

The Soviet Union

Through the Eyes of an American

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The Soviet Union Through the Eyes of an American

Mike Davidow

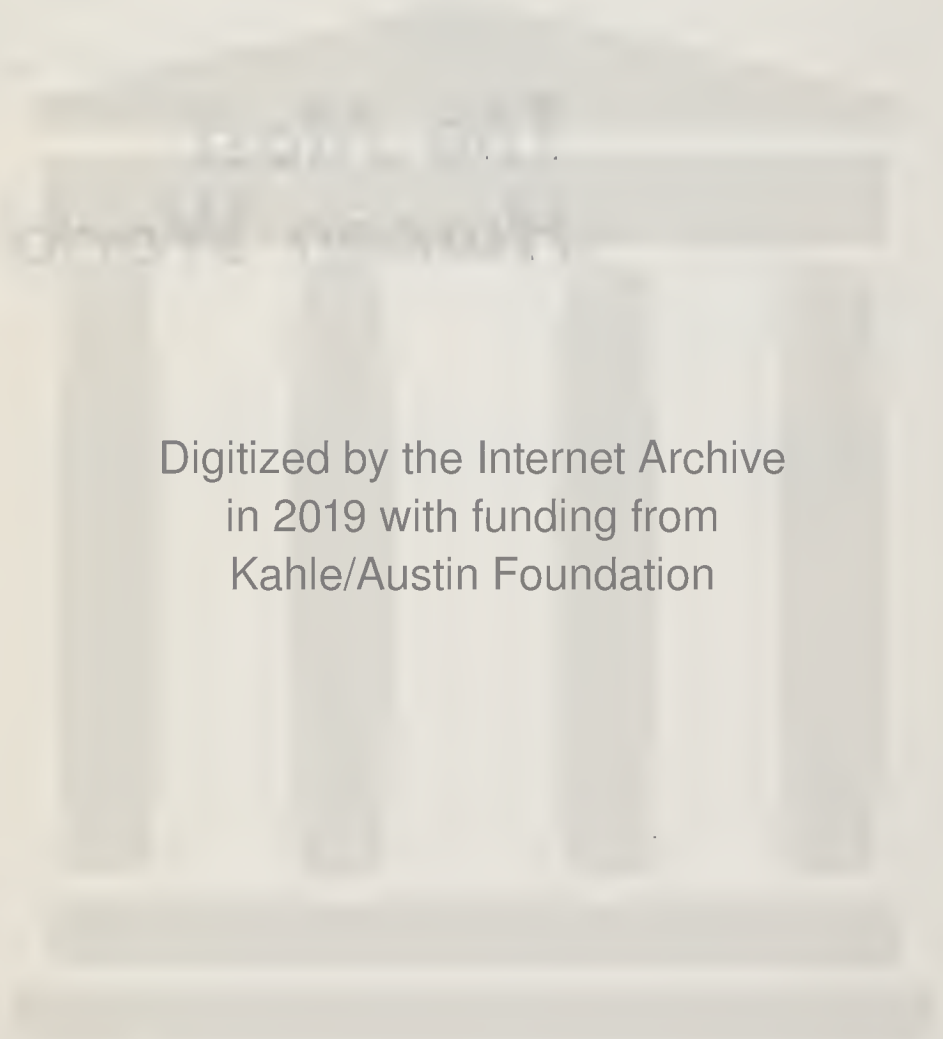


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***The Most
Human World***



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Everything for the Benefit of Man

Because there are two competing systems in the world, people will want to know: where is there greater concern for the welfare of people? Where is there a more purposeful life, especially for youth? Where is there a more secure life, particularly for the sick, the handicapped and the aged? Where is there a more progressive life, a life that holds forth a brighter future? Where is there a truly more liberating life for women? Where is there greater fraternity of peoples? Where do working people, the mass of the people, have a greater and more meaningful say in running their country? Where is culture and education made more available to the people? In short: where is there a better, a more happy life, not for the privileged few but for the mass of people?

These are the questions this series, entitled "The Soviet Union Through the Eyes of an American," will address itself to. It will attempt to do this, not so much on the basis of statistics (though it will refer to them when necessary) but on the basis of personal impressions and conversations with Soviet people from all walks of life. My story is a comparative account of what life in the Soviet Union is like as seen through the eyes of an American who for four years not only lived in Moscow but has travelled widely through 15 Soviet Republics.

For more than 55 years a people have lived without exploiting each other and without being exploited. They have grown up in a society where a person's worth is measured not by his pocketbook but by his contribution toward improving the welfare of his fellow man; where mutual concern and cooperation are ways of life; where there is no fear of tomorrow; where the base instincts and predatory habits inherited from the past are not given license in the name of "individual freedom" but are being collectively combatted and uprooted. More than half a century of such existence has left an imprint on the Soviet character that is perhaps more apparent to us, inhabitants of the "free" world, than to Soviet citizens themselves.

In the Soviet Union it is not a disadvantage to be human. Goodness and kindness are regarded as the normal characteristics of human beings and not as weaknesses to be seized upon by those not burdened with such "frailties." A half century of life without dog-eat-dog morality, without racism and national discrimination, without corruption and pornographic pollution has erased a considerable amount of centuries-accumulated dirt. Soviet man and woman are the most morally clean people we have ever met. As foreigners, we could perhaps note this contrast better than most our Soviet friends, who took these qualities for granted. After all, Soviet life is the only life most of them really know. They, in fact, were more

critical than we. With their eyes set on the future, they were above all concerned with eliminating the filth that still remains in their life.

Here let me comment on a common failing among friends of the Soviet Union who are not too familiar with the daily realities of Soviet life. Many of them expect to see ideal man and woman when they visit the USSR. And they swing from unreal elation to unjustified dejection when the "ideal" they themselves imagined does not measure up to the standards they had set for the Soviet people (who, incidentally, never asked to be placed on such pedestals). We can understand this because we, ourselves, were possessed with some of these unrealistic conceptions when we first arrived. They are indeed the natural result of inexperience with Soviet society, lack of understanding of what it takes to bring up new men and women. The building of a new society and above all pioneering the path toward such social reconstruction is an incredibly difficult process, involving mistakes and even sacrifices. It is far easier to set the ideal standard and the timetable for its realization than to do the backbreaking and complex work necessary to bring it into existence.

To understand this—really understand it—is a vital necessity for Soviet friends as well as for all who seek an honest picture of Soviet life. The sophisticated anti-Soviet propaganda machine focuses on the difficulties encountered in constructing a new society in the USSR, exaggerating and distorting them. That is why it ignores or underplays Soviet achievements and maintains a curtain of silence on the contrast Soviet life offers to the West in the most meaningful aspects of life.

I want to stress: it is not a perfect world, it is a human world. It is not a smug, complacent world that revels in its humanism. It is a restless, demanding world characterized by an incessant struggle to perfect itself, and above all, the people who live in it. In the Soviet Union I was seized with the once in a lifetime feeling that all journalists treasure: I found myself impatiently awaiting the next day to see what exciting new features this new world I was living in would bring. And I was rarely disappointed. I seek to take the reader with me in reliving this adventure.

First Impressions

I had left the "free world" twice before to visit the "other world"—in 1961 as part of a US delegation and in 1967 as a special correspondent for my newspaper to report on the Fifth Moscow International Film Festival. But there's a world of difference between *living* in a country and being a guest or a visitor. The Soviet Union seemed to say: "Here I am in daily, real life. Take me as I am now, not just on holidays." And that was the way we saw and took it. And that is the way I shall describe it.

Let me start off with my first impressions. As usual it is the little things that first hit home to you. They are indeed to be treasured, these "little" things.

I was walking Moscow's streets, riding its trolleybuses and autobuses and its Metro, on my way to factories, farms, schools, meetings and press conferences.

Let me take you on my first walk on the streets of Moscow. There is no better way to get to know a country and its people than to walk its streets.

I was walking along Gorky Street with Alla Borisovna Grechukhina, my interpreter and secretary. Walking with Alla was an experience in itself. An extremely attractive and knowledgeable woman who spoke fluent English with an American accent (most here acquire an Oxford accent), Alla was an indefatigable and enthusiastic guide. She quite understood the significance of these walks to me and notwithstanding the added work for her, Alla threw herself into it with relish. I am convinced part of the reason was that in a way she was seeing her Moscow (and her Soviet Union) through the excited eyes of an arrival from the "other world."

I stopped suddenly to impress the scene before me into my memory. Alla stopped with me and glanced at me, her eyes sparkling with some of my own contagious excitement. Fluffy puffs of snow were carpeting Gorky Street and embroidering in white the bear-like fur coats of passers-by. Tiny tots wrapped in their long fur coats, peaked hats perched on their heads, looked like oversized bunnies. Technically, it was spring in Moscow (which we were told arrives March 1st) but no one evidently had informed Old Man Winter his time was up and he was hanging around for a while. From the looks of it—he seemed to be in no hurry. But I was in no hurry for him to leave. I love winter and for those who love that cold season of whiteness—Moscow and much of the Soviet Union are quite inviting.

Men, bearing bouquets of snow-covered flowers, rushed by me. Spring and snow! Alla explained. March 8th, International Women's Day, a national holiday celebrated here on a far wider and far more meaningful scale than our commercialized Mothers' Day, was approaching.

But it wasn't the flowers that made me stop. All along our walk I had a strange feeling. Something was very different from the walks I had taken only a few days ago in the world I had just left. Then I realized. It wasn't the wintry-like Spring. It wasn't the mass of walking furs. People were walking—some hurrying (Muscovites, I later discovered, like people in all big cities, do everything at a faster tempo)—but there was no tension.

I had on several occasions observed one man jostle another. I had waited for an angry exchange of words. The colliding men either excused themselves, or more often just continued on their separate ways. No one suspected his neighbor of ulterior motives.

I had been particularly impressed with this calm when I found myself in Moscow's Metro in rush hours in a subway crush that could rival our own in New York.

The crowd, Alla and I were swept into as we transferred trains, could only be compared to the outpouring from Yankee Stadium World Series game. Muscovites were not only jostling and pushing one another, the men, women, children of all ages were literally breathing down each other's necks.

I must confess I became tense, uneasy and eyed my fellow subway sardines with some suspicion and even hostility. I was just reacting normally—as a New Yorker. I looked at Alla to see her reaction. She was as patient and as relaxed as her Muscovites. The crowd, or rather living stream, moved imperceptibly—but it moved. Not an angry word was exchanged. No one was watching to maintain order and no directives were being blared over loudspeakers. People were either moving along silently lost in their own thoughts, their faces reflecting their inward calm and ease, or were spending the time in light lively conversation.

I am convinced that if New Yorkers would just spend one week riding to and from work in the Moscow subway, an awful lot of the pap they had been fed about Soviet people would evaporate in that subway ride.

My first trolleybus ride provided another "little" insight into the life of the country, this time without Alla. Moscow's huge box-shaped trolleybuses in most areas run quite frequently—far more so than our busses. But Muscovites, I discovered, like New Yorkers, are in a great hurry, even if it is to get nowhere in particular. No one waited for the next trolleybus which could be already seen clearly approaching. Instead, all piled into the first to arrive which was already well-occupied. And like a New Yorker, I even went them one better.

But the trolleybus soon stopped. The cables had slipped off the overhead wires which fed it power. In a flash, a slip of a girl, her curly blond locks peeking out from under a bright kerchief, nimbly manipulated the cables and restored the paralyzed vehicle to life. There was such natural assurance and grace in her movements, such undisputed control over this immense mechanical monster that had been entrusted to her.

I was well aware statistically of the role Soviet women play in society and I had even observed them working side by side with men on construction sites. But, that was from a distance, from the outside, as an observer. Now I was so taken up with the activity of our attractive driver (which was hardly noticed by my fellow passengers), I had completely forgotten about paying my fare.

Alla had told me the fare was four kopecks in a trolleybus, five in an autobus and Metro and three kopecks in a tram. I searched my pockets but my smallest coin was a 15-kopeck piece. What does one do for change? And where does one pay? I was aware that except on rare occasions there were

no conductors on surface lines. Fares are collected on the honor system. You put your fare into a coin box and tear off your paper receipt. Every once in a while there is a spot check. You pay a rouble fine if you can't show a receipt.

There was no difficulty finding the coin box—it was the center of activity. A schoolboy who was closest to it was acting as the voluntary, unpaid conductor. From all directions coins were passed from hand to hand until they reached the young conductor (who seemed to be immensely enjoying his role). The boy neatly clipped off receipts and they were placed into the hands of the waiting passengers. But still what does one do for change? Puzzled, I decided to make my contribution to Moscow's transportation system, and dropped my 15-kopeck piece into the coin box. I made a mental note to raise this problem with Alla and that was the end of it. But not as far as my fellow passengers were concerned.

Soviet citizens, as I later discovered, are collective busy bodies. Just ask someone for directions on the street and you are informed not only by the person to whom you directed your question but by everyone in whispering distance. And very often the result is a lively sidewalk discussion on your destination.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned my head around. My neighbor, a middle-aged man, smiled and said: "You put in too much, comrade." Then, without another word, he proceeded to organize my refund. The woman before me gave my friend a four-kopeck piece, and he turned it over to me. Then he announced: "The comrade needs seven more kopecks." A young man who had not yet paid his fare cried out: "Here, I have four." By this time I had lost track of the count. But not my fellow passengers. An elderly woman tapped a young girl about to put four one-kopeck pieces into the box. "We need three kopecks for this comrade," she explained. The girl nodded and handed her coins to me. As I pocketed the coins, a warmly clad ruddy faced man gently felt my thinly lined New York overcoat. "You are cold, aren't you?" he asked kindly. I nodded agreement. He shook his head worriedly as he got off.

Four years have passed and yet as I write I see as vividly as on that day the faces of my fellow passengers on my first trolleybus ride. Much to my regret, I, too, have since come to take this daily, simple, but ever so revealing demonstration of collectivity for granted. It has been part of my life, too.

I have since participated in the ticket and coin passing and the organization of refunds on innumerable occasions. But as I recall it now I realize that my first trolleybus ride pointed up, perhaps, the most significant fruit of more than half a century of living under Soviet rule—the Soviet citizen's concern for his fellow man, expressed not in hail-fellow-well-met-words, that

are forgotten as soon as they are uttered, but in little daily acts of cooperation.

I have also witnessed and myself experienced many acts of rudeness, indifference and selfishness that unpleasantly reminded me of our own society with its dog-eat-dog competitiveness. They are the bitter fruits of the past which I have come to realize clings tenaciously to people and are the heritage of centuries of habits. Much has been and is being done by the powerful medium of education and culture to eradicate them. But it is the force of new habits such as I experienced on my first Moscow trolleybus ride that is the decisive factor in molding people with truly human standards of morality and behavior.

I have often thought: Why should such a simple act of neighborly cooperation impress me so? Why should I write of it as of something extraordinary?

When I mentioned this incident to my Soviet friends they were puzzled why I found it so unusual. And after four years of living in the Soviet Union, I can understand their reaction. But, when I told this to my American friends, I could detect their skepticism. "They don't sound like the people I know and Soviet people can't be that different," their eyes, if not their lips, seemed to say.

One of our readers wrote an irate letter to our newspaper in response to my article describing the trolleybus scene taking me to task for "idealizing" Soviet people. She even accused me of belittling our own people because I stated it would be hard to imagine such a scene on US busses.

It is indeed hard for many readers in the West to imagine Soviet life, this even includes those sympathetic to the Soviet Union. To a certain extent, it is thanks to the intense effort of anti-Soviet propagandists. Besides, American life is such a far cry from Soviet life that it makes it very difficult to believe that there exist completely different human relationships.

It is not that people in the US are not as good as their fellow humans in the Soviet Union. The real American tragedy is that we live in a society that breeds and hails a Lieutenant Calley, a society that spent \$150 thousand million to destroy the villages and towns of Indo-China while American cities decay. Our society measures success by dollars and regards those who permit principles to stand in the way of such success as failures or suckers. The powerful objective factors make struggle to preserve human decency difficult indeed. Whereas in the Soviet Union life and society combine to bring out the best in people and to eradicate the bad.

Of course, there are those in the Soviet Union who violate the honor system and at times avoid paying fares. Here, let me frankly state, it is not always the fault of the passenger. (I am speaking, now, solely of the surface lines.) The trolleybusses and autobusses are often so packed that it is difficult indeed to get to the coin box. And passing up coins (especially where

change is involved) makes it all quite a complicated operation. It is all the greater tribute to the inbred sense of public responsibility that there are relatively very few "free riders." Soviet transportation authorities are grappling with this problem which, they themselves admit, requires a newer and different approach. Of course, the aim is to move toward making transportation an unpaid service. There is discussion on possibly deducting a monthly charge from pay envelopes. And, one can buy a monthly pass for all transportation services for six roubles a month.

What happens to those who violate the honor system? I was only in Moscow a week when I found out. A matronly woman tapped me on the shoulder. "Where is your receipt?" she demanded as she flashed her credentials. I must confess, I was a little flustered. It was not an easy thing to find that little flimsy paper which I had shoved in my pocket containing my gloves, a notebook and cigarettes. (I have since then—like Muscovites—learned to keep it in an available spot). The stern look on the inspector's face hardly helped me in my search.

Finally, I breathed a sigh of relief—I found it and proudly displayed it. The woman tore into it and returned it. I now clutched my receipt in my hand. But my neighbor occupying the seat before me was not so fortunate. A young man, he smiled sweetly and weakly tried to explain he was just getting ready to pay. But the look on the inspector's face stopped him short. With a shrug of his shoulders, the young man reached in his pocket for the rouble fine. But this hardly satisfied the inspector.

"*Molodoi chelovek* (young man)," she began and these words alone made him shrink into his seat. All eyes turned on the "*molodoi chelovek*." Her sharp words reminding him that he had cheated Soviet society out of much more than four kopecks were unnecessary. The look on his face made it clear he was prepared to pay far more than the rouble to forget the entire incident. The most powerful and most effective punitive and educational force in Soviet life is public disapproval, and in aspects of social relations it is increasingly being brought into play.

"*Subbotnik*"

I will never forget my first *subbotnik*. It was a glimpse into the future when all will labor for the common good and work itself will be a labor of love. Appropriately enough, it was at the Moscow Locomotive Depot in those grim days, 50 years ago, April 12, 1919, that 15 workers took part in the first *subbotnik*. Lenin, the founder of the world's first socialist state, saw voluntary labor without compensation as the Great Beginning—the seeds of the future communist society.

It was Saturday, a day off for most Soviet workers, but there was rush hour traffic on Moscow's streets, busses and subway. There was a May Day atmosphere—this time, however, the march was not to Red Square but to their jobs. And the holiday attire was working clothes. Matronly women, *babushkas*, and elderly men, sturdy young girls and boys, carrying shovels on their shoulders, were walking along Leningradski Prospekt. They were part of the huge army which was giving Moscow its spring cleaning. The elderly folk wielded their shovels with gusto, a pink glow on their cheeks and a sparkle in their eyes. The younger set made their work a sport, kidding and vying with one another. Alla and I passed factories—they, too, were dressed up for the occasion—with crimson banners and flowers. From every factory there came the sound of music.

We arrived at the Moscow Railroad Depot. In the yard, bedecked with flowers and emblazoned with red streamers, stood the old locomotive which was repaired and dispatched to the front in 1919. Close by, eyeing it with loving eyes, were the three old Bolsheviks who had made it battle ready. The old locomotive and veterans seemed to cast off the years as they basked in the warmth of the spring day. Assembled at this place of honor were 70 old-timers—railroad workers who had retired. They had come to work on their old jobs and had brought their grandchildren with them. Gathered, too, were musicians from the Bolshoi Theater, actors from the Mayakovski Theater and a colorfully dressed song and dance ensemble.

After a brief ceremony, all went to work. The clang of hammers and wrenches, and the whirring sound of drilling machines mingled with the gay Russian folk tunes and old revolutionary songs. Komsomol teams competed with each other as they labored to free the depot of the residue of winter's grime. White collar workers and Young Pioneers struggled with shovels beside them. Inside, the old timers and those who had replaced them were working on the underbellies of the huge metal monsters. Pride in their labor was written on the faces of all. And as they worked, artists sketching with charcoal, pen and watercolor, sought to catch that look on paper.

I noticed reporters and television cameras were assembled around one particular worker. He was Aleksei Lebedev, winner of the coveted Order of Lenin for exemplary work, who was pointed out to me by his fellow-workers with the pride bestowed on hometown heroes. The Soviet press accords heroes of labor the kind of respect our free enterprise newspapers reserve for corporation executives.

The lunch break turned out to be a concert and the concert hall was the repair shop. Standing and sitting "concert goers" were in their oil spotted work clothes. The women had managed to clean the smudges off their faces and to primp up their kerchiefs. And in this unusual setting we listened to the Bolshoi orchestra play excerpts from a Tchaikovsky symphony and watched theatrical performances by Mayakovski actors. I noticed a grizzly

old veteran, tears of joy were streaming down his cheek. He was 80 years old Yakov Kondratyev, one of the three survivors of the Great Beginning. Kondratyev had heard Lenin speak to the railroad workers on the significance of their *subbotnik*. Alla introduced us. Kondratyev pointed to the scene about me and exclaimed: "Look how Lenin's words have come true." And nowhere do you better see the historic transformation that Soviet life represents, than in a factory and especially in the attitude toward labor.

At the railroad repair shop a young worker asked me to express my impressions. "It's a joy to be in a land where workers are honored," I told him. A puzzled expression appeared on his face. "But why should that be so unusual? Isn't that the way it should be?" he asked me simply. There you had the two worlds meeting—as it has been so often the case on practically every aspect of life these past four years. And those words summed it up: "Isn't that the way it should be?"

Work, here, as everywhere, demands effort and self-discipline, and is physically hard and, at times, dangerous. But what I saw at the Moscow *subbotnik* was a glimpse of the future when all will labor for the common good and work itself will be a genuinely creative process and a source of joy. How that will expand living!

But the Soviet factory (and that goes for all places of labor) today, already, provides a sort of preview of that future. It is not yet the finished product but it is in process of refining. I saw this preview in countless Soviet plants—I saw it everywhere. I saw it in the giant Likhachov Auto Plant, in the flower pots that adorned the automated machines. I saw it in the plant's libraries where workers read books on engineering and novels. I saw it in the new comfortable homes built by the Leningrad port and trade unions for the longshoremen. I saw it in the Odessa Longshoremen's polyclinic located *right at the docks*, only a few minutes walking distance from their jobs. "We need only two minutes to answer an emergency," Dr. Ivan Komaneyetz, the chief physician, told me. There is a medical staff of 105, including 28 doctors whose sole responsibility is to take care of the 6,500 port workers. I saw it in the prophylactic rest stations not far from the factories, which play so vital a role in *preventing* serious illness. I saw it in the galleries of heroes of labor that adorn the approaches to Soviet factories as well as their corridors. I saw it in the palaces of culture which are clubs, social centers, music halls, ballet theaters, all rolled into one. Everywhere, the factory is not only the center of production but of culture. I grasped for the first time the words I was quite familiar with: workers' power. Now, I truly realized I was living in a country that was the living embodiment of the power of the working class.

This, I now understood, was the real distinguishing feature between the two worlds.

Shopping

I found Soviet shopping quite an experience and an eyeopener. When you enter the store not as an inquisitive tourist but as a daily customer, you really feel a nation's pulse. The store is an excellent barometer of a country's economic health. Soviet shopping literally extends from the store to the street. What first impressed me was that Moscow is out shopping—hectically, all day and into the night and everywhere: on the street, in the numerous underpasses, in GUM department store (its Macy's), in *Universalny Magazines* (on the style of department stores), and now in an ever-increasing number of well-stocked supermarkets, at street stalls and kiosks.

Moscow seemed to be on a continuous buying spree—no one appeared to be concerned about saving up for that "rainy day." As a New Yorker, crowds mean one thing to me: something happened, someone got hit by a car, or was mugged, fainted. My first sight of groups of Muscovites gathered around someone or something prompted an automatic reaction. I grabbed astonished Alla by the hand and ran to the nearest crowd. But I found no "body." Instead, I came upon a street scene I have since become accustomed to—Muscovites of all ages were gathered around a bookseller who was displaying his wares—they ranged from textbooks on electronics to novels—on a makeshift shelf. And they were buying books like we buy hotdogs or hamburgers. And the books did not cost much more. I picked up a hard-cover 250 page textbook on radio mechanics. It was priced at a rouble and eight kopecks. Many paperback books were selling for 30-40 kopecks.

One quarter of the books in the world are annually published in the Soviet Union. I mention books as part of my description of Soviet shopping because here books are considered as much a necessity as bread. Our correspondents, who, one would think, appreciate the value of the written word, appear to have been little impressed by such street scenes, although no one knows better than they what a meaningful contrast to our own they present.

Moscow not only does much of its shopping outdoors, it nibbles and munches in the street on hot meat, cabbage, rice or jam pies (*pirozhki*) or gobbles up unbelievable amounts of the best ice cream we have ever tasted. Now, without a second thought, I eat the frozen delicacy in every season, including bitter wintry days. You can eat a meal on the streets for about 50 kopecks. The pies cost five kopecks (meat, 10 kopecks) and the ice cream 10-20 kopecks. The ingredients are tasty and unadulterated. For weeks I lunched in the streets.

It was as much to catch the hum of this dynamic, exciting city as to bite into the goodies. I watched and listened, and compared. I first compared what I saw to the Moscow I visited in 1961. The stores were stacked with a great deal more commodities and Muscovites looked far better dressed. In fact, it was difficult to distinguish Muscovites from New Yorkers by their dress. This is even more the case today, four years later.

You see the fruits of the 8th and the 9th Five-Year Plans in the considerably more plentiful supply of most consumer commodities, in the steady improvement of services, in the appearance of Muscovites in the street.

We found many food items cheaper or about the same price as ours. Fish is far more plentiful and far lower priced. We have been buying excellent halibut fillets (called *paltus* in the Soviet Union) at 1 rouble 40 kopecks a kilogram (a kilogram is 2 lbs. 2 oz.), about 60 cents a pound. By comparison, the price of halibut in the USA is two or three times higher. Unlike in our country, fish in the Soviet Union is far cheaper than meat.

Fresh ground meat (best quality only) costs one rouble a pound. Beef for soup or pot roast is the same price. Lamb is a little cheaper. In our country the price of meat is considerably higher. On the other hand, chicken is far more expensive than ours, it sells for 2 roubles 65 kopecks a kilogram. At the rate prices are rising, however, this will not hold for much longer. Although it is true, we found the chicken we ate in the Soviet Union a far better quality than the average we bought in our supermarkets.

One of the things we discovered in our Soviet shopping is that the wide gaps in quality, our shoppers are familiar with, do not exist here. The food products are largely of one quality—the best. But fine quality or not, we were puzzled by the high prices of chicken. The most logical explanation for this we received much later during our visit to Bulgaria, a large-scale producer and exporter of chicken. The higher cost, we were told, is the result of the higher cost of feed and less mechanization. From what I have seen, however, of the new huge poultry and meat factory complexes being constructed all over the Soviet Union, close to large cities, chicken and meat should be far more plentiful and lower priced in the near future.

As one familiar with the highly inflated cost of medicines and drugs in the USA, I found the price of medicines in the Soviet Union unbelievably low. I was introduced to this startling contrast in a rather humorous way. Our family was struck by the grippe (flu) quite early. The two women doctors who visited us prescribed an equivalent of teremycin drugs, which as we knew from our experience were quite expensive (about 50-60 cents a tablet in the USA almost four years ago). I handed the cashier a ten rouble note (you pay here before the purchase and receive a tab which you then hand over to the saleslady). The prescription was for ten tablets. The cashier gave me the tab and 9 roubles and 10 kopecks in change. I was

sure the cashier had shortchanged herself. I waited, certain that she would readily recognize her error. But the young lady eyed me belligerently. "What are you waiting for?" she asked in a rather irritated tone. She was backed up by audible protests from the long line of customers. "You made a mistake," I informed her in my halting Russian. But this only infuriated her. She picked up the receipt and addressing herself to the customers (who by this time had gathered around her to see if she were truly taking advantage of a foreigner), she read out the prescription emphasizing that it called for ten tablets and triumphantly displayed the 90-kopeck tab to her fellow Muscovites. By this time, one or two attempted to explain to me that I was not being overcharged. I could not help bursting out in laughter. I have since grown accustomed to picking up tabs for 5 and 10 kopecks in drug-stores without batting an eyelash. There are medicines that are imported which are more expensive (a small per cent).

But perhaps the greatest relief to a former New York shopper was the realization that no one was out to do me. From force of habit I entered each store warily, on guard. After all, shopping in our free enterprise system is run on the old Roman adage "Let the buyer beware!" Gradually, it hits you that no one is out to overcharge you, give you shortweight or stale or damaged merchandise. (There's a scale in clear view for customers to check their purchases.) Suddenly, you are possessed with the comforting realization that there are no A and P's or Safeways (giant corporations) to fleece you from counter to cash register.

Shopping in the Soviet Union is a normal, natural exchange, if a hectic one, not our endless battle against exploitation that starts at the point of production and continues with every purchase. There are times when some food products are more scarce—particularly fruits and vegetables in winter (though they have been far more plentiful in the past two years) but no one uses it as a club over the head of the customer for there are no monopolies here.

There is another very important medium of Soviet shopping, one that plays an enormous role in saving time and household chores—the *culinaria*. We have nothing like it. The *culinaria* is a store which supplies Soviet citizens with freshly prepared cooked foods (meats, fowl, fish), salads, sour cream, cookies, cakes, as well as ready to cook foods. All at a price that hardly makes cooking an economic saving. Any similar outlet in our country at that profit level would either have to skimp on weight or quality or both, or go bankrupt. And there's a *culinaria* in walking distance in every neighborhood. Most large plants or enterprises have one or more on their own premises to service their workers. The 9th Five-Year Plan calls for a vast increase in their number. The *culinaria* in our area does a rush business all day and particularly close to supper time when workers stop off on their

way home to pick up their supper. There are places where you can order a full cooked meal in the morning and pick it up at supper time.

Supper, incidentally, unlike in our country, is not the main meal here. Lunch, the most solid meal, is most often eaten at the plant or enterprise *stolovaya* (dining room). I've eaten at many of them in factories and enterprises all over the country. Nothing fancy—but good wholesome food. And the price is ridiculously low. I've eaten a full course meal including meat, potatoes, cabbage or beet salad, soup, tea and cookies for less than a rouble. Most *stolovayas* are partly subsidized by the enterprise. Thus, with the main meal eaten out, there is that much less pressure on the shopping.

But for all this, shopping still constitutes one of the Soviet Union's main bottlenecks, and time-consumers. Soviet women especially have a lot to do. Notwithstanding the fact that nowhere in the world have women achieved such a level of equality in all spheres of life, the main burden of the shopping is still borne by women.

Another problem that complicates shopping is the shortage of workers. The Soviet Union is a 100 per cent employed society. Any debate here on whether four per cent unemployment is tolerable (as in our free enterprise society), would itself be regarded as intolerable. With the well-nigh unlimited opportunities for training and advancement in all skills, and the attractiveness of industrial, scientific and technical fields for youth, the service trade has difficulty competing for and holding workers. The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the 16th Congress of Komsomol took note of this problem and there is a special stress on the importance of services as well as special efforts to make them more attractive. The main emphasis is on greatly stepping up modernization of services. I saw at a Sokolniki park exhibition many of the new modern facilities now under production that will considerably facilitate servicing. And, of course, the emphasis is on supermarkets.

The main guarantee that there will soon be considerable improvement is the direction charted by the 24th Party Congress, with its stress on making drastic improvements in living conditions and in the quantity-quality of services as well as goods.

Soviet citizens pay about four per cent of their incomes for rent—far less than it costs the government to construct and maintain their apartments. I discovered that my Moscow friends pay an average of 10 to 15 roubles a month rent—about what they pay for five to seven kilograms of beef. They pay nothing for the most complete medical care, their children's education (they receive stipends in colleges and institutes if they are doing well as well as free textbooks), cultural events are minimally priced: theater seats from less than a rouble to three roubles fifty kopecks (for instance for Bolshoi ballet, opera and concerts).

For most, the trade union picks up 70 per cent of the bill for their 24-day vacations at palatial sanatoriums and rest homes; transportation as I already indicated is almost free; a home telephone bill is two roubles and fifty kopecks for unlimited local calls.

There is no one in the Soviet Union to skim off the cream in gigantic profits. There are no General Motors, Ford or Rockefeller Standard Oil to vote themselves huge annual dividends. There are no loan sharks to prey on working people. Socialist society is based on the principle from each according to his ability and to each according to his work.

The main problem faced by rapidly expanding Soviet industry and agriculture is to keep up with the high mass purchasing power. Goods do not stay long at warehouses in the Soviet Union. Commodities lie on the shelf, when they do, not because they are priced out of the reach of the average consumer, but because of the shoddy quality. The process is almost a direct one from the factory and farm to the consumer. Salespeople rarely have to wait for customers. Rarely do food products lie on the counter long enough to lose their freshness.

Yet for all its considerable recent improvements, Soviet shopping reveals that basically neither production nor distribution have yet caught up with the demand and growing purchasing power. Correspondents of the big business press concentrate on this aspect of the subject to contrast our society's supposed affluence with the scarcities in the Soviet Union. Americans are not told of the ridiculously low price of medicines and books and rents, but they certainly hear about those commodities which are higher priced than ours and of those in short supply. And they are certainly told of the long shopping lines (US stores are hardly without long shopping lines as a visit to any supermarket on Saturdays will reveal).

The shortages I observed and felt in the Soviet Union are not made with an aim of making profit. Anyone who would dump milk on the ground, slaughter pigs, plough under cotton, burn grain and corn to keep prices from falling or artificially boost them, would be taken to the nearest insane asylum. Shortages in the Soviet Union are the product of a history of ordeals no other country in the world can match (let alone the result of the price it had to pay to pull itself up by its bootstraps unaided).

I thought of the grim statistics of the price paid by the Soviet people to save their country and the world from fascism, that have been so quickly forgotten by correspondents who can hardly conceal their glee in reporting "shortages." Perhaps it's because these figures never really deeply penetrated into the minds of a people who themselves have not suffered the ravages of a war on their soil for more than a century. Perhaps one should remember that in addition to thousands of collective and state farms demolished, the Nazis seized and took to Germany more than 60 million head of cattle.

As I observed my fellow Moscow shoppers, I grasped that what I was witnessing was a visible demonstration of a rapidly increasing purchasing power not of a more privileged segment of society but of an entire population. The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stressed that the entire potential of Soviet industry, science and agriculture must be mobilized to increasingly satisfy the demands of the people. I realized something that had entirely escaped me before, even though I was familiar with the operation of Soviet society theoretically. I first really understood the meaning of the words: "The main law of socialist economy is the continuous and increasing satisfaction of the material and cultural needs of the people." Our free enterprise society is inhibited by no such "laws." It is motivated by only one "law"—the drive for maximum profits.

No society in history ever set itself such a goal or attempted to realize it. For the first time I grasped the immense task Soviet society was grappling with. Everything it produced it had to think of in terms of the entire population, not just the more affluent section of society.

I came across no hungry or deprived in my four years in the Soviet Union. Thus, the *market* toward which the Soviet economy is directed is far greater than any other state sets itself.

By comparison with the past, Soviet people are beginning to experience *abundance* and their appetite is growing with the eating. The gripes I heard as I waited in the queue were the complaints of people who know they are moving onto the long-awaited hard-earned highway of plenty and who are impatient with inefficiencies that can no longer and should no longer be justified by the past difficulties. This especially goes for quality of goods and inadequate services. Leonid Brezhnev at the 24th Congress gave clear and commanding expression to this impatience with such weaknesses and sounded the call to battle to eliminate them.

In my wide travels, I observed this struggle for quality as well as greater quantity in all aspects of living. I will deal with this in the only way that it can have real meaning to the reader—in terms of how the quality of life is improving everywhere in the Soviet Union, not only in Moscow. Soviet shopping reflects the advances and difficult problems still to be solved. But, there is no question in my mind that (given peace) the Soviet Union is now well on the road to becoming a mass affluent society in the real meaning of that concept. This is so because the entire Soviet society, from the Soviet Council of Ministers and Central Committee of the CPSU to the factory and farm, are moving heaven and earth to accomplish this goal. Soviet newspapers, radio, television keep what amounts to a daily score card on how each unit of the economy (and practically each member of society) is contributing toward reaching it.

The heroes and heroines who grace the front pages of *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and are the stars of television are not the Mr. Bigs of our society but the best workers, farmers.

For the first time in history, the welfare of an entire people, its economic and social wellbeing, is the prime business of a government.

In the next installments I shall describe the development of the Soviet education system, health service, culture, the life in Soviet towns and cities, the struggle the Soviet people wage to protect environment. I dedicate this series of books to the Soviet people, their remarkable achievements, their profound humanism, their lofty ideals.

***Cities Without
Crises***

Soviet Cities—Cities Without Crises

When I left New York, Mayor John Lindsay was getting a bit tired walking the streets of the exploding Black and Puerto Rican ghettos in a well-publicized effort to convince the slum dwellers who were desperately fighting rats, roaches and racism that City Hall cared.

Lindsay's handsome profile failed to do the trick. It was a poor substitute for the homes, schools, hospitals that were never built, the jobs that never materialized.

In my four years in Moscow I never once saw Mayor Promyslov take a similar walk to soothe Muscovites. Promyslov didn't have to. Muscovites have more substantial proof that their city and their government, on every level, cares.

The New York Times noted that Lindsay, as a candidate for Mayor in 1965, promised to build 160,000 low and middle income apartments in four years. Considering New York City's housing needs, this was hardly an extravagant pledge. *The Times*, however, points out that Lindsay fell far short of his commitment. It noted that in the subsequent three and a half years "the city started only 34,167 apartments and just 8,920 of those were for low income families."

Moscow's plan, on the other hand, called for 120,000 apartments a year and 120,000 were constructed.

The difference goes to the root of the two contrasting social systems.

The Soviet Union is not only pointing the way to bridging the age-old gap between town and country; it is showing the world how to resolve the complex problems of modern cities, how to make them livable.

Nothing has so jolted the vast majority of the 73.5 per cent of our population who live in our cities as the disturbing realization which hit home with particular force in the 1960's, that our great cities are rapidly becoming unlivable. This realization exploded into a revolt, involving increasingly greater sections of our urban population, especially in the Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano ghettos. It was (and is) a rebellion against crisis-living, against indifference and inhumanity on every government level from the White House to City Hall.

As a New York reporter for my newspaper, I made a good study of city living.

And as a Muscovite for four years, as well as through visiting many cities in 15 Republics, I got a pretty good idea of the difference between living in our cities and Soviet cities. It is this difference I will try to convey and explain on the vital aspects of city life I believe Americans will want to know about.

Is it safe to walk Moscow's streets at night?

Is it safe to breathe its air?

How do Soviet schools teach their children—all their children?

How do Muscovites get to work? How are they cared for when they are ill?

How are Soviet cities kept clean?

What is their cultural and recreational life like?

What do Soviet urban dwellers pay in taxes for all their services?

Do Soviet cities face annual budget crises like ours do?

How are they financed?

Do Soviet cities have slums, ghettos and neighborhoods along racial and national lines?

Are there rich and poor neighborhoods?

And last but not least: What is the relationship between Soviet citizens and their police, militia, as they call them?

Soviet cities are not only incomparably more livable than our own but they are cities with bright futures.

I believe if New Yorkers could spend a month walking Soviet streets at all hours, coming in contact with the militia, going to the schools, riding the subways, visiting the parks (including at night) and the theaters and concert halls, be cared for by the doctors and the polyclinics and hospitals, they would come back with many questions to our powers that be.

Not that they would find a Utopia. Not that they would have no gripes about Soviet city life.

There is still plenty to complain about in Soviet cities and Soviet citizens are not at all restrained in that respect. Many of the problems have their source in historic factors: in the remnants of the czarist past both in physical surroundings and in practices and habits. Only by living here can one truly realize how much further Soviet life would now be advanced toward the construction of communism if it had not been set back by the incalculable physical and human losses in the war against fascism.

But there also are problems that stem from inefficiency, poor organization and petty bureaucracy. Bourgeois correspondents delight in nothing more than in concentrating on them and distorting them for good measure.

But such problems do exist—especially in services which, as a result of understandable past preoccupation with laying the industrial foundation of the Soviet Union, are in a relative early stage of development here. There are also urban problems which the Soviet Union faces in common with all highly industrialized countries: pollution, transportation, relationship between community life and industry, the tensions of big city life (not the tensions produced by the class, racial and national conflicts and antagonism of "free enterprise" society); noise, and how to control that mechanical potential Frankenstein monster—the automobile.

These problems are now the subject of intense study and discussion and

you come across them on the pages of the Soviet press. On the latter problem, I must express my personal concern as I have stated it to Soviet authorities. Soviet cities face one of their greatest challenges with the mass production (now underway) and appearance of the automobile. Their number has markedly increased on Moscow streets in the period I have been here. With this has come a noticeable rise in automobile accidents on the street. Moscow is displaying heightened concern about this problem, as numerous articles in the press and safety campaigns indicate.

But, Soviet cities face problems. Ours face crises. That is the great divide between the cities of our two great countries. Problems can and will be solved with time, experience and effort.

But what can be said about the crises of our cities? In the past decade it has been the subject of countless studies and reports (similar to the one made by *The New York Times*).

In that decade according to official calculations \$135 billion was spent to destroy Vietnam cities and villages and to create countless Song Mys. According to the study of *The New York Times*, the New York City Planning Commission estimated that "to make a visible dent in the city's housing problem, \$580 million a year must be allocated for ten years at least." Yet the same article notes that Washington only allocated "about \$100 million to New York for all its housing program in 1968."

Our crisis-ridden cities, from which increasing numbers are fleeing in terror, stand as the most powerful indictments of the inhumanism as well as obstructionism of our social system.

Many Americans are beginning to learn it is a diseased social system and not geography that is at the bottom of the urban crisis.

The essence of Soviet living, and that goes for its urban life as well, is that there is no unbridgeable gap between word and deed. Planning is a law of life here in every phase of living and cities are no exception. It is not a pledge, it is a commitment, a law. And the failure to completely fulfil a plan is the subject of sharp public discussion that usually results in overcoming the obstacles hindering its fulfillment.

I met with the city officials of Moscow, Kiev, Lvov, Kishinev, Riga, Leningrad, and many members of local Soviets in town and village. All lived by Master Plans that extended from 10 to 15 years as well as yearly plans.

The plans are based on scientific estimates of the needs of the cities as well as the resources required to realize them. Soviet cities can construct homes on a scale unprecedented in history, because, among other things, they do not have to pay real estate hogs for the right to build on the land (a price that in New York and other major cities often equals or is greater than the cost of construction itself).

In the Soviet Union the land is the property of the state and belongs to all the Soviet people.

Moscow is planned by a centralized body of 1,500 highly trained architects. The mustering of such a force alone would be beyond the means of any US city.

Moscow annually spends huge sums to preserve and restore more than 1,000 historic buildings and monuments. A walk through Moscow streets is like a stroll through its ancient and revolutionary history. The same I found to be the case in every Soviet city I visited.

Historic buildings are not only preserved but the houses where great writers, actors, artists, scientists, revolutionaries lived are noted by plaques. Nezhdanova Street in Moscow, for example, is a stroll into Russian and Soviet theatrical history.

