious Affairs that has been established to act as liason between the Soviet government and various religious associations, while not interfering in their internal affairs, sees to it that the respective legislation governing the status of religious associations is duly observed.

There are upwards of 20,000 churches, prayer-houses, monasteries and convents of various faiths in the country. All religious persuasions enjoy equal rights.

Who publishes religious literature?

All the main religions publish their literature. Thus, in 1976, the Moscow Patriarchy put out another edition of

the Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments. To be published shortly are the first volume of the writings of Patriarch Pimen, a number of theological treatises and other ecclesiastical literature. The periodical, *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchy*, which not only covers ecclesiastical affairs, but also contains sermons, theological essays and other material, enjoys a rather large circulation.

The All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church also regularly re-issues editions of the Bible and the Gospel, as well as prayerbooks, calendars and hymnals, while its periodical, *The Brotherly Herald*, comes out in several other national languages besides Russian.

As for the Moslem Religious Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, in recent years it has put out six editions of the Koran, Imam al-Bukhari's "Al-Jami'al-Sahih" and "Al-Adab al Mufrad" hadiths, as well as Ismail Mahmoud Sattiev's history of the Koran by Othman ibn Affan, which is preserved in Tashkent. It also publishes a magazine called, *Moslems of the Soviet East*.

Who are the dissidents and how many are there of them?

"There aren't more than thirty of us dissidents", Andrei Sakharov once admitted in a talk with foreign correspondents.

Who are these persons, whose names attract in the West such adjectives as "outstanding", "highly popular" and "famous"?

As we see it, these people who in the West are regarded as dissidents and "champions of liberty", are but pawns in a new operation that is being conducted against the USSR — and against detente too. The press in the leading Western countries would have its readers believe that the dissidents are not against Soviet power, but are only seeking to improve it, and that is all.

This is, alas, very far from true.

If one took the advice of the dissidents, we would not embark on a few minor repairs in our home, but wash our hands of it completely.

Here are some examples of what the more well-known dissidents advocate and where their sympathies lie.

Solzhenitsyn: "...those, who even before '41 dreamed

of nothing else than to take up arms and lick those red commissars." (*The Gulag Archipelago*); his ideal is the Francoist regime which gave the Spaniards a "model democracy" (from an interview in Spain).

Kuznetsov: "...I am AGAINST Soviet power" (from a statement in the newspaper *Russkaya Mysl*, Paris).

Sakharov: Pinochet initiated in Chile "an epoch of renaissance and consolidation" (from a statement to the press). "...The capitalist, but democratic, states are closer to a genuinely human society" than the socialist countries, Sakharov believes and urges the West to "exert the strongest and most sensitive pressure on the Soviet authorities" (from the book *Sakharov Speaks*, published in the USA); it is necessary to place in private hands the entire sphere of the services and the entire industry of the USSR, "except for heavy industry, freight and cargo transport and the postal service" (from a *Der Spiegel* digest of his book). In short, back to capitalism!

Bukovsky said at a news conference, he had dreamed of "an armed revolution against Soviet power" from childhood, "but nothing will come of that while the West sticks to the rule that it is not entitled to interfere in the Soviet Union's internal affairs. That is precisely why the Helsinki agreement is so dangerous."

Masquerading as champions of human rights the dissidents and, primarily, those who stand behind them, urge an end to detente. This is what it boils down to! When asked what he wanted, Solzhenitsyn declared in an interview to a neo-fascist Italian journal: "A crusade against the Soviet Union."

Do these persons realize what a "crusade" against the USSR would mean in the present circumstances?

We can well understand the anxiety felt by the *Daily Mirror* of London, when in disgust at Solzhenitsyn's statements in Britain it exclaimed that what this Russian émigré millionaire wanted the British to do was to declare a general mobilization and rearm, to begin another war.

Shortly before the conference of the International Pen Club was to open in London, a document was published in defence of the Soviet "writer" Vladimir Bukovsky, who had supposedly been innocently sent to prison. At the time he was indeed in the Vladimir prison. But he had been by no means innocent of the charges brought against him. In 1963,

1967 and 1972, under Articles 70.1 and 190.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, he was sentenced to various terms of deprivation of liberty for organizing and actively participating in group actions violating public law and order and for frankly urging the use of terror as the main method of struggle against the Soviet state system. In late 1976, he was expelled from the USSR. The court established that Bukovsky's hostile activities had been directed from abroad.

The same people who made Bukovsky a "writer", proclaimed Andrei Amalrik, who has emigrated from the USSR, a "leading Soviet historian", completely dismissing, of course, the fact, that at the age of 23 Amalrik was expelled for failing behind in his studies in his sophomore year at Moscow University's History Department.

Even among "dissidents" Valentin Moroz has earned the questionable reputation of a man who defends the terrorist activity of the Ukrainian nationalists who collaborated with the Nazis in the past war. He tried to embody his views in the form of a political programme, which emphasizes the importance of inciting hostility against Russians and Byelorussians, and urges organizing an armed struggle against Soviet power with the military support of certain forces in the West. In 1966, in accordance with Soviet legislation, Moroz was sentenced to a four-year term of deprivation of liberty for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. After he had served his time, he resumed his hostile, treasonable activities, for which he was sentenced to a second term.

A few more words about several "dissidents" who now reside outside the USSR. N. Gorbanevskaya, A. Galich and V. Maximov have also been proclaimed "leading literary figures". Certain circles in the West are making use of these émigrés for subversive anti-Soviet activity.

One may form some kind of idea as to what sort of people these "writers" and "ideological fighters" really are from the fact that while living in the USSR Galich wrote a play called *Under a Lucky Star* and a film script entitled *State Criminal*, in which he branded those who had collaborated with the Nazis during the war as traitors to the Soviet Motherland. But today, the moment he crossed the border he performed an about-face and is now painting the life in the Soviet Union in black colours.

These are the Soviet "dissidents", persons who are of value only to circles waging a psychological war against the USSR, against socialism, against international detente.

Can a person emigrate from the Soviet Union?

Yes. However, the number who do is insignificant. The majority of them leave to join their families or because they have married a foreigner.

Soviet laws and emigration rules fully accord with the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights which the UN General Assembly adopted on December 16, 1966. This document states, in particular, that the right of a person to leave his own country for purposes of permanent residence in another country may be restricted in cases that are connected with the protection of state security, public order, public health or morals, or the rights and freedom of others. This means that in some cases the decision to grant permission to emigrate may be put off until the family settles its family affairs, including these of a material nature. The decision to grant exit visas to people in possession of state secrets or who have recently taken their military training in key military professions may likewise be postponed. After the information possessed by the person in question is declassified upon the expiry of the specified period, the question of an exit visa is reconsidered.

Does a citizen's application to emigrate affect his official or social standing?

Not as a rule. The few exceptions are applicants employed at defense establishments or institutions engaged in classified research. In such cases, with the consent of the trade union and in accordance with the labour law code, these persons may be released from their jobs and given other work.

The legality of abortion continues to be discussed in the West. How do you handle this question?

"Though I am against abortion, I believe that it must be permitted as a person cannot be regarded as free if she is deprived of the right to decide this crucial issue of how many children to have," says Professor Yelena Novikova,

the Deputy USSR Minister of Public Health in charge of the Soviet Mother and Child Welfare Service.

In this country, abortions are permitted. This is a natural attitude for a state to take that recognizes the equality of the sexes. The law permitting abortion has enabled the harmful effects of illegal abortions to be reduced to a minimum, for a ban on abortion does not reduce the number of abortions, but compels women to resort to unqualified persons for help. In countries where the law forbids the artificial termination of pregnancy, thousands of women lose their health or even die.

The modern woman does not want to be tied down only to her home and family; she wants to expand her educational level, assert herself as an independent person, and develop her intellectual and spiritual abilities. Sociological surveys have shown that most Soviet women believe that the ideal family consists of two or three children. This is evidently a sensible approach as it is much easier to give a smaller number of children a proper upbringing. Another factor is that childbirth, which is usually beneficial for the organism, ceases to be so when a woman gives birth to five to ten children. World Health Organization experts say that after the third child, the danger of death in childbirth, diabetes, and certain forms of cancer increases.

It is only natural for women to want to plan their families. Abortions, of course, are not the best way to do this. However so far we do not have any completely reliable contraceptives that would not produce harmful side effects. A WHO centre to study the use of hormones has been set up in the USSR under the auspices of the USSR Obstetrical and Gynecological Research Institute.

Our attitude to hormone preparations is cautious and therefore we do not advertise them as they affect the female organism in a way which cannot be termed harmless. This does not mean we are against contraceptives generally. Quite a range of methods have been devised that help to prevent undesirable conception—though they are not a hundred per cent reliable. Teaching women how to use these methods is the real way to reduce the number of abortions.

What will also help is the removal of those objective causes that oblige a woman to terminate pregnancy. Among these are such grave chronic ailments as diabetes, kidney and heart trouble, which jeopardize the life of an expectant

mother, and complicate childbirth to such an extent that often doctors themselves recommend an abortion. True, nowadays, such cases have become increasingly rare. For women needing special medical supervision, the USSR has special sanatoriums and maternity homes that provide programmes designed to prepare a woman for childbirth.

Sometimes, the decision to terminate pregnancy is taken casually without any really serious reason. Hence, a doctor will always interview a woman before sending her to hospital—as in the USSR abortions are performed only in clinics and hospitals under the same conditions as all operations.

VI. EDUCATION AND ART

What sort of an education does the Soviet young person get?

A universal ten-year system of secondary schooling, which is now compulsory for all both in town and country, was put into effect in 1976. While one can choose which type of secondary educational establishment to attend—a general education school, a vocational or technical training school—all of them include in their curriculum the secondary school programme which enables graduates to enter, if they desire, any institution of higher education.

By January 1, 1977, the USSR had a population of 258 million. Attendance at general education schools was 46.5 million, vocational schools, technical training schools and other specialized secondary educational establishments 1.5 million and 4.6 million respectively, and institutions of higher learning, five million.

The best educated generation in Soviet history is currently embarking on their careers.

Is a universal secondary education a status symbol or an objective necessity?

An economic and social necessity.

Economically, it is needed, even demanded, by the current scientific and technological revolution, whose achievements will not be put to efficient use unless the person applying them is sufficiently well educated. It is a fact that factory workers who have a secondary school education

take half the time to master new equipment as against those who have only seven years of schooling.

Yet, in present-day production, not everyone needs the knowledge gained from a full secondary ten-year schooling; many could cope with their jobs without it. So considering this point why has the USSR introduced a universal secondary education?

The character of work is rapidly changing and jobs which require a relatively low educational level are growing less. The worker who may not be making full use of all he has learned in his job today will do so tomorrow.

This is not the only point. We have never viewed education from a purely consumer angle, or the human being as only a participant in production. We regard as equally important the social aspect, the fact that education broadens a person's horizons, makes him socially more active, extends his opportunities of participating in management and administration, helps him to choose the right career, and develops a creative attitude to work. The harmonious development of the individual, which is what we are striving for, is inconceivable without a broad general education.

What do you think of "mass culture"?

We repudiate both the practice of dividing people into such categories as the "select" and the "masses" and the consequent division of cultures into "mass" and "elite". Socialist culture is one entity, and in this sense it is indeed of the people and for the people.

As we see it, "mass culture" which is so prevalent in capitalist society, though outwardly democratic, has a serious negative effect on aesthetic standards, and with its stereotype artistic methods reduces all of art's functions to simply providing mindless entertainment.

In effect, "mass culture" has become a cultural commodity heavily dosed with violence and sex. "Culture" of this nature not only diverts a person from appreciating genuine art and seeking solutions to the crucial issues that face society, but also thwarts the development of cultural distinctions of a nation.

Why cannot art be apolitical?