My experience in Soviet city living has convinced me that while the crisis of our cities can be to some extent lessened (at the price of drastically curtailing the power of the huge financial interests choking them), the vast and complex problems of urban existence cannot be adequately met under capitalism. Big cities like big industry, or large-scale agriculture can no longer function in the interests of the mass of the people in an antiquated, out-moded social system based on private gain and profit rather than the common welfare.

I am convinced that as in all aspects of modern social existence, the more than half century of Soviet force of example points the way out of our urban crisis.

Life Without Landlords

We had not lived in the Soviet Union very long when it suddenly occurred to us: we had completely forgotten about a very important person in our lives—our landlord.

The first of the month held no terror for us here. At home our landlord was our first concern. You gave him his cut—from 30 per cent and more of your monthly income—and then you turned to your other worries—you paid the utility monopolies for gas and electricity, and for telephone, then there were doctor bills, insurance payments, college tuition for your children.

Those who make it their business to protest the alleged denial of individual rights of Soviet citizens can put this "abrogated right" on top of their list: Soviet citizens *are denied the right to worry about landlords*. Moreover, our defenders of the rights of individuals can speak out against another curtailment of the individuals' rights: the denial of the right of existence to landlords.

And I am convinced one of the chief contributing factors toward making Soviet cities cities without exploding tensions—is that their inhabitants are free of landlord worries.

What is it after all that makes a city tense? It basically can be traced to the question: what is it that makes its citizens worry? Americans who walk our cities' streets are bundles of worries. They worry about their landlord. They worry about getting or keeping a job. They worry about the calamity that would strike them should they get sick and when serious illness strikes them they worry about paying the doctor and the hospital and about losing their jobs.

They worry about walking the streets at night. They worry about their youth getting sucked into the expanding whirlpool of drug addiction. (These are by no means a complete list of the worries.) And if they are Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Indian, then not only are all these worries considerably magnified but to them is added the daily humiliation and economic and social barriers of racism.

Soviet people and Soviet city dwellers, too, have their worries—but these are not among them. Socialism, though it has freed people from most of the deadly social and economic worries that beset citizens of our “free” world, has far from eliminated personal unhappiness and tragedies. Personal worries of people—resulting from problems of love, marriage, sickness, etc.—have not been eliminated. They just exist in a society that does not aggravate and complicate them and does its best to minimize and overcome them. The social worries Soviet people face arise largely from unresolved problems that still exist in Soviet society in the period of socialism complicated, as I indicated, by the effects of World War II. Among them is still the serious housing shortage. Soviet people know that these are temporary worries. This knowledge is based not on blind faith or self-delusion but on solid reality—solid achievements. This is hardly the outlook our urban dwellers can have. Let me just illustrate it with this one fact. *The New York Times* notes that, at the rate of public-housing construction of homes people of low income could afford in the US, such families “could expect to move into a project in 51 years.”

By contrast Soviet citizens know that their government constructed 11,350,000 new apartments in the 8th five-year period, 1966-70, about 2.3 million a year. They know that in the 9th Five-Year Plan (1971-75) another 14 million will be built. And Muscovites know that every year 120,000 more apartments will be added to Moscow's housing supply. Thus, though many Soviet citizens know that they still have to wait a few years for a new apartment they have no doubt one will be theirs as soon as possible.

And they know that everything possible is being done by their government to speed the day. And what is most important, Soviet citizens know that homes will be constructed for those who need them and not for those

who can afford to pay most for them. They know that homes are built *for people—not for profit*.

But what makes the contrast between Soviet and US apartment building even more meaningful is the answer to the question: For whom are apartments being built? Take New York as an example. Here is how *The New York Times* in its article titled "The Changing City: Housing Paralysis" describes the situation: "The state of housing in New York seems as hopeless as an abandoned tenement whose broken windows stare blankly out on a slum." But for whom are homes being built? "Private industry is building apartments for only the wealthiest, 7 per cent of the population, except in cases where it receives government subsidies."

The significance of what private industry does is hit home when it is realized as *The New York Times* points out for New York: "Private industry has built and owns 92 per cent of the city's 2.8 million residential units without government subsidies." And *The Times* adds: "But privately financed apartment houses are now going up only in the most prestigious neighborhoods, such as Manhattan's East Side and monthly rents are in the range of \$ 100 to \$ 150 a room." (This rental rate has since risen, *M. D.*)

Soviet citizens have no rent worries. This is not only because they have no landlords but because they hardly pay rent. I call four per cent or less of one's income coming very close to that. US rent payers would laugh at Soviet rents.

Take our family. When we left, we were paying \$150 a month rent—not too high by US standards. But when my wife, Gail, visited our apartment in the Bronx, in May, 1972, the rent had gone up to \$235 a month. By contrast our rent in Moscow has remained stable in the past four years. It's a stable 18 roubles 36 kopecks a month (about \$ 20.00 at the official exchange rate)! We have three large rooms (they don't count the kitchen as a room here) with all modern conveniences. I have before me our rent book. Here is how it breaks down: 12 roubles 32 kopecks for the apartment itself; 4 roubles 19 kopecks for heat (all apartments are centrally heated); one rouble 20 kopecks for water and sewage; 50 kopecks for radio; 15 kopecks for the TV antenna. As for our utilities: for gas the average monthly charge is now 22 kopecks per person. (It was recently reduced from 32 kopecks – when can Americans remember their last utility reduction?) Electricity is a little higher, about 4 or 5 roubles a month in winter and about 3 roubles in summer. We pay 2 roubles 50 kopecks a month for telephone for unlimited local calls.

I itemize all this to make the point that unlike in our country, the rent charge does not determine who gets a decent apartment. *Who can't afford to pay these rents?*

What then determines how apartments are distributed in the Soviet Union? It should be noted that because of the serious housing shortage that

still exists the question of how apartments are distributed is very clearly delineated and strictly enforced in public view. The cardinal rule determining the distribution of housing here is need, not income. Only in cooperative housing (about 6-7 per cent of housing construction in Moscow) is income an important factor and even here it is negligible compared to US standards.

Here is how it works. Persons with the greatest need get preference in the distribution of housing. Special consideration is given to war invalids, sick people, disabled workers, large families, and Heroes of Labor. Families living in very old substandard houses are also given preference. Exemplary workers are also accorded preferential treatment by their unions in the distribution of new apartments built with their own funds.

State-owned apartments are allocated by special housing committees set up in each of Moscow's 30 local Soviets. These committees openly consider housing requests and complaints. Allocations are discussed publicly at meetings of the executive committee of the local Soviet. The names of everyone receiving new apartments are placed on public wall bulletins. At the beginning of each year, the names of those waiting for apartments are listed on these bulletins in order of priority.

Vast construction programs, particularly during the last twelve years, have considerably reduced the waiting lists and shortened the waiting period. From 1965 to the present, 840,000 Moscow families (more than every second family) received new or improved apartments (more than the total constructed in the US government's Federal housing program throughout the country during its 34-year history).

Moscow and Soviet cities generally still have serious housing problems, a sizable number still share apartments, and there's a considerable wait for new apartments; this particularly affects small families and single people. The State, understandably, first concentrated on meeting the most pressing demand for large flats for families. It is also more expensive to build small apartments. But as the volume of housing construction mounts and housing needs are being met, attention is being increasingly paid to this problem. More small apartments will be built.

The Soviet Union is well on the road to becoming the first country in history to fully solve the housing problem for the people. No social system, past or present, besides socialism, ever set itself such a goal, let alone demonstrated that it can be done. What this means in respect to resolving the problems of modern cities can hardly be overestimated—for the problem of urban living is first of all—*homes*.

I often thought: What would be the effect on the lives of the mass of US urban dwellers, especially in the Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano ghettos, if they were truly guaranteed the "security of their homes," if they lived with the realization that they were assured the "comforts of home" as their normal right? And what effect would all this have on reducing the tensions

which are ripping our cities apart, on curtailing the alarming annual rise in the crime rate in face of a constantly expanding police force?

In our country such a question would understandably evoke smiles, especially among ghetto slum dwellers. They are all too familiar with such "pipe dreams" fed to them by politicians running for office and projected in countless studies and recommendations (usually after ghetto outbursts) on the crisis of our cities. But in the Soviet Union, as I have seen with my own eyes, this age-old dream, especially of the working people, is a solid reality for most and will soon be for *all*.

The Soviet Union is one vast construction site—especially in the cities. And first priority is being given to building adequate housing for the people. This is so apparent to even visitors that A. Allen Bates, director of the Office of Standards Policy of the US Department of Commerce, told a Congressional hearing: "The Soviet Union is the first, and thus far, the only nation which has solved the problem of providing acceptable low cost housing for the mass of its citizens. . . . In the USSR all housing built in the last 20 years has been deliberately designed as low cost housing. In the United States, no housing built during that period or now designed for future construction can be characterized as low cost housing." And Bates added: "Slums are not profitable under the Russian form of economy." And one may well ask: And why should they be profitable in our country?

In 1971-75 some 14 million apartments will be built—more than the total housing space the Soviet Union had in 1950. This will mean another 60 million people (in addition to 55 million in 1965-70) will improve their housing. In the 1971-75 period a total of 73.5 billion roubles, 22 per cent more than in the previous five year period, will be spent on housing construction. In comparison our Federal Government is cutting even the meager funds allotted for this purpose.

In making a study of Moscow housing, I met with Nikolai Ullas, deputy head of the capital's Architectural and Planning Department. I posed the question to him: "When, do you think, Moscow's housing problem will be largely solved?" Ullas gave the question serious thought. Solving Moscow's housing problem means: 30 per cent who still share apartments (mostly members of the same family) will move into their own; the still sizable waiting list for new apartments will be largely accommodated; 9 million square meters of old housing (the equivalent of 300,000 apartments) will be eliminated.

The latter constitute Moscow's and the Soviet Union's major residue of the substandard housing inherited from czarist days, largely wooden single family homes.

Ullas divided his answer into two parts. In respect to the first two problems, he declared that they will be largely solved by 1980 (the end of the 10th Five-Year Plan). As regards the last point, the most difficult, Ullas sta-

ted, it would take another five to ten years. Thus, the outlook is by 1985-90 Moscow will be a city *completely without substandard housing*. The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union decreed that Moscow must become the model communist city.

But, from what I have observed, I would hazard the guess that the Soviet Union (given peace) will enter the 21st century with the housing problem largely solved. No other country in the world (certainly not ours) can envision such a goal.

The Soviet Union can truly boast of a housing miracle—a miracle all the greater when one considers from where it all started. Here is the housing picture when the young Soviet Republic took over the country from czarism only 55 years ago: more than 80 per cent of the urban housing was made up of one-two storey wooden dwellings, less than 10 per cent in the central part of big cities had running water, less than 3 per cent had sewage and only 5 per cent had electricity. Before the October Revolution, Moscow (notwithstanding its palatial homes for the nobility, rich merchants and capitalists) was a city of incredible slums. More than 325,000 (out of a total population in 1917 of 1,850,000) lived in slums of wooden barracks with 15 persons to a room. And for this kind of housing, rents took 15 to 22 per cent of a working family's income. The conditions among the peasant poor were even worse.

No story more reveals the real humanism of the new social system than the Soviet Union's housing story. Let those who in our country orate so much about their concern for "socialism with a human face" match our housing story with that of the USSR.

One of the first acts, following the October Revolution, was the taking over of the homes of the rich and transforming them into apartments for the working people. This was done under the decree issued November 8 (one day after the Revolution), "On Requisitioning Flats of the Rich to Relieve the Plight of the Poor." It was such expropriation of the property of exploiters of the peoples of czarist Russia that raised a hue and cry among their kindred spirits in our country.

No doubt it was not only concern for their kind that motivated this outcry. What if the numerous residences of the Rockefellers spread all over the country were made use of in similar fashion to provide the slum dwellers of Harlem with decent housing?

However, even though each exploiter had several apartments and estates, the redistribution hardly made a dent in the abysmal housing situation the new socialist state inherited.

The Soviet Union faced an unprecedented concentration of housing problems. It had to build new housing almost from the ground up (and underground since sewage, water and gas supply were nearly non-existent). It had to construct not only for those who lived in the cities at the time of the Re-

volution but the millions who were streaming into the cities from the countryside under the impact of the great socialist industrialization program. This program transformed the Soviet Union into an advanced industrial country in record time.

In terms of urban problems this meant that between 1926 and 1971 the population of cities increased by more than 110 million (it is now more than 140 million out of 250 million).

Then, after it had made substantial progress in urban housing construction (by 1940 housing in the cities had grown almost 150 per cent in comparison with pre-revolutionary days), the Soviet Union was struck by the Nazi holocaust. No country in history ever suffered the destruction of life and property as did the Soviet Union in those four war years: 1,710 towns and urban settlements, 70,000 villages, 32,000 industrial enterprises, thousands of medical, educational and cultural establishments destroyed.

Great cities like Kiev, Stalingrad, Minsk, Sevastopol, Odessa, Novgorod, Pskov, Orel were turned into ruins.

Heroic Leningrad lost one-third of its population (900,000) and much of the city was severely damaged.

Not only were there 20 million war dead but 25 million people were homeless. *This was the housing problem the Soviet Union confronted: the inheritance from a backward past, the demands arising from unprecedented industrialization and the destruction wrought by the most barbaric war machine in history. Never before did a country face such a combination of problems all packed within the space of half a century.*

In New York City 70 per cent of the population are tenants. Even New York's rent control law offered little protection against free enterprise "natural" pressures.

As a New York reporter for my newspaper, I witnessed the guerrilla warfare conducted by landlords and big real estate interests against tenants in rent controlled buildings in their campaign to undermine and destroy the rent control law. Wielding their landlord power, they punished their tenants by refusing to make necessary repairs, curtailing the supply of heat in winter, allowing rats and roaches to invade their apartments. They organized "tax strikes" to bring pressure on City Hall.

Today rent control in New York is a hollow shell (in 1968 according to *The New York Times*, the housing vacancy was 1.23 per cent—it is hardly any better now). Here is how *The New York Times* described the impact on New Yorkers of the housing situation: "All this adds up to eight million New Yorkers caught in a clash of powerful forces: rising rents and falling rates of vacancy, dwindling amounts of new construction and widespread abandoning of sound old buildings."

The latter, particularly, illustrates the inhuman, anti-social depths to which landlordism can bring a great city. Here is the description by *The*

New York Times of how, after having milked dry their property (people's homes, M.D.), landlords discard them like empty tin cans: "Even those who have studied the problem in depth have difficulty fully understanding the social and economic forces that lead to housing deterioration characterized by rat infestation, heatless apartments whose floors are covered with ice in the winter, solid buildings abandoned to narcotic addicts."

Noting that an estimated 2-3,000 buildings are abandoned by landlords a year, *The Times* adds: "As a result, more and more vacant structures are left standing, with a depressing and demoralizing impact on surrounding property and residents. Their infection spreads quickly through whole blocks, until some sections of the city now resemble bombed-out areas of wartime Europe."

And *The Times* points out, "abandonment is a national problem, even in major cities without rent control. In the slums of Chicago's West Side, for example, structurally sound brick apartment houses are being abandoned by owners who do not regard their investments as worth maintaining." *The New York Times* omits to point out that the overwhelming number of abandoned houses are part of the normal street scene of Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano slums in every large US city. They are the structural background to the depressing, decaying atmosphere that makes life in those ghettos so incredibly unbearable, it triggers off the frustrated outbursts, with which the entire world is today familiar. One can truly ask: How much have the great landlords and real estate barons who boast of their Empire State buildings contributed to the crisis of our cities?

Abandoned apartment buildings in the Soviet Union? And landlords who discard them like worn-out socks after they have got all the wear out of them?

I find it strange even to think in such terms here. It is like conjuring up the Middle Ages, like applying the standards of an insane, inhuman world to a sane and human society. I spoke to Soviet people who told me of the days they lived in abandoned buildings. But that was during or shortly after the war and they were buildings wrecked by the savagery of the Nazi barbarians.

The inhabitants of demolished Minsk told me they were compelled to live for some years in caves and underground shelters. But never has a single Soviet citizen been denied decent shelter or had the ground literally removed from under his home by the whim of someone who could no longer make a suitable profit out of it.

The Soviet Union certainly does not compare to us in respect to luxury housing. It has to catch up with us, particularly, in respect to plumbing, the finishing touches to apartment construction. But in respect to providing decent homes for the mass of the working people at rents that not only they

can afford, but that are almost nominal (the basic test of housing), there is no comparison.

The story of how it achieved this status is a thrilling one. I'm frankly surprised it has not yet been adequately depicted in the Soviet Union on screen or stage or in a novel. The Soviet housing success story can be summed up in this way: Like the hammer and sickle, the building crane in the sky has become the symbol of Soviet power.

When I visited Moscow's central construction organization, Abram Isakovitch Birger, its chief engineer of the designing bureau, told me: "In our gigantic construction everything depends on the crane." It really does. I've seen cranes with eight-ton capacity lift huge iron-reinforced concrete slabs (making up a wall of a good sized room) as if they were toys in a child's erector set. It's a common sight to see a slip of a girl manipulate these monsters with dexterity and ease. The crane is the key to Soviet housing construction because buildings in the main are assembled.

Construction is not seasonal as it is in our country—it is a year round affair. Work in Siberia and the Far North, for example, is only halted when the temperature hits 45 degrees below zero (Centigrade). Success in housing was made possible because the Soviet Union did for housing construction what the auto industry did for industrial production in the US. It put home building on the assembly line; it pre-fabricated construction.

Unlike in our free enterprise society in which workers are compelled to resist such progress because it spells death to their jobs, this advanced process was enthusiastically welcomed by the building workers who, like all other workers, knew this meant homes and have no need to fear unemployment. Thus, whereas in the 1930's, 10-15,000 apartments a year were built by the traditional methods, beginning with 1961-67 it rose to 120,000 annually. Of these 80-85 per cent are constructed by the pre-fabricated method. Once the apartments have been "manufactured" it's largely a matter of assembling them.

It takes 28 days to assemble a 9-storey building containing 144 apartments. Another 12-14 days are required for finishing work. A building of that size under traditional construction methods would take six months to build. The pre-fabricated method requires 4-4.5 times less labor and saves considerably on the use of raw material.

I visited two factories (in Moscow and Leningrad) where pre-fabricated units are manufactured on the assembly line. There were two conveyers in the plant, one for production of inside walls and the other for outside walls. A huge concrete mixer poured its mixture into metal frames already containing all the necessary wiring units and pipes for central heating. Thus, most of the electrical and plumbing work was already done. The heating pipes are encased in the walls. This not only saves time and labor but keeps the walls warm. Vibration along the conveyer settles and hardens the mixture

and the walled surfaces are polished. The walls are then heated in an oven-like process. The entire operation takes from two to eight hours. Light weight sand is used. The aim is to find the lightest materials with the strongest and most lasting qualities able to withstand Russian winters as well as intense heat.

Housing construction in the Soviet Union (and all building) is organized and conducted by huge *combinats* which combine manufacture and assembly. There are three such *combinats* in Moscow. The work of laying the foundation is done by specialized organizations whose work is also coordinated by the *combinat*. The advantages of this industrialized unified method of construction have proven themselves. The Soviet Union's unmatched unceasing construction would be unthinkable in terms of speed and cost without it.

Unlike in our country where the cost of construction has skyrocketed to such a point (it rose 118 per cent in 1969 as compared to 1949) it has priced housing beyond the reach of most Americans, housing costs in the Soviet Union are being steadily reduced. And this is not at the expense of the workers or speed-up resulting in increased accidents as is the case in our construction industry.

In construction as everywhere the word of the union and of the job safety committee is law and no work is done without its O.K. The Soviet Union's construction costs are lower because among other things besides savings resulting from the industrialized method, there are no profiteers to skim off the cream in the form of huge profits, there are no padded, under-the-table contract deals, and, of course, as I noted earlier, no one has to pay exorbitant prices to parasitic real estate hogs for a piece of land. The real estate industry in the US itself estimates that profits, financing and high-land prices account for 44 per cent of the price of a new house.

Notwithstanding all its basic advantages, there are serious problems in Soviet construction. These are openly admitted and are the subject of sharp discussion in the Soviet press. I heard some pointed criticism on this score at the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In the report of the Central Committee to the Congress, Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Party, bluntly noted among the major shortcomings in construction: "... Plan and financial discipline are sometimes violated. Insufficient use is made of new effective materials and building elements. The quality of construction remains poor." It's on the latter point that a particularly sharp struggle is being waged.

Soviet architects will be the first to admit that the problem of combining mass produced housing with variety—in a word, beauty with utility—is a very difficult and complex one. One must add to that the pressure of long pent-up critical housing needs.

For the 25 million made homeless by the war as well as the millions of

families living in rooms and sharing communal kitchens, the overriding need was speed, speed and more speed in construction.

You can see some of the results of this pressure as well as inexperience in the early pre-fabricated apartment buildings. They were pointed out to me in Vilnius by my genial host and colleague, Domas Snuikas, of *Tiesa-Soviet Lithuania's Pravda*. "Our first pancakes in the batch," Snuikas called them. And "first pancakes" is what they look like in Vilnius and all other Soviet cities. Box-like, poorly finished and monotonous in uniformity, they hardly graced Old Vilnius.

The "second batch" was a vast improvement. The finishing was already smoother, the designs more attractive and the beginnings of variety in form were already discernible.

The "third" and latest batch is now appearing in increasing numbers in all Soviet cities. It is the culmination of years of effort and experience in the struggle to combine beauty and utility. There is still far to go in this respect but the progress is unmistakable.

Monotonous uniformity is beginning to give ground to variety. The basis for this, as was explained to me by Birger, head of Moscow's experimental designing bureau, is the panel system, which allows for flexibility in housing construction. Panel units can, like blocks in a child's set, be positioned in an innumerable number of ways.

Apartments are also more attractive and comfortable with all modern conveniences. The progress made was noted by US architects. Scott Ferebee, President of the American Institute of Architects, who visited the Soviet Union in December 1972, said he was impressed by the major qualitative changes in Soviet town building of recent years.

More stress is also being placed on higher rise buildings—9-12 stories and lately 25 stories in Moscow. There are economic factors as well as transportation problems behind this. Larger units are more economical and land can be used more rationally.

Spread-out cities tax transportation. A walk in Moscow or many other Soviet cities will personally hit home to you the expansive character of Soviet cities. And it's quite a job for the Metro and buses to keep pace with the construction of what amounts to little cities in the big city. The aim is to save time for workers to get to and from work—the goal is no more than 30 minutes ride.

Contrary to the false picture of a propertyless population under socialism, Soviet citizens can and do own their own homes. Only under Soviet law, they can't use their property to exploit tenants. Soviet citizens are permitted to build one or two-storey private homes with rooms not generally more than five. They are allotted plots of land by the state free of charge. Such individual private homes are quite widespread in rural areas and small towns, and they constitute one-third of the total housing. I came across these

private homes in all the Republics I visited. In addition to state assistance these homes, which compare very favorably with our own workers' and farmers' homes, are usually built by collective or state farm construction organizations and they are provided loans at rates that any American would jump at with joy—at about 2 per cent interest and some collective farms which I visited did not charge any interest.

Incidentally, summer homes, *dachas*, are quite numerous in the Soviet Union. Those who want to build *dachas* are given land *free*. When I visited the longshoremen of Odessa, I saw many *dachas* belonging to dock workers in beautiful country area not far from the city. Compare this with the financing costs US home owners are well familiar with. The *US News and World Report* reported that new home owners have to pay "8 per cent or more a year in interest and service charges." Thus, it points out: "If a house costs \$20,000 and you get \$19,000 mortgage at the 8 per cent rate for 30 years, you will end up paying \$31,206 *for interest alone* by the time you get the loan paid off" (My emphasis, M.D.).

In the Soviet Union considerable assistance is provided for those who desire and can afford to buy cooperative apartments. Cooperatives are organized by enterprises, institutions and executive committees of the Soviets in cities and rural areas. Here is how it works. A cooperative member makes an advance payment of 40 per cent of the cost of his apartment. One half of one per cent is paid in interest on the state loan. The apartment is paid for in equal instalments over a ten to fifteen year period. Cooperative housing has helped cut down the waiting period.

To sum up, Soviet construction is well on the road to solving the housing problem for the entire population—something never before even attempted by any society or country. It is acquiring increasing know-how on the problem faced by all mass production countries—that of combining beauty and utility. Moreover, no country in the world can compare with the Soviet Union in the painstaking care and expenditures of effort and money to preserve the architectural heritage of its past. For the multinational USSR this means literally preserving the national flavor of 100 peoples. All this not only makes for cities of comfort but of charm.

Soviet housing is much more than bricks and concrete. It is trees and greenery. I'm not speaking now of parks which occupy so much of their cities. Moscow, for example, has 20 square meters of greenery per person, its surrounding environs bring it up to 30.

Every cluster of houses has a back yard. It consists of a wooded area with park benches where one can rest and relax and children can play. Part of the duties of the maintenance workers is to keep this area in proper condition. Trees can form a natural part of the Soviet housing scene because they constitute a natural element in the planning of housing construction. What US landlord or real estate baron who calculates not only every inch

of ground but air space in terms of cost and profits would dream of taking trees into his calculations?

Soviet housing grows with the city. It is part of a carefully thought out plan whose aim is convenience and comfort. When a new area goes up—and they are springing up rapidly—nurseries, schools, polyclinics, cinemas, sports fields, stores— all go with them. The name given to these “little cities within a city” is micro-area.

Our suburban areas, constructed for the more affluent who are running away from our cities, partly resemble them, only in outward appearance. The “difference” is that none of the facilities accompany the new areas to “live off” them as in the US but to “service” them.

But, the reader may justly ask: What about maintenance and repair of buildings and apartments? In our landlord-owned buildings, especially in ghetto slum areas, a guerrilla war between landlord and tenant is fought over every housing improvement. My Moscow neighbors listened to me incredulously when I described to them the perennial battles tenants in the US wage with their anonymous absentee landlords for heat, repairs, protection from fires and to rid their homes of rats and roaches.

The fight against winter is a common battle against cold led by the city Soviets and housing organizations. The severe Russian winters are made comfortable indoors by the vast city central heating system that warms every home. Soviet people have been brought up to regard and respect their buildings and their apartments as socialist property—belonging to the entire people. Thus, the responsibility for maintenance and repair is generally regarded by the Soviet tenant and the vast organization servicing him as a mutual one.

I am familiar with this not only through extensive study during which I visited the Moscow housing organization on all levels, but as a tenant in an apartment building in which ours is the foreign family. The size and scope of Moscow’s housing set-up in itself denotes the care and consideration to tenants’ needs that would be unthinkable in our country. Moscow’s government-owned buildings are maintained and serviced by an army of 100,000 workers: mechanics, electricians, carpenters, painters, plumbers, roofers, etc. This does not include those who service the cooperative buildings.

Here is how the set-up breaks down and how it functions. Each of Moscow’s 30 districts has its maintenance department commonly referred to by its initials, ZHEK.

I spent a day with ZHEK in the Kalinin district. What I saw was the kind of an organization our long-suffering tenants have long been yearning and struggling for. I would strongly urge that our tenants’ organizations visit the Soviet Union and arrange tenant tours of ZHEK. It would hit home to them how pleasant life without landlords can be. Only a social system

that views housing as a public service rather than a means for extracting exorbitant rent could lavish this kind of service on tenants. Just consider this fact. Kalinin district's 4,000 tenants living in 1,433 apartments are serviced by a staff of 167 full time workers. For purposes of efficiency and closer contact with residents, ZHEK is subdivided into six branch offices, each headed by a *tekhnik-smotritel* (supervisor).

Here let me stop my organizational description to acquaint you with our *tekhnik-smotritel*, Alla. Our family fell in love with Alla who came some years ago to Moscow from a small village near the industrial Ural city, Sverdlovsk. A warm-hearted, attractive woman in her early thirties, Alla and her two small children have been constant visitors to our home even after she left her position to take another, more advanced one. Alla got quite attached to my wife, Gail.

Alla managed a staff of 22 (for three New York size apartment buildings) which included two mechanics, one electrician, one carpenter, six janitors, whose job it is to keep the area around the building clean and in good order, eight cleaning women who are responsible for the interior of the buildings, and four women who watch over the operation of the elevators. Alla directed her staff with her natural good nature but with firmness also.

I saw her admonish men for failure to carry out a job in time without raising her voice or dropping her kind smile. I watched her as she presided over house committee meetings or listened to tenants' complaints with the same patience, earnestness and kindness. The results were evident in the neat, orderly condition of the building and the attentiveness to complaints.

Alla, a child during the war, nevertheless like many of her generation I met, felt its effects. Her school was disrupted and life around her was not the most conducive to studying, especially in a small village. And now a mother of two children, Alla first started to go to a construction institute. It proved a little too much for her to handle. So, like many others, she found the evening correspondence courses more practical.

And now to get back to Kalinin district and its ZHEK. Kalinin district's ZHEK has its one-year and five-year plans. It has its seasonal as well as long-range objectives. The yearly plan is worked out during October-November on the basis of apartment by apartment visits to determine specific needs and on the basis of close consultation with house committees made up of tenants.

Winter plans begin every September 1st. Russian winter is no joke—though the winter of 1971 was not as severe as usual—and demands early and thorough preparation. Every household seals its windows with paper strips well ahead of the expected wintry blasts. But winterizing is the responsibility of ZHEK and its subdivisions. It must see to it that the heating system is in good order, floors, roofs in good condition. The tasks are also

intense in preparation for spring and summer. The ravages of winter place demands on maintenance and repair that are far greater than in our temperate climate.

With most of its vast territory in areas affected to varying degrees by severe winters, the Soviet Union in its industrial, agricultural and transportation plans as well as in respect to housing and maintenance, faces considerably more difficult problems than we do. I dread to think what it would be like if we had to face Russian winters under our landlord set-up. Or in what condition our homes and apartment buildings would be after they had gone through one. Spring in Moscow and in most Soviet cities means repairs.

Repairs are in keeping with the *preventative* approach that guides every aspect of Soviet social living. There's no one here to bribe inspectors to look the other way. And most important of all—there's no one here to save on repairs. Where you do have problems—and this largely pertains to minor household repairs—it comes from the neglect of individual maintenance workers.

Fire hazards have been reduced to a minimum among other reasons because electric wiring, a major cause of fires in big cities in the US, is regularly checked and repaired (all new buildings, of course, are fireproof). Another important contributing factor: heating and hot water are piped from a central source. This does away with explosions, too.

All housing in Moscow (and in all Soviet cities) must undergo repairs at least every three years. These include plumbing, central heating, floors, etc. These are in addition to routine repairs whenever necessary.

Buildings must be completely restored from the inside out every 30 years. As if this were not enough—Moscow has an elaborate set-up for emergency repairs. There are 30 stations—one for each district.

I visited the one in the Oktyabrsky district. Here is what I saw: huge cranes, mobile repair stations. The station is fully equipped to handle any emergency around the clock—for this purpose it has 66 workers. In addition the Oktyabrsky station has a staff of 230 workers to handle all kinds of major repairs. But the work of this emergency set-up is made considerably easier by the system of regular inspection that is a way of life here.

Our first week here we were introduced to this feature of tenant existence, which New Yorkers are hardly used to. A matronly woman rang our bell. She looked like a neighbor and we later discovered she was a member of the tenants house committee. "Do mice disturb you?" she asked. I could hardly suppress my smile. She didn't know quite what to make of this, so I said: "No, they don't disturb us."

Since then our door bell has been rung quite often for one or another check-up. Incidentally, check-up not only carried out by regular official inspection but by tenants house committees. These committees play an im-

portant and necessary role—not only in inspection but in keeping maintenance workers on their toes. They listen to complaints and act on them. The maintenance worker at fault is deprived of his bonus and good work is rewarded by higher bonuses.

However, maintenance is not considered solely the responsibility of the maintenance workers. Tenants, in the main, have a collective, socialist attitude toward buildings, which after all belong to them as well as Soviet society. They are held responsible for leaving their apartments in good condition when they move, and for cleanliness and care of buildings. What incentive have our tenants, especially in ghetto slums, to view as their own property that which is not even treated with respect by its landlord owners? Service workers, too, have no landlord to tell them to skim on heat or stall on repairs. Nor are they, as in the US, underpaid and overworked.

Unlike our maintenance workers, who are largely unorganized, they are 100 per cent unionized and enjoy all the rights and benefits of all Soviet workers: free medical care, sick benefits, retirement pensions for men at 60 and women at 55. Like our *tekhnik smotritel*, Alla, they can go to free technical schools to raise their skills. Maintenance technical schools and institutes are training a sizable corps of workers and technicians to make homes the comfortable pleasant places they are meant to be.

I don't want to give the reader the impression that Soviet tenants face no serious problems. No set-up, even one that is so orientated toward providing tenants with the utmost in services, is self-regulating. The Allas, in the main, typify the worker of the maintenance organization. But, I've met others who were hardly as conscientious or responsible. I have come across neglect and delay in the handling of repairs and in responding to complaints, notwithstanding the vast army of workers charged with the responsibility of servicing Moscow's apartments.

But, there is a vast difference between fighting your landlord and combatting inefficiency and indifference of some maintenance workers. The landlord's neglect is deliberate. It is motivated by his economic interests which are in conflict with those of his tenants. Less services mean more profits. The neglect and delay in handling complaints we met in the Soviet Union stem from human deficiencies, lack of a conscientious attitude toward their job on the part of some maintenance workers, poor organization and, particularly, poor direction of individual housing units and ZHEKs. And also, the result of an insufficient supply of parts.

The struggle against inefficiency and an indifferent attitude to one's work is waged by the entire Soviet society, all levels of government, the Communist Party, the press, radio and TV. But Soviet tenants also have effective instruments at hand which they are not at all hesitant in using. First of all, there are housing committees which meet regularly and check on the work of the maintenance organization. Then, there are the people's con-

trol units which exercise a check-up over all aspects of public services, including housing. Then, there is the check-up by the maintenance organization itself. Thus, with all their problems, tenants in the US would consider themselves fortunate beyond their greatest hopes if they would enjoy only a fraction of the services provided to Soviet tenants.

In the four years I've walked the streets of Moscow and numerous cities in 15 Republics, I never came across any racial or national ghettos. I never came upon slums or "poor neighborhoods." I saw old, run-down houses—the heritage of the past that is rapidly being eliminated, but no areas such as our cities abound in where the underprivileged live.

No district in Moscow or in any Soviet city can be identified by race or nationality. Even in cities in the Republics where, of course, citizens of that particular nation or nationality predominate, this is true. In Alma Ata (Kazakhstan), for example, Russians, Ukrainians as well as other national groups live side by side with Kazakhs and Uigurs. In Moscow, Kiev, Odesa, there are large numbers of Jews but I never once came across a "Jewish neighborhood." There are no "poor" neighborhoods because there are no poor, no underprivileged. Though under socialism there are people with a higher income, you can never tell by the neighborhoods they live in. There are no ghettos because racism and national discrimination which create and profit from them have long been eliminated. Nothing more distinguishes Soviet cities from our own than the absence of these social sores that, above all, have made our urban centers sick cities, cities of crisis.

No Soviet citizens return from a day's work to depressing areas circumscribed by their class position or color of their skins. The place one lives in in our "free enterprise" society determines far more than just family living quarters. As *The New York Times*, quoting the President's Committee on Urban Housing, points out, the place a man in the US lives in "is a symbol of his status, an extension of his personality, a part of his identity, a determinant of many of the benefits and disadvantages of society that will come to him and his family: schooling, police protection, municipal services, neighborhood environment, access (or lack of access) to a hundred possibilities of life and culture." In other words, where one lives in our "free enterprise" society determines how one lives. All this is wrapped up in the class character of our housing. This is the essence of ghetto slum living.

Soviet society which has eliminated class exploitation and racial and national discrimination has eliminated with them this "status symbol" in housing. This is what has made Soviet cities so free of the tensions that are ripping ours apart. This is what has made Soviet cities the most truly democratic in the world. This is the meaning of "life without landlords!"

***Cities[®]
Without Fear***

Why There Is Safety in Soviet Streets?

If I were to be asked what first impressed me when I came to live in Moscow, I would reply: the fact that I could walk Moscow's streets day or night without fear.

During our first months we rediscovered the simple pleasure of a brisk walk before retiring or of returning home late from an evening out without casting apprehensive backward glances or hastening our pace at the sound of footsteps behind us.

I recall my first instinctive tenseness when, late one night, a Moscow youth approached me on the street for a cigarette. My first inclination was to ignore the request and rush past him. The young man regarded my hesitation with puzzlement and I felt a silent rebuke. I must confess it made me feel ashamed. When I lit up his cigarette, he said, "*spasibo, dedushka*" (grandfather). I think of the bewildered expressions on the faces of our Soviet women friends when I offered to escort them "safely" to the Metro at night.

The street is a window through which you can look out on the life of a city. The window revealed to me Moscow's dynamic, bustling purposeful life. I saw the calm neighborly confidence Muscovites generally had in each other. This was revealed in so many little things that completely escaped our Moscow friends.

As we walked along Leningradsky Prospekt one day with Alla Borisovna, my indefatigable interpreter-secretary, we came upon a baby carriage outside a bakery—the infant in it, swaddled tightly in Russian fashion, sleeping soundly. What made us stop and alarmed my wife, Gail, was that it was completely unattended. Alla hardly seemed to be concerned. She interpreted our lingering around the carriage as the normal love for a baby and after an affectionate peek or two, continued on her way. But, we still did not move. Puzzled, Alla returned and asked us if something was wrong. "Where is the mother?" Gail asked. "Probably in the bakery," Alla replied matter-of-factly. "But who is taking care of the baby?" Gail pressed her. Alla looked at us with increasing incomprehension. "But, why does someone have to take care of the baby?" she replied. As she spoke, women passing by paused momentarily to peek into the carriage and continued on their way.

We have since learned to understand and fully appreciate Alla's attitude. It would never enter the mind of most Soviet mothers to think any Soviet citizen could dream of harming their baby. Besides, these unattended infants have countless "mothers" who stop to quiet them, should they cry or fret.

We also rediscovered the pleasure of sitting on a park bench to enjoy

the quiet beauty of a summer night. At first, we gazed apprehensively at the approaching dusk. Instinctively we rose and prepared to leave. But, none of those occupying neighboring benches made the slightest move.

In the wooded lanes we could discern the fleeting shadows of casual strollers. We looked at each other and laughed—there was no need for words—and joined the strollers. Since then we have enjoyed Moscow's numerous and lovely parks in all seasons as well as at all hours. In the crisp, fresh Russian winter, they are full of skiers, skaters, sleigh-riders.

Major Vladimir Shuvalov told me that Izmailovsky Park, the largest town park in Europe and formerly the hunting preserves of the tsars, has the smallest police detachment in his district.

We, of course, were entranced by the palatial grandeur of the Moscow Metro, but I must honestly confess that it was not its beauty that most impressed us. It was its peaceful, normal, secure atmosphere. It was the absence of police patrols on its trains.

When I began comparing Moscow streets with American streets—some Russians reacted with polite disbelief.

I was especially struck by this because only weeks before our coming to Moscow, we had an experience that is quite common to US families in our great cities.

Our youngest son, Joe, aged 18 at the time, went together with our two nephews to Madison Square Garden, in the heart of Manhattan in the hopes of seeing a basketball game. They were unsuccessful, so they walked a bit further to the Times Square district to see a movie. The time was only 9 o'clock in the evening. As they walked along 43rd Street near 8th Avenue, they were suddenly and without provocation attacked by a gang of teenage hoodlums. My son lay unconscious for five minutes. My nephews hailed a passing police car, informed them what had happened and asked for help to rush my son to a nearby hospital. The two officers who hardly appeared concerned, replied brusquely that this was a daily occurrence and they could scarcely involve themselves in such matters. It was only hours later, after our son was brought home in a dazed condition, that we could rush him to a hospital.

We have not been the only Americans upon whom Moscow's normal streets produced this effect. Cyrus Eaton, the well-known US industrialist, told *Moscow News*, the English language Soviet newspaper, what, particularly, impressed him was that "one can go out on the streets of Moscow any hour of the day with perfect safety." And he added pointedly: "I'm calling that fact to the attention of Americans."

Nikolai Shchelokov, Minister of the Interior of the USSR, noted in *Moscow News* that "The increase in the country's (Soviet Union, M.D.) population (nearly 100 million since 1913) has not produced a corresponding increase in the number of crimes. Quite the contrary, the level has

dropped considerably." Shchelokov, in an article in *Pravda*, November 17, 1973, noted that there has been a 4.6 per cent decrease in more dangerous crimes in the Soviet Union since 1972. He pointed out that there are thousands of populated places and enterprises where for a long time there have been no serious violations of public order.

But, it is, above all, our daily existence in a "city without fear" that is more convincing than any statistics or statement such as made by Shchelokov.

Where Does Real Safety Come from?

Soviet cities are cities without fear because: they are cities without landlords, cities without crises, cities without doctors' bills, cities where polluters can't pollute, cities of culture, cities where 100 peoples daily live in brotherhood, cities without financial crises and back-breaking tax loads on the people. They are cities in a society without exploitation, without slums, without ghettos, without drug pushers, without rackets and payoffs. And *without police repression*.

The Soviet militia would be the last to claim that the basis of the peaceful condition of Soviet cities rests primarily on their work. On the contrary, the character of the Soviet militia which is a truly people's police, is based on the kind of society that gave birth to it and brought it up. Let me illustrate what I mean by citing one experience.

I spent a very revealing day in one of militia precincts in the Frunze district (we've lived in the district for four years so that what I saw that day I know from my own experience is typical). The Frunze district is in the center of Moscow. It embraces a population of 210,000 and includes 420 enterprises, numerous restaurants, stores and hotels.

During my day in the precinct, I kept up a running discussion with Colonel Aleksei Nozdryakov, the deputy head of the district. Occasionally the phone rang and a citizen's complaint was noted and acted upon. Phone calls also came in regularly from militiamen making their reports from their beats. Once or twice a citizen came in to complain against a noisy neighbor.

I remarked to Nozdryakov that it was probably an unusually quiet day. He seemed surprised at my remark. "Well," he responded, "how can we be busy, *everyone's at work now*."

Neither in Moscow nor in any of the many Soviet cities I visited, have I ever come across unemployed youth standing on street corners, or aimlessly walking the streets, their eyes smoldering with resentment.

Article 118 of the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Repu-

blics states: "Citizens of the USSR have the right to work, that is, the right to guaranteed employment and payment for their work in accordance with its quantity and quality." There are, of course, some (a relatively very small number) who do not want to use that right, who shirk work. It is not easy to do this in a society based on the concept that everyone (unless physically unable) must work. It is from among these shirkers of labor who try to live a parasitic life in a workers' society, that a good deal of the still existing social misbehavior and crime comes from.

Soviet society, government and militia, understandably are doing all they can to eliminate these parasitic habits inherited from the past.

The right to work and many other social rights which are *implemented in life*, explain Nozdryakov's quiet district.

I asked Nozdryakov how many hold-ups of banks, stores, restaurants, etc., there occurred in his area last year. He replied: "I've worked in the Frunze district 15 years, I can't remember a single case of a hold-up of a bank, store, factory, restaurant or enterprise."

I asked him whether there were cases of stick-ups or murders of taxi drivers. He never had any such cases in his district.

In the four years we lived in Moscow, I never once witnessed any such crimes.

Only an insignificant part of the crimes in his district, Nozdryakov told me, were committed by those 18 years of age or less.

Nor had Nozdryakov come across any group muggings. On occasions, there are stick-ups in isolated areas on the outskirts of the city. The weapons are usually a penknife or a household knife. The possession of guns and dangerous weapons is unlawful. The law is strictly enforced, not only by the militia, but the citizens. Soviet citizens find it hard to believe that guns can be freely bought in the United States and that millions of them, constituting an arsenal of weapons, are in possession of people, especially criminal and reactionary elements.

Organized and professional crime has been eliminated not without a bitter costly struggle, particularly in the early years of the new Soviet Republic. But it would be naive and utopian to expect all crime, bred by centuries of unjust and inhuman conditions of tsarist Russia, to be eliminated under socialism.

The complete eradication of crime constitutes one of the most difficult and complex problems.

Soviet Experience Explodes Some Pet Theories

The New York Times noted on June 3, 1969: "It was estimated, for example, that it would cost (the USA-Ed.) \$25 billion a year—a third of the total budget of the Defense Department (at that time, M.D.)—to have one

patrolman around the clock on each of the city's four-sided blocks." But the newspaper stresses even this would not solve the problem, for "even if this were possible, policemen say it would not stop crime since *more than half of it is committed in areas that they do not patrol—homes, restaurants, hallways and elevators* (my emphasis, M. D.)."

One of the pet theories circulating in the US sees growing crime as the inevitable result of rapid industrialization, migration from rural areas to urban centers and the rapid expansion of cities. Such a notion is exploded by Soviet experience. No country in history ever achieved such a rapid industrialization as the Soviet Union which in the brief period of half a century was transformed from one of the most backward, overwhelmingly agricultural countries to one second only to the US in industrialization. No cities in the world have grown as rapidly as have those of the Soviet Union in the past half century. The Soviet Union was literally transformed. Only 20 per cent of the population lived in the cities of pre-revolutionary Russia. In 1971, the figure rose to 58 per cent. Between 1926 and 1971, 955 new cities and towns appeared. The Soviet Union confronted an extremely critical housing problem which was tremendously complicated by the vast destruction caused by the Nazi invasion. In 1959, there were only three cities with more than a million population. By 1971, there were 11 such cities with four others very close to one million in population. Today the Soviet Union has more large cities than any other country. Thus Soviet experience shatters the theory that links crime to rapid industrialization, migration and urbanization.

Igor Karpets, a professor, Doctor of Law and a member of the Collegium of the Soviet Ministry of the Interior, and Vladimir Kudryavtsev, a professor, Doctor of Law, noted in an article in *Pravda*, February 9, 1972: "In reality, socialism provides such social conditions for human life under which technological and scientific progress plays a positive part in the education of discipline, in strengthening law and order and citizens' morality and, consequently, ultimately promotes the reduction of the number of anti-social phenomena. Thus, the past decades of vigorous economic and scientific and technological development in the USSR have been marked by a spiritual growth of the Soviet people, by their growing consciousness, by the strengthening of society's morality. No wonder the number of immoral acts during that period decreased in the country and the number of persons sentenced for crime fell. Per same population, the number of robberies in the city has decreased to a third of the former level and that of swindling by almost 95 per cent."

The significance of the Soviet experience is that it demonstrates, not only that the crime problem can be solved, but *how*. The Soviet experience practically shatters every pet theory of our free enterprise criminologists who offer various reasons for the growth of crime.

Soviet Militia—a People's Police

Quite frankly, it took me a rather long time fully to comprehend that the Soviet militia is in fact a real servant and protector of the people.

Four years of observing the relationship between Soviet militia and the Soviet people as well as the attitude of the Soviet people toward the militia made many things clear for me. I also got to understand things more intimately as a result of a two-three week intensive study of Moscow's militia in 1970. My experience since then, if anything, has reinforced my impressions.

Now, as to what I learned about Moscow's militia.

In Moscow—as well as everywhere in the Soviet Union—people's power and community control are living realities. This will become more apparent when I describe the character and role of the militia and the People's *Druzhina*—the mass, volunteer, unpaid people's patrol, who are increasingly assuming the functions of maintaining and promoting social order.

You see it daily in the mutual respect that is the normal relationship between citizen and militia. You see it in the salute with which the militiaman greets you when you are seeking information or being summoned for an infraction of a law. Rudeness toward, let alone abuse of, citizens is considered intolerable and the militiaman who violates that cardinal rule has, indeed, a short future.

I was hardly a week in Moscow when I had a run-in with a militiaman. I was, as yet, unfamiliar with Moscow's underpasses which make passage across its busy thoroughfares secure, so I made a typical New Yorker's dash across Leningradsky Prospekt. I was hailed by a militiaman's sharp whistle. The militiaman saluted me as I approached him, then proceeded to scold me for risking my life. I felt properly abashed—especially after that unexpected salute—and lamely explained, I was a foreigner and unaccustomed to Moscow's traffic rules.

This only heightened the militiaman's concern—foreigners normally are regarded as guests—and, if anything, are accorded special protection.

"And suppose something happened to you, what then would we do?" he asked me more in plaint than anger.

I must confess, since then I have got a particular kick out of watching the reaction of visiting Americans—familiar with the brusque ways of our "finest"—upon their first contact with Moscow militia.

I recall the impression such an experience made on Monsignor Rice, when he visited Moscow in the summer of 1972. The Monsignor, a delightfully gentle soul, requested me to aid him in locating the Roman Catholic Church in Moscow where he planned to attend mass. When we reached Dzerzhinsky Square, I hailed the militiaman who was some distance away,

in the center of the square, directing the busy traffic. I must say, the Monsignor regarded my efforts as somewhat presumptuous and perhaps futile. What New York or Pittsburg policeman (the Monsignor is from the Smoky City) would respond in a similar situation? The militiaman acknowledged my appeal, waited a moment until he got traffic under way, then walked over and saluted us. He listened attentively to my request and proceeded to explain the church's location. The expression on the good Monsignor's face spoke far more eloquently than his words. I got to know some of militiamen personally during my tour of the Moscow militia.

Lt. Col. Evgeny Krechet typifies them. A slender gentle man who spent much of the time discussing art and literature with me (he is a passionate admirer of Rodin, the great French sculptor), he is a graduate of a school of journalism and an author. I particularly observed his relationship with the men on the beat and, more especially, with the Moscow man and woman in the street. I found it difficult to remember that he was a high official and I must confess, it was even harder to think of him as a militiaman. Krechet just didn't fit in with the kind of police I was accustomed to. For one thing—no one was in the slightest degree afraid of him. Nor did this kind-looking man seek to inspire such feelings. On the contrary, no one would be more upset than Krechet if he "succeeded" in creating a gap between himself and the Muscovites.

I've since watched countless run-ins between Muscovites and their militia (I've also witnessed quite a few such incidents in many other cities). I have yet to come across one case which reflected anything faintly resembling police brutality or overbearing authority so common among our police. I saw nothing of our instinctive fear upon coming in contact with the "arm of the law". I've yet to come across that threatening command "get a move on." I've seen a militiaman patiently taking verbal abuse from a rather intoxicated citizen.

The use of force by the militia, in all cases, is strictly limited and abuse is dealt with severely. Militiamen carry no clubs. Some years ago, as an experiment, clubs were issued to militiamen in five cities but practice showed they were unnecessary. Under no circumstances are militiamen permitted to beat a prisoner, even if he is resisting arrest. Militiamen do carry small pistols but they are largely for purposes of warning in cases of danger. A militiaman may use his gun only when he is confronted with armed attack, when the lives of other citizens are endangered or when he is defending socialist property, and only after he has exhausted all other means of subduing a criminal. Even under these circumstances, he must first fire a warning shot in the air. Even after this fails to eliminate the danger, the militiaman must not shoot to kill. He can only shoot to wound in the leg or arm. And under no circumstance—even if facing personal dan-

ger from an armed adversary, may a militiaman use his gun against a woman or against anyone under 16.

One of the outstanding heroes of Moscow's militia, is a militiaman who sacrificed his life because he attempted to subdue a desperate armed man. The hero is Vassili Petrushkov, who, incidentally, was also a hero of the Leningrad siege during the Nazi invasion. Petrushkov was killed when he placed himself between the rifle of a drunken husband and the wife and child the man threatened. Petrushkov's wife took his place in the militia.

I asked Moscow militia leaders: With all these restraints on your militiaman, how does he bring in his man?

"Our citizens help him, if necessary," was the answer.

Ordinarily, resistance to arrest is rare. The culprit not only knows he has to contend with his fellow citizens, but is aware of the scorn that will greet him.

An incident I witnessed illustrated the truth of these words. Waiting for a taxi near the huge GUM department store in the center of Moscow I saw a sturdy woman, about 30 years of age, running towards us. Behind her were two young girls, red armbands on their arms (they were *druzhi-na*) racing after her. "*Derzhi, derzhi,*" (hold her!) they cried. Several women on line waiting for a taxi, rushed out and seized the woman who made no effort to resist or even protest her innocence. She was too ashamed. Her captors and all bystanders froze her with their scornful looks. The young girls with armbands escorted her away as they sought a militiaman. The entire incident was completely handled by Soviet citizens without the slightest abuse.

I have, of course, come across some Soviet people who are indifferent to the problems and troubles of their fellow citizens, who also don't want to get involved. They are so rare, they sharply stand out. But, the dominant characteristic of the Soviet people as I have observed in daily life is their *involvement and concern for each other* in practically every sphere of life. Involvement is a way of life here. It comes from the collectivity that is the characteristic feature of Soviet life as I have described in so many "little things." This quality comes out in their attitude toward and their relationship with a police that is under rather than over the people. That is why it is natural for them to assist and cooperate with their militia in the apprehension of those who break the law.

The People's Character of the Soviet Militia

To understand the people's character of the Soviet militia, one must know something of its origin. This was graphically depicted to me in the museum of the Moscow militia in the central headquarters. It was a walk

through a half century of the transformations wrought by the October Revolution. What personalized this tour through Soviet history was that my guide was Colonel Dmitri Kiselyov who lived through and helped make much of that history.

I stopped before a picture of a ragged group of determined workers, clutching their rifles. It breathed the spirit of the first days of October. It was a picture of a new kind of police, the world's first workers' militia, which was formed in 1917.

One of the first acts of the October Revolution (which drew lessons from the Paris Commune of 1871) was the destruction of the old oppressive, corrupt czarist and capitalist apparatus and, particularly, one of its pillars, the brutal police. It was a police force which then stood over the people.

I moved on to another exhibit. It was a facsimile of Lenin's first address to this new kind of a police force. Lenin called on them to "set examples in honesty, politeness, socialist legality," from top to bottom. "Only then will the citizen respect the militia" and submit to its directives, he said. Those have been the half-century guidelines of the militia.

Revolutionary history marched in review before me. Here were the organized militia detachments going off to fight the numerous counter-revolutionary criminal bands, including those which in 1918-20 committed their crimes under the banner of anarchist and ultra-Leftist slogans of those days. Such bandit groups, capitalizing on the chaos and disruption wrought by the bloody Civil War and imperialist intervention, in the first years after the revolution constituted a serious menace to each new socialist republic. The militia played an important and heroic role in wiping out this threat to socialist, workers' law and order. And here were the pictures of those who gave their lives in that struggle. Two of these heroic militiamen are buried near the Kremlin wall.

The people's character of the militia is revealed in: how they are recruited, how they are educated and trained, in their close ties with the people, and in their systematic accounting to the people. I discussed these questions in considerable detail with Yuri Blokhin, deputy chairman of the Frunze district militia headquarters, who is in charge of the political and educational department, and Nikolai Mishuta, the Communist Party secretary. I also observed in practice much of what they told me, both during my tour of Moscow's militia and as a resident of Moscow.

A large part of the militia is recruited on a voluntary basis right out of the factories; another big section comes from demobilized armymen. Before the applicants are accepted, shopmates discuss and pass on their approval.

The qualifications for joining are also very revealing. Prospective militiamen must be advanced workers who are respected by their fellow workers for the quality of their work as well as their conduct. They must have good records of labor discipline and, of course, of social behavior. And it was

emphasized to me by Blokhin and Mishuta: "They must not be rude to people."

Not only must they be recommended by the shop, but the recommendations must be signed by the Communist Party, Komsomol and trade union secretaries and the plant administrator. The signers bear a heavy responsibility. If a militiaman is found to be unqualified or commits a serious violation, those who recommended him are held to account.

In all Soviet organizations and enterprises, work is combined with continuous political, general and specialized education. The militia is no exception. I visited the Lenin reading, study and meeting room of the 108th precinct, in the Frunze district (each precinct has one). In a corner were the selected works of Lenin, books by Marx and other leading revolutionaries. Militiamen come here during leisure hours to read classics or theoretical journals and to discuss latest developments on the world and national scene. Seminars and study groups are conducted on all levels from the elementary to the most advanced. What is the main content of the political and educational work? I asked Blokhin.

"To prepare the militiaman so that he can adequately participate in the molding of a new kind of Soviet man," he replied.

Blokhin, like all other leaders of the militia I met, sees the job of the militiaman as one of education and not enforcement.

The key word as regards crime and social misbehavior (as for disease and industrial accidents) is *prevention*. Thus, militiamen, on all levels, are called on to do a great deal of educational work with individuals as well as large groups. They hold regular meetings with workers in plants, trade unions, schools, community clubs and organizations. I checked this in many of the plants I visited and found this to be a true account of the militia's activities. I also got a pretty good idea as to the character of this educational work by watching TV. The message is put across through feature films, illustrated talks on various social problems, documentary films, a review of the history of the people's militia and its heroes. Soviet Militia Day, on November 10, observed nationally, serves as not only a tribute to the militia and an outstanding cultural event, but as an intensive educational effort to inculcate the highest standards of social behavior.

Let me note here that the fight against crime and social misbehavior is hardly regarded as the job of the militiaman alone. All the massive means of education, culture, and communications at society's command are *constantly* thrown into this struggle. But it is important to stress not only the cultural enrichment that is the Soviet citizen's daily fare but the kind of "culture" that is *not* part of their diet (especially for their children). Soviet citizens, unlike citizens in our free enterprise society, are *denied* films and television programs which make heroes out of gangsters and glorify violence, or promote pornography. In all my four years of watching TV programs (I

early became a rabid TV fan) I have never once come across "crime" and violence films.

The constantly rising educational level in the Soviet Union places ever higher demands on the militia.

"Our militiamen have to be on a high educational level because ours is a very educated people," Blokhin pointed out to me.

He was not overstating the case. The Soviet people would hardly respect their militia (as they quite obviously do) if it failed to keep in step with them. Thus, understandably, the militia considers the educational level of its force a vital element for the performing of its social function. Study never stops and like workers in all Soviet plants, the percentage of militiamen who take night or correspondence courses, or go to institutes is very high. All heads of departments are graduates of higher institutions. Blokhin, who has two degrees, is a graduate of a pedagogical institute and an institute for Party and Soviet leaders. Nozdryakov of the Frunze district, is writing a thesis on the Soviet system of law to qualify for his degree of Candidate of Science. He was a worker in a plant before he joined the militia. Shchelokov (*Pravda*, March 17, 1973) stated that 97 per cent of the department heads of Soviet militia have higher or specialized secondary education. But not all education is formal.

As everywhere, an important role as a gadfly is played by the wall newspapers. I had seen and read the bouquets and brickbats on factory wall newspapers. But, I was curious how this role would apply in a militia headquarters. The monthly wall newspaper in the Lenin room of the 108th precinct had its share of commendations. Then, I noticed sharply satirical cartoons. Under them were articles that expanded on the theme. They were directed against lagging militiamen and they hardly pulled any punches. The laggards were identified by name as well as likeness.

"Well, how do they take this kind of public dressing down?" I asked. My hosts looked rather surprised at my question—since such criticism has been part of every Soviet enterprise and organization since the October Revolution.

I stopped before a picture. It showed men of the 108th precinct participating in the annual *subbotnik*, the universal day of voluntary free labor every Soviet citizen donates toward the common welfare. I could not suppress a laugh. My hosts looked at me, puzzled. "I was just trying to imagine our New York police in that posture," I explained.

Soviet "Community Control"

District inspectors of Moscow militia's micro-areas (they usually include a population of 5,000-7,000) are obligated to account for their work before public meetings regularly every three months. Discussion and criticism,

if necessary, follow their reports. Higher ranking officials present carefully note the public attitude toward the inspectors. A very critical or hostile attitude leads to an investigation and, if necessary, to removal.

Bribery is rare and is treated very severely, and the militiaman who commits such a crime is considered even more shameful than a hooligan. And, not only the guilty militiaman but those who recommended him are held to account.

No Drug Addiction Problem

In the four years here, we were made aware of the alarming spread of drug addiction abroad, especially among our youth. "We only occasionally come across cases, and these usually involve foreign tourists," Lt. Col. Krechet told me.

Soviet militia, well aware of the extensive character of drug addiction in capitalist countries, are understandably alert against any such "imports." This kind of "free exchange" between the two world systems will not be permitted.

Soviet youth who live purposeful lives have no need to seek an "escape" from life. That is why neither Soviet militia nor Soviet society confronts any real addiction problem.

That is not to say that it faces no serious problems, especially among its youth. The measures taken to combat drunkenness and hooliganism testify to this. But, it is laughable to what ludicrous extents some free enterprise correspondents of the US and other countries will go in an effort to "equa-te" our drug addiction with the problem of drunkenness and hooliganism in the Soviet Union. One need not belabor the point—the correspondents themselves well know the *difference*—they walk Soviet streets. Moreover, we have no small drunkenness problem of our own, *in addition* to drug addiction.

The Problem of Hooliganism

As for hooliganism, I don't want in any way to minimize its extent and character in the Soviet Union. It constitutes a shameful blot on a socialist society. But, as one who has witnessed hooliganism in both societies, let me say the Soviet version is like a Sunday school frolic compared to New York typical Saturday night brawls.

Most acts of hooliganism by far fall into the category of "*melki*" or

"light cases" of public misbehavior. Many acts of hooliganism fall into the category of potential rather than actual acts of violence.

Soviet citizens usually "interfere" in brewing street brawls. I've personally witnessed many potential fistfights nipped in the bud by passing Soviet citizens of both sexes. The "interferers" ordinarily quickly grow in numbers so that the brawlers find themselves dealing with a disapproving collective. I must say, it usually proves to be quite effective. What is more, brawlers seem to expect such interference (and my guess is that in most cases they are happy about it).

Hooliganism is viewed as a serious offense, Lt. Col. Aleksei Nozdryakov of the Frunze district told me, because it concerns not just the individual but the "public peace." In a collective society, that is a matter of common concern. Most cases, he said, are handled by either the militiamen or *druzhina* by "education and persuasion."

Hooliganism is punishable by law. If the offense is light, the offender may be fined; if a little more serious, he can get 15 days imprisonment. Stronger measures are employed when the acts go beyond mere disturbing of the peace into the realm of criminal offense. He may receive as high as a several year sentence in a corrective work camp.

Here, let me say a word on the general Soviet approach to crime. It emphasizes *rehabilitation* rather than *punishment*.

People convicted of crimes are obliged to work an eight-hour day at their place of imprisonment. They are paid in accordance with the quality and quantity of the work done. Labor is considered to be a decisive factor in moral rehabilitation.

In each colony there is both a secondary and vocational school, as well as a library. The colony's club has a cinema hall where besides films, regular concerts are given by amateur performers. There are also a polyclinic and a hospital whose staff looks after the health of the prisoners.

The educational staff of the colony help a person serving time to choose a job in accordance with his inclinations and to learn a trade, if he has none. The library is kept supplied with books on different subjects.

The administration of the colony helps those who are soon to be released find a job and a place to live well before their term is over. This is accomplished in conjunction with the local Soviets of Working People's Deputies, the departments of internal affairs, the management of industrial enterprises and public organizations.

The management of factories and public organizations, and primarily trade unions, are doing their utmost to help former prisoners begin new normal life. In this way they continue the process of moral rehabilitation started in the colony.

There are many organizations in the Soviet Union whose job is to help people released from colonies start a new life. For instance, there are super-

visory commissions attached to the executive committees of the Soviets. The responsibilities are strictly divided between members of the commissions—one group assists in finding jobs for former prisoners, the other is responsible for educational work, and the third supervises "repeaters."

The contrast with the social ostracism suffered by those convicted for crimes in our country, especially Black, Puerto Rican, Indian, Asian and Chicanos is well known. The "record" usually hounds the ex-convict for life. It bars him from all but the most menial jobs under the most humiliating conditions.

It is the awareness of and the contact with these social bars, that keep our prisons filled with constant "repeaters." And the inhumanism suffered by those who are not even yet convicted is enough to guarantee their lifelong hostility to society. The *International Herald Tribune* noted that a "federal census of city and county jails shows that 52 per cent of their inmates have not been convicted of a crime and that many inmates whether convicted or not, endure less than human conditions." It goes on to describe the hell-holes into which those convicted and not yet convicted are thrown. "85 per cent have no recreational or educational facilities of any kind. About half lack medical facilities. About one-fourth have no facilities for visitors." And yet, as is well known, the racist, reactionary proponents of "law and order" in our country are stressing more "toughness" as a solution to our crime problem.

Public drunkenness was a rather common phenomenon in czarist Russia. This ugly and shameful situation still exists in the US, especially among the most oppressed and most poverty-stricken sections of our population, as the massive character of vicious bar-room brawls, wife and child beating, the battle casualties of hospital emergency wards, the tragic statistics of New Year's Eve celebrations testify. And these people are motivated by the same reasons that drove the oppressed of czarism and capitalism to drink and brawls. Alcoholism, in the USA, though, is hardly confined only to the poor. It is not at all uncommon among the affluent. It is no exaggeration to say that in the USA liquor is one of the most lucrative businesses—as the huge profits of the giant liquor corporations, and the high price for liquor licenses reveal.

Nowhere in the Soviet Union are bars, saloons and cocktail lounges as numerous as food stores—as they are in our great cities (if anything, in my opinion, Soviet cities could use a few more beer halls). In the Soviet Union, the production and sale of liquor, like all other products, is state owned and directed. And in no country in the world is there such an effort to decrease the sale and the profits from such a "lucrative" business. Not only is there no psychologically all-pervasive sophisticated advertising aimed at encouraging drinking as in our country but the *Soviet government* and all the vast instruments of propaganda *are directed at* discouraging excessive

drinking. Moreover, steps are constantly being taken to restrict the sale of vodka and other hard liquors. In 1972, the Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted new and more severe measures to restrict the sale of liquor and to deal with drunkenness. They include: greater restrictions on the channels and hours for sale of hard liquors (it is now more difficult to buy vodka); more severe punishments for salespeople who violate these limitations; stricter enforcement of penalties for repeated drunkenness; more intensive educational campaign against drinking; increased medical treatment of habitual drunks.

I in no way wish to minimize the alcohol problem, but it must be stated, that at least as regards the link between heavy drinking and automobile accidents, there is no comparison between our two countries. In the US, as is well-known, drinking accounts for many of the casualties, fatal and otherwise, of automobile accidents. One has but to note the "battle casualties" resulting from New Year's celebrations (which are annually forecast with uncanny accuracy). An official government report (*International Herald Tribune*, September 14, 1972) noted that of the 55,000 road deaths in 1971, 27,000 deaths were "related to alcohol." The report showed that "of every 25 cars on the road at night, one was operated by an intoxicated driver." The report admits that there is slaughter on the highways, "US laws are far less harsh than those of most countries."

One of the things that surprised and impressed me in the Soviet Union was that those who drove cars usually refused to drink at parties and celebrations. "I'm driving," they stated simply and no one pressed drinks on them. One of the most strictly enforced and most severely punished laws is on drinking and driving. And one does not have to be "drunk"—the smell of liquor on one's breath is enough.

Every measure—from persuasion to punishment—is aimed at cure and correction (here I want to note that when I visited the psychiatric clinics, I discussed with the special departments the comprehensive efforts being made to treat alcoholism as the disease it is). Increased stress in being placed on the role of these psychiatric clinics in the fight against alcoholism (statistics show that they contribute greatly to diminishing alcoholism).

I've spoken to Soviet citizens who visited the US and what particularly hit home to them the utter inhumanness of our capitalist society were their walks through our streets. Soviet people find such disregard for human beings almost beyond the grasp of their comprehension. I've watched the special militia patrols (especially in winter when exposure is hazardous) searching for helpless drunks, motivated above all by concern for the health and safety of these men. Drunks are picked up and brought to a special clean-up station. They are given a thorough washing, change of clothes, and medical help, if required.

Drunkenness, like all relics of the past, is viewed as a clean-up in all respects. One is only too familiar with the "treatment" drunks get from American police. In most cases they are simply ignored, left to the perils of exposure as well as the prey of muggers who lie in wait for such easy victims. Or when they are picked up, they are thrown into jail, treated as criminals and roughed up if they become in any way "abusive." As for following this up with efforts at correction and treatment—our police hardly view such human concern as in their line of duty.

I met with Olga Stepanova, a mother and a graduate of a pedagogical institute, who directs the work of a militia precinct among children. Mrs. Stepanova told me that the main approach was aimed at early detection of behavior problems. Thus, she works very closely with schools, parents, house committees in apartment buildings and Pioneer groups. School absenteeism and frequent serious acts of misbehavior are carefully observed and acted upon promptly. I asked Mrs. Stepanova if she confronted any drug cases among children. She was surprised with my question.

Readers, familiar with the extent of crime among children in the USA, may find it hard to believe that it hardly exists in the Soviet Union. But, as even the most unsympathetic US visitors to the Soviet Union have observed, children in the Soviet Union are, indeed, the privileged class. Nowhere have I seen such universal attention, concern and affection bestowed on children. Nowhere have I observed the kind of family involvement in sports and recreation. An abused child not only calls forth the wrath of the militia and the courts, but of every neighbor, and Pioneers in the child's school.

There were quite serious problems of child crime in the early years of the Revolution. One of the most moving experiences is to observe the annual get-togethers of the "alumni" of the special schools that were established for the "*besprizorni*" (vagrant homeless children) of the 1920s. Among the "alumni" are some of the Soviet Union's most prominent scientists, writers, artists, generals and plant and collective farm heads. Of course, some serious problems again arose as a result of the disruption of World War II but they were rapidly overcome by the all-out attention Soviet society showered on its "privileged class."

The Militia's More Advanced Role

The militia's role has changed radically in the course of more than a half century of socialist living. Shchelokov, Soviet Minister of the Interior, summed up the transformation in Soviet society and the new tasks facing the militia: "During the years of Soviet power, radical socio-economic transformations have taken place in the country. The social structure of society

has changed and a cultural revolution has been accomplished. The educational standards have immeasurably improved." Thus, he stressed, the "tasks facing the militia have also changed, as distinct from the early days of the October Revolution. It is now fulfilling its tasks under the conditions of exclusive domination of communist ideology, of communist morals. One can say that never in the past did the militia work under such favorable conditions." But, these new conditions place in the foreground the "problem of preventing crime," he emphasized. "Socialism," Shchelokov pointed out, "is a society of high level of organization, order and discipline. While granting the working people extensive rights and freedoms, while guaranteeing their actual exercise, it places a great civic responsibility on them. There can be no democracy without discipline, no rights without duties. The building of communism proceeds not through the weakening of the responsibilities of the citizen before society, but through the strengthening of these responsibilities." Thus, "the Soviet militia must increasingly become an intellectual force capable of profoundly analyzing the social processes occurring in the country. . . because the militia's activities are very closely connected with the solution of one of the basic problems of communist construction—the education of a new kind of Soviet man."

Just imagine any US Attorney General discussing the solution to our crime problem and the role of US policemen in that spirit! In our country, as everyone knows, the annual report submitted by the Department of Justice and the FBI, notes the steady rapid rise in the extent and the vicious character of crime and calls for greatly expanded funds for police. And, above all, they demand far more toughness in dealing with criminals. These annual reports read like proclamations of war against a huge and growing section of the population. And they are just that—*declarations of war*—directed against the poor (especially of oppressed minorities) driven by poverty, misery and discrimination to fight the society that abuses them by individual acts of crime. These reports, incidentally, always consciously link crime with militant struggle against racism, war, poverty and repression; the main efforts in that domestic war are, above all, directed against fighters for peace and full freedom. Never have I heard a single Soviet citizen or a single Soviet leader call for an expanded militia force or increased appropriation to fight crime. On the contrary, it is considered normal that with the progress of socialist society and the advance toward communism, the need for a militia force will and does steadily diminish. The vastly different approach to crime is based on this solid reality: the very source of law breaking has an all important difference.

Shchelokov summed it up in *Pravda*, March 17, 1973, as follows: "Under socialism crime is not a form of social protest against living conditions, but, above all, the result of moral personal degeneration, intellectual backwardness, and a low level of culture. Investigations reveal that violators of

law are much more frequent where educational work with people is neglected, where there is a low labor discipline, where little attention is devoted to arranging the life of people, where the problem of wisely utilizing free time is poorly dealt with, where there still exist serious deficiencies in the work of administrative bodies."

Shchelokov stresses the responsibility of community housing and plant organizations to intensify their educational activity, to raise the cultural level of those who are not keeping pace with the development of the overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens. Shchelokov emphasizes the need for more *personal* attention. He notes the impressive results in those plants and areas where such work is done. Thus, one of the most important elements in the advance toward communist society is expanding the role of Soviet citizens in the administration of affairs of state. More and more functions of society are transferred from administrative to people's control.

No one hailed the formation of the *druzhina* in March 1959, more than the militia. The newspapers noted at the time that in the atmosphere of the growing consciousness and political activity of the working people, and the further development of Soviet democracy the struggle against crime and anti-social behavior "must be carried out, not by administrative organs, but by the broad involvement of the working people."

I spent a night with the *druzhina* of the First of May district of Moscow. I observed them at work, discussed with them their role and organization and participated in one of their patrols. The headquarters of the First of May *druzhina* (as all others) is on the ground floor of a typical Moscow apartment building. As I walked in, *druzhina* members, red armbands on their coat sleeves, were getting ready to go out on patrol. They had just come from their shops and offices. More than 50 per cent of the First of May's *druzhinniks* are shop workers. A good many are engineers, technicians and professional workers. Vyacheslav Massalski, the energetic leader of the group, is a computer engineer.

What is the chief purpose of the *druzhina*? I asked Massalski. Again I heard the word that seems to sum up all Soviet approach to all social problems: *prevention!*

The First of May *druzhina* which was organized in October 1963, has demonstrated the effectiveness of these people's patrols. It broke up a number of hooligan gangs. Within one year it had reduced more than half the number of hooligan acts. If the First of May group is any example—the *druzhinas* are extremely well organized, efficient bodies with a very high sense of purpose.

The control room maintained direct and regular contact with each patrol. The First of May *druzhina's* 500 members (about 10 per cent are women) are divided into groups of 100 and units of 20. There are 20-25 mem-

bers on patrol every night. The *druzhina* is an independent organization separate and apart from militia with whom however it works closely.

Soviet experience demonstrates that there is no short cut, least of all at the end of a policeman's club, to achieving real safety in the streets. Safe streets can only exist in cities without crises. And cities without crises are the fruit of a social system which daily demonstrates it cares for the needs of the people.

***Cities
of Brotherhood***

Solution to the National Question

Soviet experience demonstrates that urban centers can only become cities without crisis if they are *cities of brotherhood*. And most important, Soviet experience shows how this can be done. I contrast Soviet and US cities, not only because they present such different pictures, but, above all, because I believe it is through such a contrast that the solution to the crisis of US cities is revealed. Philadelphia, one of our largest cities, expressing the dream of its Quaker founders, is called the "city of brotherly love." But its noble title is mocked by its racist Mayor, Frank Rizzo (its former "tough" chief of police), who dispenses "brotherly love" at the end of a police club.

One week every year our country celebrates "Brotherhood Week" when politicians from the President down, proclaim their love for all and make sanctimonious appeals for "brotherhood" of all peoples and races.

In the Soviet Union, there are no cities titled "brotherly love." But, Soviet cities *are* cities of brotherhood.

The Soviet Union does not proclaim "Brotherhood Weeks." It *lives* brotherhood *every day*. December 30, 1972 marked half a century of the fraternity of its more than 100 nations and nationalities (as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). But the difference between the two countries is expressed by much more than the vast span separating one week from 52 weeks a year. It is the difference between word and deed, promise and performance.

Nowhere in the world is there a more awesome gap between pious words and ignoble deeds on "brotherhood" than in the US. And nowhere are words and deeds in greater harmony than in the Soviet Union. I note this because, coming from a country whose cities were exploding in ghetto rebellions, the inevitable eruptions resulting from three centuries of inequality and discrimination, I was particularly impressed by the natural harmony and fraternity that characterized the multinational Soviet cities. In more than the four years of living in Moscow and visiting dozens of cities in 15 Republics, never once did I come across a single clash between peoples of different races and nationalities. Not once did I witness the use of police or military force against any of its 100 peoples (as I had personally observed in the brutal "occupation" of Harlem by an almost totally white police army during the ghetto outburst of 1964).

During my four years in the Soviet Union; new and more shameful chapters were added to the US "solution" to the national and race question. They are symbolized by names familiar to the entire world: Attica, Baton Rouge, Angela Davis, Bobby Seale, the Soledad Brothers, George Jackson, Wounded Knee.

The Soviet Union has given the world quite different symbols. One of the most meaningful of these was provided during the mid-1960's, when the "dirty war" unleashed against the Black ghettos was in full force. I'm referring to Tashkent, capital of the people of Soviet Uzbekistan, who constituted one of the oppressed peoples living in the czarist prison of nations. Tashkent, as is known, was nearly devastated by an earthquake, April 26, 1966. I visited the city in 1969. Only some months before I had witnessed the most explosive of the ghetto rebellions against racist misery.

The year 1968, as Americans and the world will never forget, was the year of assassinations. It was the year of the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King (only three years before, in 1965, Malcolm X, militant Black leader, was killed). It was the year of the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy (killed only a month after King). It was the year of rebellion in 125 cities in 29 states, when 46 (almost all Black) were killed, 2,600 injured, 21,270 arrested in the week following the "death" of King. (Figures from *World Almanac 1969*, p. 74)

It was the year our nation's capital itself, patrolled by 55,000 troops, resembled an armed camp. Between 1960 and 1968, 191, with a few exceptions all Blacks, were killed in the "dirty war" against the Black ghettos.

I came to Tashkent from this world of cities of tinder-box tensions, from cities of "long hot summers" which had crossed the seasonal line. Thus, Tashkent summed up for me half a century of two approaches to solving the complex national question which baffled mankind for centuries and exacted a toll of rivers of blood.

The Reconstruction of Tashkent

I thought of reconstructed Volgograd (Stalingrad) as I surveyed rebuilt Tashkent. The defense of Stalingrad demonstrated the unity of 100 Soviet peoples as they confronted the mightiest and most barbaric war machine in history. Tashkent revealed the unity of the Soviet people in the face of natural disaster. In a way, Tashkent provides a peek into the future *when the brotherhood of man masters nature*.

Americans are familiar with, and prize the helping hand good neighbors extend each other in times of calamity. Tashkent was a *helping hand applied on an unprecedented national scale*. A few hours after the earthquake (while tremors were still being registered) Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Premier Aleksei Kosygin arrived in Tashkent. In our country, too, it is not uncommon for the President and leading public figures to visit

scenes of disaster. But that is about all that Tashkent and our own disaster-struck areas share in common.

Just recall the situation when in the spring of 1972, large areas in Pennsylvania and other states were devastated by floods. President Nixon made his appearance at the scenes of disaster. But the President, who did not hesitate to spend billions of dollars to destroy Vietnam cities, villages and dikes, was so parsimonious in giving assistance to Pennsylvania's destitute citizens that the state's Governor Shapp publicly protested the government's heartlessness. "Free Enterprise" meets the suffering inflicted by natural disaster by mobilizing the Red Cross, appealing for private contributions and special Congressional appropriations barely calculated to relieve the emergency. The hundreds of thousands of victims of disaster lose their homes and belongings, many of them being reduced to destitution for years. Only those who can afford the high insurance costs (most Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian families are too poor to "insure" themselves against disaster) are able to partially make up their losses.

Tashkent provides a stark contrast, not only in respect to the immediate period of destruction, but to the years that followed. With the survivors, many of whom wept and rejoiced as they relived Tashkent's tragedy and triumph, I witnessed the reconstruction of Tashkent on the screen. Thus, I hardly felt I was seeing a film. On the screen I watched as by train, plane, truck and bus, the working people of every Soviet Republic poured into Tashkent. It was as if the entire nation was moving to the front. And, indeed, it was! Construction workers from Moscow, Leningrad and other parts of the Russian Federation, from the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenia, Byelorussia, and the Baltic Republics, unloaded their huge cranes and excavators. All came with their own equipment and materials. The people of Tashkent—men, women and children—greeted them like liberators with flowers, music and tears.

Off the screen, I saw with my own eyes the fruits of their labor. Tashkent is a city reflecting the charm of the Soviet Union's multinational family. As such it is an eternal monument to its indestructible unity. It is the living symbol of the brotherhood of Soviet cities.

Each newly constructed area of apartment buildings (with the naturally accompanying schools, nurseries, polyclinics, cinemas, stores) bears the imprint of a particular Republic. The Ukrainian, Georgian, Byelorussian, Kazakh—all bore traces of their national designs, especially around the windows. The buildings constructed by the Baltic Republics, for example, were red-bricked.

96,000 lost their apartments, 35,000 their homes, 41 per cent of the enterprises were severely damaged, 181 schools and 600 food shops and many restaurants were demolished. The army of builders (joined by tens of thousands of soldiers and students who gave up their vacations) set themselves

the goal of speedily providing homes for the homeless and opening the schools. The building workers, themselves, lived in makeshift barracks—many for as long as two and three years. By September 1—three months after the earthquake—the schools were opened. To make up for the destruction, 20,000 apartments (twice the previous rate) were constructed annually.

Tashkent suffered no loss in population, since many who came to build remained to live (about 10 per cent of the population left the city after the earthquake). Thus, Tashkent today is not only more multinational in its appearance, but in its composition as well.

It suffered no panic or epidemics. Its children (about 30,000) were "adopted" temporarily by Soviet families, Young Pioneer camps and rest homes, all over the Soviet Union. New lifelong friendships were born in the throes of Tashkent's tragedy. The spirit of national unity sustained Tashkent as it once did Stalingrad (Volgograd). And like that once-destroyed city, it has not only been reborn—it breathes the same spirit of confidence in its future.

Despite its long history of severe earthquakes, it is now building a subway. I recall the surprise and skepticism among our international group of journalists when Mayor of Tashkent made the announcement. Later, at a meeting at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Vasid Mirzaev of the Institute of Seismology made it clear this was a carefully considered decision. The experiences of 1966 revealed that underground constructions can successfully withstand earthquakes. Thus, the tunnel built in Tashkent before the quake by Leningrad engineers and construction workers was unaffected. Moreover, drawing on the lessons learned, the entire city was divided into zones and the more dangerous spots were noted. The type of construction differed according to zones. For example, little housing or few high rise buildings are constructed in the epicenter zone. Buildings are specially reinforced with metal in this area. In all construction in Tashkent, the latest anti-quake methods are employed.

What particularly struck me as I listened to Mirzaev was that the entire city was being reconstructed with complete disregard for the all-important (in our country) "*real estate values*." I had just read an article in the *U.S. News and World Report*, December 15, 1969, which indicated these "*values*" figured uppermost in the minds of "free enterprise" city leaders of the San Francisco area. They apparently made no effort to draw similar lessons from the devastating 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

The *U.S. News and World Report* noted that Richard H. Jahns, dean of the school of earth sciences at Stanford University, estimated "an earthquake as intense as that of 1906 could cause \$10 billion in damage in the San Francisco Bay region and \$15-20 billion in the vicinity of Los Angeles." A more recent study by the California Division of Mines and Geology was more specific and menacing. According to the *International Herald Tribune*,

August 18-19, 1973, "earthquakes could kill more than 50,000 persons and cause \$21 billion in damage in the San Francisco and Los Angeles area by the year 2000." It said more than 10,000 persons could be killed and more than 40,000 seriously injured in an 8.3 magnitude earthquake on the San Andreas Fault near San Francisco that is about the same magnitude as the 1906 San Francisco quake which killed 700 persons and caused \$500 million in damage. About 30,000 persons would die in dam breaks during earthquakes in the San Francisco Bay area.

Jahns attributed this danger in large measure to the land-filling *in the zone of previous destruction of life and property*. And here is the kicker! The *U.S. News and World Report* pointed out that geologist experts warned, "a major quake could cause land created by filling in portions of San Francisco Bay to behave like a vibrating bowl of jelly, shaking poorly built structures to pieces." (My emphasis, M.D.) Yet, despite these predictions, real estate values continue to come first.

Here you have the contrast in values that underlies the moving story of Tashkent. Not only was the entire Soviet Union mobilized to rebuild Uzbekistan's capital, but its reconstruction was based on only one consideration—*how to protect it from future catastrophes*.

Kara Kum and Wounded Knee

I thought of the Kara Kum Canal, the lovely modern city of Ashkhabad built on former desert land and Turkmen scientists I met with as I read about Wounded Knee. The US Voice of America and that cold-war relic, Radio Free Europe, have been clamoring for a freer exchange of information and people. But I never heard either of these organs of "freedom" tell the American people the true stories of Tashkent, Kara Kum, or Ashkhabad. As for exchange of people, I'm all for vastly increasing tourism and delegations between our two countries and I have noted with pleasure the considerable rise in recent years in the number of Americans coming to the Soviet Union. But, I believe far too few workers and particularly far, far too few Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Indian Americans have been among them. And the main reason is clear—those are the Americans who can least afford a trip. Yet, these are the people who above all need to visit the Soviet Union to see what has been done in the cities and villages of peoples who were formerly oppressed.

It would be good if the militant fighters of Wounded Knee came to Turkmenia. Let them see with their own eyes how the entire Soviet people transformed the Kara Kum desert into a Garden of Eden. Let them visit

(as I did) the Turkmen Academy of Sciences whose members are mostly the sons and daughters of former nomads. Let them hear from her own lips the story of how Bibi Palvanova, whose mother wore the hated yashmak (a hood completely covering the face) and who herself was sold at the age of 14 to her husband, became Minister of Education of Turkmenia. Let them walk through the beautiful green city of Ashkhabad, a desert military outpost under the czars in 1881 and now an industrial, cultural and scientific center (253,000 population) on a par with any Western modern city. Let them visit the central library (with its stock of 1,500,000 volumes) in a land where less than one per cent could read or write in 1914-15.