Though some artists have tried and will probably try to "evade" politics, nobody has succeeded so far.

Of course, an artist might think his art apolitical. However, this is merely an illusion, as every time he speaks to the reader, viewer, or listener, he takes a political stand. Even if he is sincere when he says he is not interested in politics, he is nevertheless involved, as objectively he sides with those who are content with the existing system and is against those who seek to change it.

How do we form our assessment of the interconnection between art and politics? Lenin believed it important for the artist to absorb the progressive world outlook of his time so that faith in man, in the possible eradication of social inequality and evil, in the victory of goodness and truth, in the great cause of revolution, would become his conviction and creed. This, in effect, is the meaning of the Leninist principle of partisanship in art.

The reader and viewer want to meet a positive hero, who plays an active role in life, who boldly shoulders the burdens of responsibility, who feels he is a maker of history. This hero is the product of life, of the new reality.

Eisenstein's *Battleship Potyomkin*, an acutely political film about the Russian revolution, termed by the world's leading authorities as "the best film of all times and nations", is nearly half a century old now. Or take Sholokhov's brilliant *And Quiet Flows the Don* saga, which amazes the reader with the power of its social and political generalizations, and its penetrating psychological analyses; the challenging, fiery, publicistic verse of Mayakovsky; or the symphonies of Prokofiev and Shostakovich with their philosophical content. They all comprise a genuinely innovative art, which reveals to man the truth about himself and the world around us. This is art demonstrating hope and faith in man the creator.

Nothing raises the spirit of a person so much as a positive attitude to life. It is the task and mission of art as well to help man develop this attitude.

What is socialist realism?

Socialist realism is a creative method in literature and art the essence of which is to provide a historically concrete interpretation of reality in its revolutionary development. It emerged as the natural continuation and development of preceding trends in literature and art in conditions of the drastic changes in the pattern of social relationships

brought about by the socialist revolution, by the victory and establishment of the new socialist society, and by the new life-asserting role that literature and art play in this society.

Our ill-wishers in the West refuse to accept this method and seek to discredit it precisely because of its revolutionizing role. They mockingly term it as an assortment of "permitted" genres and subjects, as "manacles" on the wrists of writers and artists. In their effort to smear the concept of "socialist realism", they strive to desecrate the revolutionary mission in art that underlies this concept.

Socialist realism does not impede creative possibilities; on the contrary, it helps writers and artists to become more actively and deeply involved in life, to preserve their creative individuality. If this were not so, how then could one explain the emergence of such leading lights in world art as Eisenstein and Pudovkin in the cinema, Prokofiev and Shostakovich in music, Deineka and Saryan in painting, Obraztsov and Tovstonogov in theatric art, Utyosov and Raikin in variety, or Ulanova and Moiseyev in the ballet. And there are hundreds more. They are all striking personalities, every one of whom would adorn any country in the West.

Here lies the authentic power of socialist realism.

How free are avant-garde artists to create what they would like to? Are they able to exhibit?

Between 1974 and 1976 we had six exhibitions of what are known in the West as avant-garde or non-conformist artists. The interest they at first attracted waned noticeably later. Most exhibitors were seen by visitors—as comments in the Visitors' Books show—as "hungry for sensational fame", "avid for attention", "unsuccessfully and blindly imitating Kandinsky, Salvador Dali, or Chagall". Of course, there were also favourable reactions.

Some of these painters, the minority, show real talent. Among these artists who are searching for their own style and technique are Dmitry Plavinsky, Vladimir Nemukhin, Vyacheslav Kalinin, Dmitry Krasnopevtsev, Alexander Kharitonov, and Nikolai Vechetomov, each of whom has his own method. Some of their works have been purchased by the USSR Ministry of Culture.

Who defines the standards in Soviet art and how is this done?

Any attempt to govern artistic creativity or represent the work of any one artist or writer as the criterion will not encourage the development of literature or art. To recognize Balzac and reject Stendhal, to admire Mayakovsky and ignore Blok, is wrong. However, it is possible and desirable to look for the best works in art and literature and to try to find what makes them so.

In this country, annual awards of Lenin and State Prizes are given for outstanding works in literature and art. These works could be considered as models of the art of socialist realism. They are submitted by professional associations of creative workers, that is, unions of writers, architects, or composers, by editorial boards of various publications, drama companies, or staffs of publishing houses and libraries. The works then are discussed in the press, with the active participation of the public. The Lenin and State Prize Committees receive thousands of letters discussing the merits of the various works. After they have discussed all suggestions and formed their opinions, the Committee members, who are distinguished writers and artists, select the worthiest candidates for the prizes. However, this does not at all mean that the prize-winning works set a standard which must necessarily be followed.

How well off financially is the Soviet artist?

The professional artist lives by his work, selling his paintings to museums and galleries, or executing commissions for factories and offices. His income also depends on the USSR Art Fund, whose 190 profit-making enterprises employ more than 26,000 artists.

Thanks to its impressive financial resources, the Art Fund is in a position to financially assist members in need of such help and grant them permanent loans when they are temporarily unable to work. Similar loans are awarded to the aged, and to artists' widows. The Fund also lends interest-free sums for the building of studios, housing co-operatives, organizing special anniversary celebrations, and the like.

The Fund has built eleven facilities for rest and work for members of the Artists' Union who are entitled to a two-month stay with full board, medical care, studio space, and artists' supplies. Travel expenses are paid for. Artists may also take members of their families along with them.

The Fund earmarks large sums for exhibitions, the purchase of works of art, the building of exhibition halls, and subsidizing of trips to gather background material for commissioned work. Finally, the Fund organizes the sale of works of painters, sculptors, graphic artists, and craftsmen working in the applied arts through a network of 120 salons plus a special export salon which is the country's sole agent in selling works by Soviet artists to customers abroad.

Will a Soviet poet be able to make a living from his poetry alone?

Yes. Verse is paid by the line, from 0.7 to 2 roubles (0.93 to 2.7 US dollars). The rate depends on a work's quality, the talent, and reputation of the poet.