Wounded Knee was the desperate stand of a brave people who are determined to call a halt to centuries of genocidal treatment. Countless Wounded Knees were decimated by wars of extermination, robbed of good lands and shunted into ever narrowing barren reservations. Here is how *The New York Times Encyclopedic Almanac* describes the results of this policy: "The most striking fact about the American Indians today is their tragic plight: Fifty thousand Indian families live in unsanitary, dilapidated dwellings; many in huts, shanties, even dilapidated automobiles. The unemployment rate among Indians is 40 per cent, more than ten times the national average. Forty two per cent of Indian schoolchildren—almost double the national average—drop out before completing high school. Indian literacy rates are among the lowest in the nation; the rates of sickness and poverty are among the highest. Ten per cent of American Indians over the age of 14 have had no schooling at all. Nearly 60 per cent have less than an eight grade education. . . Their infant mortality rate is 32.2 per 1,000 births—ten points above the national average. The incidence of new active cases of tuberculosis among Indians and Alaskan natives outstrips the national average *seven times*. More than half of the Indians obtain water from contaminated sources and use waste disposal facilities that are grossly inadequate. Virus infections, pneumonia and malnutrition—all of which contribute to chronic ill health and mental retardation—are common among Indian children. . . Fifty per cent of Indian families have cash incomes of below \$2,000 a year, 75 per cent below \$3,000." (This means 75 per cent are living in poverty, since the US Bureau of Labor Statistics sets below \$4,200 a year for a family of four as the poverty level. *M.D.*) This is a recital of conditions and statistics that spell one word: *genocide*.

The statistics of Turkmenia tell quite a different story. In fifty years of socialism the population of Turkmenia doubled (2,988,000 as of 1973). Fifty years ago, less than one per cent of the population were literate. Today, not only has illiteracy been completely wiped out, but some 60,000 students are enrolled in the impressive University of Turkmenia (in Ashkhabad) and in medical, agricultural and polytechnical institutes. Turkmenia has nearly

4,000 research associates working in scientific institutions. It has an Academy of Sciences.

Turkmenia has 25 doctors per 10,000 population, *a higher ratio than in the US*. Before the Revolution it had a total of only 20 doctors and 10 hospitals with 250-300 beds. Cholera, small pox, malaria and trachoma, which once plagued and decimated the population, have all been eliminated. The transformation is revealed in the dramatic rise in the average life-span. It was less than 35 years before the Revolution; it is now over 70.

But the story of Turkmenia can hardly be told in its statistics. Let me describe it as I saw it. Like Tashkent, Ashkhabad and the Kara Kum Canal provide living examples of *how a socialist society* practices brotherhood.

The Kara Kum desert covers an area of about 350,000 sq. kilometers, larger than France. The Turkmen people were largely nomads living in a feudal society. Life in this desert land was dominated by an eternal, roving search for a few precious drops of water. The search was expressed in an ancient Turkmen saying: "A drop of water is a drop of gold and at the same time a tear drop." The fight for these "drops of gold" constituted one of the decisive battles for social progress. The October Revolution catapulted Turkmenia from feudalism into socialism—skipping the stage of capitalism. *But socialism could not flourish in a waterless desert*. One of the main tasks of socialist construction was *to eliminate the backwardness of all areas (the heritage of capitalist and feudal societies) and bring the vast land extending from the Baltic to the Pacific up to the same, the most advanced level*. Thus, the half century history of the Soviet Union (with the exception of the interruption of World War II) constitutes an endless series of Kara Kum projects.

The wounds of the Great Patriotic War which took 20 million lives and ravished more than one-third of its territory had been hardly healed, when in 1954 the Soviet Government turned to the construction of the world's greatest canal across a desert, second in size only to the Sahara. The story of the *battle with Kara Kum* was related to me by Bazar Annaniazov, director of the Canal Administration. It was waged by a Soviet "international brigade" representing every Republic, under intense heat (47 degrees Centigrade, about 114 Fahrenheit in the shade) and with very little water to drink or wash in.

It was a battle not only with heat, but with moving sands and the notoriously wild Amu Darya River whose waters were harnessed to feed the man-made river. The struggle was led by a worker-scientist alliance, in which the Turkmen Academy of Sciences played a particularly important role.

But it was the transformations I saw on the Nine Commissars State Farm (named after nine communist commissars killed by the British and *Basmachi* counter-revolutionists in 1919) that particularly hit home to me the meaning of the battle of Kara Kum. My guides were Kurban Orazov, a handsome young Turkmen, the farm's chief agronomist, and Ivan Grabachev,

the chief zoo-technician, a Russian veteran with 40 years experience of struggle against mother earth. They proudly escorted me along rows of newly constructed brick single-family homes sitting on the edge of city-like paved streets. Nearby were dozens of similar homes in various stages of construction. The rent paid for these four-room homes, incidentally, was 4-5 roubles a month. I saw mountainous mounds of cotton covered with canvas awaiting transportation. Lined up in a vast motor park and housed in large repair shops, were 150 tractors, including 35 of the famous Tashkent four-row cotton-picking machines that had gathered in 99 per cent of the farm's 4,700 tons of "white gold." Built and in operation were two ten-year middle schools, a nursery and kindergarten, dining room, club house, summer theater and medical station. A hospital, bathhouse, a Palace of Culture, stores and a sports stadium were under construction.

Every foot of soil we trod on had been wrested from the desert, only three years before.

Compare this with the ever-tightening noose upon the Indian people which has driven them to desperate actions like Wounded Knee. Here is how *The New York Times* magazine, March 18, 1973 (Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.), describes the situation: "Grabs for Indian resources have reached the dimensions of a massive assault by all sorts of conglomerates and huge industrial combinations. Tribe after tribe has become split into factions, the government has encouraged and aided coal companies to strip-mine Indian lands, much of them held sacred by the traditionalist Indians; power companies to build monster, polluting generating plants, transmission lines, railroad spurs and truck highways on reservation; and real-estate and industrial development syndicates to erect large projects among the Indian settlements *for the use of non-Indians.*" (My emphasis. M.D.)

Ashkhabad—the City that Blooms in a Desert

The Soviet government, not only mobilized the nation's resources to conquer the Kara Kum, it had to reconstruct Ashkhabad itself, while its war wounds were still bleeding. Ashkhabad, a tiny village at the end of the 19th century, had become a thriving city of 100,000 after the October Revolution. But it was completely destroyed by an extremely severe earthquake in 1948. I spoke to many of those who lived through that ghastly minute (the city was levelled in one minute). It was far more destructive than the one which struck Tashkent (force 9).

Ashkhabad is a city of unobstructed desert skies; you truly walk in beauty under a celestial canopy of the clearest blue and cotton white. Ashkhabad fought the desert (much of the expanding city was only recently de-

sert) for trees, grass and flowers as well as cotton. And it wears its deep, many-hued green with the pride of a victor; it is a city of wide streets enveloped by endless archways and dotted with numerous parks.

Ashkhabad glories in its man-made river (it is now a thriving river port) and its huge new lake sitting on its outskirts, as only a people who have quenched an age-old thirst for water can. A nomadic desert people have now become not only prosperous farmers, skilled workers, scientists and artists, but seamen, fishermen and gardeners.

You see the beautiful, ancient geometric stylized patterns of its famed carpets everywhere: in the designs decorating its homes and buildings, in the rich red rugs (red for the desert sun) draped on walls, and spread out like the sun on every floor.

I thought of the beautiful ancient artcraft of our Indian people which has been reduced to the pitiful sale of trinkets to patronizing tourists. The Turkmen people (as all formerly nomadic peoples of the Soviet Union) have leaped into the approaching 21st century. They not only took their ancient culture and art with them—this culture is experiencing an unprecedented renaissance. I saw this in Ashkhabad's carpet factory. Here, in a most pleasant atmosphere, 200 craftsmen (all women) weave huge rugs, some of one million knots. These luxurious carpets contain the ancient, reborn soul of Turkmenia.

Like all Soviet cities, Ashkhabad is also a city of micro-housing areas: neat, modern apartment homes surrounded by a complex of schools, stores, polyclinics, cinemas, kindergartens, and nurseries. But the new areas retain the distinctive Turkmen flavor, with vines twining round buildings.

Ashkhabad is an important industrial center. I visited its highly mechanized glass factory that exports its products to many countries. But what, above all, impressed me was its beautiful Palace of Culture with stained-glass windows constructed by the voluntary labor of its workers. It was truly a labor of love, one could see. Like the Kara Kum Canal, this Palace was a monument to Soviet triumph over the desert. Incidentally, Turkmenia had only four small towns before the Revolution. All its many new cities were constructed in the fifty years of Soviet power.

A key role in Turkmenia's extraordinary progress was played by Ashkhabad's Turkmen Institute of Agriculture. It is a seat of learning that would be the envy of any major country. A. Rustamov, its charmingly optimistic rector, told me 90 per cent of the students come from and return to Turkmen villages. In its 40 years of existence, the institute has trained an army of agronomists, botanists and geologists for the battle with the Kara Kum. More than 7,000 agricultural specialists today form the core of Turkmenia's collective and state farms. Probably no major country, including the United States, can match this scientific army on a per capita basis. But the institute is not only concerned with producing agricultural experts. Rusta-

mov told me: "Our students are returning to their farms and villages. They must not only be good specialists; they must be village cultural leaders."

The institute was completely destroyed in the 1948 earthquake. Rustamov recalled: "It was 1 : 30 a.m. and I ran to my children's room." He was silent for some time, then continued: "We lived and studied in tents and makeshift huts for a year and a half. But, look at us now!" We had come to the institute's beautiful, stream-lined sunlit cultural center that houses its large library, 900-seat theater and innumerable recreation rooms.

"Do you want to know the history of our institute?" Rustamov asked me. "It's in these statistics: In 1930 when we were founded, we had 200 students—now we have 5,500; we had 30 professors and teachers, now we have 300; we had 10,000 books in our library, now we have 250,000."

Compare these achievements of a once-nomadic people to the struggle Indians in the United States have to conduct for even a rudimentary education. The *International Herald Tribune*, March 27, 1973, in an article appropriately titled "Struggling for Life," gives this description of Navajo Community College (a two-year college, M.D.): "America's first Indian-organized and operated institution of higher learning." The Indian people were decimated for centuries but were only accorded the right to some semblance of involvement in higher education (as this Community College) in 1969. That this is a "token" concession on the part of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a government white-dominated agency which runs all "Indian affairs," is indicated in this account of the "state of affairs" at Navajo College by the *International Herald Tribune*: "Of 3,421 students who enrolled at Navajo Community College since it opened, including 1,828 full-time students, *only 46 have graduated*. . . Navajo Community College shares facilities with a high school run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the tiny community of Many Farms. (Arizona, M.D.) The high school is a series of ugly green buildings. *Not a blade of grass, nor a bush grows on the campus* (this for Indian youth whose legends are poems to nature, M.D.) which turns into a sea of mud in winter, rain and snow. There is little for students to do. No town to visit, movies once a week. *Some of the bored students turn to drink—others to drugs.*" (My emphasis. M.D.) The *Tribune* also notes, "many of the students cannot read well," college policies "do not require students to attend class or faculty members to meet scheduled classes," nor is there "any supervision of what takes place in class." This, to prepare Navajo youth (60 per cent of the tribe's males are unemployed) to compete for jobs.

Front Line Fighters with Kara Kum

I want to tell the reader something about the role of Turkmen women in the battle with the Kara Kum desert and, especially, to introduce you to Ogulgozel Taganova, Chairman of the Bagir village Soviet just outside Ash-

khabad. The front line in the battle with the desert is led by the chairmen or rather chairwomen of the village Soviets. It is a struggle, not only to overcome a hostile nature, but to narrow the gap between village and city, to mold a new man. The struggle on this all-important village front is largely directed by women in the Turkmen Republic and in most Republics in Central Asia. And, judging from Ogulgozel Taganova, they are leading the fight with a fervor, firmness and the calm wisdom born of centuries of struggle for survival. The job of leading a village Soviet demands organizational ability and sensitive understanding of people—qualities particularly strong in women. Taganova, a handsome woman of 52, spoke with intimate knowledge of all aspects of life in this village of 6,300. Dressed in bright flowing native garments and speaking in the Turkmen language, she was equally at home with the progress of the huge, cattle-breeding state and collective farms, the situation in the village's two schools, the latest developments in its theater and cultural life, the problems of the youth and the special attention which the village Soviet pays to the needs of women.

The village Soviet is a collection of experts, all of whom have specific responsibilities. There is no gap between discussion and performance. And the chairman of the Soviet must not only be the overall expert, but the chief checker-upper. Taganova outlined the various functions performed by committees into which the village Soviet is subdivided. It is through these committees, charged with specific responsibilities, that the real work is done. The village Soviet combines executive and legislative powers, it implements its decisions. The health service committee, headed by a doctor member of the village Soviet, accounts regularly for its 35-bed hospital and 10-bed maternity home. The cultural committee supervises the village cultural club which has a 500-seat theater. The village has its own subsidized dramatic group and is regularly entertained by Ashkhabad's Turkmen academic dramatic theater and the ballet and opera theater. Ashkhabad's theaters have mobile song and dance groups which bring the stage to lonely shepherds tending their flocks.

The village Soviet has a youth committee which concentrates on encouraging youth, especially girls, to qualify themselves for institutions of higher learning. Like all schools, Bagir village's schools are now ten-year schools. The committee's work has borne fruit, Taganova told me proudly. Where once they were held back, the girls of the village are now in hot competition for entrance to colleges and technical schools.

But, perhaps one of Bagir's most exciting and important committees is the "Women's Soviet." The "Women's Soviet" consists of nine members. It deals with all problems confronting the women of the village. Its main functions are to aid women, especially mothers, with health problems, provide assistance to young housewives and to encourage and help women in

choosing their working careers. It is through the work of such committees in the villages that many gifted artists, doctors, engineers were produced.

Taganova, herself, is a product of such concrete concern. Her mother who was illiterate, was married off at the age of 12 and when her husband died she was promptly sold to another husband. Taganova finished school and became the first woman tractor driver in the Ashkhabad area. Then it was discovered she had an exceptional voice and she entered the Moscow Conservatory of Music. Despite pleas of the Conservatory's director, Taganova returned to her village before completing her training, when she learned her mother was quite ill.

Her deep attachment to her village was evident. I asked her if she confronted difficulties in being accepted as village leader by the men of the village. She smiled knowingly and replied philosophically: "In the beginning. But everyone got used to the idea. Besides, I know my people very well."

In the Land of the Pamirs

There are many areas in the Soviet Union where urban life actually only came into existence with socialism. I had heard that the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, the home of the Pamir Mountains, the roof of the world, was one such region. Thus, I was particularly anxious to learn not only how the leap from mountain hamlets to modern cities like Dushambe was made, but how the stage of capitalist development was skipped.

I never climbed the Pamirs. But the view from its summit could not have commanded a more majestic one than Tajikistan's spanning of its last half century of history. In Turkmenia, I had seen that the enemy was the desert. In Tajikistan, the foe was the mountains which occupy 93 per cent of its territory. Like Turkmenia, and so many other Soviet Republics, before Tajikistan could master nature, it had to overcome the legacy of its history. It was a far more difficult path to ascend than the Pamir's most hazardous trail.

"How did your land of mountain climbers make this, their most formidable ascent?" I asked Hamid Godoyev, a Candidate of Sciences. He ceremoniously poured out tea—a ritual which, I learned, precedes every discussion in Central Asian Republics. A mischievous twinkle played in his eyes. "There are those who say a land which never experienced capitalism cannot provide the best example of socialism," Godoyev noted. "But our history shows otherwise. Tajikistan skipped the stage of capitalism—we went from feudalism into socialism." He paused and I noticed he had no notes. "Let me show you in concrete terms what this means. There were

only six very small industrial enterprises on our territory and all told, only 204 workers in all Tajikistan. We had only ten schools (primary) and 13 teachers, one hospital with 40 beds. We had not a single newspaper, theater or club. There was not a single city, only thousands of tiny villages."

Godoyev spoke with the fervor of one reliving personal history. "During the first imperialist world war, the family of a drafted soldier received a letter. But no one in the village could read. The soldier's parents wept in fear, they were sure something terrible had happened. So they went to the next village. But no one could read there either. They went from village to village in a frantic search for a literate person."

Godoyev paused and continued his description. "We have very little land, as you can see. And there was very little water. The primitive agriculture was controlled by the *bais*-feudal landlords. The *bais* had the water and took half the harvest for any water they supplied to water-hungry peasants. All-consuming taxes accompanied poverty. If a daughter got married there was a tax, if a son was born—another tax." Godoyev sighed: "That's feudalism. So you may ask how could a land so burdened by its backward past avoid capitalism and advance toward socialism? The answer is: only by receiving the wholehearted, selfless help that would enable us to catch up with the more advanced Russian people. And help we received! Entire plants were moved to Tajikistan from Central Russia and with them workers and technicians. Around them, an army of Tajik workers and technicians were trained. The same happened on the cultural front—Russian scientists, agronomists, teachers helped organize our schools. They were our first teachers." He paused and emphasized: "*Up to 1935, 85-90 per cent of our budget was financed by the Soviet government.*"

Godoyev urged us to drink our tea and continued: "Our Revolution had not only historic backwardness to contend with but internal enemies. The armed struggle with the *Basmachi*, feudalist counter-revolutionary bands who were aided by the British, continued until 1932. Many of our first teachers and first organizers of collective farms were murdered by the *Basmachi*. And many of these martyred heroes were Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Uzbeks."

He paused in tribute, then his face lit up. "Now what are we doing to build communist society? It's a very complicated question and it will take a lot of time. First, to build communist society, a firm material basis is needed. And that is what we are constructing very rapidly everywhere. That's the significance of the Nurek hydroelectric power station which will have a 12,000 million kwh annual capacity. (It has since been completed, M.D.)

"Fifty years ago, Tajikistan had a total capacity of 100 kwh. Now we have 370 large plants—among them electrical, chemical, aluminium, machi-

ne-tool. Our new textile combine is among the largest in the Soviet Union. Our mountains are yielding their vast mineral treasures. From the Nakulah Mountains alone, we can supply the entire world with salt for hundreds of years. Our agriculture is well on the road to mechanization. Our cotton production is almost 100 per cent mechanized. In the past five years, 50,000 hectares of arid land have been made fertile through irrigation and amelioration." Godoyev stopped to emphasize another point.

"But building communism means more than industrial and agricultural advancement. It means molding a new person, highly educated, cultured; molding hard workers with high moral and ethical principles, cleansed of the backwardness of the past. That is the most difficult and most complicated task of all. We are under no illusions; we know that much still remains to be done. The past—especially religious past—still lingers on. There are still cases when very young girls get married. We still have petty thieves and petty speculators. But these are remnants of the past. The main thing is that a firm cultural foundation for educating communist man and woman has been established. A land of illiteracy, we have become a country of scientists. Our scientists played an active role in the *Lunokhod* project. Our Academy of Sciences has ten institutes attached to it. We have more than 3,000 ten-year schools, seven higher educational institutions, among them a State University, 40 special technical, scientific and cultural institutes, and one of the best medical institutes in Central Asia. We have 16 permanent repertory theaters. We have 1,200 libraries, including branches on every collective and state farm and in every plant. We have 62 newspapers including seven Republican papers, and 16 magazines."

Godoyev stopped suddenly to exclaim: "But you are not drinking our delicious green tea. I'm a poor host." Our audible sipping seemed to reassure him. He continued: "Communism also means eliminating the gap between city and village. We had no cities. Even Dushambe was a *kishlak* (a village). It now has a population of 350,000. We now have 16 big cities and 37 towns. Much still remains to be done. But you will see for yourself when you visit our state and collective farms, how the differences between city and village are being eliminated."

Godoyev pointed to the beautiful Tajik design that decorated the room and all public buildings. "Our ancient culture is flourishing and developing. We live in harmony with our Russian, Uzbek, Georgian, Tatar, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian brothers and sisters and the many other peoples who make up our Republic." He paused a moment in thought. "What is it that unites or disunites people? From our history we know. Private ownership disunites. Before the Revolution a brother killed a brother for five meters of land. Today, our people are united on the basis of public and collective ownership."

Help to Kishinev

The story of the Soviet Government's helping hand to Kishinev, capital of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, deserves to be told for several reasons. First, it demonstrates the special assistance given to those Republics which initially formed part of the young Soviet state but for historical reasons were compelled to make a detour from the path of socialism. Thus, the peoples of these Republics have had almost a quarter of a century less of socialist life.

One of the most remarkable chapters in Soviet history is how this 25-year gap was made up. My visits to the Baltic Republics and Moldavia convinced me that in the basic sense, in all spheres of life, these areas are on a par with the rest of the Soviet Union. But, understandably, the effects of almost 25 years less of socialism still make themselves felt. The gap is revealed in some respects in Soviet cities which had decades less of socialist planning and construction.

An example of this is Kishinev. But, Kishinev drew my attention for another reason. One day I came upon a resolution adopted in 1971 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the USSR Council of Ministers which outlined a comprehensive plan for the reconstruction of Kishinev. Now, in the ten years I covered urban affairs for my newspaper, not once did I come across a similar law enacted by our Congress in respect to any city in the US, let alone a city comparable in size to Newark, New Jersey. Thus, I was understandably intrigued. Several US cities have been pleading for years for some Federal aid to stop the decay, let alone to reconstruct the entire city.

I decided a trip to Kishinev to see *how* this decision was being implemented would present a refreshing contrast in the approaches of two governments to the problems of the cities. I will let the reader judge if "this trip was necessary," as the saying goes.

I had a meeting scheduled with Ivan Kuskevitch, Kishinev's young and dynamic Mayor. But I decided to do some on the spot checking before our discussion so that it could be more concrete.

Point one of the resolution stated that 34,000 new apartments were to be built during the 9th Five-Year Plan (1971-75). And point one seemed to be Kishinev's concentration. Typical Soviet micro-areas (including schools, nurseries, polyclinics, stores and plenty of greenery) were springing up around nine-storey apartment buildings. I again checked the resolution. It called for the construction of a new and more modern Moldavian Opera and Ballet Theater (just imagine Congress voting funds for such a "frill" for Newark). Before me loomed the spider-like skeleton of Kishinev's burgeoning cultural pride.

From time to time passersby would pause to inspect its progress. And from the impressive monument in Victory Square to Soviet soldiers who liberated Kishinev from the Nazis (created by the famous Moldavian sculptor, Lazar Dudinovskiy, whom I had the pleasure to meet), I could observe the rising structure of the 16-storey *Intourist* Hotel.

Kishinev was one huge construction site: ditches for almost 40 miles of sewers and conduits, 60 miles of gas mains, torn up roads on the city's outskirts (66 miles of modern highway are being built). As I moved from site to site, the exciting image of reconstructed Kishinev increasingly captivated me. Here was where hospitals (with 1,770 beds) were to rise. And this vacant field was to be the home of a new 2,000-seat circus. And this lovely garden-like spot would resound to the shrill voices of Young Pioneers (it will be the site of a magnificent Young Pioneer Palace); and here Kishinev's railway workers (they compose 20 per cent of the city's working force) would spend their leisure hours in their new Palace of Culture (no royalty in history possessed the number of palaces Soviet workers have at their disposal). And so the picture of new Kishinev unfolded—a new large department store, a publishing center—all were springing to life. But I saw another thing during my tour; I understood the necessity for the decision of the Soviet Government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Kishinev is a lovely city of parks, fine architecture, impressive monuments, thriving industry and a stimulating cultural life. It is framed rather than enclosed by the breathtakingly beautiful Moldavian rolling hills and is dotted with countless sidewalk gardens. It is one of the few cities in the world where you can hear the heavenly singing of nightingales *in the center of the city* (in Pushkin Park). But Kishinev, I could see (and its city officials admitted), had a serious housing problem. It was evident in the considerable number of pre-socialist houses, largely one- and two-storey buildings, many of which were hardly in the best of condition. Kishinev was a socialist city for about a year and then it was caught in the eye of the Nazi storm. About 55 miles from the Romanian border, it was savagely bombed only four hours after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. The Hitlerites and the troops of the Romanian fascist dictator, Ion Antonescu, heaped terrible destruction and suffering on the city. It was almost 80 per cent demolished in the three years of occupation and more than 30,000 Jewish and Moldavian inhabitants of Kishinev were killed. The city's population which was 100,000 in 1940, was reduced to 60,000 by the end of the war.

With massive aid from the Soviet state, Kishinev was not only rebuilt, it was transformed from an industryless oversized village (it had a candle factory, small shops and 70 churches under Romanian fascist rule) into a modern Soviet city. Today the city has a population of 400,000, it has 110 large factories which export their goods to 40 countries.

With the picture provided by my tour and an acquaintance with some of Kishinev's background, I was ready for my meeting with Mayor Ivan Kuskevitch. What I wanted to know was: how did it come about that the directing bodies of the Soviet Union made such a decision about a city? Kuskevitch seemed puzzled by my stress on *city* so I explained that any US city would rejoice at a fraction of such interest, let alone aid, on the part of the Federal Government. Kuskevitch shook his head sympathetically and noted that such problems should be the natural concern of "any" government. "Besides, you must remember we are the capital of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic," he added. His tone, his natural assumption that this was equally regarded by the Moldavian Republic and the Soviet Government as sufficient cause for special attention, particularly struck me. The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR had voted to make Moscow the model communist capital. This more or less is the attitude taken toward the capitals of all 15 Republics. The decision on Kishinev also had much to do with the inherited problems I indicated earlier.

Kuskevitch was in on the project from its inception. An article, appearing in *Izvestia*, June 26, 1972 (four days after our discussion), outlined the scope of the plan of reconstruction and how it was being implemented. It fully conformed to what I had seen on my tour of inspection.

Kuskevitch discussed Kishinev's problems with me frankly. Present Kishinev was laid out in 1947 by the renowned architect, Academician Shchusev, who designed the Lenin Mausoleum in Moscow's Red Square. Shchusev did wonders, Kuskevitch pointed out, "but a city outgrows even the best of planners. Thus, our Republic and our City Soviet—all agreed that our capital did not meet the standards of modern town planning." The Mayor paused and simply added: "And so, we appealed to the Soviet Government to help us." I recalled the persistent frantic appeals of our harassed Mayors to an unheeding Washington. Kuskevitch noted that Brezhnev was very familiar with Kishinev's needs, since the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the first secretary of the Moldavian Communist Party in 1950-54. The Mayor told me the Soviet Government's aid was very concrete. It almost doubled the amount of money to be spent on reconstruction of Kishinev. About 30 per cent of all expenditures are being supplied by the Soviet Government.

Moscow architects were laying out plans for the new department stores, covered market and restaurants. Leningrad's were designing the sixteen-storey hotel, the press-publishing complex and new cinema theater. Kiev architects were building the new Russian drama theater and Tbilisi architects, the city library.

But the most important result of the Soviet Government's aid was the spirit it had stimulated among Kishinev's citizens. Tens of thousands pledged to donate 100 hours of labor to reconstruct their city. Saturdays and

Sundays, thousands participated in weekly *subbotniks*. Deputies to the City Soviet, led by Mayor Kuskevitch, were demonstrating leadership by example (there are 400 deputies, 238 men, 162 women, and more than half are workers). They were responsible for helping carry out plans at specific construction sites. None are professional politicians, since deputies are not paid. Many are trained engineers and technicians.

Kuskevitch is an economist and for five years has been concerned with housing problems. Kuskevitch was quite open about weaknesses and problems which he cited in his *Izvestia* article. He pointed out that more attention had to be paid to economizing on construction and modernizing methods of work, making greater use of underground space, especially in building garages, more effectively utilizing the latest construction equipment and striving for better proportion and harmony in housing and public building construction. "Kishinev is 500 years old but it is a young city," Kuskevitch exclaimed. It's young in the same sense as the many ancient cities which have been reborn in the fifty years of the USSR.

Public Education

From a New York to a Moscow School

One of my first acts upon arrival in the Soviet Union was to "go to school." I spent three delightful weeks in Moscow classrooms on all levels and I watched the children and youth with pleasure and pain.

Pleasure because nothing is more beautiful than the sight of happy children in the process of discovering a new world.

Pain, because only a few weeks before I had witnessed quite different scenes in our New York schools. I had come from schools that were battlegrounds, not places of learning.

For ten years, as a reporter for my newspaper and as a parent, I observed and participated in this struggle. Our schools had become battlegrounds because for years they had not been adequately teaching, especially those in most need of such teaching—Black, Puerto Rican, Indian and Chicano children.

I had seen American mothers, especially the mothers of these educationally deprived children, goaded into desperate demonstrations, picket lines and boycotts. I had seen teachers, most of whom once regarded walking a picket line as beneath their "professional dignity," taking to the New York streets in militant strikes because they were fed up with conditions which made it impossible for them to teach. Teachers' strikes today, just as parents' boycotts, are part of the US school scene.

Thus, as I entered Moscow schools, I revelled in their calm, in the normal atmosphere of teaching that surrounded them. I mentioned this to my teacher-guide who seemed puzzled by what appeared to her as an odd observation.

I was frankly a bit disturbed. Hadn't she read about the turmoil that is the "normal" in the schools of our major cities?

She had. But her attitude reflected something which I since frequently came across in the Soviet Union and on many aspects of life in the United States. She found it hard to grasp why schools should not be able to teach. And why shouldn't there be the pleasant, calm atmosphere that makes it possible for teachers to teach and children to learn?

Nothing speaks more for Soviet society and its schools than the fact that its parents, teachers, and children accept all this as normal.

This does not mean that Soviet parents have no "worries." Soviet schools have their problems which I will discuss. Just as Soviet cities are cities without crisis, so are their schools crisis-free.

One can only fully appreciate the advances in Soviet education by looking back to its beginning: czarist Russia was a land of illiteracy; three quarters of its population could neither read nor write. Not only was illiteracy almost complete in the national provinces, but 40 of the 100 nationalities had no alphabet.

This was the czarist heritage the new Soviet Republic had to build on. Alexander Arsenyev, member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, noted that "by the most 'optimistic' forecasts of czarist officials, the introduction of general primary education in the country would take at least two centuries." The more than half century of Soviet existence is the story of a cultural revolution that is unprecedented in mankind's history. From a land of illiteracy to a land of the most avid readers in the world—one quarter of the books in the world published in the Soviet Union!

The milestones along this miraculous path denote the giant strides. A mass campaign wiped out illiteracy and in a single decade cultural backwardness was overcome. Though it had to devote its energy to rebuilding on the ruins of World War I, the Civil War and intervention, the young socialist Republic allotted huge sums to education. Never, even in its most bitter days, did it skimp on educating its children.

To Bring Up Good Human Beings

The Soviet people's goal is the construction of communist society that will eliminate the inequalities still existing under socialism and bring abundance to all and make possible the fullest creative development of the people. Therefore special attention is paid to the molding of the new man.

The Soviet Union trains 285,000 engineers annually as compared to 60,000 in the United States. It has more than three million engineers, the US has 990,000. But, though no one recognizes more the importance of training scientists and technicians in this age of the scientific technical revolution (and there is recognition that Soviet schools have much to do to catch up with the needs of the time in this respect), the prime aim of Soviet schools is to help bring up *good human beings*.

This goal was put to me by a well-known Soviet mathematician, Aleksei Markushevitch, Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Pedagogical Sciences: "We want to imbue them with the realization that without association with other people, without the spirit of comradeship, without the ability to restrain and suppress one's egoistic inclinations and emotions, *one cannot merit the proud title of human being*" (My emphasis, M.D.).

The Soviet child's school world is in full harmony with the world he meets outside as a student and the world he joins as a producer.

The rebellion shaking our colleges and now engulfing our high schools, above all, is a rebellion of US youth against the unbearable contradictions between what they have long been taught and the reality.

I don't want to give the impression that the Soviet child does not come across people who are far from those one may regard as the builders of the communist society. The Soviet child does meet drunkards, self-seek-

ing carerists, and petty bureaucrats. He does come across situations in real life that are at odds with the principles of socialism. But these still existing blemishes are not only not typical of Soviet life, they stand out because they are in sharp conflict with the mainstream of Soviet life. These blots are just that—blots of dirt inherited from the past, that time and a good social scrubbing are diminishing. The Soviet child sees all Soviet society, including his school, participating in that scrubbing.

The Soviet child learns in schools that are as far removed from schools where dope-pushers hang around as our planet is from the moon, he knows the police (militia) as friends and true protectors, and can't imagine the need for school boycotts or demonstrations. School is the Soviet children's best friend.

But, what is the major problem confronting our city schools?

Here is how the *New York Times* school expert, Fred M. Hechinger, puts it in *The New York Times Encyclopedic Almanac*, 1970: "The major issue confronting public education is the crisis of the urban centers, with their concentration of *disadvantaged* Black, Puerto Rican or Mexican-American children."

And who are these *disadvantaged* children?

They come from ghetto slums, from homes hit twice as hard by unemployment, disease, from areas rife with crime, dope-pushers and corrupt, brutalised police. It means that these "deprived" children are deprived of nurseries, roam dangerous streets after school while their parents are at work.

In my four years in the Soviet Union, I never came across a single "difficult school." There are no such schools because as I described in a previous chapter, there are no "disadvantaged ghettos" or "poor" neighborhoods in any Soviet cities.

There are no dangerous streets because, as I shall describe later, organized crime is practically non-existent in the Soviet Union. Besides, Soviet children do not have to use streets for playgrounds. They have thousands of Pioneer Palaces and Pioneer Camps, that have everything in them that children can dream of. They have more than 100 theaters, and their own newspaper (*Pionerskaya Pravda*, 10 million circulation).

Dope-pushers? They are alien and incomprehensible fears for Soviet parents. Who is to profit from dope in a society that has long eliminated profiteers? Unemployed parents? There has been no unemployment in the Soviet Union since 1930.

Gap between Soviet child and teacher? Nowhere in the world as some US educators, themselves, noted, is there a closer or more affectionate relationship between teacher and pupil than in the Soviet Union. True, there are at times gaps in understanding between teacher and child. There are teachers who lack understanding of their pupils. This was the subject of a

popular film here, *Let's Live till Monday*. But, the entire atmosphere, as I observed in my tour of classrooms, breathes the kind of spirit of teacher-pupil relationship that our teachers and children truly long for.

During the 1960's, Black students, all over the United States, rose up in militant mass demonstrations, demanding that their history, long ignored, be taught in schools.

The history of more than 100 peoples making up the Soviet family of nations is taught to all Soviet children, who read in Russian as well as other languages the works of all great writers of all its peoples. The textbooks are prepared by the Soviet Union's outstanding scholars in every field.

Harmony Between Soviet Schools and Soviet Life

Soviet mothers can enter their children into creches when they are about six months old. Pre-school training is not regarded as a privilege. It is the normal right of the mass of Soviet children. Creches and nursery schools are attended by 13 million children—more than half of the children of pre-school age. Of these, about ten million attend nursery schools. And room is being made for an additional two million in the 9th Five-Year Plan (1971-75).

Moscow has more than 300,000 children, aged 3-7, in 2,200 nurseries. The fee ranges from three roubles 50 kopecks to 12 roubles 50 kopecks a month, depending on the family income. The Moscow Soviet pays the additional cost which averages 45-50 roubles a month. But, you have to visit these nurseries to really appreciate the tender affectionate care combined with skilful training and inculcation of the spirit of collectivity and discipline, Soviet children receive.

I visited many nurseries all over the Soviet Union. There are no happier, no more beautiful children than those who know they are loved. Take nursery No. 342 in the Krasnaya Presnya District of Moscow. The 145 children are taught by 12 highly trained teachers in music, dance, art, and foreign languages. The children are under constant medical supervision.

Each group has its own dormitory, playrooms and toys. The nursery also has its own puppet theater and sport ground. *This is the Soviet child's introduction to the world of the classroom.* While for millions of US children of our big cities, especially for the "disadvantaged," their introduction is the teeming jungle of the ghetto streets.

What impressed me in my visits to classrooms was not only the serious atmosphere of study I found, but that the children seemed to be enjoying their work. I saw this in a third-year class of eight and nine year olds studying English in Moscow's special secondary school No. 31. It is one of 50 such schools where English is taught to all, starting with the second year, and in senior classes some subjects are taught in English.

The children seemed to enjoy the discovery of each new word. In the sixth year geography class, geography and grammar were skilfully combined. Alexander Markov, the teacher, barely paused when correcting a verb tense here, a geographical location, there. The boys and girls—aged 13-14—not only answered questions but debated the sources of the Nile in commendably fluent English.

I visited a tenth-year class (17-18 year olds) where Socrates and participles were discussed in quite literate English. Irene Ureena, the teacher, was equally demanding in grammatical as well as philosophical precision. I must confess, I was happy she didn't call on me, especially to answer her probing questions on participles.

What gives Moscow's classrooms the atmosphere of serious study that would delight the hearts of frustrated US mothers, is that at no time is learning looked upon as pointless, as it is by so many of our schoolchildren, especially the "disadvantaged" who at an early age are familiar with the economic, social and racial "facts" of life.

Soviet cities (and its villages, too) are free from the exploding tensions that characterize our own, because Soviet society does not dump its youth on the streets anywhere nor does it pile frustration on frustration that goad them into desperate outbursts.

The street scene that met me when I first arrived in Moscow included countless notices on bill boards, plant bulletin boards, in store windows, on buses. They read: "*Vass priglasiaiet*"...—you are "invited"... What kind of an invitation is it that seems to grace Soviet streets, I asked Alla Borisovna, my interpreter-secretary. "They are inviting people to take jobs in their enterprises," she explained, matter-of-factly. The Soviet Union, as I discovered on my trips, is one vast land of such "invitations"!

Thus, Soviet youth know that the classroom leads to waiting jobs for all: in schools to teach others, in laboratories, in factories, on collective farms, or on the stage or concert hall. I cannot stress too much, that it is the link with this Soviet reality which gives purposefulness to the Soviet classroom. Soviet youth speak of their ambitions with a confidence.

The country needs them to construct gigantic hydro-electric stations as in Krasnoyarsk, Nurek and Ust-Ilim. It needs them as scientists, engineers, technicians and highly skilled workers to link the scientific technological revolution to the advantages of the socialist system in countless factories and plants.

It needs them as agronomists, zoologists, veterinarians, to man the huge industrialized farms that are transforming Soviet agriculture.

It needs them to unlock the treasure houses of the frozen North, to conquer the deserts of Turkmenia, and the mountains of Tajikistan, to build hundreds of new "youth" cities.

It needs them to maintain and expand the great cultural stream that

flows into the tiniest Soviet hamlet. *It needs them!* This, every school child knows and takes for granted. One of the most thrilling aspects of my travels was to see this implemented everywhere in life.

This is not to say, all find the place in life they seek or fulfill their ambitions. Abilities are not equal nor do all apply themselves equally to their studies. I met plenty of Soviet youth who were far from satisfied with the position they had achieved. But, even in such cases, it was rare indeed, that I came across someone who felt he was cheated by Soviet society or his school. They know that the doors of learning are still open to them.

Studying is a way of life in the Soviet Union—it never stops at any age. About 80 million Soviet citizens study. About four million workers study in 11,000 evening schools or learn by correspondence. They receive all the aid they need to continue their studies from their enterprises. Those who study and work at the same time get time off to prepare for exams, are exempted from night work and the more arduous types of labor, get additional paid holidays that could extend from 20-40 days to as much as four months, and are provided with a 50 per cent discount on travel fares to and from places of study, if they live in other cities or in the country.

Thus, with this living link between Soviet society and the school, it is understandable why the connection between theory and practice is a natural one and present in all studies. I found it in all the schools I visited. You cannot appreciate or understand the discipline, the intensive classroom teaching, extracurricular training and homework study which are on an incomparably higher level than ours, without grasping this.

Soviet schools take seriously their job of equipping young men and women to play their role in advancing their country toward communism. This calls for people who have absorbed the best contributions of past societies, who are in step with the swift pace of the scientific technological revolution. It means much more than that. It means bringing up not only proficient engineers and technicians but human beings who have absorbed the finest cultural contributions of mankind.

A Talk with the Minister of Education, M. Prokofiev

Mikhail Prokofiev, Minister of Education and Corresponding Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, with whom I had the pleasure of discussing educational questions, publicly stated that in the new school curricula for secondary schools introduced on September 1, 1972, "art subjects account for 40 per cent of the hours, considerably more than before and in non-Russian schools where pupils study their own language and literature in addition to Russian and other subjects, for 47 per cent."

Secondary education continues also in vocational schools which train

skilled workers and in specialized schools which produce intermediate-grade technological personnel. All classes work a six-day week, six-hour day.

When I "went to school" in Moscow in 1969, preparations were under way for the introduction of the new curricula Prokofiev referred to. Soviet educators and the Soviet government were not satisfied that the schools were either tapping the full potentials of Soviet children and youth or keeping pace with scientific progress, or adequately educating them in the spirit of communist upbringing.

Markushevitch, Vice-President of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, who was head of a commission that was revising textbooks and curricula, told me that it was the opinion of Soviet educators that the learning capacities of children especially as regards mathematics and scientific subjects, still have unexplored potentialities. Markushevitch emphasized the creative character of childhood "when everything appears new and significant, when inquisitiveness is inexhaustible, and when memory and imagination still retain their indomitable freshness and flexibility." The recognition of the "creative" years largely explains the high standards of Soviet schools.

The introduction of the new curricula was preceded by experiments in a number of Soviet areas. I was present in a second grade classroom (8-9 years old) attached to Moscow's Pedagogical School No. 2, where children were being taught algebra and geometry. The children did not appear to be overawed by the complexities of this exact science. The teacher treated her pupils like adults without the faintest trace of a patronizing manner. The children responded in kind. They stood at the blackboard like little scientists. Thus, I knew from my experience how right Prokofiev was when he pointed out: "People belonging to the older and even middle-aged generation have been astonished to see a second-former coping quite happily with the equation: a plus b equals c , etc., in our experimental school."

But the experiment also applied to subjects in the humanities and led to improvements in teaching the Russian language and history. It frees pupils from excessive pressure of compulsory studies and gives them more opportunities for independent work according to their individual preferences and abilities. Factual information and dates have been reduced to a reasonable minimum. Stress is placed on independent use of material, thinking for oneself.

The experiment is over. Now, new curricula and textbooks worked out by the best Soviet minds are adding a new quality to study for almost 50 million schoolchildren. Children are familiarized with the principles of operating electronic computers as well as with the great writers of their own and other countries. I found Soviet children were as at home with our Mark Twain and Jack London as our own. I want to emphasize all this is for almost 50 million.

One of the most heartening things about Soviet schools is their truly

democratic character. Nowhere are children given more opportunity for fullest development.

But the Soviet educational system, unlike ours, unequivocally rejects "elitism." It rejects the elitist approach even expressed by such an outstanding educator as Conant, who in his well-known book *The American High School* singled out the upper 20 per cent of students for study of sciences, languages and advanced mathematics.

It rejects the concept of "uneducable" children (even when it comes to those with serious problems of retardation as I shall later describe). It rejects the racist concepts of "inferior peoples"—"inferior children" behind the approach to "difficult schools" which transform teachers into custodians of classrooms, and which are largely responsible for a situation where Black and Puerto Rican, Chicano and Indian children lag considerably behind white children.

The half-century record of Soviet schools which produced scientists and great writers from among peoples who had no alphabets has shattered the myth of superior and inferior peoples, the logical and frightful conclusion of elitism. The Soviet educational system constitutes the greatest demonstration in history of the vast talent and ability embodied in the children of workers, peasants, and oppressed nations and nationalities that were long suppressed by previous feudal and capitalist society and given full rein only under socialism.

Visiting a Music School

This was repeatedly impressed on me but perhaps nowhere more than when I visited Odessa's famous Stolarsky School of Music. On that same trip to the Ukraine, I met Duke Ellington who was making an enormously successful tour of the Soviet Union. Duke was extremely impressed by the musical atmosphere in the Soviet Union and incidentally, with the widespread familiarity and appreciation of his own compositions. "The Soviet Union," the famous American jazz musician told me, "has the climate, the proper atmosphere for music."