The normal edition of a volume of verse is 10,000 copies. But should the printing be larger, the author will receive additional sums as for a second edition. Thus, should the printing run to 50,000 copies, which is incidentally rather common, the author will get 60 per cent of the full rate for the second 10,000 copies, another 60 per cent for the third 10,000 copies, plus 40 per cent for the fourth 10,000 copies, and 35 per cent for the fifth 10,000 copies.

Should the edition be less than the usual 10,000 copies, which is mostly the case of poetry in the languages of the national minorities, the author will nevertheless be paid the same rate as for a 10,000-copy edition.

Until the poet has enough poems to make up a collection, he will usually publish them separately or in a series in a magazine or newspaper, for which he will be paid by the line. But what happens should a poet fall ill? The USSR Writers' Union has a Literary Fund—much the same as the Art Fund of the Artists' Union—which has millions of roubles at its disposal. These sums are constantly being replenished through deductions from publishing-house profits. It is these resources that provide a writer or poet with temporary or permanent loans.

The Literary Fund has 17 facilities for rest and work as well as dozens of out-of-town guest houses for members of the Writers' Union and the Literary Fund, at which accommodations are provided free or at a 50-per cent discount. The writer or poet is entitled to two accommodation vouchers a year.

VII. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

How do you approach the problem of disarmament?

We have long and resolutely been fighting for universal and complete disarmament under effective international control. We see this as a lasting guarantee of peace and the security of peoples and, apart from all else, a colossal saving of funds which could be used with benefit by mankind.

We by no means insist on making it an "all or nothing" proposition, however. The Soviet Union calls with equal determination for any steps conducive to the limitation and ending of the arms race and reduction of armaments. Of course, such steps should not give an advantage to one side at the expense of the other. It is a fact that all the international agreements concluded in this field in the past 10-15 years were the result of Soviet initiative.

Recently the Soviet Union proposed a whole range of new important initiatives in this field. We suggested that efforts should be stepped up to achieve a new agreement on the limitation of strategic offensive arms. And although, as transpired during the talks in Moscow in March, 1977, with US State Secretary Cyrus Vance, the position taken by the new US Administration was far from constructive, the Soviet Union continues to think that both sides should work for positive results, as it is imperative to halt the arms race. We have renewed our proposal on the reduction of military budgets. We are working for the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons and for a ban on the manufacture of

new kinds and systems of mass destruction weapons; we propose that agreement should be reached on the complete and universal prohibition of all nuclear weapon tests and on concluding a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations. We are working for a curtailment of the armed forces and armaments in Central Europe, and, together with our partners in the Warsaw Treaty, appeal to all the countries which took part in the European Conference to conclude an agreement undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other.

It is a broad and specific programme. The measures suggested by the Soviet Union are of course no substitute for universal and complete disarmament but they create better conditions for its realization.

Much is being written in the West that the Soviet civil defense system threatens peace by "destabilizing the strategic balance of forces". Is this a valid complaint?

No, it has no substance. Our civil defense service has never threatened—nor can it threaten—anybody. Its purposes are to protect the population in case of war, to provide for economic stability in time of war, and to deal with the damage done by an attack by an aggressor.

Some American writers allege that there has been a big build-up of our civil defense organization, especially since mid-1972. This idea must have been prompted by the fact that in 1972, following a long period of drought, serious forest fires started up in a number of regions. In many places they threatened populated areas. Such natural disasters call for emergency measures, and it was necessary to enlist the help of the population and to organize the people for fire-fighting accordingly. The civil defense organization was used to control the massive fires and on the subsequent clearing-up operations. Such a "build-up" of civil defense to cope with a natural disaster of course threatens nobody.

The organization of our civil defense and methods of protecting the population from possible air attack, as well as methods for coping with natural disasters, are continually being improved. This fact was known at the time of the conclusion of the Soviet-US agreement on anti-missile defense. It was no obstacle to the signing of this agreement

and caused no anxiety until 1976, when a struggle arose in the United States in connection with the US military budget for the years ahead. We are aware that the United States is engaged on big civil defense programmes, but we have never claimed that this represents a threat to peace and the security of other peoples and have never tried to use it as an argument against ending the arms race or against general disarmament.

Does the Soviet Union admit that it is not doing its share in information exchange with the West?

How can it make such an admission when the situation is quite the reverse?

The Soviet Union systematically imports from Western countries several times as many publications as they buy from the Soviet Union. Our total imports of publications from Western countries in 1975 amounted to 6,289,000 roubles, while the export of publications from the Soviet Union to these countries came to 2,644,000 roubles.

The following official figures for 1975 are typical of the exchange of publications (in thousands of roubles):

Country	Exports from the USSR	Imports into the USSR
USA	681	1955
Britain	210	1191
France	370	922
FRG	344	596
Switzerland	35	181
Austria	44	96
Holland	84	431

More than 20,000 different periodicals and 70,000 book titles are bought abroad each year by the All-Union Association "Mezhdunarodnaya kniga" on behalf of Soviet organizations and bookshops. When ordering foreign publications we give preference to original works which reflect as fully as possible the achievements of different countries in the fields of science, technology, literature and art.

The Soviet Union is steadily extending the range of publications imported from abroad. Starting from 1976 it

bought for retail trade another dozen Western newspapers including *The Financial Times*, *Frankfurter allgemeine*, *Die Presse*, *Le Peuple*, *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Les Echos*, *L'Unité*, *Dagens Nyheter*, and *Mainichi Shimbun*.

It is to be deplored that even after the Helsinki meeting the situation concerning information exchange with the West has not become any better. This is not through any fault on our part. "Mezhdunarodnaya kniga" still cannot buy certain Western publications which "are not sent behind the Iron Curtain countries." Soviet orders for US political weeklies like *U.S. News and World Report* and *Time International* are systematically undersupplied.