Duke's perceptive observation haunted me as I listened to little Mila Rechtman, her long braids flapping as her tiny fingers raced over the piano keys in the recital hall of Stolarsky School of Music. Milochka, as Evgeniya Globa, the school's deputy director, affectionately called her, was not giving a concert. She was playing Debussy for the US correspondent who had come to find out why this renowned music school discovered and gave to the world artists like David Oistrakh, Emil Gilels, and Yakov Zak.

Tiny Milochka and her huge piano seemed to be one. And in every rehearsal room, Evgeniya Globa and I entered, there appeared to be the same unity of student, instrument and teacher.

Stolarsky is a world of music for talented children. It's a world children enter not by chance or privilege. It's a world that seeks out the talented child. Stolarsky's teachers scour the villages and settlements of the Ukraine, visiting countless nursery schools. The radio and TV bring the announcements of Stolarsky's auditions to the remotest Soviet villages. And there are similar hunts for talent in all respects, not only in music.

Since 1961, the school has a boarding school attached to it. About 100 of the 363 students live there. The rest, who are from Odessa, live at home. Board and tuition are free. In addition, as in all Soviet schools, the students receive stipends. The school has its own polyclinic. The 363 students are taught by 110 teachers. That's about one teacher for every three students. Many of the teachers are the Soviet Union's finest performers, since teaching is highly regarded by them. The 11-year school includes a curricula of general secondary education in addition to intensive music courses. Piano is taught from the first to the 11th grade, and harp and brass instruments from the 5th, contrabass from the 9th grade. Orchestra lessons start with the 8th grade and piano accompaniment and chamber ensemble begin with the 9th. The school's main courses are piano, violin, brass and theory.

The school is named after Pyotr Stolarsky, a famous music teacher. The school was founded in 1933, but actually started to function fully in 1939. The Nazis burned it to the ground and destroyed its instruments and library when they occupied Odessa. With Odessa's liberation in 1944, the teachers returned and helped rebuild the school with their own hands. That same year Stolarsky died in Sverdlovsk.

What makes the Stolarsky school unique is that it is not unique in the Soviet Union. Almost every Soviet city of size has its Stolarsky.

One can only imagine what a flowering of musical and cultural talent we would witness in our own country if we, too, had our Stolarsky schools, especially for the countless children of our Harlems whose great talents are crushed in the rat-ridden slums of the ghettos.

The Pioneer Republic

The school, of course, is the Soviet child's second home and the chief molder of his or her character. But, Soviet children have a third "home"—perhaps the one they find most pleasant of all—their Young Pioneer organization. One of the things that first struck my wife and me when we arrived in Moscow was that we saw very few children playing in the streets. Street life that is so much part of our city kids' existence hardly figures in the lives of Soviet children. One can romanticize the unforgettable street adventures of one's childhood and bemoan this "loss" of freedom of the streets for Soviet kids. And there are those who portray the Young Pioneer

organization as the first stage in "Soviet regimentation." Would that our kids suffered from such "regimentation"!

I came to know first hand this "regimented" life. And I never met more happy "prisoners." One of my most pleasurable and memorable experiences in the Soviet Union was my close four-year relationship with the Moscow Pioneers. Their "home," their Palace, beyond the fairy tale dreams of any child, was practically my own. And so, as a grandfather I saw my own childhood dreams come to life on Lenin Hills. No one is more sensitive to the secret yearnings of adults than children. And my Pioneer friends readily took me to their hearts and shared with me their pride and joy in their Palace. Mine was not a guided tour. Their clubs, workshops, their celebration of international revolutionary anniversaries, their countless solidarity meetings, became my own.

It was Angela Davis, particularly, that brought us together. I received a telephone call only a couple of days after news was flashed of the "capture" of Angela Davis. It was from the Moscow Young Pioneer Palace's Club for International Friendship. "We want to free Angela," a girl's shrill, excited voice exclaimed to me in well-taught English. "Please, come to our meeting and tell us what we can do. We *must* free her," the voice rose higher. However, when I entered the packed auditorium, I saw there was little need for any directions. Tens of thousands of petitions from schools all over Moscow had already been collected.

They were written in painstakingly neat penmanship. Many had penned their messages in English: "Dear Angela, we love you." Galya Burenkova of the 9th class in school 241, rose to recite the poem she had just written. "My heart, sound the alarm," Galya cried out. I looked at the faces of her red-scarfed fellow Pioneers. Theirs was the irresistible outrage of the pure of heart. Thus, began the movement to free Angela Davis that swept the Soviet Union.

I know of this personally because, understandably, as the Moscow correspondent of Angela's newspaper, I was frequently called upon to speak at many schools, Pioneer meetings and on Pioneer TV programs. Together we welcomed her sister, Fanny Davis Jordan, when she visited the Young Pioneer Palace. Together, we greeted Angela in a memorable victory celebration in the same auditorium where the campaign for her freedom was initiated.

I will never forget the pride with which an honor guard of Pioneer girls and boys escorted Angela around their Palace. But even more memorable was the look in Angela's eyes as she went from room to room. Angela, of course, could not see all the facilities of this 54-hectare children's paradise which was built in 1962. It would take her almost a week to visit and spend even a few minutes in the 830 circles and sections in the 14 clubs embracing 23,000 youngsters from five to seventeen years of age. Like the

world famous Young Pioneer Camp, Artek (which I will soon describe), the Lenin Hills Palace is regarded by them as their Young Pioneer Republic. And well may it be.

Beautiful and modern in construction, it has eleven buildings, workshops, a planetarium and observatory, a stadium, a closed-in swimming pool, an airdrome and landing strip for sports aircraft, a winter garden, concert hall, children's theater, film studio, art studios, ballet and folk dance schools, song and dance ensembles. A child coming to this Palace is guided in making his or her choice by a corps of well-trained advisers. The children are instructed by hundreds of teachers who come from Moscow State University or the Soviet Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.

Angela was, of course, deeply moved by the campaign for her freedom. But, she was even more moved by what she saw. Tears in her eyes, she told her cheering Pioneer friends: "This is what we are fighting for. This is what we also want for our children of Harlem, for all the children of workers." The campaign to free Angela also introduced me to Artek where I lived with the Pioneers for an unforgettable five days.

The multi-hued mountains seemed to rise up from the sparkling Black Sea as I approached the camp. Two huge craggy rocks jutted out like giants' teeth. I walked along a park-like path lined with stately cypresses. Lilac and cherry blossoms dotted the landscape like Japanese paintings. All around me was sun, sea and sky and song—the never-ending chirping and trilling of more than 130 varieties of birds who make Artek their nesting place. Bronzed troops of boys and girls their crimson Pioneer scarves flashing in the sunlight sang a jaunty sailor's song as they marched by. From where I stood I could survey a panorama of stream-lined buildings, their picture windows inviting the mountains, sea, sun and sky into the children's dormitories. A pretty pug-nosed Pioneer leader with the map of Russia on her face shook my hand vigorously. "Welcome to the Pioneer Republic," she exclaimed.

Artek is indeed a children's Republic. Almost five miles long, it occupies 320 hectares (a hectare is more than two acres) of vacation land on the Crimean coast once reserved for czarist nobility. More than 100 hectares (veritable botanical gardens) make up five parks. All that a child can dream of assumes the delightful shape of reality here. Swimming in mirror-like waters, playing in spacious fully-equipped sports fields, boating, including extended excursions on the bluish green Black Sea in Artek's own fleet, constructing and launching rockets, ships and planes, operating radio and TV stations, learning the songs and dances first hand of the one hundred Soviet nationalities and 40 different countries represented annually at Artek. Artek is an All-Soviet Union and international camp.

Artek annually plays host to 27,000 children coming from the Soviet Union's 15 Republics. The Pioneers, chosen for their exemplary study and

activity by their school groups, come in eight shifts (Artek is active the year round). There are three fall and winter 60-day shifts (about 1,800 each) and five 30-day summer shifts (4,500 each).

Only a socialist country where people come first could display such disregard for budgetary limitation when it comes to providing for its children. For 5,000 children (in summer peak) Artek has 2,000 workers. These include 900 Pioneer leaders, 28 doctors, 40 nurses and doctor assistants. It has hundreds of kilometers of its own communications system, supplies its own electricity, heat, water and maintains a vast network of repair and maintenance shops, laundry, machines, cars, and a special park department. Artek has an annual budget of eight million roubles. During the past ten years it spent 30 million roubles on a huge construction program designed by the famous architect, Anatoly Poliansky, Lenin Prize winner.

Fifty per cent of the children are not only admitted to Artek free of charge but their fares both ways are paid no matter from what part of the Soviet Union they come. Others pay only part of the cost.

Artek like every organization in the Soviet Union has its plan for its future. The camp capacity will be expanded to care for 7,600 (each shift) in the summer and 4,600 in winter shifts. A Sports City will be built which will include a 10,000 seat stadium, huge playgrounds, gymnasiums and swimming pools. Among other projects to be constructed are: a Cosmonauts City, a Science City, an underwater laboratory to study fish and sea life, a Flora and Fauna City, a 1,600 movie and concert hall, and a Medical Complex.

Artek's Pioneers are surrounded by their country's glorious traditions. Artek itself is a great tradition. We paused at Friendship Square, a favorite gathering place for the children. Here in the severe days of 1925 a group of 80 Pioneers assembled to mark the opening of Artek. All told, 320 children attended the camp that year. Since then, about 320,000 Pioneers, including thousands of children of all lands, became Artekers.

My Pioneer friends took me to one of their most sacred spots. It was a simple flower-bedecked monument to Artek heroes in the Great Patriotic War against fascism. Among those listed I read the names of Ruben Ibaruri, the son of Dolores Ibaruri, la Pasionaria, and Timur Frunze, the son of Mikhail Frunze, the great military leader of the Civil War. Artek itself was occupied and destroyed by the Nazis.

For Levon Mikaelyan, deputy editor of *Pionerskaya Pravda*, who accompanied me on the trip, every visit to Artek revived visions of the devastation. Mikaelyan fought to wrest Crimea and Artek from the Nazis. He was here on April 16, 1944 when it was liberated.

Artek is not only an ideal place for rest and recreation. It is an All-Soviet school for training the future and present leaders of the 23-million-member Young Pioneer organization.

The children who come here during the winter and fall shifts (all are from 11 to 14 years old) attend school. I was escorted around the modern sunlit classrooms each of which looked out on a view of indescribable beauty.

Kaleria Gornastayeva, Artek's school director, apologized for the bareness and lack of decorations in some of the school halls. I told her I doubted any decorations could match the one the children daily observed from their windows. The children have a five-day week (it is six days everywhere in the Soviet Union) and do not get any home-work. Yet all manage to keep up their high level of performance. The reason? As Gornastayeva explained, those who come to Artek are the best students and the school's teachers are specially trained to get the most out of the classroom work. Maximum class size is 25 and most are smaller. There are 94 teachers (including 22 who direct special laboratories, teach classes in aviation, ship-building, radio, TV, automobile mechanics, and driving) for about 1,700 pupils. The Artek school reveals that a high level is largely maintained in all the schools of 15 Republics. Gornastayeva said the school faced no serious problems in achieving uniformity of study on the part of the children and stated that only 3-4 days were required to overcome any individual lags. One can only compare this with the problems that an all-US school based on sectional and class inequities in education would confront.

Children are not only surrounded by nature's beauty in Artek. They are enveloped in an atmosphere of affection and concern. It is not only revealed in the warm relations between the children and their leaders. It is, above all, reflected in the intensive comprehensive teaching and training that goes into a typical Artek day. A reading of the neat and colorful wall papers put out by every Pioneer group (there must be about 100 of them), provides adequate testimony to the quality as well as quantity of activity they lead. In one I looked at, the children wrote of their dramatization of a story by Anton Chekhov and a poem by Alexander Blok, their visit to the hero city, Sevastopol, their participation in a national festival of song and dance (all national Republic holidays are celebrated), their preparations for May Day, their exciting day of sports and dance competition.

A Pioneer leader is a 24-hour father, mother, teacher, comrade and friend. Anyone faintly familiar with the Soviet concern for children can understand the high qualifications demanded of Pioneer leaders. They must undergo an intensive two-year special course which includes three months of theoretical study (the rest is on-the-spot training).

In Artek, "boys and girls together" in all camp activities comes naturally and is a way of life. All Pioneer groups are mixed and I saw as many girl as boy "commanders."

One of my most moving meetings was with the "sailors" group of the "Dawn" camp. Pretty braided "sailors" and their tow-headed com-

panions gathered around to hear about Angela Davis. They told me what they were doing to save "our dear Angela." We sang and danced their favorites. Then, they pleaded for me to sing our songs of struggle. They joined in on the chorus of "Solidarity Forever" with real demonstrators' spirit.

Artek is a model Soviet camp. But its real significance is that it is not the exception. Cosmonaut Frank Borman, who visited Artek with his wife and two sons, told leaders of Artek he found it hard to believe anything like Artek was really in existence. Borman evidently was surprised because, like most Americans, he was carefully "sheltered" from present-day Soviet reality.

Perhaps as revealing as the contrast between US and Soviet classrooms is the attitude toward schoolchildren on holiday. Holiday season in the US is a period of "freedom" for kids as everywhere, but it's a "freedom" full of worry for working-class parents, especially Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano, in our big cities. The perils of the city streets are open to their children "full time." With the exception of special children's cinemas offered by movie houses anxious to profit by the holidays and some special programs presented by church and community organizations, the children are truly "free."

I must admit that in this sense Soviet schoolchildren are not "free" on their holidays. Shortly after we arrived we noticed the subways and streets were filled with groups of excited kids, escorted by parents and teachers (teachers are busy during school holidays). We had run into spring vacation. The TV, radio, press were full of programs, announcements and special programs. All theaters, including the famous Bolshoi, scheduled special performances, as did circuses and sports clubs.

We attended an unforgettable one at the historic palatial Hall of Columns, where 1,000 children from 7 to 14 were assembled. On the richly panelled walls were signs heralding Children's Book Week. Milling around bookstalls were crowds of beribboned and braided girls and freshly scrubbed apple-cheek boys, many of them with the red Pioneer scarfs around their necks. The kids sang their favorite songs to a spirited accordion, then, led by the youngest and smallest, solemnly marched into the dazzling hall resplendent with sparkling crystal chandeliers. No one seemed to be awed by all this grandeur. It was theirs.

And what do Moscow kids do on their Christmas holidays? Well, among other things, they take over the Kremlin. The Kremlin, long portrayed by US correspondents of the commercial press as the "sinister" center of Soviet communism, resounds with the echo of shrill childish voices and the tapping of dancing feet. I watched as thousands of kids bundled up in their fur coats swarmed over the ancient Kremlin grounds, escorted by their *babushkas* and mothers into the magnificent modern Palace of Con-

gresses. This goes on twice daily, from December 30 to January 10. Some 116,000 kids sing, play games around the *yolka* (a Christmas tree like ours), watch outstanding Soviet performers and get presents.

The Kremlin *Yolka* parties, initiated in 1954, are organized and financed by the Moscow City Committee of Trade Unions. The unions are responsible for winter vacation programs attended by an estimated 2.5 million kids (children attend more than one program). They also play host to the thousands of children who come to Moscow with their teachers from all over the Soviet Union. In addition to city programs, more than 40,000 kids spend twelve days at Young Pioneer camps in the suburbs. The twelve days of sports and fun, including three meals, cost their parents six roubles—about 50 cents a day.

Technical Training

The link between theory and practice—this time between school and production—was forcefully demonstrated to me in my visit to a specialized industrial technological school (*technicum*) in Moscow. The role of the *technicum* was summed up for me by Vladimir Tichinin, the school's director, a man who seemed to symbolize in person the harmony between the humanities and the sciences, that Soviet educators had spoken about.

There are two categories of specialized secondary schools in the USSR. One, like the technical school I visited, trains specialists for industry, construction, transport and communications; agricultural workers and economists. The second trains teachers, subsidiary medical staff, musicians, art workers, theater personnel. In 1971, both types of secondary schools trained over one million people.

The school I visited graduates a new type of skilled worker, a type of specialist I met in all Soviet plants I visited. This school's composition was equally divided between men and women, with the latter apparently more attracted to plastic-chemistry courses. Of the 3,300 students, about 1,000 were students in the day session and 2,300 in the evening (these attended classes three evenings a week). There were 132 teachers, about one teacher for every 25 students.

The four-year school period includes intensive theoretical and laboratory training, followed by eight months of work at plants as workers receiving full wages. At the conclusion of this work period, the student returns to the school and embarks on an intensive six-week preparation for final exams. This includes work on special projects and defense of their theses. I saw many of these projects. They were far more advanced and elaborate than projects in our technical high schools.

At the end of the third year, the student already knows his future

place of work. The decision regarding this is arrived at by considering the needs of industry, the student's qualifications and personal desires. All students are spoken to separately and exercise the right of choice. First choice, however, goes to the best students.

Here, let me stress that Soviet schools are polytechnical. At all levels children are taught to respect work and honor good workers, and the desire to work is instilled in them. They are made familiar with the basic elements of modern industrial production. And they, themselves, are involved in manual labor in special classes and during their work period in plants.

I saw in Soviet students the embryo of the future men and women of communist society who harmoniously combine love of labor with the highest in cultural development. As I observed them, I thought of Tichinin's words about the task of his *technicum*: "We are trying to bring up a new person—a Soviet citizen with a communist morale and outlook. This is impossible without a broad culture." Culture in technical schools is regarded as important as in universities.

Students in *technicums* who make good grades receive a monthly stipend of 30 roubles. Those with special family problems also receive monthly allowances.

A word here on stipends. The USA, the richest country in the world, regards itself as doing more than its share by providing scholarships to some at the college level. Incidentally, many US college students owe their scholarships to a great extent to the example set by the Soviet Union. This is indicated by Hechinger in *The New York Times Encyclopedic Almanac*, 1970. Hechinger notes that after the launching of the first Soviet Sputnik there was widespread dissatisfaction in the USA because there was a feeling "much potential talent had been lost." Though begrudgingly, he states quite frankly: "The turning point for modern education came in 1957, when the launching of the Soviet Sputnik provided a dramatic (though probably irrelevant-???) rallying point and battle cry for all those who feared that American academic rigor had slipped to the danger point." Hechinger admits that "the *new era* (my emphasis, *M.D.*) began with the passage in 1958 (one year after Sputnik, *M.D.*) of the National Defense Educational Act during the Eisenhower Administration." It was under this Act that scholarships and loans were provided by a frightened US government which feared the Soviet Union educational system was outstripping our own.

But the economy axe and skyrocketing school tuition has more than made up for this "generosity."

The November 1972 issue of the *American Federationist*, the AFL-CIO monthly, states bluntly that college costs have risen until without some sort of aid, higher education is nearly . . . beyond the means of a worker's family today.

The Soviet Union in 55 years leaped from illiteracy and schools for a privileged few, to the most advanced educational system *free* to all up to the university level with stipends to make that freedom fully meaningful.

Schools for the Handicapped

The humaneness of Soviet schools and Soviet society is best demonstrated in the care provided children who are victims of nature's cruelties or handicapped in any way. Education is the right of every child. Those with special problems get special care. Moscow, for example, has 21 boarding schools (housing 6,000) for retarded children and those with special handicaps. The schools are specifically adapted to the particular requirements of the afflicted children. There are special schools for epileptic children, those suffering from polio and arteriosclerosis, as well as for the deaf and blind.

Where parents prefer to keep the child home, teachers are assigned (free of charge) to go to the home of the child. And, of course, all medical care is without charge.

Moscow has 41 boarding schools housing 21,000 children who live and study there the year round. They are in the main attended by children from large families or those without parents.

The upkeep of children from large families of low income is borne entirely by the government. Only parents with high earnings pay 30 to 70 per cent of the cost of maintaining the child. There are even special schools in hospitals for those who have to spend extended periods in these institutions. I want to stress for the benefit of US parents: *The entire burden for these handicapped children is borne by the Soviet government.*

The sharp contrast in the "care" provided by our government and our free enterprise society to such children constitutes the severest condemnation of the inhumanness of our government and society. Not only is the back-breaking financial burden largely shifted on to the backs of the unfortunate parents but these are the most heartlessly neglected children in our country. No free public schooling is provided for them—the only special schools are private and are extremely expensive—well beyond the reach of all but the more affluent parents. They run from \$300-\$400 minimum per month to \$800 and up per month (\$10,000 yearly or more) on the average. Though, recently, some financial aid was provided, it was far from adequate. President Nixon's 1974 budget demonstrated how insecure even these meager gains are. Michael Gorman, executive director of the National Committee Against Mental Illness (at that time), pointed out that 15 US states have

no facilities, public or private, for treating mentally troubled juveniles. American families know all this from personal experience. We had had a son who suffered from epilepsy and became retarded at an early age.

My wife, Gail, and I spent a day at one of the Moscow boarding schools for retarded children—school No. 103 in the Bauman district of Moscow. Before us was a life filled with kindness and a sense of usefulness.

This Moscow school, which is largely for those in the early stages of retardation, is in a four-story red brick building, the size of one of our big city public schools. It houses 150 children, from 8 to 16 years of age.

This small student body is cared for by 30 teachers, a psychiatrist, nurse, two cooks and a sizeable staff of house workers. The teachers (they are paid 25 per cent above the normal salary) are all specially trained. When we expressed surprise at the size of the teaching staff, Nina Sergeyevna Ivanova, the school's director, looked puzzled. "But we are preparing children for life," she exclaimed, with heavy emphasis on the last word. That about sums up the attitude and atmosphere of special school No. 103.

Everything—curricula, teachers, workshops, medical and psychiatric care, four nourishing meals a day, spacious surroundings that include a well-equipped playground and, above all, human kindness are instruments for involving the pupils in Soviet life. Representatives of Moscow plants arrive at the school a couple of weeks before graduation to interview prospective employees. Almost all get jobs at full regular wages—the boys in radio repair and book binding; and a few, unable to work, receive a state pension.

Flowers and pictures, both bright and colorful, adorn the clean spacious corridors, stairways and dormitories. Space and sunlight, invited in by numerous picture-frame windows, enhance the atmosphere of secure calm. What we saw in school No. 103, from the kind and efficient Nina Ivanova, to the motherly *babushkas* (nannies), who welcomed us as they took our coats, was no facade, as was evident from what we saw in the work of the school.

Why did she choose this work, we asked Nina, who had graduated from Leningrad State University as a history major. "Because seeing our children develop and knowing they will find their proper place in life is a double reward," she answered. As she spoke, Nina smiled at two boys waxing the corridor floor. Each had a brush attached to one leg and with evident enjoyment were dancing rhythmically over the floor. "Don't they dance well?" she asked proudly.

Another teacher, Ivan Fomichev, presented us with the handiwork of a pupil in his carpentry class. The boy singled out for special praise was among the most retarded, and he beamed with joy.

In every classroom we visited, there was ample cause for what Nina had described as "a double reward." There were the poems the children of the third class recited with such fervor, the dresses the girls sewed with such skill, the books the boys neatly bound, the impressive wood carving and cabinet making displayed in the corridors, and the delightful song and dance comedy skit being rehearsed.

Both in the classrooms and workshops, the attitude adopted toward the children was one of confidence in their ability and accountability for their tasks. Rewards for work well done included special trips and public acknowledgement, and there was admonition for failures. Neatness of appearance, in dress and care of rooms, were more than surface niceties. They reflected pride and self-respect, the feeling that "we, too, count."

The school curriculum was the usual one for an eight-year school but the level of work was approximately half that of the normal school. Class size was not more than 16 but we saw many that were considerably smaller. All around them, in their classes, corridors, workshops, and rooms, the children were presented with vivid and beautiful things.

The pupils get up at 7:30, have breakfast at 8:00 and then start their classes. "Juniors," first four grades, have classes from 9 to 12:30, seniors until 2:30 p.m. Dinner is at 1:30 p.m., there's "snack" at 4 for juniors, and at 5 for the seniors, and supper is at 7 p.m. for the former and 7:30 for the latter. In between, there are extensive periods for rest, games and walk. Frequent excursions to all parts of the city are organized.

The children spend weekends at home with their parents, and summers, either at Young Pioneer camps or on vacations with their parents. "No children remain in Moscow during the summer," Nina told us. What about those without parents (there are 20 such children at the school), we asked her. She said there was no lack of requests by other parents to take them home on weekends, holidays, or on vacations. "We make sure those who make the offer can provide our children with the proper home environment," she stressed. What do the parents pay for this schooling? More than half pay nothing, since the charge is based on many considerations—size of family, income, special problems. But the other half do pay. "How much?" we asked. "They pay from eight to ten roubles a month," she told us.

The New in Soviet Schools

But while our crisis-ridden schools are deteriorating and our colleges being priced out of the reach of workers' families, the level of Soviet education is taking a huge leap. This is the meaning of the decision making

ten-year secondary schools compulsory throughout the Soviet Union since 1975.

The two-year extension is not merely a simple addition as the new curricula makes clear. It is a qualitative leap. It is a leap dictated by the needs of the scientific technological revolution and social development.

Millions of Soviet youth still lack the crucial ninth and tenth years of schooling. Many make up this lack later in vocational and technical schools or through correspondence courses. But, this places an additional burden on the higher levels of secondary education.

Some idea of the kind of a leap involved in compulsory ten-year secondary education can be gathered if we think in terms of our own country. It is as if junior college was made compulsory for every child in the US. A ten-year education in the Soviet Union is on a higher level than our high school. In actual school time (six days a week, six hours a day) it is the equivalent of our combined twelve-year primary and high school. However, as I have already indicated, far more is packed into the Soviet school year.

By contrast, in the United States, the completion of high school is not compulsory. The responsibility for education, one of the highest obligations of a society and government to its citizens, is shifted to the states and localities (and in respect to southern states particularly, it is left to their "tender mercies"). Thus, though in the majority of states legal compulsory school age is 16, it varies from state to state and in many of them, it is fourteen years or less. Mississippi and South Carolina have no requirements that children attend school. This, of course, is without considering the serious and growing "drop out" problem which reaches as high as 60 per cent in many cities.

In the Soviet Union, the picture as regards those who finished the eight-year compulsory school, and not the ten-year (they cannot be considered "drop outs" in any sense since, as I indicated, most of them continue their schooling) is the reverse. In 1965, only 45 per cent completed ten-year school. In 1970, this jumped to 70 per cent and by 1975 will have reached 90 per cent.

Here let me say a word on a matter of great concern to US parents, especially to Black and minority group parents. As they well know, nothing is as *unequal* as the schooling US children get.

If a child is so unfortunate as to be born in Mississippi (especially a Black child) about one-third of the amount spent on educating a New York child will be spent on him.

Even in New York state itself, the kind of school a child goes to depends on *where* he lives.

I knew this not only as one who covered the school situation in New York for a decade, but as a parent. Our sons went to schools in overwhelmingly Black and Puerto Rican areas, known as "difficult schools." The "difficult schools" which should receive the most experienced teachers, had the highest percentage of substitute teachers, those not yet assigned permanently to a school.

The level of teaching was frankly a much lower one than in the schools in more affluent neighborhoods where the more experienced teachers flocked in large numbers. I'm not now referring to schools in the richer suburbs, which pay teachers higher salaries.

By contrast education in the Soviet Union is regarded as an all-Union responsibility. Curricula are on a national, uniformly high level. I visited schools in most of the 15 Republics I toured. Most were pretty much on an equal footing with the Moscow schools I attended. The main difference, I noted, was that universal education was combined with teaching of the national cultures and languages of the particular Republics.

And I believe this quite natural and justified. The uniformly high level of all schools is demonstrated in the enrolment in Moscow's higher educational establishments of all types. Their student rosters read like an all-Union roll-call of Republics.

From the earliest days of the Soviet Union, when Russian teachers flocked to the illiterate former backward national provinces to teach millions, to today, when each Republic has its own University and Academy of Science, those who needed education most, were provided with the best. Today, there is no area of this vast socialist land that any longer requires such a special approach because there are no longer "backward areas."

Nor did I once come across annual "battles over school budgets" which are so much part of our school and city scene. *The New York Times*, June 7, 1972, for example, reported that for economy reasons, the Detroit School Board adopted a budget "that would reduce the academic year by 35 per cent for Detroit's 291,000 public schoolchildren" (most of whom are Black). It noted Detroit's schools "are clearly considered inadequate."

The idea of schools closing down or opening late because of lack of funds is just unthinkable in the Soviet Union. In my four years of wide travelling in the Soviet Union I never once heard of a single Soviet school closed for a single school day. The only times schools were disrupted here was during the barbarous Nazi invasion and then only temporarily, and those directly affected.

No money for schools? Or for adequate wages to teachers? Even in the severest days of the Civil War and World War II, education came first. The school budget is part of the Soviet five-year plans.

The national economy, the plants, resources, national wealth of the country, which in the Soviet Union is not in the hands of monopoly trusts but in the hands of the people, is the goose that lays the golden egg for schools as well as all social and public needs.

Public Health

Public Health—a Concern of the State

There are no privately-owned hospitals or clinics in the Soviet Union. The basic unit in the entire system is the polyclinic, to which every Soviet citizen belongs. There are more than 36,000 of these clinics in the country. The staffs work two shifts—doctors work alternately on a six-hour day. The clinic is the key preventative unit not only because it is always available but because it operates like a huge family doctor. It knows the patient—his or her entire family—often from childhood.

Special care is provided for women and children. There is a wide network of women's consultation centers and children's clinics. Unlike in the United States, where the cost of childbirth is steadily rising (from \$500 to \$1,000), delivery and intensive prenatal and postnatal care are free. Nowhere does society give greater aid to mothers in bringing up their children. Expectant mothers get 112 days fully paid maternity leave (56 days before and 56 after childbirth).

Great progress has been made in child care. In 1913, 269 out of every 1,000 newborn infants in pre-revolutionary Russia died. The infant mortality rate in the Soviet Union in 1970 was 23 out of every 1,000.

Incidentally, the life span increased from 33 in pre-revolutionary years to 70 today. In 1972, there were 698,000 doctors in the Soviet Union, the figure will reach 830,000 in 1975, one-third of the world's doctors. In addition there were 2,195,000 medium level personnel. All told, more than 5 million people are engaged in protecting people's health.

And as I have observed in the dozens of factories I have visited all over the Soviet Union, that protection is provided at the point of production. All large plants have polyclinics similar to the one at the Likhachov Auto Plant.

One of the things that most impressed me when I visited the dockers of Odessa was the longshoremen's clinic. It is located right on the docks. I spoke to Lou Arian, of Local 10, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union in San Pedro, California, who was part of a delegation of US longshoremen that visited the Odessa docks in 1972. Arian was quite moved by the sight of that polyclinic because as a longshoreman of many years, he knows what that means to the health and safety of workers engaged in one of the most hazardous occupations.

Dr. Ivan Komaneyetz told me: "We need only two minutes to answer any emergency." There is a medical staff of 105, including 28 doctors, whose sole responsibility is to take care of 6,500 Odessa port workers and their families. Not far from the docks is a special hospital for seamen and dockers. Incidentally, seamen from foreign ships visiting Odessa can also receive medical care free of charge.

I visited many after-work sanatoriums which are called prophylactoriums. More than 1,800 enterprises have set up such rest and health facilities. Here,

too, the concept is "don't wait until you are sick enough." The mine workers of Apatity, in the Soviet Polar Region, have a rest home (which I visited) that would be the envy of mine operators, let alone the delight of our miners.

Disease prevention is also promoted through a system of compulsory checkups. There are compulsory fluoroscope examinations at least once a year. This is a great help in early detection of tuberculosis and lung cancer. All women are strongly urged to come to clinics for checkups by gynecologists. All those suffering from coronary disease, chronic kidney ailments and hypertension are registered and receive regular compulsory examinations several times a year. Particular attention is being given to early cancer treatment.

I remember the thrill of our first home visit. We didn't have to twist any arms or claim we were deathly ill. We just called our polyclinic and reported our complaint. Patients are not intimidated from applying for home visits or from making frequent use of doctor appointments. On the contrary, they are scolded when they fail to appear for regular checkups. With all the facilities available, we discovered, many Soviet citizens (far less than in our country, of course) still are negligent in respect to health care. The psychological fear of "finding out" some unpleasant news still maintains its grip on people. This is being overcome through frequent compulsory medical examinations as well as the entire preventative approach to health care.

No one should get any ideas that Soviet doctors are more proficient than ours. Like our doctors they vary in their competence. Soviet citizens, too, seek out doctors they have more confidence in. And there are doctors here, too, whose diagnosis, we discovered, left much to be desired.

These are the human elements in medical practice that are not easily solved—even in a socialist system. And a struggle to raise medical proficiency is being constantly waged.

In the United States not only the poor, but many workers, only see a doctor when literally compelled to do so, because medical care is expensive in our country. And in our country the very opposite approach to that in the Soviet Union is taken toward the health of people who can't afford the high cost of medical treatment.

In the Soviet Union you don't have to be sick enough to go to a hospital. The idea is to treat you to prevent you from getting sick enough.

At a Hospital for Eye Surgery

Perhaps I can best describe the typical qualities of Soviet doctors I have met by relating my experience in visiting the Filatov Institute and Hospital for Eye Surgery, in Odessa.

I came there because I had heard of this famed hospital as the refuge of the hopeless. I saw a hospital that was the last word in eye surgery. Now I

understand what Filatov Institute means to the blind and near blind of the world. I found the answer, above all, in Yevdokia Budilova, a motherly woman who is the hospital's chief doctor. Budilova explains much about the character of the Soviet doctor. And she reflects the spirit of Vladimir Filatov, the institute's founder. Budilova has been chief doctor for more than 20 years; she worked six years in that capacity under Filatov. She said: "We have 168 doctors and 450 patients in eight large separate clinics. In addition, 377,000 people annually visit our consultative department." After a pause she said: "We have scored victories in the battle against darkness. More than 86 per cent of our patients had their sight either fully or partially restored."

Her eyes fixed on the wall clock which had stopped at seven. "That's when Filatov died. This was his study. He passed away at the institute. Despite his age he performed operations to the very end."

Filatov studied at the same gymnasium in Simbirsk as Lenin—he was three years younger than Lenin. Filatov was an implacable enemy of pessimism. He used to say: "There are no hopeless people; there are only hopeless doctors."

Filatov Institute serves without any charge not only Soviet citizens, but patients from every corner of the globe. Annually it treats patients from 50 countries and provides consultative care (it has a special consultative correspondence department) to those fighting for their sight from 102 countries. "We are the world's best stamp collectors," Budilova noted with a smile.

Filatov Institute has performed more than 1,000 eye transplant operations. It has an eye "bank" supplied from those who died in accidents. Filatov was the father of the eye bank concept. He rejected the idea, popular among some medical people at that time, of taking eyes from the living, as "stealing the sight of others."

Filatov Institute's interest in and its relationship with its patients are of long standing—often as much as 5-10 years. "The fight for sight is a difficult and often a long one," Budilova pointed out. "The successful operation, and often operations, do not end our interest in our patient's welfare. We follow through until we are satisfied the very best results possible are achieved."

We saw some of the "results" as we toured the hospital. One was Valerian Chapka. Chapka had six per cent vision in his left eye and ten per cent in his right for more than eight years. Now, he has 70 per cent vision in one eye and 100 per cent in the other. He teaches at a polytechnical institute in Alma Ata.

Budilova showed us a picture of horribly burned eyes. They belonged to Maria Detchenko, who was blind for 18 years. "When Maria first came to us," said Budilova, "her face was the mask of a dead person. If I were a painter, I'd paint her portrait and call it 'Blindness.' After the operation which restored her vision 100 per cent she was transformed. She set her hair, dressed in bright clothes and was the spirit of gaiety."

Budilova paused adding: "Women, when they see again, want above all to see their children. And Maria asked for her son. The only memory she had of him was as a three-year-old boy. But now he was 21. She was told her son had just arrived in the building and was downstairs. Maria couldn't wait. She rushed out of the room and ran downstairs. Her son was running upstairs and they bumped onto each other. There was such a transformation, the son at first did not recognize his mother. He tried to continue up the stairs and only then did he cry out 'Mama'."

"City of Surgery"

Vishnevsky Institute is a "city of surgery." Its 17 stories of stream-lined glass and aluminium is a peek into the medical future. In Vishnevsky Institute, the skilled surgeon's hand is guided by cybernetics. The computer has added speed and precision to the job of diagnosis. We witnessed the operation of this mechanical "diagnostician." The computer has been helpful in diagnosing many diseases. This system enables Vishnevsky Institute to provide doctors hundreds of miles away with speedy diagnoses.

The Institute is directly linked with five large cities, and in the near future its network will extend to 200 cities. We spent a day in this "city of surgery." We watched, through closed circuit TV, Professor Alexander Vishnevsky, the Institute's director, operate on the heart of a woman suffering from a congenital rheumatic condition. We witnessed on film the working of a mechanical heart and artificial blood circulation apparatus. We watched a complex operation on a spinal cord.

Soviet successes in surgery, especially heart surgery, are today widely recognized, as the recent international congress of surgeons in Moscow revealed. Thanks to the advances made by Soviet surgeons a number of heart diseases, among them congenital and acquired heart defects, post-infarction aneurysm, which were once considered out of bounds to surgery, are being operated on with considerable success. The lives of thousands of children formerly doomed to an early death by congenital heart defects have been saved by just such operations as we witnessed.

Operations like the one I saw would have been impossible without the artificial blood circulation apparatus now used in open ("dry") heart surgery. The first apparatus of this kind was designed by the Soviet scientist, S. Bryukhonenko. There are 50 medical centers where heart operations are performed in the Soviet Union.

Vishnevsky Institute has also made considerable progress in restoring the normal function of organs paralyzed by trauma of the spinal cord. We met with Dr. Arkady Livshits, a young scientist who heads the department of spinal traumas, and who, following the suggestion made by Professor Vishnevsky, developed a stimulating device consisting of a radio-frequency receiver

implanted together with electrodes into the patient's body, and an external radio-frequency generator. The implanted receiver accepts impulses from the external generator, and through the electrodes transmits the excitation to the urinary bladder, causing a controlled act of urination. Previously in such cases of spinal trauma, urination was possible only by means of implanted tubes and the patient was doomed to an early death. We saw a 16-year-old boy who had successfully undergone such an operation.

Vishnevsky Institute, which has a staff of 800, is basically a scientific investigatory establishment. Thus, there are only 500 beds in this vast building. Surgery is mostly performed on the 13th floor in six spacious operating rooms. Vishnevsky smiled when I told him he'd have a hard time getting US patients on the "13th" floor.

Patients are under medical observation day and night by closed circuit TV, and infrared rays being used at night. All surgical and medical care is without charge.

The Institute was named after the father of the present director, who has occupied that post since 1948 and whose son and daughter also work in the Institute. Professor Vishnevsky was recently awarded the Lenin prize.

The Soviet "Secret" Weapon

The Soviet Union has more of collective spirit, not only because it has practised it longer than any other socialist country (more than half a century), but because that spirit of collectivity was forged in the fires of unprecedented ordeals and trials. It was the collective spirit that reconstructed a new and more beautiful Tashkent when an earthquake almost levelled the Uzbek capital in 1966. And that collective spirit beat off an invisible and silent enemy (it threatened Soviet Black Sea cities in the summer of 1970)—cholera.

We were vacationing at Foros, not far from Yalta, in the Crimea, in August during the height of the cholera scare. We were amazed to find that very few cut short their vacations. What is more, new vacationers, from all parts of the Soviet Union, continued to arrive on schedule. Let me say at once that the calm we witnessed was not based on ignorance, or concealed information or a devil-may-care attitude. All were fully aware of the terrible danger of an epidemic. We attended regular meetings where reports of the cholera threat, where it struck, etc., were openly discussed by doctors. Behind the daily bantering about cholera, there was natural concern. The calm was based on confidence that the proper medical and organizational measures were being taken by the governmental bodies and public organizations.

It was the city of Kerch, on the Black Sea, where, incidentally, one of the great battles against the Nazi invasion took place, that provided an outstanding example of the invaluable collective spirit I'm talking about. We

heard and read about Kerch's new battle, this time against the cholera. The 1970 battle of Kerch was waged by the entire population, as it worked, went to school and shopped for its daily needs. None of these vital daily activities were in any way interrupted. During the Great Patriotic War, Communists, putting into life the slogan "Communists First," flung themselves into battle at the most dangerous and crucial sectors. In this emergency, too, Communists were called on to set the example.

An extraordinary meeting of the Kerch Party Committee was called, followed the next day by meetings of leaders of the City Soviet, factories and offices. The city was besieged, again, and the entire population had to be mobilized to beat off the new invader. An anti-epidemic committee was set up in every section of Kerch. But the Battle of Kerch was also waged as a national struggle. Doctors and nurses on vacation along the Black Sea gave up their vacations and volunteered for the Battle of Kerch. Students of the Crimean Medical Institute joined their teachers to work with them in the areas of greatest danger. The entire population became medically educated and trade union leaders developed into medical experts.

Medical aid was brought by plane, truck, train and ship. Ships brought water from Sevastopol. Special medical shipments came from Gorky and Riga. Cities of the Ukraine dispatched special milk trucks and cleaning equipment. It was a nationwide mobilization. Food was brought to Kerch in special trucks. They halted at the city's "quarantine line." Disinfected trucks from Kerch took the food with hooks and delivered it to the city stores. All consumer goods were thoroughly disinfected before they were made available to the public. Kerch fought the enemy with cleanliness and like all Soviet cities, it was already well equipped and trained in that respect. Far more important than even the massive sanitation equipment ordinarily employed on a daily basis in Soviet cities, are the habits of civic concern and cleanliness formed under more than half a century of socialist living. Thus, citizens of Kerch were well prepared to rally to the call for keeping their streets, markets, factories, restaurants and theaters spotlessly clean. As a result of this all-out effort, the cholera claimed only two victims in Kerch.

I described the Battle of Kerch in such detail because it dramatized the entire character of the Soviet fight to make cities livable, and life more healthful and enjoyable. Just stop to think what problems our cities would confront if they had to meet a similar emergency. Even an unusual snowstorm in February 1969, almost paralyzed New York City for days. Just imagine the problems it would face to compel Consolidated Edison Corporation to cooperate in the all-vital cleanliness campaign when for years it has defied all the city's efforts to prevent that giant utility monopoly from polluting the air eight million New Yorkers breathe. How could our city government in New York, for example, suddenly make up for decades of dirty garbage-filled streets? Or how could our doctors trained in the spirit of personal gain be

expected to respond in the same self-sacrificing spirit as did the Soviet doctors? Our cities could not respond to such emergencies in Kerch's spirit of collectivity because ours is a life that is dominated by the spirit of "everyone for himself" and the "devil take the hindermost." It takes living a collective life—where concern for one another dominates—to produce such spirit of collectivity.

Mental Health Care

No social system reveals itself more than in the way it cares for the mental and physical health of its citizens and in the way it treats its handicapped, particularly the mentally ill or retarded. No country boasts more about its concern for the individual than the United States, the leader of the "Free World"; few do less for the health of their people, with its tremendous resources and unrivalled wealth. And no country does more in this respect than the country which, according to our ideologists and propagandists, treats the individual as a tool of the state and swallows him up in a sea of collectivism.