The high prices of Western publications are a formidable barrier to greater exchange of information between the Soviet Union and Western countries. A yearly subscription to *The New York Times* delivered by air, for instance, costs 2,982 dollars, which makes it practically inaccessible. By ordinary post (220 dollars) *The New York Times* reaches the USSR after a month, which deprives it of any news value. It is worth noting that an annual subscription to *Pravda* and *Izvestia* costs in any Western country 14.40 and 12 dollars respectively, and to the popular Soviet weeklies *Literaturnaya gazeta* (the Literary Gazette) and *Za rubezhom* (Abroad), 14.40 and 18 dollars respectively.

Books, too, are much more expensive in the West than in the Soviet Union.

Between 1946 and 1972 more than 6,000 works by American authors, some 6,000 works by French authors, 4,000 works by British authors and about 1,000 works by Italian authors were published in the USSR.

Over the same period 500 works by Soviet authors were published in the United States and Britain (each), 600 in France, and 400 in Italy. Their printings, incidentally, were considerably smaller than the Soviet printings of foreign authors.

The Soviet Union cannot be accused of unwillingness in the field of the cinema and the theatre either. Between 1966 and 1975 we bought 21 American films which were given wide distribution. Over the same time the Americans bought 25 Soviet films, but showed only some of them.

Soviet theatres have put on 35 plays by American authors, as against two Soviet plays performed in the US. We have also staged 14 British, 21 French and 15 Italian plays.

In Britain, theatre-goers are acquainted with one Soviet playwright, Alexei Arbuzov. In France and Italy Soviet drama is not represented at all.

There you have the true position.

Can the USSR manage without Western technology and equipment?

Our achievements in space, alone, are a sufficient answer to this question.

In the past five-year period (1971-75) the Soviet Union imported machines, equipment and transportation facilities worth 29,000 million roubles (roughly 38,000 million dollars). For the years 1974-75 the value of these items imported from socialist countries came to over 9,500 million dollars, and from capitalist countries, the figure was around 5,600 million dollars. Generally, the volume of the Soviet Union's imports is smaller than that of the other industrialized countries, and, as the above figures show, the minor part of these imports come from capitalist countries. Its imports from the capitalist countries make up less than 1.5 per cent of the Soviet gross national product.

In the 1976-80 period, the Soviet Union plans to boost trade with the socialist countries by 41 per cent, and with industrialized capitalist countries by 31 per cent. In other words, by 1980, the trade turnover with the USA, Canada, Western Europe and Japan is expected to come to about 20,000 million roubles. Imports will probably account for about half this sum—10,000 million roubles, including imports of machinery worth 3,000-4,000 million roubles, which is not a large sum, considering that the volume of capital investments in the current five-year period in the USSR will amount to 621,000 million roubles, and the increment of national income, to 91,000 million roubles.

There is another thing worth noting. The Western monopolies are competing for Soviet orders and using Soviet equipment and knowhow on a growing scale. They find it profitable. But one may profit from economic relations with the USSR only provided that these relations are profitable to the Soviet Union as well.

The Soviet Union's technological capacities and achievements are such that it is perfectly able to continue its

rapid advance all by itself. On the other hand, it is sometimes cheaper to buy than to make what one needs. It would be foolish of us not to avail ourselves of the advantages of the international division of labour.

What is impeding the growth of Soviet-US trade?

The answer is very simple – *tariff discrimination* against Soviet goods by the United States.

The average customs duty levied in the United States on foreign capital goods amounts to 4.8 per cent of their cost, but to 38 per cent for equivalent Soviet goods. It is 9.7 and 42 per cent respectively for electrical equipment, 5.2 and 30 per cent for transportation facilities, and so on.

Agreement on abolishing this gross discrimination, i.e., extending to the USSR the same terms of trade as apply to 140 other countries, was reached as long ago as 1972, but it has still not been implemented by the American side.

Then there are the *administrative restrictions* imposed on exports of American goods to the Soviet Union. Many goods may be sold only under an individual export licence issued by the US authorities. And the regulations applying to such exports are so vague that the exporter does not know in advance whether or not the licence will be issued. This results in endless delays. To quote an example, in 1973, the Soviet "Intourist" organization concluded an agreement with IBM for automated control equipment for its hotels. It took more than three years to get the licence.

Or take another example. The Soviet Union proposed to the Americans that the two sides exchange information on the nature of the goods which, for one reason or another, neither country wished to sell to the other. The aim was to end ambiguity and lack of understanding. The proposal was not accepted.

Another hindrance to the growth of Soviet-US trade is the *credit restrictions* imposed by the US Congress, which limit the possibility of US exports to the Soviet Union. As a result, US companies often become non-competitive and lose Soviet orders which they could otherwise have had.

There are no barriers on the Soviet side to the development of trade with the United States.

What is the pattern of Soviet imports from Western countries?

We have already mentioned that the USSR buys machinery, equipment and transportation facilities from the West. These goods account for a little over a third of total imports. A large proportion of imports is made up of ferrous metals, rolled stock of ferrous metals and pipes (roughly 40 per cent of the imports). The rest of the Soviet purchases from the West consist of consumer goods and raw materials for their production, foodstuffs and grain.

What can the Soviet Union offer the West besides oil, gas and other raw materials?

In the 1971-75 period, the foreign partners bought from the Soviet Union 1,150,000 motor cars, 170,000 tractors, 8,500 bulldozers, 72,000 metal-cutting machine tools, 13,000 excavators, and other similar items. Equipment for atomic power plants, electronic devices, aircraft and aviation equipment, hydrofoil ships, and programme-controlled machine tools are exported in increasing quantities.

Exports of Soviet machinery and equipment amounted to 2,500 million roubles (3,250 million dollars) in 1970 and to 4,500 million roubles (about 6,000 million dollars) in 1975.

Electric motors made in the USSR have been bought by the FRG, France, Italy, Austria, Denmark, and many other countries. Soviet machines for contact welding of rails are being used on railways in the United States, Japan, Italy, Austria and Greece. Industrialized capitalist countries use the Soviet technology of electroslag welding. Such units have been sold to France, Sweden and Japan, i.e., countries which are in the front rank in world metallurgy.

Soviet pneumatic processing equipment has been bought by French firms, stationary air compressors and textile equipment by Italy and Finland, and printing and chemical plant by Britain and the FRG.

One can see in the fields and on building sites in more than 80 countries about 400,000 Soviet tractors, 70,000 grain harvester combines and more than 40,000 road-building machines. Swedish farmers are very satisfied with Soviet

tractors, which are sturdy and tough, of simple and convenient design, and which are easily started at below-zero temperatures. They are praised in Canada and other countries as well.

The Eberhard Hoesch Company (FRG) sells filter presses made under Soviet licence to many countries. Many machine-building plants in the FRG use extra-hard cutting tools to work superhard steel, also under Soviet licence. The Soviet technology of evaporative cooling of blast furnaces is used in the FRG and ten other countries.

In short, there is no dearth of evidence as to the opportunities available to the West to purchase Soviet plant and equipment and technology.

Why, then, are these possibilities not used more fully? Why is the world's second industrial power, accounting for a fifth of world industrial output, still but poorly represented in the Western technological markets?

There are, of course, such objective considerations as the abundance of these goods on the market, tough competition, and loyalty to traditional suppliers, the Soviet Union often not being one of them.

Even so, it is worth noting that while running down the quality of Soviet machines and other goods and declaring them uncompetitive, the West puts up additional barriers of a discriminatory nature. That is clearly at odds with plain logic. Who can make a capitalist company buy an article it does not want to buy? Nobody. Why, then, impose an embargo on the export to Britain of Soviet colour television sets and introduce import quotas for Soviet transistor radios and radiograms? Why levy extra duty on Soviet exports to the United States?

Naturally, such measures hinder the export of Soviet manufactured goods to industrialized capitalist countries and at the same time reduce reciprocal purchases of Western machinery and equipment by the Soviet Union. What the Soviet Union is unable to sell to the West because of these discriminatory practices it successfully utilizes at home. But meanwhile Western exporting companies are the losers through missing out on Soviet orders.

This seems to us to be a nonsensical situation. Why should anyone create difficulties and suffer losses when there could be profit for all concerned?

Why does the Soviet Union conduct its foreign trade mainly with major Western companies, ignoring the small ones?

High quality and competitive prices are important considerations in securing Soviet orders. Whoever offers the best goods and terms, will be favoured accordingly. Neither the size nor the nationality of the company are of decisive significance to us.

Nevertheless, allegations are spread in the West that our country prefers to deal only with the biggest corporations. Major Soviet projects are cited in which Western companies have participated or are participating—the construction of the motor works at Togliatti and Naberezhnye Chelny, pipelines, some mineral fertilizer plants, and so on.

Indeed, in some instances not every company is able to meet our requirements. Hence the choice of major partners such as FIAT. However, many smaller companies have taken part or are taking part in these projects as much as it is within their capacity to do so. In some instances they even play the most prominent part.

How did the Soviet Union accumulate a trade balance deficit in its economic relations with the West?

In 1975, the deficit in trade with the West amounted to 3,600 million roubles. It was partly due to large Soviet grain purchases resulting from the severe drought we experienced and consequent crop failure.

In 1976, however, this deficit was already considerably reduced. We might point out by way of comparison that in 1974 the USA had an adverse balance of trade with a deficit of 9,900 million dollars, and Japan had a deficit of 6,500 million dollars.

It should also be recalled that in recent years Western countries have granted the Soviet Union large credits to promote their own exports and to secure future supplies of goods they require. This is the whole essence of the credit arrangements, especially with respect to long-term large-scale compensation deals. It is worth noting that with regard to the main creditors (France, Britain, Italy, Japan and Canada), the Soviet trade balance deficit is considerably

smaller than the credits themselves and cannot therefore be considered "staggering", "unexpected" or "inspiring misgivings", to quote the Western news media.

Any consideration of a country's trade balance must naturally be in relation to the general economic context. Otherwise, 1975, the lowest point for the West in its great slump in production, accompanied by high inflation and unemployment, could be said to have been a most favourable year. For while the West had an aggregate deficit of 27,000 million dollars in 1974, it finished 1975 with a surplus of 6,700 million dollars.

The industrialized countries partly smoothed away their difficulties by cutting back on imports to protect their own production when demand fell. That is, they sought to make others carry the main burden of the slump.

The Soviet economy, being crisis-free and slump-free, is not forced to cut back on imports. It need not be afraid of any market glut or the appearance of "surplus" production capacities.

Credits granted to the Soviet Union stimulate Western exports to this country, and therefore benefit this side of the trade between the USSR and the West. As for a country's trade deficit, this of course can be eliminated only in two ways, either by curtailing imports or by increasing exports.

In the first half of 1976, the United States sold the Soviet Union goods worth 1,210 million roubles, while its purchases were just under 89 million roubles. Belgium bought twice as much from us and Britain about five times as much. The cause of this obviously abnormal state of affairs is not that the Soviet Union has nothing to sell, but that discriminatory restrictions are imposed on selected imports from the USSR.

The further development of mutually advantageous cooperation in trade between the Soviet Union and the USA largely depends on how quickly and completely the artificial barriers obstructing the access of Soviet goods to the markets of industrialized capitalist countries are removed.

What interests does the Soviet Union pursue in granting credit?

Unlike the capitalist countries, in which free capital and idle production capacity are to be found, the planned

nature of the Soviet economy excludes the presence of surplus resources and, consequently, the need to export them.

All available means are needed by our country for the dynamic development of the national economy (in the 1971-75 period, the average annual growth of industrial production was 7.4 per cent, as against 0.3 per cent in the United States) and the implementation of a social development programme of unprecedented scope.

Why, then, does the Soviet Union grant long-term credits to developing countries?