Our family knows this not from reading the reports of others, not from any study based on visits to Soviet institutions, but from our own personal experiences. I know this not as a correspondent, but as the father of a son who had suffered from epilepsy since early childhood and consequently was affected by mental retardation. But perhaps no one knew this better than our son, Robert, himself.

Our dear Bobby is no more. He passed away on August 7, 1973, at the age of 28, at the Kashchenko Psychiatric Hospital in Moscow, overcome by a final shattering burst of seizures (status epilepsy) accompanied by double pneumonia and extremely high fever. Bobby lived in the shadow of death for many years. The nightmare of Wassaic State Institution and Pinegrove "school" (a private institution), both in New York State, the cruel and callous treatment that turned living into a fearful tortured existence, the beatings of sadistic custodians who vented their brutality on his sick and tormented body—all seemed to drift into the horrible past. But Bobby's cruel illness and even crueller treatment took their terrible toll: it left him with too frail a foundation to withstand the inevitable final assault.

Kashchenko could not give Bobby a long life but it gave him four more years—the best years of his life. It gave him the simple but oh so wonderful a pleasure of being treated like a human being. It was not superior medicine or medical treatment that made the difference. Soviet mental health authorities and doctors themselves tell you that in both respects the US and the USSR are at about the same level. They are no closer to curing complex elusive mental illnesses than our own doctors. The difference above all was reflected in the sensitive, human concern, the kindness Bobby

felt from the nurses, attendants, and doctors at Kashchenko which was his home four years. When we discussed going home, back to the US with Bobby, he trembled in fear. For him, unfortunately, the US meant Wassaic, Pinegrove. How could he bear the thought of returning to that nightmarish existence after he had tasted the joy of living in a truly human society?

In the past Bobby learned to shrink in fear of the punishment and indifference that surrounded the mentally ill and shut them off from society. Now he suddenly felt sincere human compassion. It was not easy for Bobby to grasp this new environment. I remember the terribly accusing look in his eyes when he first came to Kashchenko. He had only known one kind of an "institution"—Wassaic and Pinegrove. And he knew what they were like. Why should this new place be any different?

Gradually Bobby began to recognize the difference, to realize that this was not Wassaic. What relief and joy came with the recognition! How he would recount to us every little new kindness, every new friend, every new kind word. How happy and proud he was when he participated in his first *subbotnik*, how he escorted us to the playground to show us the flowers he had planted! For the first time in his life he, too, counted. Bobby did not get to see much of the Soviet Union or Moscow. To him, socialism and the Soviet Union was his hospital with its excellent personnel.

And this new life not only made Bobby happy, it brought out to the fullest the beauty and goodness that was so much a part of him and which even his cruel illness and even crueller treatment could not kill in him. Bobby truly flowered, under socialism. He returned the love he felt with interest.

There are, of course, private places in the United States where one can buy more human treatment. There are numerous private schools which, aware of the readiness of many parents to pay almost any price for what they hope will be better treatment, are in the business of selling "kindness" and "concern." Most charge a minimum of about \$5,000 a year. The private "school" in the main provides a more attractive façade that creates the comforting illusion of human care, especially on visiting days.

Our son, for many years, lived at such a private school in upstate New York. We once happened to visit the school on a non-visiting day much to the embarrassment and vexation of the private owners, two doctors. Gone was the veneer of orderliness and cleanliness. The scene that met us was very little different from what we later met when we were forced to place Robert in a state school. The "classroom" was nothing more than a custodial room. Robert and his fellow classmates were unkempt, unwashed and disheveled. We later discovered (after our son overcame his fear of reprisal if he informed) that Robert and the other boys were quite often beaten by brutal attendants. But the real character of this private school was revealed when the owners decided they could dump Robert because

he was too "difficult a case." The "market" was glutted and thus there was a pick of "cases" to be had. And they did literally dump our son.

We received a call one scorching summer day to come and take him home at once. When we arrived, we found Robert waiting for us—tied to a tree like a dog.

For months Robert was home with us while we searched for another private school. But everywhere we met the same "requirements." Robert's case, and this meant only his ability to control his behavior, had to meet their standards. They were totally unconcerned that our son's illness to a large extent lies precisely in that his behavior got out of control. Thus, for months we tried to be doctors as well as parents. And for weeks my wife and I had to give up our jobs since it took the two of us at times to handle the situation.

When finally we were driven to request admittance to a state school, we discovered that even these hell-holes had a long waiting list (with a two years wait). It was only after an emergency arose that Robert was admitted to Wassaic State School, upstate New York.

In Wassaic, Robert lived in an extremely crowded dormitory. There was no effort to separate those who were criminally retarded from those whose condition was far less complicated. The pandemonium and even unsafe situations in this "jungle" can hardly be imagined. One doctor took "care" of about 800 patients. The poor man confessed to us he could only be aware of something wrong if a patient complained loudly enough. The personnel were so overworked and underpaid, there was a continuous turnover. The horrible conditions only attracted those poorly qualified for the demanding work.

As a result of the neglect and poor care, our son had pneumonia four times in 1968 and was repeatedly in critical condition. My wife, Gail, in effect, acted as Robert's private nurse and it was largely her constant devoted care that helped pull him through. All around us, we noticed with pain the difference such attention meant. Other sick patients paid with their lives for the inadequate and indifferent care they received.

Here is how the National Association for Retarded Children describes the conditions in US mental institutions: "Living conditions for the most part in residential facilities throughout the country represent for the most part sub-standard conditions. Some state and private residential facilities can best be described as *economically and culturally deprived areas*. *Oftentimes, basic health and safety standards are not met to say nothing of human standards.*" (My emphasis M.D.). It goes on to add: "Unfortunately, many residents in our state residential facilities are rarely seen by a physician. Drugs are prescribed and changed without a medical examination by a doctor. Abuse, neglect, questionable deaths are not adequately investigated or reported. Appropriate measures to safeguard the health of a

retarded resident through concern with such things as sanitation, availability of drinking fountains to prevent dehydration, methods of feeding and intake of food, abuse of the use of seclusion and restraints, are but a few of the medical and health concerns which contribute to *dehumanization*." (My emphasis, *M.D.*) The National Association noted that "seclusion and restraints are used for the convenience of the staff or as a means of punishing the residents." It points out that the person being punished very often doesn't "even understand why he is put into seclusion or restraint" and is "often not seen by a staff member except at times when food is provided."

Because of crowded conditions mentally retarded are moved into "any vacant facility," such as TB hospitals or correctional institutions, as the National Association notes.

Humanity—the Best Soviet "Medicine"

In the Soviet Union, care for the mentally ill is not shown in pious expressions of sympathy, with which US parents are all too familiar. It is shown in the only way it counts—in human care, kindness, and the effort to do the utmost to return their sick ones to society as useful citizens. And we know from our personal experience that this is being accomplished with many. It is shown in the fact that Soviet parents and relatives of the mentally ill are freed from any financial worries. Medical care for the mentally ill (one of the most expensive in our country) is provided free of charge at every stage of the illness and for as long as is necessary. What is more, mental patients, as we know through personal contact, receive their allowance, if they are students, or disability pensions, if they are workers, while they are residents at psychiatric hospitals.

If the sick person, after successful treatment, is able to perform the work, his previous job awaits him. If not, another, which takes into consideration his special needs. Thus, we were impressed by the confident manner with which patients at Kashchenko spoke of returning to their former jobs. They made no effort to conceal where they worked or studied and did not at all seem to be concerned that any change in attitude would greet them upon return. Nor were their parents bothered by any such concern. This lack of worry is a powerful factor in treating the mentally ill.

Quite a different situation confronts our mentally ill. Few employers, indeed, will reemploy or employ one who is "stigmatized" by such an illness. The knowledge of this social disapproval, as well as the difficulties of securing work and starting over again, complicate the problems of treatment and rehabilitation in the US.

All these forms of social assistance which the mentally ill in the US and their families would rejoice in, Soviet people take for granted as the normal attitude expected of a civilized human society.

US Mental Health Experts in the Soviet Union

A delegation of US mental health experts headed by Stanley F. Yelles visited the Soviet Union in 1967. Its findings were published two years later in a book entitled *Special Report: First US Mission on Mental Health to the USSR*. The delegation stated that their sampling of Soviet mental health activities was "intensive" and its members were in "agreement that the delegation experienced a substantial and representative exposure in securing a view of the organization and delivery of mental health services." It went out of its way to note in the book's introduction that this agreement was "striking." In its three weeks in the Soviet Union, it toured more than 25 individual mental and psychiatric facilities in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and the rural areas of the Ukraine.

The report of the US mental health experts stresses the continuous and the comprehensive character of Soviet mental care. It says: "Since the basic operating principle of Soviet psychiatry is continuity of care, that care continues whether the patient remains in a specific facility, is transferred to another, or becomes an outpatient. When a patient returns to his family, he will. . . be visited by a psychiatrist in his home. . . In the United States such visits by psychiatrists are still considered to be innovations, but the typical Russian psychiatrist working in a neuropsychiatric dispensary is expected to make at least 20 home visits a month." "Innovations" is hardly the word for it, what with psychiatric fees running from a minimum of \$25 and up per office visit. The cost for a home visit (few psychiatrists would consent to make them since time is valuable) would be considerably more. But, as the US experts note, these home visits, like all "medical care, are provided free of charge and are totally financed by public funds." The care starts with the birth of a child, and continues throughout the person's life. It is through this continuous and personal care that, as the delegation notes, mental health problems are detected at an early age and followed up and treated. Patients are referred to the appropriate hospital. "Referral has none of the amorphous quality associated with the term in the United States," the US experts stress, "it includes the transfer of medical records and follow up. The polyclinic is not a passive agency, waiting for patients to seek it out. . . If the patient does not respond to the card requesting him to visit the polyclinic, he will be visited at home by the nurse, and in some cases, the physician assigned to his district."

What this means in respect to timely assistance, when it counts most, is only too well known to parents of mentally ill and retarded children in the United States. Ours, as with most parents in such circumstances, was a long, constant, frustrating, heartbreaking as well as costly search for assistance. No polyclinic or psychiatric dispensary opened its doors to our son, let alone sought him out at home.

The US experts were quite impressed by the factory medical units which, as they noted, are accessible to all workers. They were particularly impressed by the medical unit servicing the 70,000 who work at Moscow's huge Likhachov Auto Plant. I am very familiar with the operations of that medical unit since I twice visited the famous plant. Try to imagine such a set up as this at a General Motors or a Ford plant! The Likhachov medical unit consists of a staff of 600, including 150 physicians and 250-275 paramedical workers. The medical services include a psychiatric unit and a staff of nine neurologists. The main task is not intensive treatment for which patients are referred to appropriate facilities, but to help former patients on the job. The US mental health mission pointed out that the "stigma of mental illness was not obvious whether among the staff or the workers" and that "record cards include notes they (former mental patients) are to be observed and given special support." As a result of such care and consideration on the part of fellow workers, plant management and medical unit, "the accident rate for former mental patients is no higher than for other workers," and according to the plant medical staff, "actually, the reverse is true." The US experts noted that this type of treatment and care made it possible for the individual to work and to be accepted by his fellows and his community.

The US delegation was highly impressed with the Soviet emphasis on work, both for its therapeutic value and as the highest social function of all Soviet citizens. It noted that workshops are an extremely important part of all Soviet mental hospitals and facilities on every level and pointed out such workshops are unique in a number of respects. First of all, the patients are paid for their labor. This is hardly the case in the United States. The US delegation observed: "Work is considered to be the foundation upon which social readaptation of mental patients is based," and it went on to say: "It would be impossible to overemphasize the importance of work in Soviet society and of ergo-therapy in Soviet treatment of psychiatric patients. The workshops in psychiatric facilities are special working organizations under constant supervision of the medical staff, psychiatrists and instructors, specially trained for this assignment."

The goods produced are not limited to the most elementary as in US institutions. The US delegation noted that "all of the medical equipment in use at the Bekhterev Psychoneurological Institute in Leningrad were made by patients in one of the workshops."

Summing up on this point, the delegation said: "Despite the fact that the patients had impairments of varying degrees of severity, they were being treated as people with substantial resources, able to perform meaningful activity and in many cases to learn new skills. At whatever level they were able to perform, their contribution was regarded as worthwhile, backed up with financial reward."

The US experts, obviously aware of the disrepute with which US mental hospitals are held, were particularly impressed with the Soviet attitude toward mental hospitals. They declared: "It was striking to the delegation to note the vigorous enthusiasm expressed by health officials and professional personnel regarding mental hospitals." They said that "one of the more striking features of the Russian mental hospital is the unusually high patient-staff ratio," and pointed out that "overall, the patient-staff ratios were virtually one to one."

The US delegation noted that Kashchenko's patients "were well-dressed, seemed quite self-reliant and capable of managing themselves," that "wards were spotlessly clean and newly painted" and that the "patients seemed at ease, there was no tension, no disturbance, the interaction with nurses was free."

I had a very interesting talk with Andrei Snezhnevsky, director of the Soviet Scientific Research Institute of Psychiatry and a member of the Academy of Medical Science of the USSR. Like so many top Soviet scientists I have met, he has little of the professional air so common among our own medical men. Snezhnevsky has visited the US on three occasions and is familiar with US mental health facilities. His observations, I felt, were quite perceptive. "The United States has big mental hospitals, but small staffs," Snezhnevsky noted charitably.

He said that the key element in Soviet mental health practice is "timely and consistent comprehensive psychiatric aid," and pointed out that that was why such emphasis was placed on the extensive network of psychiatric dispensaries. The United States, Snezhnevsky noted, has no such network. He said US psychiatrists had told him that with such dispensaries on a similar scale, the number of beds occupied in US mental hospitals could be cut 200 per cent.

The US delegation was also greatly impressed not only with the aim of Soviet psychiatry to return the mentally ill to society, cited by Snezhnevsky, but with the practical steps taken by Soviet authorities to guarantee its achievement.

I once visited an out-patient clinic of psychiatric dispensary No. 8. It serves the Kuibyshev and Sokolniki districts in Moscow. The patients, many of them middle-aged and elderly, were seated in bright attractive rooms. Dr. Elena Obratsova, the chief doctor, a matronly woman with an extremely sensitive face, greeted me warmly.

Dr. Obratsova's staff consists of 27 doctors, 37 trained nurses and 36 other workers and attendants.

The psychiatric dispensary has its own hothouses in beautiful Sokolniki Park. The patients who work here under the doctor's supervision and are paid the full normal wages feel they are making a significant contribution to society. Perhaps more than anything else, I was impressed with the dispensary's

ability to fully carry out its doctor's prescriptions for patients. I am not only referring to medicines and therapeutic treatment. Medicines are provided free or at very low cost (and we know how expensive such medicines are in the United States). I am referring to necessary changes in basic living and working conditions prescribed by doctors. In the United States, the doctor's advice or "orders" to get a new job, improve one's living conditions, or go on a vacation, are just so many words for the average American, especially working people and, particularly, Blacks and other minorities. The doctor and the patient both know this.

In the Soviet Union such a tragic gap between what the doctor prescribes and what the patient's financial situation and capitalist society dictate is non-existent.

Even though there is still a tight housing situation in the Soviet Union, mentally ill and their families are provided with particularly spacious and more comfortable apartments. Dr. Obratsova told me that annually a number of apartments are set aside for this purpose. The dispensary also has a special sanatorium to which it can send its patients.

The delegation of US mental health experts concluded in its report: "As with other elements of the care network, a major emphasis of the specialized chronic facilities lay in the preservation and maintenance of human dignity. In that regard, the Russian attempt to care for chronic patients was notable." It was for good reason the US delegation was so impressed on this point. Preservation and maintenance of human dignity hardly describe most US institutions for the mentally ill, especially the chronically ill.

Child Care

The US Mental Health Mission was particularly moved by what they saw in respect to Soviet care for children, especially the mentally and physically handicapped. It confirmed the picture of systematic and continuous medical care with which we have personally become quite familiar these past four years. I hardly need add to its description: "In actuality, care of the child begins before he cries, on an intensive and meticulous basis, with the pregnant mother. From the third month of pregnancy, there is the beginning of an accumulation of a vast physiological data on the child yet to be born. Obstetricians and pediatricians have all pregnant women under constant observation. When the mother delivers the child, the children's polyclinic is immediately notified by the hospital. From that time until the child reaches the age of 16, the polyclinic is the medical hub of all health services designed to meet the special needs of children. All the families in the neighborhood know where it is located—no one has to look up the number—since there is a children's polyclinic in each district of approximately 40,000 people.

"For example, as soon as the mother returns home from the hospital, the doctor and nurse must visit her and give her a regimen for the newborn infant. During the first month of a baby's life, the physician must call five times at the home, and the medical data on these visits must be recorded in the polyclinic files. Until a child is two or three years of age, the physician is required to see him at least once a month, and continues to see him at least every two or three months until he enters kindergarten."

The US mental health experts concluded: "The organization of health services in Russia is complete and health services for children bear this out." They noted that "there are more than 70,000 pediatricians in the USSR (there are more now, *M. D.*) as compared to 15,000 in the United States," and they correctly observed that "with this kind of continuity of care as a base, it is usually the pediatrician who first detects emotional problems in children." The US delegation pointed out that "the children's neuropsychiatric dispensary is the focal point for the professional practice of child psychiatry." It was impressed with something that we are quite familiar with—the comprehensive network of special schools, homes for children and schools for mentally retarded, neurotic children and those with speech disorders, and "forest" schools located in wooded areas. All provide special care at no cost or a nominal charge of from six to ten roubles a month.

My wife and I visited a "forest" school with a Moscow friend whose child suffered from an emotional problem. The girl's problem was the kind that is usually ignored in our country because it could not yet be considered as "serious enough." The child was not doing as well as she should in school and there were signs of emotional disturbance. No one waited for it to get "worse." The school called her classroom problems to the attention of the mother. The mother, aware of the facilities available, immediately made use of them. The girl was admitted at once to the special school. It was located in a very pleasant rural area just outside of Moscow. School work and study were skilfully combined with play, sports and cultural activities and a regime of rest and proper diet. The girl remained at this "forest" school for several months (one can stay for a year or so). We observed the marked improvement when the little girl returned home. She has since, not only completely overcome her emotional problem and improved in her studies, but has become an outstanding athlete. It is the prompt attention to "little" problems (which in our country all too often are permitted to get out of control) that makes it possible to avoid so many "big" problems in the Soviet Union.

The US mental experts observed the same thoughtful approach in a kindergarten for mentally retarded which they visited. They were, understandably enough, first impressed with the staff—147 for 200 children! The 147 included 19 teachers, 3 psychiatrists, 23 nurses, physical and recreational therapists. The school director pointed out to the US delegation that the staff was so large because the school wanted to do everything possible "to raise

the educational level of the children so that they may enter regular public schools at the age of seven." However, the school director admitted that "a fair percentage of the children would not achieve the goal of entering the regular elementary school." They would be sent to special schools for the mentally retarded. But what, above all, struck the US mental experts, is that "the Russians were devoting considerable financial and manpower resources to the care of children whose financial and potential contribution to the Russian economy was at best limited." This, in a country usually depicted in our press as concerned solely with getting the utmost materially out of individuals! The US delegation noted that when it questioned the director on this point, he replied simply: "We think that every child, however limited, is entitled to the best that we can give him. Even if he cannot be absorbed into any educational system, *we must make his life, not only endurable but somewhat joyful.*" (My emphasis, M.D.)

These are not pious words as the observations of US mental experts demonstrate. I could go on citing numerous similar observations. Let me add a final one in conclusion. The US delegation visited one of the Moscow children's hospitals. For 530 children, there was a staff of "more than 800 people including 83 physicians, of which 63 were child psychiatrists, 280 nurses, 32 speech therapists, 60 teachers, 238 ward assistants" besides housekeeping and maintenance personnel. And here is the physical setting (an area of 45 acres) that impressed the delegation: "a zoo, carefully tended gardens, several small parks and an orchard." "What is more," the delegation pointed out, "there were no 'keep off the grass' signs and, indeed, the children were largely responsible for the care of the zoo animals and helped in the planting and harvesting of the orchard's cherries and apples." The US experts were "very impressed with the high quality of supervision even in the most disturbed ward. Of particular note were the vases, plants and draperies in abundance, reflecting the expectation that the children would respect property and control their behavior."

I am convinced that the systematic human care which the Soviet Union provides for its mentally ill and retarded citizens from early childhood, is another important factor contributing to the tensionless character of its city streets. In addition to poverty and slums compounded by racist discrimination, the high cost of treating these often lifelong illnesses helps to swell our crime rolls. Mike Gorman, a member of the US Mental Health Mission to Moscow, in noting that the United States has at least four million emotionally disturbed children, described the appalling neglect of the problems of many of these children, in his preview of a report prepared for Congress by the Joint Commission of Mental Health of Children. He pointed out that two-thirds of all afflicted youngsters "are quite literally lost, bounced around from training school to reformatories, to jails, and whipped through all kinds of understaffed agencies."

I firmly believe that, in addition to the overall human character of Soviet life, the continuous comprehensive and concerned care rendered to its mentally ill and retarded has done much to eliminate this as a source of crime.

Soviet Sanatoriums and Rest Homes

We have spent our vacations in the past four years in sanatoriums in the Crimea and the Caucasus.

Those were vacations in paradise! Here, nature and science unite to restore, repair and replenish the health of a nation's workers of hand and brain, factory and field. All that I described earlier in respect to the year-round care provided for the Soviet people is, as it were, turned into an intensive crash health course (of usually 24 days).

Soviet holiday-makers are carefully examined by doctors who prescribe for each a regime of exercise, treatment, diet, swimming, and rest (and not least of all the amount of sun to which one should be exposed).

I must confess that at first I found it a bit too organized (and there are those, especially Soviet youth, who prefer a less organized vacation). But the surge of vigor and freshness that replenishes your weary body, you soon realize, is well worth the systematic effort. Besides, you readily discover there is plenty of time for your own individual brand of rest and enjoyment.

The health of its citizens is one of the prime "businesses" of Soviet society. In the Soviet Union it is a business whose only profit is the renewed health of its people. And for a socialist society, that's profit enough. For people are its most valuable "capital."

For the business of its people's health, the Soviet Union has established the world's largest, most elaborate, most modern and most luxurious facilities, natural and man-made.

In our country, nature's prime health and beauty spots are the preserves of the rich and very rich—in that order. The best places in the sun are, indeed, costly in our free enterprise system where real estate, whether concrete or mountains and seashore, is measured by that all-important yardstick—profitability.

I tried to imagine a General Motors worker from Detroit or a garment worker from New York, and especially a Black family from Harlem, in one of the sanatoriums or rest homes of the Crimea and Sochi I visited. First, there would be the cost of just getting there. One of the things that first impressed me was that I met workers from the far corners of the Soviet Union in Sochi and the Crimea. There was a fisherman from Vladivostok, a construction worker from Norilsk (in the extreme North), a teacher from the

Buryat Autonomous Republic, near Lake Baikal, Siberia, and a cotton worker from Uzbekistan. It would be as if a lumber worker from the State of Washington or Oregon, a cotton picker from Mississippi, and a copper miner from Montana would vacation for nearly a month in the most luxurious spots of the Florida coast. The cost of plane fare alone would make this prohibitive.

My fare from Moscow to Sochi (about 1,300 miles) was 26 roubles and 30 kopecks (one way). By contrast the fare from New York to Chicago (about 900 miles) is about \$62.00. But, transportation fare is the least problem.

You have to bask in the Crimea or Sochi sun (with great care, as you will be repeatedly admonished not only by the doctors, but your fellow vacationers). You have to bathe in the invigorating crystal clear waters of the Black Sea and sleep in the soothing embrace of the gentle breeze that makes enchanted nights of the Crimea, to realize that the czars and nobility of pre-socialist Russia knew what they were doing when they built their palaces of rest in these paradise spots. The first significance of the palatial health resorts of the Crimea and Sochi is that they were made the property of the people instead of the private preserves of princes.

You have to visit the czar's former palace in Livadia in the Crimea to grasp the dramatic significance of what a transformation in the life of people the October Revolution has brought about. Workers, men and women, were casually strolling along the majestic cypress-lined paths where once the czar's family took their walks, as we entered the palatial grounds. They were on their way to lunch or to *protseduras* (medical treatments) in one of the former palaces. And they were so accustomed to their "royal" surroundings that they hardly took notice of the gaping visiting foreign tourists who still found it hard to believe that all this really happened.

It was clear that the present occupants of the palaces had long ago got used to this "happening"! It was their parents and grandparents who felt the once-in-a-millennium thrill of the transformation. In 1925, Livadia became a sanatorium for illiterate poor peasants. Many received their first lessons in reading and writing in these palatial surroundings. I recalled how as a child I listened to my parents speak with awe of this "happening," while in my New York classroom my teachers spoke in horror of the "terrible Bolsheviks" who were seizing "private property." The sanatorium in Livadia run by the Soviet trade unions (as are most sanatoriums and rest homes), today specializes in treatment of heart ailments. In addition to a large medical staff and elaborate facilities, a staff of 30 cardiologists provides care for 1,000 people all year round. And for all this—medical treatment that is beyond the reach of not only our working people, but those in comfortable circumstances, idyllic beauty, and nourishing, if not the most sumptuous meals—the cost is only 120-130 roubles a month.

Most vacationers, however, only pay a fraction of the cost since their union usually assumes 70 per cent of the charge. This then explains why I

was able to meet workers from the far corners of the Soviet Union in the Crimea and Sochi.

Average Americans couldn't afford such sanatoriums as I visited in the Crimea and Sochi. My questioners were puzzled—some had absorbed considerable illusions about the much-ballyhooed US wage and the American standard of living. So, I explained to them some of the facts of life (our high tax rates, sky-high rents, the cost of medical care, etc.). "What does it cost a worker to spend his vacation in a place like this?" a young Soviet worker asked me. I couldn't help bursting out in laughter. Vacation, Soviet-style, was such an accepted way of life to this worker that he evidently found it hard to grasp that the richest country in the world couldn't "afford" to provide its workers with such facilities.

I told him that, to my knowledge, there existed no such places for workers in our country, but that for an ordinary resort hotel, which probably would not be located in one of our choice vacation areas, it would cost from about \$125 to \$150 a week for room and board. With it, of course, would go none of the elaborate medical services that Soviet sanatoriums provide. And the price would not include the cost of tips (another \$25 or more a week). Incidentally, there is no tipping in Soviet sanatoriums and rest homes—the gracious and hospitable service is regarded by the administration and vacationers alike, as a part of a rest.

My information was greeted with sympathetic head-shaking. "Poor Americans," I could read in most eyes. But a few, I could see, still found it hard to believe that this could be in "rich America."

The Soviet Union has gone far beyond mere appropriation of the pleasure palaces of the czars, nobles and capitalists of Russia. It has established the world's largest network of resort centers (which expands with every five-year plan). The chief industry of such resort centers as the Crimea and Sochi (and many others throughout this vast land) is the health of the people.

It all began in the grim days of the first years of the young socialist republic. Walk through the center of beautiful Yalta, shielded by the multi-hued mountains and bathed by the refreshing waters of the blue-green Black Sea, and you will come across a plaque imbedded in rock. On it are chiselled the words of the decree adopted by the Soviet government at Lenin's suggestion on May 13, 1921, on turning the former palaces into sanatoriums and rest homes for the workers and peasants and on building new ones. Wrecked by the Civil War, foreign military intervention, blockade and economic disruption, the socialist republic in 1921-22 allocated considerable funds for establishing health resorts on the Caucasian coast of the Black Sea. Many resorts and sanatoriums were built during the years 1933-41. The palatial beauty of the buildings, parks and layout is not accidental. The country's best architects designed them. This is all in keeping with the Soviet way of life that makes

palaces of its public places—Metro stations, theaters, concert halls and sanatoriums.

Fascist Germany's attack on the Soviet Union and the devastating years of war not only halted further construction of sanatoriums. In the occupied areas, they were largely destroyed and plundered, particularly in the Crimea and the Ukraine. After the war the construction of sanatoriums and rest homes started anew. At present the country has more than 5,000 sanatoriums and rest homes.

By the end of the 8th Five-Year Plan, 1970, the trade union sanatoriums and rest homes annually catered for 10,000,000 people. The total capacity of sanatoriums will double in the 9th Five-Year Plan period (1971-75) as compared with the 8th. No country in the world (including our own) can compare with this let alone quality of recreation and health care. Over 80 per cent of vacationers get their accommodations free of charge or at a discount.

Now about some of the "little" things that impressed me. The relationship between the doctors, nurses and vacationers is a very natural and comradely one. The medical staff exercises its authority in no unmistakable terms, but without that overbearing professionalism that marks the line between doctor and patient in our country. The same natural relationship exists between worker-vacationers and resort workers. This particularly struck and pleased me because I never forgot the humiliating treatment I received when as a youth I worked for one summer at a resort hotel.

A visit to Chekhov's home in Yalta serves to show how greatly the Russia which Chekhov, the great Russian writer and playwright, loved and wrote so poignantly about has changed. Chekhov spent the last years of his all-too-short life in Yalta. In Chekhov's time Yalta had only the sun and pure air to offer, hardly enough to make up for the ravages of years of disease and ceaseless creative toil. And the thought occurred to me: "What if all this vast industry of health care had been available to Chekhov and the countless creative talents Chekhov wrote about who were wasted by conditions in czarist Russia."

No one would have rejoiced more in the Yalta of today than the writer-doctor who so treasured the health and minds of the people. No one would have better appreciated its beautiful parks, forests, and birches—the property of the people—than the man who in Dr. Astrov cried out against the despoliation of Russia's natural resources under the czars and capitalists, than the man whose garden planted with his own hands now stands as a monument to his love of man and nature.

And how Chekhov would have been overjoyed to see Yalta's rest home for workers in the theatrical arts. How he would have taken delight (as I did) in meeting its warm-hearted director, Natalia Kirillovna Lebedevskaya! For no one understood better than Chekhov that the most beautiful characteristic

in human beings is kindness, selfless concern for the good of others, expressed not in gushing, empty talk, but in hundreds of little things that are truly meaningful. Natalia Kirillovna for almost 30 years has devoted her life to doing these "hundreds of little things" and that was why the most beautiful thing about my visit to the actors' home was not the garden-like surroundings, the countless little comforts, but the love I saw in the eyes of her "children"—many of them celebrated actors, actresses, directors, writers, and critics.

Established in 1934 in Alupka and in Yalta since 1956, the Actors' Rest Home plays host to 3,500 theater people a year. (There is another one in near-by Miskhor and all told there are eight rest homes for theater people in the Russian Federation alone.) The home is not only a place for rest and recreation—it is a beehive of creativity. Dramatists come here to write their plays, actors and directors to rehearse them. They pay only 65 roubles for 24 days (some only pay 30 roubles or nothing at all). Here, too, I was asked: "Do your actors have anything like this?" The relative handful in our country who make the big-time—the "stars"—have this and more. They even have private swimming pools in their home. But for most of our hardworking talented theater people (80 per cent of whom can't even work full-time at their profession) who work from "hit" to "hit" with very long slack periods in between, comparable place of rest is well beyond their means.

One final word about Yalta. I have discovered that it is a haven for people of many professions who had once been ill, and who have not only regained their health but have decided to live and work in Yalta. It is as if they are bound to the place which has given them renewed life. Their love for Yalta is a love for a great and kind benefactor. I met two such lovers of Yalta. Maya Korabanova, a charming and extremely energetic young woman who loves her profession of journalism, came to Yalta some years ago from Perm where she had contracted a serious case of tuberculosis. Concerned with a dying mother and a sick father, Maya had ignored the dire warnings until it was almost too late. Hers was almost a hopeless case. But Yalta's health industry saved her. There was no mistaking the solid repair job that had been done. For it was Maya whom we all watched (and shivered) as she swam in the Black Sea in temperatures that restrained even the most hardy.

A similar light shone in the eyes of Mikhail Ozerov, a member of the *Kurortnaya Gazeta* published in Yalta, when I spoke to him in the editorial offices of the very lively and informative paper of Crimea's resort industry. Ozerov, an extremely vigorous and young-looking man of middle age, could well serve as an excellent advertisement for the industry. A veteran of the Great Patriotic War, who made the long, triumphant journey to Berlin and who still remembers the songs he learned from US soldiers, Ozerov suffered from a severe back condition. And so he, too, came to Yalta. And he, too, remained to live and work in this delightful city of health. Ozerov's rejuvenation

nation for me is awe-inspiring. He rises at 5 : 30 a.m., exercises, runs for half an hour, then follows it up with a vigorous 30 minute swim in the Black Sea—this, all year round, including January and February when it gets quite cold in the Crimea.

There are many Ozerovs and Korabanovas in Yalta. But on a less spectacular scale—this is the story of millions of Soviet people. For restoration and rejuvenation of health is one of the most booming businesses in the Soviet Union.

Culture

Theater for All

Anthony Lewis, *The New York Times* correspondent, wrote after his visit to Soviet Estonia: "The cultural activity in Tallinn is staggering by our standards. The week I was there there were performances of Verdi's *Travatore*, Mozart's *Seraglie*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and a number of ballets at the opera house. The musicals were *Man of La Mancha* and a local version of *Love Story*. The Moscow Chamber orchestra played Bach and Vivaldi and there was a performance of Verdi's *Requiem* by the Estonian Radio and Television Orchestra and chorus that would have been a credit to New York or London. All that when the whole Republic's population is 1.3 million."

Lewis goes on to add: "The ballet repertory in the last few years has included modern works to music by Bartok and Stravinsky. . . Six Verdi and five Puccini operas have been put on."

A small country like Estonia with a population about the size of Philadelphia's, has, among other things, nine top professional permanent repertory theaters and a State Philharmonic Society and eleven people's amateur theaters which are very close to professional standards. Tallinn has a population of about 400,000. Take any US city of that size (and much larger) and compare its cultural life and facilities with that of Tallinn and an honest American would blush for shame. I lived a couple of years in Akron, Ohio, the nation's rubber capital, which is a little smaller in population than Tallinn. But there is no comparison between Tallinn and Akron in respect to cultural life. Akron has not a single professional drama, opera or ballet theater like the overwhelming mass of our cities (outside a handful of metropolitan centers and a few university-based towns). Once in a while a few drops of culture fell on its parched soil when a theatrical, musical or dance group passed through on a nationwide tour.

Lewis's article, incidentally, is appropriately titled "Some Surprises in Estonia." Among the "surprises" Lewis noted besides the "staggering" cultural life is the fact that Estonian "remains the common language. . . Children are taught in the language of their parents which means that 70 per cent of the schools are in Estonian from day-care through university."

The situation Lewis describes is typical of all 15 Republics.

Let me continue and add to the "surprises." For more than half a century, the Soviet Union has been the scene of a renaissance of 100 national cultures. No one living even for a short period in the Soviet Union can fail to feel the all-pervasive character of this multinational renaissance. I will describe it shortly.

Yet, to this day, Soviet culture is falsely presented as only Russian culture. More, it is portrayed as an instrument for stifling the cultures of other

peoples, the weapon of "Russification." This black-out on the multinational character of Soviet culture is even reflected in the constant news reference to the Soviet Union as "Russia."

Russian culture and the Russian language have, of course, played very significant roles in the multinational renaissance. And no one knows this and appreciates it more than the writers, composers, conductors, actors, scenario writers, directors and artists from the Republics who were trained in the conservatories, theaters, ballet and opera and cinema schools of Moscow and Leningrad.

Let me illustrate this by continuing with Estonia which so impressed Lewis. Let me take the reader to Tartu, Estonia's ancient university city, where I spent a delightful day with the famous Vanemuine Theater and its dynamic and extremely imaginative director, Kaarel Ird.

I met him at the 15th Congress of the International Theater Institute and he was bubbling with new ideas. No wonder many directors and critics from all over the world at the Congress, including Americans, sought him out.

Tartu has only a population of 80,000 but 250,000 attend Vanemuine's 550 performances every year. Theater-lovers come from every section of the Estonian Republic as well as from all Soviet Republics, not only to enjoy the theater's varied and original productions but to learn from its experiences. Vanemuine is a unique theater. It is a drama, ballet and opera theater all rolled into one. Its actors, directors and producers, in the course of a week, will participate in productions in all three genres.

Ird chuckled when I expressed surprise at the demands placed on his staff and performers. Versatility and Vanemuine just naturally go together. Tartu's audience, Ird pointed out to me, is a small town audience. In addition to the townspeople, it is regarded as their theater by collective farmers from southern Estonia.

To illustrate his point, Ird showed me the statistical study of Vanemuine's audience (the people's character of the theater is indeed demonstrated by the fact that such a survey was made). Here is what the survey revealed: 33.2 per cent are workers, 31.2 per cent students, 17.7 per cent intelligentsia, 11.3 per cent schoolchildren and 6.8 per cent pensioners. More than 35 per cent are newcomers from collective farms of neighboring areas.

"Tartu is not Moscow with its multitude of theaters for all tastes. Vanemuine has to meet the demands of the entire people. It has to truly be a people's theater," Ird stressed.

Vanemuine is living proof that a theater for all the people need not compromise with high standard or be bound by conservatism. Vanemuine breathes the spirit of innovation and originality. I saw its interpretation of *Maria*, a popular modern Soviet play on a vital contemporary theme, written by Afanasi Salynski. Earlier I had seen Moscow's Mayakovski Theater's pro-

duction of the play. Vanemuine made me feel I was watching an entirely different play. Vanemuine was the first to stage Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Prokofiev's opera, *The Player*, a number of operas by Mozart, and Gluck's *Orpheus and Euridyce*. Its repertoire includes plays by Sholem Aleichem, classical Russian and contemporary Soviet plays and, of course, works by Estonian writers and composers, past and present.

Vanemuine is housed in a palace in the full sense of the word. I doubt that in respect to its facilities as well as beauty, it is surpassed by any theatrical complex in New York! Certainly, I know of no city anywhere in the US that has anything to compare with the Vanemuine Palace. It has three beautiful auditoriums, one seating 840, another 700 and the third, 500. It also has a large open-air theater. Its revolving stage can compare with the best of Broadway.

It has a well-stocked library, a lovely lunch room and innumerable work, study and make-up rooms. Vanemuine has a staff of 400 which includes: a drama group of 35, ballet 33, opera 20, chorus 50, orchestra 50.

Vanemuine's studios are not limited to training professional actors. Many of its best actors and directors are factory workers, budding scientists and university students. Evald Hermakula who directed *Maria*, is a geology student. Vanemuine has three schools: drama, ballet and vocal. Ird, Vanemuine's director since 1940 (except for the years of Nazi occupation), also heads the drama school, a function he is not paid for. "It's social obligation," Ird explained.

Vanemuine, of course, has its own national tradition and unique form. But from what I observed in the Soviet Union, every Republic, in its own way, has a Vanemuine. The Vanemuines reflect the unprecedented cultural renaissance that has been taking place during the past half century in this land of many cultures.

Latvia's Family Celebrations

One can cite many statistics on the cultural renaissance in the Baltic countries but I believe two examples will best drive home the point.

I visited the Palace of Culture of the VEF plant which is noted especially for its high quality transistor radios in July 1972. VEF with its enormous labor force can be compared to our RCA or PHILCO giant corporations. But try to imagine RCA or PHILCO with a Palace of Culture for its workers like this.

The VEF "clubhouse," an imposing structure whose Grecian columns indeed give it a palatial appearance, has 44 groups comprising 1,800 partici-

pants ranging from children to pensioners. The Palace has two theaters, one Lettish, the other Russian, each with a 900-seat theater and a modern "revolving" stage. It has a folk chorus of 105, conducted by a prominent musician from the Riga Conservatory, an orchestra based on national folk instruments and music, a ballet school, sculpture and art studios, a 20-violin ensemble, film, radio, technical and "inventors" groups—as well as numerous sports groups.

The VEF ensembles give more than 250 concerts annually. They have frequently appeared on all-Union Soviet TV and thus are known to millions. To some extent or other practically all big plants and collective and state farms have VEF-type palaces. It is these cultural centers which are largely responsible for the renaissance in national culture in Latvia as well as in all the other 14 Republics I visited.

Cultural renaissance is as marked in the Latvian countryside. This was impressively demonstrated in the song and labor festival I attended in the city of Ogre, an agricultural and garment center not far from Riga.

More than 25 collective farms took part in the festival. It was a pageant of Latvia's centuries-old treasure-house of songs and dances. In colorful costumes collective farmers danced and sang their joy of labor on a huge open-air stage in a pinetree theater.

At the festival the singers sang of the perils and triumphs of the sea, the pride in productive labor, the joy in reaping a rich harvest. It was an ode to labor. The festival celebrates agricultural achievements and is an invaluable stimulus to meeting production goals. Competition in song, dance and labor go hand in hand here and the best collective farms usually excel in all three.

The audience was a mustering of the region's farmers but it included a substantial number of shop workers, students and professionals. It was a festival of all generations. None were too young or too old to thump or twirl in the lusty Latvian folk dances. A septuagenarian group of men and women danced with such abandon and *joie de vivre* they brought down the house and had to do an *encore*.

Participation is on a mass scale and preparations for the festival continue almost all year round. Itinerant judges travel from farm to farm carefully rating each performance. After months of intense competition, six of the 25 collective farm groups are chosen as the final contestants. This is how Soviet Latvia not only preserves its ancient heritage, but keeps it as green as the ivy Janus crowns worn at the festival. The festival was also a celebration of the Soviet Union's family of nations. A talented ensemble of Russian dancers from neighboring Leningrad received a rousing welcome. And Ogre's dancers were quite at home in the Ukrainian and Moldavian dances they performed.

Tea in Ashkhabad

Let me tell you of a delightful evening I spent in the city's attractive Ballet and Opera Theater. Hader Allamurov, the theater's handsome director and chief conductor of its orchestra, ceremoniously poured the tea as he related the story of his country's cultural rebirth and his own life.

They are really one. Until the Revolution, no choruses, not to speak of opera, symphony or drama, existed in Turkmenia. Only *bakhshi*, roving troubadours, preserved the ancient folk songs and poems. The Republic now has, besides the Opera and Ballet Theater, a symphony orchestra, youth theater and an academic drama theater. The night before I left Ashkhabad a dramatization of Ernest Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* translated into Turkmen, was being performed to a packed house.

Most important of all, a corps of young talented writers, composers, singers, musicians, actors and artists have come into their own. From what I saw and heard at the Opera and Ballet Theater, they are not only talented but extremely well-trained. Allamurov told me the conservatories, music institutes, ballet and drama schools of Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev opened their doors wide to the sons and daughters of shepherds and nomads. Now composers, artists, actors and musicians are being trained in the Republic itself.

Allamurov cited the story of his own life as typical of this process.

"I was born in the middle of the Kara Kum desert, the son of a poor shepherd," he began.

He was orphaned at an early age and was brought up and educated at a boarding school. From there he entered the Agricultural Institute where he played in the school orchestra. There, attentive teachers were impressed with his musical talent and decided Allamurov would make a better musician than a technician, and so in 1937, Allamurov was admitted to the famous Moscow Conservatory of Music. He has been chief conductor for 24 years and the director of the Ashkhabad Opera and Ballet Theater for eight years. Allamurov drew on the rich store of Turkmen melodies.

At the "tea" I also met Durdi Nuriev and watched later the performance of his interesting and melodic musical comedy dealing with the conflict between the old and the new as it affects two young people in love. I also attended a concert in the process of being televised. It was a delightful combination of operatic arias, songs and orchestral pieces by Turkmen composers, classical Russian and Italian works and what was particularly impressive was the quality of the performances by the artists.

Symphonic Orchestra in the Countryside

Situated in the west of the USSR ancient Lvov (founded in 1256) absorbed the finest in the architectural art of medieval Europe but tenaciously clung to its own national character.

The spirit of Ivan Franko, Ukraine's immortal poet, patriot and internationalist, hovers over the city he lived in for forty years, over its lofty Gothic cathedrals, its imposing Baroque church towers, its magnificent Renaissance structures, its burgeoning bustling industries and its sprouting, spreading modern housing complexes.

Lvov is an Ukrainian city of old world and Slavic charm with the vigor and optimistic purposefulness of Soviet cities.

From 1919 to 1939, Lvov and Western Ukraine were occupied by reactionary bourgeois Poland. In all these many years, Ukrainian culture and the Ukrainian language were truly stifled and suppressed. Ukrainian schools were closed down and the speaking of the language was forbidden in public places.

In September 1939, Western Ukraine voted for Soviet rule and reunification with Soviet Ukraine. In the brief two years of Soviet life before Nazi occupation, a veritable cultural revolution began to sweep Lvov and the Western Ukraine. But it was stopped by the war. The Nazis burned books (50 million copies), destroyed museums, clubs and theaters.

In the first days of occupation the Nazis, aided by Ukrainian fascist nationalists, slaughtered almost the entire Jewish population, and massacred thousands of Communists and those who had hailed Soviet power, including many of the finest scientists and cultural leaders of Lvov. This tragedy personally hit home to me when I met Isaak Pein, People's Artist of the Ukrainian Republic and director-conductor of the renowned Lvov Philharmonic Orchestra. Pein, who was the orchestra's first conductor when it was organized in 1939, told me the tragic story of what befell his fellow musicians and close friends. It was as painful to look at Pein's face as to listen to his words. It was the story I had heard about all Soviet cities that were caught up in the Nazi holocaust: "There was no time to evacuate them—so half of the members of the orchestra were killed"... Pein escaped their fate by chance—he happened not to be in Lvov at the time.

Lvov Region now has 1,600 cultural clubs, 1,800 libraries, and eleven state museums, five museums sponsored by various scientific societies and 220 museums of regional studies. But what particularly impressed me is that Lvov Region has 20 symphony orchestras. Symphony orchestras in our country are largely confined to major centers. But many of Lvov Region's symphony orchestras are in the villages and on collective farms.

I visited the Conservatory. I attended classes where, besides world, Russian and Ukrainian classics, students from villages as well as towns were being taught ancient Ukrainian instruments, like the bandura, which are now taking their proper place in the world of music.

I was particularly impressed by a network of village cultural complexes. These complexes include palaces of culture with large auditoriums equipped with modern fully-equipped stages, 12-15 rooms for amateur groups, dance halls, libraries, outdoor auditoriums, stadiums, parks and recreational centers. Lvov Region has 10,000 amateur groups involving 200,000 participants. The Ukraine has 26,000 clubs, 106 amateur theaters, 150,000 amateur art circles. Incidentally, the amateur talent groups are a regular feature of TV programs and thus have a regular all-Soviet audience. The vast number of amateurs and the intensive training they receive from the best Soviet artists as well as the tremendous resources expended on them by the state, plants and collective and state farms, are producing a qualitative effect. It is narrowing the gap between amateur and professional.

I would like to mention the famous *Yunost* Ukrainian Dance Ensemble whose rehearsal I watched at the luxurious Gagarin Palace of Culture in Lvov. Directed by Yaroslav Vantukh, it was made up of 80 young people who attended special technical schools where they obtained a secondary education and were taught a trade or profession. Their teachers were highly skilled machine workers and technicians. They attended the dance ensemble after school. But watching them perform we could understand why some people who had seen them perform in Italy had questioned their amateur status.

"One of our boys had to go to a plant and work one of their machines to prove to them he knew how to work," Vantukh recalled with a grin.

Just looking at the beautiful costumes richly decorated with traditional Ukrainian embroidery was in itself enough to make it worthwhile to attend the performance (the group changed costumes for each number).

Never before have the lusty yet graceful Ukrainian dances had such a huge stage or reached as vast an audience as they do today. And this is not only true of the multinational Soviet Union where Ukrainian Days of Culture are annually celebrated in each Republic. When, in all its long years of struggle for cultural survival, has Ukraine's treasure chest of song, dance and literature been opened to the kind of international audience it has today? The *Trembita* Choir is known the world over, as is the *Verkhovina* Song and Dance Ensemble. Non-professional groups like *Yunost* have won the hearts of tens of thousands in Europe and Latin America. Lvov, Kiev and Odessa conservatories of music have given Ukrainian music a flourishing rebirth and have produced a crop of talented musicians and composers who can well take an honored place among the world's great.

On the Blue Screen

Television is one of the most effective means of bringing the cultures of 100 peoples into the homes of Soviet citizens. Very early I became a rabid Soviet TV fan. In the first place it was my best Russian teacher. As I became familiar with the language, I got to appreciate and enjoy the programs all the more. In four years of close TV watching I never once came upon any programs glorifying or wallowing in violence or sex. Absent is the world of crime and depraving sensationalism.

Automatically, I awaited the television commercials which dominate our TV screen. There are no US Steel hours or General Motors programs, whose content is determined by the board of directors of these all-powerful monopolies. There are no CBS, NBC, or ABC corporations to cash in on every minute of TV time.

In the Soviet Union, there is no pliant government to generously hand the air over to any monopolies and, what's more, there is no one to sell it to. Thus, Soviet TV, like the theater and the concert hall and all performing arts, are truly public servants. Soviet TV, as the most constantly visual of the mediums of communication and culture, perhaps is the best reflector of Soviet society. Just spend a day before TV and the dynamic life of this society with its constant construction passes in review. You have a front seat at the birth of the great Nurek and Ust-Ilim hydroelectric stations and you meet the men and women who built them.

You feast daily on the rich cultural fare provided by Soviet TV. The ballets and operas, produced by the famous Bolshoi Theater and presented in full, are a regular TV feature. So are concerts by Emil Gillels, Svyatoslav Richter and other internationally acclaimed artists. And plays staged by theaters from all the Republics. And no TV viewer in the world has the kind of front seat at the cultural, social, political and sports events of the Soviet Union's 15 Republics (and to an increasing extent of the countries of the socialist community of Europe). All the important concert halls and theaters in Moscow—among them the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, the Hall of Columns of the House of Trade Unions, the Bolshoi Theater, the Moscow Art Theater—have TV apparatus at the ready. Mobile TV stations cover all the other cultural, sports and social events. And all these important events can be fully broadcast without the slightest charge to Soviet TV stations and can be brought without any cuts or commercial interruptions to the Soviet viewers.

Thus, with all our talks of "free" air waves and the ballyhoo about "controlled" Soviet media, one may well ask: Which are truly the more democratic? The Soviet media, which give the Soviet citizen a front seat at

all the nation's great cultural, social and sports events or our "free enterprise" media which base its program on profit making?

Moscow TV has four channels. Channel 1 is an all-Soviet program and is relayed to all local stations. Channel 2 is directed primarily to the central regions of the USSR. Channel 3 is entirely devoted to educational and scientific programs. It is an extremely important and regular auxiliary to the school and University. It is a comprehensive educational program that includes physics, mathematics, language, and literary programs. Channel 4 is exclusively devoted to theater, symphony, poetry, films and variety music. Tuned to TV the Soviet viewer regularly attends the Bolshoi, Kirov (Leningrad) ballets and operas, listens to symphony concerts and sees the best plays and films. During festivals such as the famous Russian Winter Festival in Moscow, the White Nights Festival in Leningrad, and the International Tchaikovsky Competitions, the Soviet viewer, indeed, partakes of a cultural feast. Whereas we are constantly reminded this comes to us by the grace of this or that great corporation which sponsored it and whose products we should therefore buy.

About the closest thing to a regular cultural program in our country is channel 13 in New York which broadcasts good theater and cultural programs. But our channel 13 not only broadcasts a fraction of the cultural programs of Soviet TV, it leads a very precarious financial existence. It is compelled to make constant financial appeals to its audience (which is rather limited), who contribute by paying an annual fee for its printed programs and is subject to the pressures direct and indirect from the powers that be.

Soviet TV is truly multinational. This I know from personal experience for I watched Soviet TV programs in 15 Republics. I visited their TV stations and they compare quite favorably with their Moscow counterpart in all modern techniques and equipment (there are 127 TV centers in the USSR). TV and radio programs are broadcast in their own national languages and feature national films, dramatic and musical productions.

Thus, the theater, ballets, opera, writers and poets of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Turkmenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are almost as well known in the cities and villages of the Russian Federation as they are in their own Republics. Soviet TV literally brought the cultures of 100 peoples into the living rooms of the Soviet people.

Soviet TV plays an extremely vital role in stimulating the development of amateur dance, song and dramatic groups. A very large part of the TV cultural programs are given over to them (and it is quite often difficult to distinguish them from the professional performers). Most of these are factory and farm cultural groups like the ones I described at the VEF radio plant in Riga and the collective farm festival groups in Ogre, Latvia.

The cinema poses no threat to TV in the Soviet Union. Both are flourishing here. The relationship between Soviet TV and Mosfilm and the film organizations of the Republics is a natural one. Both are in the same business of bringing culture to the peoples. Thus, you see one of the best films rather quickly and without any commercial breaks.

But perhaps the most distinguishing feature of Soviet TV is its working class character. For me, it was a source of pleasure to see that workers on the job were the heroes of Soviet TV, and not the fat cats and Mr. Bigs. Workers and farmers are, indeed, the heroes of Soviet TV. The coal miner who fulfilled his planned quota, the dairy maid whose cows produced the most and best quality milk, the machine tool worker who discovered new methods to increase productivity—are the most highly honored Soviet citizens on TV.

I have also seen excellent documentaries which had the quality of plays in their warm human portrayal of the work and lives of the workers. This was particularly the case with an unforgettable documentary on the coal miners. Actually it was difficult to think of it as a "documentary"!

Skilfully woven together were scenes tracing the incredibly difficult and heroic upward climb of the coal-diggers and the personal story of outstanding workers. You saw the black pit hell-holes and barracks of czarist days that made this the most dangerous and most miserable of all labor. You were there as Stakhanov dug his way to history and made his name the symbol of socialist labor. You relived the terrible days of Nazi occupation. There were the deep Donbas mines that became the tombs of thousands of martyred miners. And here were their wives, sisters, and sweethearts marching with their picks and shovels to take the place of their men who were at the front.

You rejoiced in their triumph and their march to reconstruction in their new and more beautiful cities (like Donetsk). And you realized these men laboring in the bowels of Mother Earth were truly regarded and treated as the heroes of the Soviet Union. The camera took you "inside" these simple warmhearted heroes of labor and you felt a tug of sadness at parting with them. I saw similar moving documentaries dealing with the life of collective and state farms.

Television is one of the most powerful forces for good or evil in modern life. Treated as a profitable commodity in the hands of three giant monopolies in our country, it is a horror to millions of American parents who witness the crippling effects of this immoral monster on their children. Soviet TV, on the other hand, demonstrates the virtually limitless possibilities for bringing education and culture to the most remote corners of this vast country, for narrowing the age-old cultural gap between village and town. It is a key instrument for making Soviet cities (and villages) centers of many cultures.

"The Russian Winter"

Music and cultural festivals are a way of life for all Soviet cities (and I may add, on a smaller scale for rural areas as I described in Ogre, Latvia). Aside from Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, cities like Kuibyshev, Odessa, Lvov, and, in fact, all Soviet capitals have regular mass musical and dance festivals. Soviet cities not only hold festivals of their own Republic's culture, one can see and hear the cultures of all Soviet peoples in Moscow in the course of the year. When we visited Moldavia, that small Republic had just been the scene of a ten-day Festival of Russian Arts and Literature in the course of which there were more than 200 concerts and theatrical performances and more than 90 meetings with workers, farmers and intellectuals of Moldavia.

The annual "Russian Winter" Festival of Arts in Moscow offers a cultural feast no other city in the world can match. Four years of partaking of this cultural feast has convinced me that today Moscow is the cultural capital of the world. For, what is presented during the "Russian Winter" Festival in concentrated forms, is the normal cultural diet of Muscovites.

Here, for example, is the cultural program for the "Russian Winter" Festival, December 25, 1970-January 5, 1971 (which featured ballet). It included: evenings of ballets, operas, staged by the country's best opera theaters, the state symphony orchestra of the USSR, the renowned *Beryozka* Dance Ensemble, the Omsk Russian National Choir, the "Ergirva" Chukchi-Eskimo Ensemble, the world-famous Moissejev State Academic Ensemble of Folk Dances of the USSR, the Orenburg Russian People's Choir. All were performed at Moscow's beautiful and palatial concert and theater halls. In addition there were special art exhibitions at the Tretyakov and Pushkin Galleries, and, of course, Moscow's 25 dramatic theaters played to packed houses.

Incidentally, American tourists have discovered that Russian winter, long portrayed as forbidding, can be fun (they are visiting the Soviet Union during that season in increasing numbers). They not only spent pleasurable evenings indoors at concert and theater halls, but learned during the day how enjoyable Russian winters can be. I know because I spent an unforgettable day in Izmailovski Park with a group of Americans on an Anniversary Tour visit. I rode the *Russkie Gorki* (Russian mountains)—a thrilling ride that is a cross between the roller coaster and bobsled, slid down the icy spiral runway of the tall house of ice, raced through the snow capped woods of graceful birch trees to the merry jingling of *troika* bells, danced, played vigorous winter games around an international campfire, ate delicious piping hot *blini* with red caviar and listened to soulful Russian and Gypsy music.

Izmailovski Park, like all Moscow parks, was teeming with skiers and skaters, many of them children on their winter vacations. A goodly number of the skiers were middle-aged and even elderly men and women. Skiing, particularly, is an all-family sport in the Soviet Union and is participated in on a scale unknown in our country. There are seven million active skiers in the Soviet Union. And unlike in our country, it is not at all an expensive sport. You don't have to travel a good distance to the "country," or pay a good price for skiing accommodations. You can just go to a nearby park or hilly, wooded area, or else get on the Metro (5 kopecks) and the electric train (a few more kopecks). And for tourist bases (which are subsidized by the unions) you pay about 50 kopecks a day.

A walk through a Russian forest, silent and sparkling in the snow, is a journey through a world of serenity and majesty.

A Mirror of Life

Soviet theater plays a specially significant role in the cultural life of the USSR. I consider its role so important, I deal with it in a separate book. Here, I want to confine myself to some general remarks. The spirit of Chekhov, Ostrovsky, Tolstoy, Gorky and the great innovators, Stanislavsky, Nemirovitch-Danchenko, Meyerhold, Okhlopkov, all of whom exerted so profound an influence on the US and world theater, hover over the Soviet stage.

Contemporary Soviet theater, contrary to cold war myths, which portray it as conservative, one-style and dogmatic, is vital, varied and versatile. Only an honest description of what Soviet theater is like today and a concrete presentation and analysis of contemporary Soviet plays, can demonstrate this. What is, above all, characteristic of Soviet theater is the people's character of the audience. Most Moscow theaters are not only packed, but are constantly surrounded by eager ticket-seekers. Professional theaters, unlike in our country, which are largely confined to a few metropolitan centers, exist in practically every big Soviet city. This is the meaning of Soviet statistics on theater: 547 drama and music theaters performing in 42 languages.

Unlike in the US where the cultural stream primarily courses through a few great urban centers and University towns, I discovered that the Soviet cultural stream flows throughout this vast land, into the most inconspicuous mountain hamlets, isolated desert settlements as well as in the lusty towns and cities springing up in the Far North and the Siberian taiga.

The theater is built along with the homes for the builders of new Soviet cities. And as repertoire theaters, Soviet theaters bring an incomparably richer and more varied dramatic fare to their audiences. Each of Moscow's

25 drama theaters has a repertoire of from eight to 30 plays. Thus, Moscow patrons are annually offered a choice of about 500 plays from world and Russian classics to contemporary plays by Soviet and foreign dramatists. I would guess that's about five times the number presented yearly by our professional New York theaters, not to speak of the difference in quality.

Heroes of the Screen

Every two years Moscow plays host to the cinema studios of the world. Its International Film Festival held under the slogan "For Humanism in Cinema Art, for Peace and Friendship among Nations," attracts an increasing number of countries (there were 85 or so at the last one). Perhaps no cinema festival in the world is attended by so many young and promising film studios from African, Asian, and Latin American countries. I was present at four of these international film gatherings—in 1967, 69, 71 and 73. The slogan of Moscow's International Film Festivals is not just for these world gatherings. It is the slogan the Soviet Union's vast, modern film industry lives by.

The Soviet film industry consists of 19 feature and 34 documentary and popular-science studios. It is multinational in character, 15 of the 19 feature studios producing about half the films annually made in the Soviet Union.

Mosfilm and Lenfilm are not the only studios that have achieved world fame. Among the Republics' studios that have established international reputations are: Kiev Film Studio named for the Ukrainian genius of the film, Alexander Dovzhenko (it's entry, *White Bird with the Black Mark*, won a Gold Medal at the 7th Moscow Film Festival); Georgian Film Studio (its *Soldier's Father* won second prize at the Rome International Film Festival); Lithuanian Film Studio, which made the extremely effective film *No One Wanted to Die*; Kirghizian Film Studio, the youngest of Soviet studios which made a number of good films based on the works of Chinghiz Aitmatov, one of the outstanding contemporary Soviet writers.

The cinema is the art with the greatest mass character since it reaches and influences so many people.

The influence can be for good or evil. How then, one may well ask, can such a powerful medium of art be permitted to be regarded as just another sphere for private enterprise? How can the production of films be treated as just another field for the all-important business of making profits? I must confess while this thought entered my mind before living in the Soviet Union, it never struck me with quite the same force as it has since the viewing of Soviet films became a normal part of my cultural diet.

Starting with the early revolutionary films of Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevo-

lod Pudovkin, Alexander Dovzhenko and to this very day, Soviet film has exercised a powerful and progressive influence on film makers all over the world. I believe, Ossie Davis, the celebrated US actor, playwright, film director and producer and militant fighter for Black liberation, best summed up its role when I interviewed him in July 1971, at the 7th Moscow Film Festival.

Davis told me: "I was extremely impressed because Soviet film makers have a completely different approach to cinema than in Hollywood. Take the *Liberation* series (a Soviet chronicle of World War II—*M.D.*). *Liberation* is an attempt to express a national epic. Who else could conceive of doing that? Moreover, it seems to me the Soviet film is imbued with a conscious effort to apply art to everyday problems of the Soviet people. And this is particularly demonstrated in that beautiful film *By the Lake* (directed by Sergei Gerasimov). The film deals with the question of ecology, of nature versus machinery, beauty versus utility. And all these questions are handled with tenderness, beauty and all the resources of dramatic and film art."

The *Liberation* series that so impressed Davis is an historical and political accomplishment of immense international significance. It records for all time the titanic struggle waged by the Soviet people to save mankind from the dark ages of fascism, their unprecedented mass heroism and the incalculable price they paid to defeat the Nazi war machine, the most powerful and most inhuman in history.

Ossie Davis was a thousand times right when he exclaimed "Who else could conceive of doing that?" Hollywood? Hardly. And not only because of the vast resources and finances expended on this epic (though I hate to think the price of tickets our movie industry and distributors would charge to see this five-part series—it was seen by Soviet citizens at the usual nominal price, 30 kopecks for each series or 1 rouble 50 kopecks for twelve hours of film show).

The Soviet camera has also focussed its penetrating lens on one of the great historical themes of our time—the surging national liberation movement.

I was impressed by the film *Black Sun*.

The film is based on a story that bears strong resemblance to Patrice Lumumba's martyrdom though the brutally murdered Black patriot in the film is named Robera Musombe and the country fighting for its independence and freedom from white colonialists is not identified. But Americans fighting for equal rights and against racism, especially Black Americans, would also recognize in *Black Sun* the story of the martyrdom of Dr. Martin Luther King, the murder of Black Panther activists, the persecution of Angela Davis, Erika Huggins and Bobby Seale. This is not a Soviet film about Africa. It is a Soviet-African film about new Africa made by the Byelorussian film studio. The Soviet author of the script and director of the film, Aleksei Speshnev, enlisted the assistance of three African countries. Most of the leading

roles are played by African actors. Supporting roles are played by students of Patrice Lumumba Friendship University in Moscow, American Blacks living in the Soviet Union for many years and their Soviet offspring.

Since *Black Sun*, Soviet cinema studios have produced several other extremely effective films dealing with the national liberation struggle. *That Sweet Word, Liberty*, a powerful, as well as extremely exciting description of the heroism, resourcefulness and militancy that make the struggle for Latin America's liberation from the damnation of US imperialism and its gorilla juntas invincible, won a gold prize at the 8th Moscow Film Festival. It was directed by Vitautas Zalakevičius of Soviet Lithuania who is regarded as one of the most imaginative and talented directors of the stage, as well as screen. His unique combination of realism and symbolism is revealed in the excellent film *No One Wanted to Die*. And, of course, the Soviet cinema was not long in coming up with a sharply indicting documentary film depicting the immortal three years of Allende's and Neruda's Chile, the bloody betrayal of the four generals, the CIA-junta conspiracy to kill Chile's democratic and constitutional effort to become master of its own home, the new fascist menace created against Latin America's and all national liberation movements.

The film was produced and directed by Roman Karmen, one of the geniuses of the Soviet documentary film who saw fascism first hand in Spain, in conjunction with a group of Chilean students of Moscow's Institute of Cinematography. One also could hardly expect this kind of a film from Hollywood.

The Soviet screen is increasingly and with ever greater effectiveness portraying contemporary life. And what, among other things, distinguishes it from our screen, are its heroes and heroines—the best workers, collective and state farmers, the most devoted school teachers, the most dedicated scientists. It is an honest portrayal that also deals frankly with the complex human problems that are involved in molding the communist man and woman. A good example of this was *Let's Live Till Monday* (Gorky Central Film Studios for Children and Teenagers), the Soviet feature film entry in the 6th Moscow Film Festival. Its artistic strength lies in its profound, probing integrity.

The story, direction and acting, all, were as honest as the film's chief actor, Ilya, a teacher in a Soviet secondary school. And the camera conveyed this quality with such simplicity and tenderness that the audience, sharpshooting critics and movie-lovers alike, burst into enthusiastic applause at the conclusion of the film.

The film describes the relations between teachers and students and different problems in connection with education.

The problems are presented in the person of true-to-life Soviet people—teachers, administrators, parents, all of whom approach the questions dif-

ferently, but all of whom earnestly and honestly seek the same objective—to prepare the youth for a happy and productive life in Soviet society.

It was Sergei Eisenstein, the genius who revolutionized world cinema, who best summed up the relationship between the artist and socialist society. This, the most succinct definition of that twofold relationship was made known to me in the summer of 1967 by Ilya W. Weissfeld, professor of dramaturgy of Moscow Institute of Cinematography and a life-long friend of Eisenstein. Weissfeld told me that when Eisenstein was asked to evaluate the impact of the October Revolution on him, he replied:

"'I' turned into 'we' and in this 'we' there was a place for 'me'. Millions of 'me's,' both as professional and amateur artists, have found a place in a culture that stresses 'we.'" This is the main theme emphasized by Soviet cinema in countless forms in innumerable films.

Culture—Not a Commodity

In the Soviet Union, culture is not regarded as a private luxury whose satisfaction is determined by the financial means of the individual. It is accessible to all the people. It is not treated as a commodity governed by our law of laws, supply and demand. It is treated as a normal public service. And the statistics to quote Anthony Lewis's apt description are, indeed, "staggering by our standards," and I may add, by any standards. I am well acquainted with what they mean in terms of personal life and will deal with that, the real significance of statistics. But, first let me say a few words on the statistics themselves.

At one of the press conferences held at the Ministry of Culture we heard about the history of the exciting and unprecedented cultural revolution that transformed a land of mass illiteracy into a country that, according to UNESCO, holds first place in the world in respect to theater, cinema, concert, museum and library attendance.

The figures speak for themselves: more than 238 million persons annually attend theater and concert performances, more than 100 million frequent museums, 4,600 million go to the cinema, and about three-quarters of the population—180 million—are library cardholders. Our statistics could hardly match these. To cite just one comparison. According to a Ford Foundation study, only 3.5 per cent of our population ever attended a live professional theater performance. The figures are scarcely any better in respect to concerts.

We have been given a comprehensive picture of the colossal Soviet cultural set-up. The Soviet Union has more than 134,000 club houses and palaces of culture, 1,144 museums, 360,000 libraries, 547 drama and music theaters

performing in 42 languages—25 in Uzbekistan, 24 in Kazakhstan, eight in Moldavia—all Republics which before the Revolution had no national theatrical art or theaters proper.

In the Soviet Union, 23 million people—almost one-tenth of the population—go in for amateur activities (with the facilities at their disposal that I described in Riga and Lvov). The Soviet Union has 29 conservatories, 11 institutes training highly-qualified painters, 12 theater institutes, 16 choreographic schools, and 11 institutes of culture which train specialists for this particular field.

I think I shan't be far out in saying that no other country in the world has such educational facilities in the sphere of culture and the arts. And it's all free and students receive stipends. They are also provided with accommodations at hostels and boarding schools, and performing musicians receive instruments, the most gifted being supplied with unique ones from state collections.

A system of artistic education extends from primary to higher school and embraces 7,000 music and art schools, and 445 secondary and 63 higher specialized educational establishments. But the Soviet Union hardly considers these massive cultural facilities as adequate to meet the constantly expanding cultural needs of its people. Thus, we were acquainted with the goals set by the 9th Five-Year Plan.

One of the major tasks is to narrow the cultural gap between city and rural areas. Thus, the 9th Five-Year Plan calls for the construction of 558 large district houses of culture (similar to what I described in Lvov). In addition, every district center will have libraries for adults and children, a music school, a museum and a people's theater. By 1975, there will be an additional 11,400 club houses, 12,200 libraries, 132 museums, 49 theaters, 30 circuses and 355 recreation parks. These are "staggering statistics" of a cultural revolution that has never lost its momentum but, on the contrary, has been steadily gathering steam.

For, aside from the fact that I had seen these "staggering" statistics in the flesh and blood, our family had experienced their meaning personally. Let me explain. Our son, Joseph, revealed a musical talent at an early age and like many American parents in modest circumstances, we were anxious to do all we could to give it the possibility for development. As is well known this is largely considered a "private" matter in our country for each family to manage as best it can. This, of course, meant private lessons since public musical facilities are quite limited and are far from cheap when available. And so, like many other families in our circumstances we skimmed on other needs to pay for Joseph's piano and trumpet lessons. At that time the charge was \$5 for a half-hour lesson. (It is now considerably more.)

Incidentally, the cost for learning to play orchestral instruments for children in the Soviet Union, is 1 rouble and 50 kopecks a month. For the piano,

it is based on the parents' income, but it is also purely nominal. There are 4,000 children's music schools and as I described in respect to Lvov, hundreds of collective and state farms, as well as enterprises maintain their own schools.

But to get back to our son. Joseph, fortunately, was able to qualify for entrance into the High School of Music and Arts in New York (the only music secondary school for children talented in this field in New York). I doubt whether such schools exist in many other of our great cities, certainly not in our medium-sized cities. He, and we of course, wanted to continue his studies in this field. Since neither we nor our son were in a position to pay the tuition cost, Joseph applied for a government-sponsored loan.

On March 5, 1969, Gail and I accompanied by our son, Robert, came to Moscow. In August of that year Joseph came to Moscow. After one year in Moscow University preparatory department where he learned the Russian language and a year at the Lenin School of Music, Joseph qualified for entrance into the Moscow Conservatory of Music (where he took a special two-year course for composers). We had by this time forgotten about the worries of paying for a musical education (since not only were we not burdened by tuition charges but Joseph was receiving a monthly stipend). However, New York University and the Bankers Trust Company of New York, which financed the loan, hardly had forgotten us. And so, in accordance with the stipulations of the National Defense Education Act which provides that a borrower may repay his loan "over a period beginning nine months after the date the borrower ceases to carry, at an institution of higher education... at least, one-half the normal full-time academic work load," Joseph received a letter informing him that he had to begin payments on his loan plus the interest charges that had accumulated.

It was, indeed, a dialogue, not only across the Atlantic Ocean, but across two worlds. The New York Higher Education Assistance Corporation of Albany, New York, the body set up to effect the loan and supervise its payment, sent Joseph a copy of the "promissory note-installment" which he had signed. It itemized the amount financed—\$1,782.75 and the interest charge \$284 for a total payment of \$2,067. This total, of course, grew yearly since the annual interest rate was six per cent (the interest was increased to seven per cent for loans disbursed after April 1, 1969).

My son wrote on April 2, 1971 to the New York Higher Education Assistance Corporation explaining (as he had done on a number of other occasions) his "predicament": "I am attending Moscow Conservatory of Music with no tuition costs and am receiving a stipend in roubles. I do not have any income other than that, so it is impossible to pay back on my loan now." Asking for a "temporary stay," Joseph added hopefully: "I'm sure that you can understand my situation." This was hardly the case.

A steady flow of increasingly threatening letters made it clear that my

son's creditors were operating on an entirely different wave length. The letters were followed by a final notice to the delinquent debtor: "...served on you this 25th day of February 1972." The notice read: "...unless your delinquent payments on your student loan of \$1,782.75 are paid within thirty (30) days, it will be given to our attorney for immediate action." It also warned Joseph: "...you will be liable for interest at the legal rate for the period of delinquency of the above stated loan and all court costs, incident to collection thereof." Now all this was indeed "legal", "proper" and "normal" in our free enterprise society.

But what now gave the matter an entirely new light, and made it all seem as if our son was in communication with a world as strange to the one we are now living in, as Mars, was the utter incongruousness of reducing the development of artistic talents to a business transaction. And what gave this strange cross-continent communication an air of unreality, was that every day Joseph was going to one of the world's greatest conservatories where the most famous composers and musicians were his teachers. No one had "graciously" extended him a loan (at a nice interest). No finance company, bank or creditors were holding any club over his head. On the contrary, not only were the best facilities and teachers all put at his disposal in order to make it possible for him to develop his talents to the utmost, but he was being financially sustained in the process.

There you have the contrasting picture of the approach to culture. In the socialist country my son received the fullest opportunity to develop his musical talents without cost and with the necessary financial assistance. While in his own country, he will upon return have to repay not only the original "loan" his government so "generously" sponsored and a bank so "generously" financed, but the interest which accumulated every day.

Of course, the Soviet Union has high standards for admission to its institutes, universities and conservatories. And they are, indeed, demanding. But the demands are: talent, ability and hard work. They are never based on the ability or obligation to pay.

The Soviet Audience

The mass character of Soviet cultural life has produced world-renowned artists on an unprecedented scale. And alongside this, it has also brought into being an indispensable element in the development of culture—the world's most culturally advanced audience.

The entire world today is, of course, familiar with the calibre of Soviet artists (and they reflect the multinational culture and multinational character of Soviet talent). Aside from such well-known names as Oistrakh, Gillels, Pli-

setskaya, Otts, this is reflected in the young new talented artists, winners of 78 first prizes in international competitions since 1966. The winners represent almost all Republics. They include the Ukrainian violinist, Krysa; Moldavian singer, Bieshu; Azerbaijan pianist Badalbeili; Lithuanian singer, Daunoras; Georgian violinist, Yashvili; the Latvian violinist, Hirshorn; Armenian dancer, Galstyam; Tajik ballerina, Sabirova; Kazakh violinist, Nakipbekova; Kirghiz singer, Minzhilkiev; the Yakut singer, Yefremova.

But the world needs to become more acquainted with the Soviet audience. For me, the people who packed Soviet concert halls and theaters, were of even greater interest than the wonderful artists who performed for them. I doubt whether any artists in history ever confronted audiences of enthusiasts and one must add—critics—on such a mass scale. It is this audience, by the way, that so impresses visiting artists from all countries. And for good reason—they well know the difference between the composition of audiences in the Soviet Union and in the countries of free enterprise.

The massive network of cultural institutions produces not only the quantity of talent that makes possible quality on a relatively mass scale, it also produces the largest and world's most educated cultural audience. And this is reflected in the relationship between artists, theaters and factory and farm audiences.

My most impressive and most intimate acquaintance with the members of the Bolshoi Theater orchestra was when I heard them perform at the Moscow Locomotive Repair Plant.

In Uzbekistan, during the cotton harvest, we couldn't meet any artists or attend any concerts—all were busy entertaining the mass army of collective farmers.

The miners of Donbas, whom I visited in Makeevka and Donetsk, maintained regular contact with poets, actors, singers and dancers.

Moscow's popular *Sovremennik* Theater spent several days with the auto workers of Togliatti, intimately getting acquainted with their work and their life, before it started rehearsing a play about auto workers.

The very consideration of such an idea for our free enterprise system seems strange. Yet, my Soviet artist friends found it strange that their natural relationship with the Soviet working people should be a subject of special interest to me.

Soviet cities are cities of culture, they are cities without landlords, cities without doctor bills, cities where books are the cheapest and most widely read in the world and where the subways are like art galleries.

Fighting Pollution

For the Good of Mankind

Among the simple but fast disappearing blessings (for US city dwellers) that urban Soviet citizens can still count on to a far greater extent than Americans is the smell of clean fresh air and the good taste of pure water.

Coming from New York, I have appreciated this much more than Muscovites. By their superior standards, Moscow air is not sufficiently pure. They are concerned about the considerable increase of air pollutants resulting from the notable rise in automobile traffic in the past four years. Their justified concern is shared by their city government and Soviet officials and scientists.

Pollution, of course, is not a political phenomenon, and pollutants are no respecters of any social system. They are the by-products of massive industrialization and as such confront all great industrial countries with the most serious problem of environment mankind ever faced.

But, how the problem has been and is being tackled has a great deal to do with politics and social system. And to what *degree* pollution has become a problem (a not unimportant matter as any New Yorker can tell you) has much to do with both. For example, in the four years we've lived in Moscow and visited cities all over the Soviet Union, not once have we experienced anything faintly resembling the smog scares so common in US industrial cities.

Neither Moscow nor any Soviet city can imagine a situation similar to the near-disaster which threatened New Yorkers, Thanksgiving Day, 1966, when the air pollution index reached 60.0 mgs. per cubic meter, five times the normal, choked New Yorkers gathered at their Thanksgiving Dinners and hastened the death of many elderly and sick people. The holiday, as many news commentators at that time noted, largely prevented a major catastrophe, since it shut down or slowed the wheels of industry, one of the main contributors toward pollution.

By contrast, analyses show that dust content in Moscow is too small to pose a threat to the health of the people.

In respect to pollution as in relation to all urban questions, the Soviet Union faces *problems*, whereas we confront *crises* threatening the very life of our cities. The social forces which before the October Revolution also polluted the cities of czarist Russia, have for more than half a century been removed from the historical scene in the USSR. As a result, industrialization took place in a society whose concern was *people* not profits.

Let me illustrate, concretely, what the difference is. The Mayor's Task Force on Air Pollution publicly labelled Consolidated Edison, the utility monopoly that fleeces New Yorkers, as "the largest single producer of foul air in the City of New York"! Well, how did Mayor Lindsay and the city government deal with this monopoly that was endangering the very lives of eight

million New Yorkers? Strip it of its city-granted monopoly or, at the very least, restrict its powers? Not at all! The Mayor treated the utility monopoly as if it were an independent power, a sovereign state into itself! I recall this comic opera scene because at that time I covered the "negotiations" between the Mayor and Consolidated Edison. With all the fanfare that usually accompanies such talks, the Mayor announced that an "agreement" had been reached with Consolidated Edison. The negotiations, Lindsay noted, were conducted "in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual good faith and were sealed in "a Declaration of Intent"! Yet, Consolidated Edison, 19 per cent of whose fuel was natural gas which is non-toxic, balked at that time, even at increasing the use of coal with a lower sulphur content because it was too expensive. The Mayor's Task Force had "urged" Consolidated Edison to increase its use of natural gas to 30 per cent. Subsequently, the "gracious" utility agreed to use less noxious fuel, diminishing its massive pollution by 27 per cent, far from enough to protect the health of New Yorkers.

By contrast, 68 per cent of the fuel burned in Moscow is natural gas and by the end of the 9th Five-Year Plan it will be 95 per cent.

As many prominent New Yorkers constantly noted, the city of New York not only proved itself to be "unwilling or unable" to enforce its laws, but for many years, itself, has been one of the chief violators of its own laws by permitting its incinerators to pour "burned" pollution into the air breathed by eight million New Yorkers. And nothing better demonstrates the impunity with which big corporations defy or get around such laws than Mayor Lindsay's negotiations with Consolidated Edison. Such a "relationship" between Moscow and any Soviet city and an industry or a plant is unimaginable for the simple reason that no industry or plant is owned by capitalists like Consolidated Edison but is owned by the people through their government.

Or take this scene which many would just find incredible. Together with other newsmen, I was present at a New York-New Jersey conference on air pollution, held in the plush Statler Hilton hotel in New York City in early January 1967. I recall how the late Congressman William F. Ryan transformed the conference into a trial against Consolidated Edison and some of the largest corporations, particularly, oil and chemical industries, who were polluting the air breathed by 15,392,000 people. Pointing to photographs he had taken on a helicopter trip over the New York-New Jersey area, Ryan presented visual proof of the pollution poured into the atmosphere by these leading US corporations. In some pictures the smoke emitted was so dense, it was difficult to discern the stacks. Noting that local and state governments were either unwilling or unable to act decisively, Ryan called on New Yorkers to "declare a war on Consolidated Edison." At one point, Ryan declared that "no man has the right to profit at the expense of injury to others." But, the city of New York hardly restrained that right.

Why then this incredible spectacle of a Mayor negotiating with a corporation as if it were a sovereign state and a Congressman driven to appeal to citizens to "declare war" on that offending "power" that acts like a law unto itself? The answer is clear. In our "free enterprise" society it is only natural for Consolidated Edison and other large corporations to regard as their first duty the protection of their profits, not the protection of the health of the people. Similar thinking is behind the disregard for human beings that leads mine operators to sabotage even weak laws aimed at protecting miners from black lung disease. The same "morals" lead the owners of US industries to "save" on safety measures, a saving which considerably contributes to an on-the-job death toll of more than 14,000 workers yearly.

The same standards are behind the evasion of the public health laws by food and drug monopolists and their placing goods on the market that are dangerous to the health of the purchasers.

Soviet industries and plants, which are owned by the people and operated for their benefit by the government, have no such "incentives" to wilfully disregard the health of the people.

The basic reason why the battle against pollution is being won in the Soviet Union lies in the all-out cooperation of the government, the Communist Party and the people. Now, what is the situation as regards Soviet handling of the problems of pollution? The Soviet approach to combatting pollution is the same as its approach to fighting disease: *prevention* is the main concentration. Before any new plant can be put into operation it must pass a rigid inspection to insure that it has the necessary scientific anti-pollution equipment. This goes particularly for air and water pollution.

Moscow's "Lungs"

Let me first deal with the question of air pollution. Moscow and other large Soviet cities have problems in this respect and I am convinced that the rapidly rising automobile "population" will complicate them, but the threat of a smog scare such as New York faced that fateful Thanksgiving Day is unimaginable here. Soviet cities live by the General Master Plan (25 years) and their shorter range plans (5-10 years). One of the main problems grappled with in these plans is how to *harmonize* industry and community, plants and people. In a word, how to make it possible for large and smaller industrial cities to produce the things people need and at the same time make it possible for citizens to live pleasantly and healthfully. I want to stress these two aims not only coexist in all Soviet Five-Year Plans, but they are natural to a society whose basic law of existence is the maximum satisfaction of the needs of the people.

One of the sights that had most meaning to me on my tours was not the huge modern plants I saw everywhere, impressive as they were, but the "green belts" I saw around these giant enterprises, the numerous little parks where workers relaxed during their lunch breaks, the flower pots sitting on immense automated machines. These green belts not only provide restful relaxation, they are regarded as important allies in the battle against air pollution. Trees, plants, flowers are weapons in the fight for clean air. That is why one of the strictest laws (as I learned during my tours) is in respect to preservation of trees in cities.

No tree may be cut down in a Soviet city without the approval of the local Soviet. That is why almost one-third of Moscow's total territorial area consists of such greenery. The Soviet capital has 100 parks. Izmailovo Park covers 1,800 hectares.

In addition, Moscow has 600 boulevards and gardens. This, however, is regarded as insufficient. Thus, there is an annual increase in greenery of 60 hectares. In addition, Moscow is surrounded by a protective forest belt line of 172,000 hectares. These are the "lungs" of the Soviet capital.

A Smokeless Soviet Pittsburg

I thought of Pittsburg when I visited Donetsk in the Ukraine. Like Pittsburg, Donetsk is in the heart of one of the main coal mining and steel regions. But there all resemblance between the two ends. Pittsburg for good reason is known as the "smoky city." The air is not only dense with coal dust particles and foul black smoke from the steel stacks. The grime clings to everything and everyone so that much of the city itself has the color of pollution.

When we saw Donetsk, it was hard to think of it as a coal and steel center. Nowhere is there the tell-tale stain of industrial smoke and grime. The air is fresh and clean. The spacious park-like streets lined with sweet smelling acacia trees, numerous parks, the lovely wide artificial river, and attractive modern apartment houses make Donetsk one of the most beautiful cities in the Soviet Union.

Yet Donetsk, under the czars, was a dirty disease-ridden hell-hole. And even in the early days of Soviet power, when it mushroomed as a steel and coal city, it earned the name of "smokestack."

Donetsk, now a city of one million, was transformed into one of the cleanest and loveliest cities in the Soviet Union.

City Planning and Pollution

In Moscow I met with Alexander Yanovsky, chief of Moscow's Planning Institute and his deputy, Yuri Sokolov. Sokolov outlined Moscow's approach to air pollution along three main lines: introduction and perfection of anti-pollution equipment (this includes increased use of least noxious fuel); moving industries or residents, and strict systematic inspection to determine where pollution norms are being exceeded. On the last point Sokolov stressed that the decision of the inspection commissions, composed of representatives of workers, scientific and public organizations is law. He reported that a factory in Noginsk which violated the pollution norm was closed down for six months until the proper conditions were established. Others were also disciplined. But such violations are rare. They are the result of erroneous judgement, and a one-sided approach to production. They are being dealt with increasingly sharply.

The law on environment and conservation enacted by the Supreme Soviet in early January 1973 provides for stricter enforcement and penalties. It particularly stressed the urgent need to *perfect* the anti-pollution equipment to eliminate pollutants to the maximum.

But Moscow faces a special problem, Sokolov admitted. A large number of factories built during czarist times were located in the center of the city. This is a problem that many of our own cities face. But how Moscow met the problem reveals the difference in the approaches of two social systems. The Moscow City Soviet moved more than 300 such plants into an industrial zone area set up by the city.

Zoning occupies a very important place in Moscow's immediate as well as long range plans. We, too, have zoning laws but they have nowhere near the scope of Soviet laws which aim at nothing less than removing inhabitants from all the ill-effects and unpleasant by-products of industrialization.