Is it out of commercial interest? No, it is not profitable in this sense. We grant credits for 8-12 years (sometimes for longer terms) at an interest rate which is half the rate charged in similar circumstances in the international financial market. Money invested in the Soviet economy yields a higher profit. Putting it another way, we grant the developing countries credits at an interest rate that is only half what the Soviet Union has to pay the capitalist countries.

Is it a means of obtaining hard currency? Hardly. We do not insist that developing countries repay credits in convertible currency—we accept their traditional exports and a proportion of the output produced at the factories built with Soviet assistance in payment.

What are the political strings? There are none, for this would run counter to the principles of socialist foreign policy. Does the Soviet Union have surplus goods which it would be convenient to sell in the form of aid? We do not have this problem. To illustrate, at the 25th CPSU Congress, the Minister of Power Engineering and Electrification, Pyotr Neporozhny, said that for some years past the demand for electrical and fuel energy had been growing faster than power generating capacity. Although the USSR holds first place in the world for oil and coal production and produces more electricity than Britain, the FRG and France put together, it still has no capacity to spare, nor can it have any.

Notwithstanding this fact, the Soviet Union is helping developing countries to construct power stations with an aggregate capacity of 11.6 million kilowatts. In other words, turbines are being installed in power stations in Asia, Africa and Latin America that could very well be used at home. The same can be said also about other bran-

ches of production in the developing countries as it is to this area of the economy that nine-tenths of Soviet credits goes.

Finally, is it that the Soviet Union wishes to secure a foothold in the economies of developing countries in order to profit later on? The Soviet Union neither owns nor controls a single project built abroad with its assistance, nor does it seek such control. They are all owned solely and entirely by the country concerned. Moreover, Soviet specialists, in line with Soviet policy, train experts from among the local population as quickly as possible so that they should be able to run the projects on their own.

What, then, does the Soviet Union grant credits for?

First of all we can dismiss any suggestion of charity. The Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Algeria, Houari Boumedienne, was quite right when he said some years ago that there was no charity in international relations today and all talk of it was insulting to those allegedly subjected to it.

The reason why the Soviet Union grants the developing countries credits and renders them other assistance is that objectively their interests agree with our interests and with our idea of internationalist duty. The policy pursued by the Soviet Union stems from its belief that the task of consolidating peace, strengthening the anti-imperialist forces and establishing a just order in international economic relations cannot be accomplished without the participation of the developing countries and without their having achieved economic independence.

Are mutual interests observed in the trade between socialist countries?

Within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), not a single decision concerning a member country can be passed without its consent. Only national interest determines the economic association and continuing expansion of co-operation of the CMEA members. Such co-operation involves co-ordination of their national economic plans, specialization and co-operation in production, development of reciprocal trade, and so on.

At present the CMEA countries are implementing their Comprehensive Programme for Socialist Economic Integra-

tion. The mechanism of co-operation is set so as to rule out the possibility of non-equivalent exchange, or gain for one country at the expense of another or others, and to help to equalize the level of their economic development. Among other things, prices in the trade between CMEA countries are fixed by common consent of the interested parties and, if adjustments are necessary, these are agreed in exactly the same way.

Socialist market prices differ from current world market prices. First of all, they are lower (for example, the price of Soviet oil); secondly, they are not subject to sudden fluctuation. They are based on the average prices obtaining on the main world commodity markets over a five-year period. They remain stable over a stipulated period, no matter what happens on the capitalist world market.

We have answered 100 questions about the Soviet Union in the hope that this is only the beginning of our dialogue with our reader. The subject is inexhaustible indeed. We shall answer further questions from you in subsequent editions.

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پڑهندڙ نَسُل . پ ن

The Reading Generation

1960 جي ڏهاڪي ۾ عبدالله حسين " اُداس نسلين" نالي ڪتاب لکيو. 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ وري ماڻِڪَ "لُڙهندڙ نَسُل" نالي ڪتاب لکي پنهنجي دورَ جي عڪاسي ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش ڪئي. امداد حُسينيءَ وري 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ ئي لکيو:

انڌي ماءُ ڄڻيندي آهي اونڌا سونڌا ٻارَ
ايندڙ نسل سَمورو هوندو گونگا ٻوڑا ٻارَ

هر دور جي نوجوانن کي اُداس، لُڙهندَڙ، ڪَڙهندڙ، ڪُڙهندڙ، ٻَرندڙ، ڇُرندڙ، ڪِرَندڙ، اوسيئڙو ڪَندَڙُ، ياڙي، ڪاڦُو، ياڃوڪَڙُ، ڪاوڙيل ۽ وِڙَهندڙ نسلن سان منسوب ڪري سَڳهجي ٿو، پَر اسان اِنهن سيني وِچان "**پڙهندڙ**" نسل جا ڳولائو آهيون. ڪتابن کي ڪاڳر تان کڻي ڪمپيوُٽر جي دنيا ۾ آڻڻ، ٻين لفظن ۾ برقي ڪتاب يعنيe-books ناهي ورهائڻ جي وسيلي پڙهندڙ نسل کي وَڌَڻ، ويجهَڻ ۽ هِڪَ ٻِئي کي ڳولي سَهڪاريِ تحريڪ جي رستي تي آڻِڻَ جي آسَ رکون ٿا.

پڑهندڙ نَسل (پَـنَ) کا بہ تنظيمَ ناهي. اُنَ جو کو بہ صدر، عُهديدار يا پايو وِجهندڙ نہ آهي. جيڪڏهن کو بہ شخص اهڙي دعويٰ ڪري تو تہ پَڪَ ڄاڻو تہ اُهو ڪُوڙو آهي. نہ ئي وري پَـنَ جي نالي ڪي پئسا گڏ ڪيا ويندا. جيڪڏهن کو اهڙي ڪوشش ڪري تو تہ پَڪَ ڄاڻو تہ اُهو ٻہ ڪُوڙو آهي.

جَهڙيءَ طَرَح وطن جا پَـنَ ساوا، گاڙهاڻ، نيرا، پيلا يا ناسي هوندا آهن اَهڙيءَ طرح پڑهندڙ نَسُل وارا پَـنَ بہ مختَلِف آهن ۽ هوندا. اُهي ساڳئي ئي وقت اُداس ۽ پڙهندڙ، بَرندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ، سُست ۽ پڙهندڙ يا وِڙهندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ بہ ٿي سگهن ٿا. ٻين لفظن ۾ پَـنَ کا خُصوصي ۽ تالي لڳل ڪِلَب Exclusive Club نہ آهي.

ڪوشش اها هوندي تہ پَـنَ جا سڀ ڪَم ڪار سَهڪاري ۽ رَضاڪار بنيادن تي ٿين، پر ممڪن آهي تہ ڪي ڪم اُجرتي بنيادن تي بہ ٿِين. اهڙي حالت ۾ پَـنَ پاڻ هِڪَٻِئي جي مدد ڪَـرڻ جـي اُصـولَ هيـٺ ڏي وَڻُ ڪنـدا ۽ غيرتجـارتي non-commercial رهنـدا. پَـنَـن پـاران ڪتـابن کـي دِجيٽـائِيز digitize ڪرڻ جي عَملَ مان کو بہ مالي فائدو يا نفعو حاصل ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش نہ ڪئي ويندي.

ڪتابن کي دِجيٽائِيز ڪرڻ کان پو ٻيو اهم مرحلو وِرهائڻ distribution جو ٿيندو. اِهو ڪم ڪرڻ وارن مان جيڪڏهن کو پيسا ڪمائي سگهي تو تہ پلي ڪمائي، رُڳو پَـنَـن سان اُن جو کو بہ لاڳاپو نہ هوندو.

پڑهندڙ نَسُل ـ پ ن The Reading Generation

پَنَن کي ڪُليل اکرن ۾ صلاح ڏجي ٿي ته هو وَسَ پٽاندڙ وڌِ کان وَڌِ ڪتاب خريد ڪَري ڪتابن جي ليکڪَن، ڇپائيندڙن ۽ ڇاپيندڙن کي هِمٿائِن. پر ساڳئي وقت عِلم حاصل ڪرڻ ۽ ڄاڻ کي ڦهلائڻ جي ڪوشش دوران ڪَنهن به رُڪاوٽ کي نه مڃن.

شيخ اَياز علمَ، ڄاڻ، سمجهَ ۽ ڏاهپَ کي گيتَ، بيتَ، سِٽ، پُڪارَ سان تَشبيهه ڏيندي انهن سيني کي بَمن، گولين ۽ بارودَ جي مدِ مقابل بيهاريو آهي. اياز چوي ٿو ته:

گيتَ بہ جِٽ گوريلا آهن، جي ويريءَ تي وار ڪَرن ٿا.

... ...

جئن جئن جاڙ وڌي ٿي جَڳَ ۾، هو ٻوليءَ جي آڙ چُپن ٿا؛

ريتيءَ تي راتاها ڪن ٿا، موتي مَنجهِ پهاڙ چُپن ٿا؛

... ...

ڪالهَ هُيا جي سُرخ گُلن جيئن، اڄ ڪلهه نيلا پيلا آهن؛

گيتَ بہ جِٽ گوريلا آهن.....

... ...

هي بيتُ اَتي، هي بَم- گولو،

جيڪي بہ ڪٽين، جيڪي بہ ڪٽين!

مون لاءِ ٻنهي ۾ فَرَقُ نہ آ، هي بيتُ بہ بَمَ جو ساٿي آ،

جنهن رِڻَ ۾ رات ڪَيا راڙا، تنهن هَڏَ ۽ چَمَ جو ساٿي آ ـ

اِن حسابَ سان اڄاڻائي کي پاڻَ تي اِهو سوچي مَڙهڻ ته "هاڻي ويڙهه ۽ عمل جو دور آهي، اُن ڪري پڙهڻ تي وقت نہ وجايو" ناداني‌ءَ جي نشاني آهي.

پَڻ جو پڙهڻ عام ڪِتابي ڪيڙن وانگر رُڳو نِصابي ڪتابن تائين محدود نہ هوندو. رڳو نصابي ڪتابن ۾ پاڻ کي قيد ڪري ڇڏڻ سان سماج ۽ سماجي حالتن تان نظر کڄي ويندي ۽ نتيجي طور سماجي ۽ حڪومتي پاليسيون policies اڻڄاڻن ۽ نادانن جي هٿن ۾ رهنديون. پَڻ نِصابي ڪتابن سان گڏوگڏ ادبي، تاريخي، سياسي، سماجي، اقتصادي، سائنسي ۽ ٻين ڪتابن کي پڙهي سماجي حالتن کي بهتر بنائڻ جي ڪوشش ڪندا.

پَڙهندڙ نَسُل جا پَنَ سيني کي **چو، چالاءِ ۽ ڪينئن** جهڙن سوالن کي هر بَيانَ تي لاڳو ڪرڻ جي ڪوشَ ڏين ٿا ۽ انهن تي ويچار ڪرڻ سان گڏ جوابَ ڳولڻ کي نہ رڳو پنهنجو حق، پر فرض ۽ اڻتر گهرج unavoidable necessity سمجهندي ڪتابن کي پاڻ پڙهڻ ۽ وڌ کان وڌ ماڻهن تائين پهچائڻ جي ڪوشش جديد ترين طريقن وسيلي ڪرڻ جو ويچار رکن ٿا.

توهان بہ پڙهڻَ، پڙهائڻ ۽ ڦهلائڻ جي اِن سهڪاري تحريڪ ۾ شامل ٿي سگهو ٿا، بَس پنهنجي اوسي پاسي ۾ ڏِسو، هر قسم جا ڳاڙها توڙي نيرا، ساوا توڙي پيلا پن ضرور نظر اچي ويندا.

وڻ وڻ کي مون ياڪي پائي چيو تہ "منهنجا ياءُ
پهتو منهنجي من ۾ تنهنجي پَنَ پَنَ جو پڙلاءُ".
- ايار (ڪلهي پاتم ڪينرو)