I visited many of the hundreds of new cities that have sprung up all over the Soviet Union and I saw in life the realization of the plans outlined to me by planners like Sokolov. The new cities do not have to do any moving. They are constructed along the humanistic principles of Soviet city planning. The community areas are built for comfortable, cultural and healthy living and are surrounded by parks, theaters, cinemas, sports fields, nurseries, schools and clinics. The industries where the townspeople work are on the outskirts of the city, a healthy distance from where they live. And transportation grows with the industries and homes and links the two. It's not entirely a smooth operation. Making transportation keep pace with the city's

growth presents one of the most difficult problems. But, this is the character of the new Soviet city everywhere and this is essentially the direction in which the old are rapidly moving.

Contrast this with the approach of US cities in respect to making cities livable as well as productive. The competition between US cities to attract or retain industry (since in respect to employment and taxes this is the life-blood of cities) is so fierce, they are prepared to do (and do) almost anything to entice it. This includes not only tax privileges but permitting industries to get away with murder in respect to violation of pollution norms and zoning regulations. The state of New Jersey and its cities will do anything to keep the oil refineries, including permitting them to pollute the air people of New Jersey and New York breathe, rather than risk the possibility that demands on these industrial spoilers of the atmosphere may induce the owners of these plants to move them to rival cities. (Another factor "restraining" city governments is the sizable contributions these corporations make to both major parties during elections.)

Thus, big business not only dictates to US cities as their financiers, it befouls the air their citizens breathe. And if the citizens resent these "rights" of big business, it threatens to remove or close down "its property," on which workers depend for their livelihood and the cities for their taxes.

Soviet cities are not burdened with these strange "rights" of individuals or groups of individuals organized as corporations. Thus, Soviet cities need not "compete" among themselves for the privilege of playing host to these "independent powers." In the Soviet Union, both industry and city grow according to a plan based on the needs of the Soviet people.

Soviet Cities Do Not Inhale Their Garbage

The disposal of garbage presents all modern cities with one of their most serious pollution problems. I asked Yanovsky how Moscow disposes of its garbage. He said most of Moscow's garbage is not burned. Nor is it dumped into the Moskva River or piled on garbage dumps. It is sorted out in huge sanitation plants (metal is separated from it), purified, turned into compost by a special biological process and used as fertilizer. The entire process takes two to three days. Yanovsky said that the garbage which could not be disposed of this way was burned in smokeless incinerators.

Incinerator plants are under strict pollution control. A network of sanitation control stations keep a watchful guard on collection and disposal of garbage. They inspect stores, restaurants, buildings and plants and have the power to enforce all aspects of the sanitary codes including the closing down

of stores, restaurants, plants and the imposition of stiff fines. *And it should be emphasized there are no private owners to bribe them to turn the other way.* By contrast, as no one knows better than New Yorkers, the inhabitants of our largest city (and most other major cities) *inhale* their garbage.

The Report of the Mayor's Task Force condemned the city administration as "the worst violators of its own laws against pollution." It pointed out that the city's eleven municipal refuse disposal plants lack the proper smoke and control equipment. This is substantiated by *The New York Times* which noted that the Sanitation Department "has long used inefficient incinerators to burn up 9,000 tons of refuse a day." *The New York Times* asks: "What will it do when dumping areas such as in Staten Island reach a saturation point?"

The *Times* should not confine its description of "dumping areas" to Staten Island. The largest dumps of all are the streets of New York, and especially the streets of the Black and Puerto Rican ghettos, as a walk in Harlem, Bedford Stuyvesant and Brownsville—East New York will reveal by smell as well as pollution.

The New York Times Encyclopedic Almanac acknowledges that "there are all sorts of possibilities for a fully scientific attack on the problem of garbage pollution." What then stands in the way of this "scientific attack"? *The Times Almanac* notes: "Standing in the way are the usual obstacles—**political sluggishness, reluctance of private industry (including public utilities) to make major investments for public purposes that may raise unfavorable stockholder reactions.**"

One of the first things a visiting American notices about Moscow and all Soviet cities is their cleanliness. Moscow is totally devoid of New York's chief ornament: overflowing garbage cans, let alone broken bottles and empty tin cans cluttering the streets. Garbage is collected from buildings every day in huge vatlike receptacles kept discreetly out of sight in back yards. The garbage is usually collected in the early morning hours to avoid interference with traffic. It is carted to 25 disposal points along special routes.

Moscow, though incomparably more advanced in garbage disposal than New York, is not satisfied with the situation. The plans call for fully solving the problem, primarily through the construction of large capacity mechanized and automated plants. Special care is taken to protect the health of sanitation workers and to guard them from injury.

Soviet sanitation workers, unlike ours, do no heavy lifting and do not come in direct contact with the odorous garbage. A hydraulic lift places the garbage bins onto the truck. After being dumped, the containers are thoroughly washed with hot water and returned to the buildings.

Moscow's Mayor Promyslov (*Izvestia*, January 5, 1973) noted that although Moscow was more advanced in its handling of the garbage problem, it was far from satisfied with its progress. Especially since, as the Mayor

pointed out, "the composition of refuse is changing... the percentage of synthetic materials, metals and glass is rising. Therefore, the problems of garbage disposal by industrial methods are becoming increasingly important." The Mayor noted that garbage decontamination in Moscow is handled by a recently commissioned plant with an annual capacity of about 500,000 cubic meters and that in 1973, another garbage incinerator is to be commissioned. Promyslov declared that confronting new problems, Moscow can't "be satisfied with the traditional technology of collecting and removing utility refuse by means of replaceable containers." He noted the latter means is more expensive in manual labor and not sanitary enough. He said Moscow was working on plans to transport garbage via a piping system and the use of large-tonnage garbage carriers, equipped with compressing devices.

Another very important advantage which Soviet cities have over our own in combatting air pollution is *central heating*. Central heating based on heat and power plants and district boiler houses now supply heat to the overwhelming majority of Moscow's homes and buildings. By 1975, they will cover 95-98 per cent of the city's heat requirements. In contrast, New York City has 135,000 heating furnaces and 10,000 incinerators in privately owned apartment houses and office buildings. It has 600,000 private residences. Most of these use highly noxious fuel, oil or coal.

Underground Moscow

This contrast is also characteristic in respect to the *underground* life of the cities. Before the reader gets any notions, let me explain. Shortly after my arrival, Konstantin Urivaev, chief engineer of Moscow's Board of Public Maintenance, took me on a tour of the city's underground system (I'm speaking of the network of pipes—not the Metro).

"You are the first American in underground Moscow," he told me with a mischievous twinkle.

I informed him he could cause considerable excitement in the United States with such an announcement. Urivaev burst into understanding laughter. But the truth is the Moscow underground I saw should arouse a great deal of interest in our large cities. Every urban center has an underground that makes modern life above ground possible. But, in our country it consists of a foul-smelling web of aged (often, decaying), rust-eaten pipes we only become aware of when they burst into sudden floods that engulf our subways and streets, or explode menacingly. It's a hidden, grossly neglected underground. New York sits on an underground (very aged) that quite often erupts like Mt. Vesuvius.

Even in this realm the spirit of private enterprise holds sway. The maintenance and repair of the gas mains are left to the tender mercies of Conso-

lided Edison, which underground, as above ground, places its profits first.

Moscow's underground is a city *underneath* a city. It's a huge tunnel, almost 10 feet high and equally wide, that parallels the main city streets for a distance of 87 miles. First built in 1937, it expands yearly by six and a half miles. In it, neatly arranged as if they were in a vast modern industrial plant, are the pipes and wires that provide Moscow's life lines. On one side are the whitewashed asbestos-covered pipes that carry Moscow's central heating to all the apartment houses. On the other are the sturdy water pipes. I was particularly impressed by the solid shape of the pipelines. Very little rust was evident. The pipes are washed and painted three times a year. They are regularly cleaned and maintained.

Our tour of inspection was a cool and comfortable journey. The tunnel is fed steady streams of fresh air by a powerful ventilating system and is lit up like a thoroughfare. Every 300 meters we came upon street signs so that we always knew exactly what part of Moscow's bowels we were crossing. Telephones are everywhere so that the areas where workers are inspecting, cleaning or making repairs are always known at the station. All repairs are carried out in this factory-like underground. Moscow's streets are rarely torn up to repair a worn-out water main.

"What about gas mains?" I asked Urivaev.

They are in their own underground network, he showed me, since they represent a special problem and danger. He pointed to a particularly solid pipe that at one junction cut across the tunnel. That, he said, was a gas main which at certain intervals came into contact with the tunnel. It was a double pipe as a special precaution. But, far more safety measures are taken to guard against possible gas leaks. Inspectors equipped with meters similar to those I saw used in Soviet mines, daily check the tunnel. If any leak is detected, a repair crew immediately gets to work. While the ground still has to be dug up to make a repair (an automatic monitoring system will soon vastly limit such digging) constant care and inspection keep this down to a minimum.

Urivaev told me it's been quite a few years since Moscow experienced a serious gas explosion. I know of none in the time we've been here. Water breaks are also rare for similar reasons.

Fight Against Automobile Pollution

The automobile, as I indicated earlier, presents Soviet cities, as it does all countries, with one of their major pollution problems. In 1975, the Soviet Union will be manufacturing more than two million automobiles a year. This is still far below our own vehicle level but more than twice the Soviet 1970 level (of 916,000).

I don't believe Soviet scientists or city officials have yet adequately come up with the answer: how to control this would-be Frankenstein monster that has in the United States taken over the great cities. Neither do they make any such claims. But they are doing something.

Take the question of the type of gasoline which may be used by vehicles driving in Soviet cities. Only the least noxious fuels may be used in cities. The use of ethylated gasoline, which contains more lead compounds and highly noxious exhaust components, is strictly prohibited. The prohibition is enforced quite simply—service stations which are all state owned, do not sell such gasoline in cities.

In our country, where this, too, is regarded as the prerogative of private enterprise, there is no such restriction. Ethylated gasoline is freely sold. Thus, millions of vehicles pour the most noxious fumes into the lungs of New Yorkers with little restrictions. Incidentally, the price of the best Soviet gasoline is a good deal less than the cost of the cheapest US quality.

Soviet engineers, incidentally, have developed a device called the neutralizer which, when installed in the exhaust pipe of a vehicle, renders the exhaust gases harmless and reduces the toxic content to a minimum. They have also developed a liquid-gas automotive engine that cuts toxic exhaust by nearly 50 per cent. Liquid-gas fuel is obtained in oil and gas processing and is much cheaper than gasoline. Here, too, there will be no problem equipping all automobiles and trucks with these devices, since in the Soviet Union, there are no General Motors or Ford corporations to block or stall their introduction through well-financed lobbies in Congress.

Moscow curtails the noxious effects of automobile pollution by keeping the traffic moving. It has an unrivalled network of underground passageways. The idea is to keep to a minimum the contact between the pedestrian and the exhaust fumes which reach their highest peak at crossings or when the car slows down. The pedestrian underpasses which, incidentally, provide a safe and comfortable passageway under most of Moscow's main streets, decreased by 10-15 times the amount of noxious fumes inhaled by Muscovites. They have also decreased accidents and helped speed up traffic. Here I must stress again, the problem of fumes is far from solved, and the accident death rate of 500 a year admitted by Mayor Promyslov reveals Moscow has a serious problem on its hands.

To the extent possible, Moscow transport also uses the non-noxious electric power. Trolleybuses and trams, which are electric powered, form a large part of the transport of Soviet cities. The USSR Research Center for Electric Transport is working on an electrically driven truck and passenger electromobile. Both are under trial at present and though there are serious problems to resolve before they can be put into mass production, there is hope that by 1975 many of the problems will be solved.

Battle Against Water Pollution

Water pollution presents a serious challenge to all major industrial countries. But, here, too, efforts to equate the problems and the *approach* to resolving them between the two countries are ludicrous. In the height of the public outcry in the US against the pollution of our rivers and lakes (and ocean shores), Bernard Gevertzman, Moscow correspondent for *The New York Times*, wrote an article which presented a grim picture of water pollution in the USSR. Reading Gevertzman's article, Americans alarmed at the water pollution crisis in our country would conclude that nowhere is the situation any better, even in the leading land of socialism. Thus, they would reason, water pollution has nothing to do with the giant monopolies which own our industries and abuse our natural resources.

And that obviously was the intent of the owners of the class-conscious *New York Times*. Gevertzman's article on Soviet water pollution was in keeping with the most of his reporting (and of most US bourgeois correspondents). One of the chief functions of these correspondents seems to be to ignore the positive and accent the negative in respect to Soviet news. And much of the material for this slanted picture of Soviet life comes from the wide open self-criticism that appears daily in the Soviet press. Thus, all that is necessary for an enterprising correspondent out to portray Soviet deficiencies is to read (or get someone to translate) these self-critical comments and fashion them into what seems to be an "authoritative" piece. This is exactly what Gevertzman did in respect to his article on Soviet water pollution, which was based on a critical article in the Soviet journal *Agricultural Economy* by Boris N. Bogdanov, chief of the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Nature Conservation, Reserves and Hunting.

I decided to visit Bogdanov and ask him to comment on Gevertzman's article. Bogdanov, a bluff and hearty man, chuckled as his interpreter translated Gevertzman's piece. "That's for your disturbed Americans," he exclaimed. "Of course my article contained critical comments. Its aim was to focus on a number of weaknesses," Bogdanov pointed out as he added, "And now I will give you the picture which *The New York Times* article does not deal with."

What the *Times* did not and does not deal with is the real story of how the Soviet Union tackles the problem of water pollution. The story begins with the historic October Revolution. As the world knows, one of the first decrees issued by the young Soviet Republic (it was drafted by V. I. Lenin, the founder of the world's first socialist state) was the famous Decree on Land which expropriated and nationalized the land of Russian feudal nobility and capitalists and gave it to the land-starved peasants. Soviet water legislation is based on and proceeds from that decree. In February 1919, a Central Commit-

tee for Protection of Water Resources was established. Incidentally, the decrees on water played a decisive role, particularly in the Central Asian Republics where they were used to break the age-old stranglehold of the feudal beys on the extremely limited water supply. Water was life itself in these parched lands and the control of this precious liquid meant domination over the lives of the people.

Not only was water taken out of the hands of the czarist spoilers, but the natural resources, for the first time in man's history, were treated as the common treasure of the people. And, as such treasures, they were protected as never before. Poor as it was and suffering the ravages of a cruel Civil War and intervention, the young Soviet state spent considerable funds to construct water supply systems, provide sanitation, filtering and to protect sources from pollution. Czarism left little of a heritage in this respect and its sanitation was on an abysmal mediaeval level, resulting particularly in frequent epidemics of typhus and dysentery. Soviet expenditures to protect water from pollution rose steadily and during recent years increased yearly at the rate of more than 100 per cent.

The devastating war on Soviet soil set back, as it did Soviet life in all other respects, the fight against pollution. Not only were countless reservoirs and water systems destroyed, but thousands of factories had to be transported from Moscow and Leningrad and many other threatened cities. Thus, many post-war pollution problems were "inherited" from the understandable neglect during the period of the Nazi invasion when the Soviet Union was fighting for its life.

"The factories operated without roofs. The issue was existence, not pollution," Bogdanov told me. He paused and added: "Our inherited difficulties can be explained and justified."

But the Soviet Union did not rest on such "justification." It recognized that rapid industrialization had created new problems, which were not being adequately grappled with by Soviet science, industry, government and public. Following an extensive critical discussion, an intensive anti-pollution campaign was launched by the Soviet government and the Communist Party.

Another high point in the renewed fight against pollution was reached when a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union discussed the need for a more up to date all-Union Fundamentals of Water Legislation that would sum up more than half a century of water legislation.

The Fundamentals were published, in full, in all newspapers and discussed throughout the land. Tens of thousands of proposals were considered and in December 1970, the Fundamentals were enacted into law by the USSR Supreme Soviet. The law *forbids* putting any industries into operation that have not been properly outfitted with filtering, sewage and anti-pollution installations. This was in effect for some time, even before it was enacted in the

Fundamentals. All new Soviet plants must pass careful inspection *before* they begin operating to insure they have the necessary equipment. There have been cases where the date of operation was postponed by tough inspection commissions.

The Fundamentals also forbid the commissioning of irrigation, watering and drainage systems and other hydrotechnical installations unless they have been properly equipped with anti-pollution devices. The Fundamentals prohibit the floating of timber in bundles and rafts without ship propulsion not only in navigable rivers, but in rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs enumerated in a long approved list. The Fundamentals lay down strict rules on disposal of sewage. Water users are responsible for taking all measures to discontinue disposal of sewage containing pollutants. Sewage may be disposed *only* by permission of the concerned authorities, and only if it does not increase the content of pollution in the reservoir above the permissible level or if the user has purified the sewage to the degree required by law. It is forbidden to use water reservoirs for the disposal of industrial, household and other waste. These requirements are strictly enforced by state inspection with penalties for violation. As Bogdanov pointed out to me, the severe penalties include stiff fines and imprisonment.

Incidentally, Bogdanov's information was confirmed for me in my meeting with Academician Andrei Voznesensky, who is in charge of water pollution problems for the Soviet Academy of Sciences. I asked the academician if he spelled his name the same way as the famous Soviet poet, Voznesensky. He smiled. "I not only spell it the same way but I gave him his name," he replied. "He is my son."

Voznesensky pointed out that many industries spend considerable sums on water anti-pollution equipment. He noted that in the case of chemical and paper plants, it comes to about 14 per cent of the total cost of construction. I tried to imagine Dow Chemical, which defied US progressives to reap billions in profit from the napalm bombs it produced which burned alive thousands of Vietnamese children, setting aside such a sum to protect the health of US citizens.

Voznesensky also stated that importance is being attached to reusing the same water for industrial purpose. The noxious wastes, incidentally, are being put to profitable use. Voznesensky also acquainted me with some interesting facts about Soviet water supply and its special problems.

Thus, he noted that the Soviet Union has eleven per cent of the world's water resources (first place); nevertheless it confronts serious water problems. About 75-80 per cent of its water resources are concentrated in Siberia and the north, areas which are sparsely settled. Some 15 per cent of its rivers flow into internal seas (Caspian and Aral) which do not find their outlet into oceans. Water taken from such rivers can reduce the level of the seas and increase the amount of salt deposits, thus diminishing the food supply

for fish. This is what happened in the Caspian and other waters with serious harm to fish until the Soviet Union put a stop to such practices. US correspondents reported the harm done, but not the prompt, forceful measures taken by the Soviet authorities.

The Soviet Union, as the world knows, has performed engineering miracles to artificially redistribute its vast water resources, taking water from well-supplied areas and feeding it to places in need of water. For example, the great Kara Kum canal carries water some 500 miles from the Irtysh River.

Mayor Promyslov reported (*Izvestia*, January 5, 1973) that the quality of water in the Moskva River is "improving year after year, due to the increasing capacities and perfection of the purification set-ups." He pointed out that "the Moskva River is now sanitarily and technologically controlled from its source all the way down to the mouth."

Promyslov stressed, "A great deal of work is yet to be done with the sewage discharge of both industrial and utility origin." But, unlike in our free-enterprise cities, where countless reports noting "a great deal of work has to be done," have been gathering dust for years, Promyslov was able to be very concrete as to *what* is to be done and *when*. He was able to state that "in 1975, new purification and decontamination set-ups will be built at 500 enterprises in Moscow. Work is now in progress to clean up the bed of the Moskva River."

The True Story of Lake Baikal

A good deal of the hullabaloo raised by some US correspondents on Soviet pollution, strangely enough centered on the "situation" in Lake Baikal. They portrayed a picture of ruthless Soviet "industrialists" wilfully and defiantly polluting the waters of Baikal. They obviously counted on the sad experience Americans have with US industries in this respect to sustain their distortions.

I decided to visit Lake Baikal and see everything for myself.

First of all, it should be pointed out that the outcry about the threat of pollution faced by Baikal came from every section of Soviet society—scientists, trade unionists, Communist Party and government officials and the Soviet press, especially *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. How to protect Baikal was not only the subject for widespread debate, but it gave birth to the film, "By the Lake," one of the best recently produced by Soviet cinema. The film used the issue to go deeply into the whole meaning of Soviet society in which the goal in all progress is based on the slogan, "everything in the name of humanity and for humanity." The very outcry on Baikal distinguishes Soviet society from our own.

The picture of an outraged Soviet citizenry fighting the "establishment" is a mechanical carryover of conditions of our own society dominated by the Consolidated Edisons. In the Soviet Union, the people, particularly the working people, have been the "establishment" for more than half a century. In no country in the world are the natural resources so much in the hands of the people as in the Soviet Union. More than 30 million Soviet citizens are members of volunteer conservation societies. Enforcement is really based on "community control" here. Area inspection and control committees include members of public organizations, shop workers, trade union leaders, Party secretaries, Komsomol leaders and scientists.

There was some difference of opinion between those who one-sidedly emphasized industrial production and those who insisted that the basic balanced approach had to be adhered to. As I looked at Baikal's breathtaking, untamed beauty, its ocean-like sparkling waters, the specter of industrial freebooters ravaging its virgin loveliness was so incongruous, especially to an American familiar with real ravaging of nature, that I couldn't help smile. By US standards, Baikal's shores are almost untouched by industry.

What would our Rockefellers, General Motors, US Steel, not to speak of our enterprising Hilton and Holiday Inn hotels, do, if they had a Baikal in their hands? What would they do to its forests, rich in priceless timber, its mineral wealth, its treasure-house of fish (Baikal is literally a water delicatessen, with its highly prized sturgeon, white fish and 230 species of shrimp)? What would they do to its 1,300 mile shoreline (Baikal has 260 sunny days a year)? What would they do to its valuable fur-bearing mammals?

Baikal would be raped, ravaged and despoiled and its very air commercialized as have been all the natural beauties of our own lovely country.

Speak to any Soviet citizen, scientist, worker, plant director or Komsomol about Baikal and the light of love and pride illuminates their faces.

From a glowing Moscow Komsomol who came on special assignment to Baikal and now would never think of leaving it, I heard this charming Buryat legend:

"Old Man Baikal had 336 sons—rivers—that fed him, and one daughter, the Angara River, which alone flows out of the lake. Angara fell in love with the neighboring Yenisei River and begged her father to let her join her lover, but Baikal flew into a rage and locked his defiant daughter between two huge rocks. (My lovely storyteller at this point pointed to them.) One night Angara tried to steal away but Old Man Baikal awoke and threw her from the highest hill. Angara's water is so pure because her tears filled the lake." I tell this legend because it illustrates the deep feeling all Soviet citizens have not only for the beauty of Baikal, but for the boundless beauty of their vast socialist land. Every Republic, every region in the Soviet Union has similar legends as familiar to the people as our hit songs. Nowhere is nature's beauty more treasured.

I spoke to scientists at the Institute of Lake Studies on Baikal as well as scientists in Moscow. They discussed the problems with me honestly and objectively. Baikal first faced such problems almost 200 years ago when its shores were settled and crop farming and cattle breeding developed, and timber was felled. The floating of loose timber, particularly, polluted its waters. The pollution problem grew, especially after the war, because of the accelerated development of industry and the rise of cities in Siberia.

Did the answer lie in shutting down all existing enterprises, and all production in Baikal's vicinity? Was it necessary that Baikal's vast treasures of forest, its power resources, mineral deposits and fertile soil lie untapped to protect its purity? Soviet scientists reject the approach of the conservationist purists who contend only by leaving nature untouched can environment be protected and pollution controlled. After considerable scientific study and debate, the conclusion was Baikal's beauty and purity could be maintained at the same time that its rich resources were tapped. Baikal could provide *both* material wealth and beauty to the country.

The answer lies in the *rational* use of Baikal resources, in guaranteeing its protection from pollution and despoliation. The approach was summed up in a special resolution on Baikal adopted in 1971 by the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The measures to protect Baikal include the following: no loose timber floating is to be permitted by the end of 1973, a vast program of construction of purification systems (in the cellulose plant, it is completed), improved forestry management and forest amelioration, strict control over the protection and reproduction of fish reserves. A special ship which is a floating laboratory, built in Ulan Ude, the capital of the Buryat Autonomous Republic, is now regularly taking samples in Baikal of air and water to determine their level of pollution.

I should mention here that I spoke to Pete Seeger, our famous folk-singer and fighter against water pollution. Pete, who sang and sailed on our beautiful but polluted Hudson River to awaken the conscience of America, made a special trip to Baikal. He was greatly impressed with what he saw and brought back a bottle of Baikal water. "I'm going to drink this on television," he told me, "to answer those in our country who are equating pollution in the US and the USSR." Let one of the proponents of this propaganda do the same with water from our Hudson River.

And most important of all—Baikal is being transformed into a vast rest and recreational zone. A highway around its extensive shoreline is planned as well as improved rail and air communication.

I feel that the Soviet example can be a powerful factor in stimulating our own people in our fight to free our cities, our country from its polluters.

I believe we have a powerful new weapon in our hands for that fight in the joint commission to study and combat pollution, set up at the Moscow Summit. From what I have seen, popularization of the Soviet approach to fighting pollution will provide us with a good idea of what can and must be done.

The "Secret" of Soviet Civic Pride

Soviet cities are strangers to a special kind of pollution that transforms the city streets and even the parks of our large cities—especially, New York—into garbage dumps. Take, for example, this typical scene in New York's Central Park after a concert attended by 135,000 as described by *The New York Times*: "But after they departed, the meadow resembled a huge garbage dump. Obliterating the grass was a prodigious rug of chicken bones, half-eaten sandwiches, cartons, bottles and paper."

Such a scene would be unthinkable in the Soviet Union.

Though I must say the cigarette butts and matchsticks around bus stops in Moscow, particularly, mar an otherwise near-perfect scene. But, by any standards, Soviet cities literally sparkle. No streets in the world get the kind of constant scrubbing they receive daily. It begins with early morning. An army of sweepers (about 20,000 in Moscow) scrape the sidewalks with their picturesque and surprisingly effective birch brooms. Each apartment building and store front has its own contingent. The sweepers are usually mothers who find it easier to work near home and the pay compares favorably with the average wage. They are supported by the most up-to-date cleaning equipment—which, incidentally, unlike that in New York City, is kept in good shape. But their most effective assistants are Soviet citizens.

I found one of the most appealing qualities of Soviet citizens to be their civic consciousness. They regard the streets as they do the floors of their homes. I've come across those who don't have this attitude, especially among some rude, would be tough youngsters, who think it a sign of their independence to throw cigarette butts and spit on the streets. But these are fortunately hardly the rule and I've seen some get a public dressing down from irate Soviet citizens, that made them squirm.

The overwhelming majority, including the mass of youth, have been brought up to respect their homes, their streets, their parks, Metro—all public conveyances and services—as socialist property, property Soviet citizens share in common. More than half a century of such living has made this a natural characteristic of most Soviet people. This is what makes it so appealing a quality to a visitor from the Other World. And the example of this attitude is set by Soviet sanitation and maintenance officials and workers.

This was forcefully hit home to me only a few days after our arrival here. It snowed every day in early March 1969. Each night I would look out of the window and wonder what would happen to the city in the morning. I had good reason to wonder because I knew what had happened in the city I had left only a few weeks before (in February). New York was not only paralyzed for days by a snow storm Muscovites would laugh at, but 50,000 tons of garbage turned the city and not just Central Park, into the kind of garbage dump *The New York Times* described. It was City Hall which was, above all, responsible for this menacing situation (rats had a field-day, especially in the Black and Puerto Rican ghettos) because for "economy" reasons the city officials refused to put to work the thousands of sanitation workers who had reported for work as soon as the snow storm struck. The city turned them away because it was Sunday, a day for which it would have to pay double time. *The New York Times* pointed out that N. Y. city officials stated that "the ability to cope with a storm is largely dependent on human judgement—the ability to predict a bad storm and *then to employ men and equipment at the outset despite possible heavy financial cost*" (my emphasis, M.D.). The guilt of our city officials thus is all the greater because they well knew the remedy.

I found that Moscow sanitation and maintenance leaders not only knew the remedy for a far more difficult problem (our cities would be in a state of constant paralysis if they faced such snow storms) but applied it promptly. Thus, each morning I discovered the snow was cleared when I got up. The nightfall snow was piled up at the edge of the street in huge piles. Snow machines looking like something that descended from Mars, were lifting the frozen heaps into trucks.

Thus, in respect to every aspect of city life (and this goes for rural life as well) the Soviet citizen *knows* his government *cares*. It cares about the air he breathes, the water he drinks or washes in, the streets he walks on. And the Soviet citizens respond by *caring* as well. I thought of this as I recalled the vandalism which literally embraces all our public places, our subways, streets, schools and especially our parks. Every New Yorker (as well as most inhabitants of our other big cities) is well familiar with this scene described by *The New York Times*: "Entire comfort stations are demolished by arson and explosion. Swings, see-saws and even the rims of basket-ball baskets are ruined or stolen. Hundreds of benches are shattered each year and often the concrete supports are demolished."

And the *Times*, wringing its hands, asks: "What is the answer?" It could get the answer from its own Moscow correspondents if it were really concerned, if it devoted a fraction of its attention to reporting on the contrast in this and all vital respects Soviet cities present to ours.

***Cities
of 100 Flavors***

Flavors of Cities

The Soviet Union is a tourist's dream. It's a world of cities of 100 flavors. No country in the world offers such a variety of sights, such a feast of a multitude of cultures, such intimate contact with the glories of the ancient past, beautiful present, and such a sense of the even more glorious future. It is a future you can see in the process of construction.

Soviet cities, whether they are more than 2,500 years old like Samarkand, former seat of Tamerlane's sprawling empire, or as young as Ust-Ilim which is being carved out of the Siberian taiga, are cities where the new look is daily fashioned before your very eyes and literally raised up from the ground by an unprecedented armada of sky-piercing cranes.

The Soviet Union has more young cities than any other country. In little more than a half century of socialist construction more than 1,000 cities and towns have come into being. And nowhere do the old and young, whether ancient churches or sleek, modern glass and aluminium structures, whether red-scarfed, apple-cheeked Pioneers, or wrinkled *babushkas*, coexist in greater harmony and mutual respect. Nowhere are the treasures of the past more cherished than in this bustling land.

While walking through the streets of Soviet cities, one should bear in mind the unprecedented ordeals which befell them. The Soviet Union is a land of hero cities that bled from countless wounds. It is a land of brotherhood graves where millions lie together as they fought and died together.

I can never forget (nor do I want to) my first visit, on May 9, 1961, to the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery in Leningrad where 600,000 Leningraders lie buried. It was a bright sunny day. Mothers with young fatherless sons and daughters, *babushkas* guiding little beribboned girls and freshly-scrubbed boys, gathered at the huge common grave. They gently laid bunches of flowers and branches of *beryoзка*, the traditional Russian birch tree, on the graves.

Nowadays many people have no idea of the costly price paid by the Soviet Union to save the world from fascism—twenty million dead.

I remember on the day I walked the martyred streets of Kiev, American storm-troopers who called themselves the Jewish Defense League were desecrating the memory of these heroic dead by their vile campaign of violence and slander against the Soviet Union which saved millions of Jews from the Nazi gas chambers. The desecrators should be condemned to walk the endless trail of brotherhood graves, to stop at countless memorials to the fallen heroes on collective and state farms and in the squares of Soviet cities.

Nowhere have I come across a deeper sense of civic pride than in Soviet cities. The basic reason, of course, lies in the fact that like their factories,

farms, theaters—everything in this vast land of socialism—truly belongs to the people. But, I believe, it can also be explained by the fact that no people in the world fought harder and suffered more for their cities. Only a people who paid such a price could so treasure every street, every building, every ancient monument. . .

My problem in describing the varied charm of Soviet cities was largely one of selection. I've tried to pick a number of cities that best describe the main and varied characteristics of Soviet cities.

Construction—a Way of Life

There are some in the USA who consider themselves super-revolutionaries and bemoan the debilitating effects of "soft living" that comes with years of peaceful socialist successes. To hear them, revolution defeats itself as it begins to move closer to its goals, as it increasingly provides the mass of the people with the comforts and joys of living. The logic of such thinking is to regard revolution as the end as well as the means. They should get to know the Soviet youth and particularly the Komsomols (members of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League).

Here, let me frankly state, the Soviet Union also has its youth problem. How could it not when the very process of maturing presupposes the resolution of problems such as hammering out an outlook toward life, finding one's place in life. And I met some Soviet youth who hardly were satisfied with their place, some who were groping, and even some who were lost. And, indeed, anything can happen: someone did not pass entrance exams to a higher school, someone was condemned by his friends as an egotist, someone was left by the person he was in love with or someone failed his fellow workers. But, what is characteristic of Soviet youth is their purposefulness, their sense of security in the future.

Construction is a way of life here. The scene I saw on University campuses in Moscow at the close of the school term in June resembled the army staging areas preparing for attack. The battles, these student recruits were going off to fight, were being waged at 107 decisive construction sites, in the tundras of Siberia, in the wide expanses of Central Asia, the far reaches of Primorye and Sakhalin Island.

It's a highly organized, well-planned and well-directed battle. Not just during vacation time—when it is joined by a vast force of enthusiastic recruits—but all year round. This army, led by Komsomols, moves from construction site to construction site, from city to city, as if it were marching

from battle to battle. Numbering tens of thousands, it comprises the youngest, most enthusiastic and one of the most experienced construction forces in the world. These youth not only have put up dozens of cities like Bratsk in Siberia and Volzhsky on the Volga, but they live in them. The cities they build are youth cities. These builders have the pride of pioneer frontiersmen for they can point out their "buildings," as they take a Sunday stroll through town with their offspring.

Besides their skills their characters are being molded in construction. The "new worlds" these Soviet youth are conquering place particular demands on collective as well as individual initiative. Their peaceful triumphs over Siberia's forbidding frosts call for the calm courage their grandfathers demonstrated in the stormy ten days of 1917 that shook the world (that was the expression used by John Reed, an outstanding American journalist, with regard to the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917).

And you sense something of the revolutionary zeal of their grandfathers when you speak to these young participants of communist construction. I saw all of this in the three unforgettable days I spent in Ust-Ilim in 1970. Let me take you with me to this Electric City in the taiga.

Electricity in the Taiga

Our small 12-seater Antonov plane seemed all the more flimsy as it fluttered over the endless stretches of the taiga. Below was Siberia's wondrous but forbidding taiga-virgin forests that seemed to shut out all human existence. Below, too, snaking its way along this wilderness was the prime target of Komsomol construction in Eastern Siberia—the Angara River. Suddenly tiny patches of civilization loomed into view: rooftops of wooden homes and concrete prefabricated apartment houses, the outlines of a hydroelectric power station in its first stages of construction. Cranes with a lifting capacity of 80 tons looked like toys from a child's erector set. Ant-like figures stood or crawled about. Our plane veered leftward as it began descent. The bumpy landing was nevertheless a pleasant relief.

We had arrived at Ust-Ilim, where the mighty Angara was being harnessed to create another 4,500,000 kilowatt hydroelectric station and a modern city was being built.

Ust-Ilim's big brother Bratsk—its chief supplier of material and equipment and many of its most experienced workers—was itself only wrested from the taiga 15 years earlier.

Ust-Ilim, like most other Siberian cities, will be among the most elec-

trified in the world. Not a single chimney stack will be permitted to pollute the fragrance Ust-Ilimers breathe in from the taiga.

Material incentives are an important and necessary element in stimulating the construction of Ust-Ilim. Bonuses and other benefits provided are based on climatic and arduous conditions of labor. The average wage in Ust-Ilim, I was told, was 220 roubles a month (wages in such rigorous areas were raised at the 24th Congress), a good deal higher than the average Soviet wage. Bonuses go up to as high as 40 per cent of the wage. Workers receive 36 day vacations yearly (the average in the Soviet Union is 24 days). Once every two years workers can travel to a resort free of charge. Men can retire at 55 and women at 50 years of age (the usual retirement age in the Soviet Union is 60 for men and 55 for women). In this zone the required length of service is 20 years for men and 15 for women, with every year of service here counted as one and a half years.

But bonuses and benefits, as important as they are, hardly account for the outpouring of youth and the tenacity with which they stick to their rigorous jobs. Forty and fifty degrees below zero, centigrade, is not at all unusual here. Work is usually halted only when it hits 45 below or more. Moreover, most of the youth are not professional construction workers. Many give up other careers to join in the construction. There are, of course, those who give in to the hardships. Not everyone under socialism is of pioneer stock. Some stick it out for one hitch. But a sizable number are caught up with the creative spirit of constructing new cities and projects.

In Soviet life, hydroelectric stations and cities—modern comfortable homes, nurseries, schools, theaters, cultural clubs, stores—just go together. And Ust-Ilim already has all of these. I visited one of the nurseries (Ust-Ilim is a city of young mothers) where 250 children are cared for by a staff of several dozen, at a charge of 10-12 roubles a month.

Ust-Ilim is a city united by a mission: the conquering of the Angara. Everything here is geared to one purpose—to master nature.

Vassily Pechkovski, the project construction chief, comes from a village in martyred Byelorussia where one out of every four was killed in the war against the Nazi invasion. He spoke of Ust-Ilim and his birthplace in one and the same loving breath. His "enemy" was the Angara, the bitter Siberian frost, the boundless impenetrable taiga. But it was a foe against which he struggled without hate. On the contrary, he spoke of the Angara and taiga with affection and even had good words for Siberia's winter. He came not to conquer but to tame the environment, and like all I met, he fell in love with Siberia's wild beauty.

Vassily (and all Ust-Ilimers) spoke with tenderness of the three Little Moose Islands in the Angara that helped them win the first contest with

the turbulent river. He was pained at the thought that the islands would be swallowed up in the final victory over the Angara.

In Ust-Ilim, one breathes the spirit of comradeship as one inhales the fragrant taiga air. Comradeship is welded in struggle. Ust-Ilim points the way to the comradeship that can come when men can at last stand united in the battle to master their environment.

As everywhere in the Soviet Union, women play an equal role in all phases of the construction of Ust-Ilim. They are engineers, they direct the movement of 80-ton loads from the cabin of huge cranes, they are political leaders.

Vera Kozhitsa came here from Petropavlovsk (Kazakhstan) two years ago. Why did she come here? Her pretty eyes sparkled:

"As Komsomols we go where it's most difficult."

Then she added:

"I never knew such beautiful flowers grew in Siberia."

Where will the builders of Ust-Ilim go from here?

Many have come to Ust-Ilim from Bratsk. A total of six hydroelectric stations, and cities of course, will be constructed on the Angara. New cities like Ust-Ilim seem to have a special character. They are young cities and they exude the enthusiasm and energy of youth. These are cities inhabited by their creators. Every street, every building, every spot brings forth memories of struggle and creativity.

Treasure Chest in the Polar North

Murmansk (founded 1916) is the largest (population 320,000), the most industrial, most scientifically advanced and most cultured city in the Arctic circle. Its Polar Scientific Research Institute has a staff of 800 including 35 Candidates of Science. The port of Murmansk is connected with 170 ports of the world.

The city is peopled by hardy seamen and fishermen. Its fish canneries are among the most productive in the Soviet Union and the world.

We felt the lash of the biting Arctic wind (it was 20 degrees below zero, centigrade, when we visited the port in March), and I tried to imagine what it must be like in deep winter when the temperature gets down to 35 below and Murmanskers work and live for two months without seeing daylight or sunshine. And you marvel all the more at this dynamic outpost of communist construction some 1,500 miles from the North Pole.

The mission of Murmansk is to unlock the priceless treasure chest that for ages was clasped in an icy grip. The treasure: apatite, the finest quality mineral fertilizer, minerals that include three-fourths of the elements of Mendeleev's Table and a yearly catch of 46 million tons of finest quality fish into the bargain.

The awareness that they occupy a strategic outpost imparts to Murmansk a special spirit. I felt that spirit at a most inspiring meeting of seamen and fishermen, their wives and children, at their beautiful Palace of Culture.

Among those assembled were the officers and seamen of the famed atomic icebreaker, *Lenin*, who had just returned from a lengthy trip. It was a fraternal gathering and an accounting by workers whose special job is cutting a path through icelocked waters of the Arctic region.

There was mutual praise and straight-from-the-shoulder talk that minced no words on what had to be done to carry out the new Five-Year Plan. And it all wound up in a cultural tribute to Murmansk's men and women of the sea.

Murmansk's exhilarating spirit is fed by the universal awareness that their arduous labor is not only valued but is backed up by all-out governmental provisions to make up for the difficulties of working and living in the North. My travels have convinced me that where nature is most severe to the man and woman of labor, the Soviet government is most considerate and helpful. Workers here get the same added benefits I described in Ust-Ilim.

But it is what has been done to make Murmansk an equal Soviet city in cultural and comfortable living that was most impressive to me. I noticed the houses were painted in bright colors and their windows gaily decorated.

"We need to make up for our lack of trees," our hosts explained to me.

Murmansk rests on rocky, unfertile soil. Its few trees are stunted and scrawny. But the city is anything but drab. Green plants and lovely Polar flowers tenderly raised in hothouses decorate window sills. Sturdy apartment buildings constructed for Arctic living make each home a solarium.

For almost nine months a year Murmansk is dressed in snowy white that sparkles in the months of bright sunlight. You get the feeling Murmansk can no longer live without that all-pervasive majestic whiteness.

Culture plays a special role in severe areas like the Polar North. Murmansk has three drama theaters and a puppet theater, smaller than, but just as modern and attractive, the famed Obraztsov Theater in Moscow. It has 141 club-houses, including a magnificent Palace of Culture replete with a beautiful swimming pool; 25 cinemas and movie rooms and 119 libraries with 430,000 volumes. Television is regularly brought to 97 per cent of the population.

There are 3,330 doctors and specialists and 11,500 medical workers.

There are 309 general, seven secondary specialized schools and a university in Murmansk with a total of 165,000 students. Before the Revolution there were 23 parish schools on the Kola Peninsula; only 20 per cent were literate.

More than 60,000 children are provided daily care in nurseries and nursery schools. My guess is that this exceeds the number in New York City (with a population more than 20 times larger than Murmansk's).

All this progress equally applies to the national minorities of the Far North. You think of the American Eskimo and Indian people when you meet the Saami, Komi and Mansi who live in considerable numbers here. Formerly they existed under pretty much the same backward and poverty-stricken nomadic conditions that are still the lot of most of the Eskimo and Indian people in the United States. Now they have their own scientists, artists and writers (they had no written language before the Revolution).

Novosibirsk—Academic City

Actually, Academic City is not a city at all. It is part of the Sovetski District of Novosibirsk. Science and beauty blend here in natural harmony—it is a delightful marriage of mind and matter, man and nature. It is a city "built into" birch and pine forests. Every street, and almost every building rests in the cool comforting embrace of gentle birch and fragrant pine trees. Dressed in winter white each street scene was like a Christmas card.

And in Academic City (as I did in Ust-Ilim) I learned how delicious and exciting breathing can be. You not only inhale but taste the fragrance of the forests around you.

Despite my tiring trip, I found myself relaxed and invigorated as I walked through birch groves into modern university and research buildings.

Academic City seems to sum up Siberia—its promise and its problems, as well as its own purpose for existence.

Academic City is *socialist science mobilized* in the Soviet Union's concentrated effort to free the treasures clutched in Siberia's frozen grip.

Siberia's challenge was frankly discussed with me in Moscow and Academic City. In Moscow Academician Nikolai Nekrasov put it this way: Siberia and the Far East contain the Soviet Union's main material resources but they have only one-tenth of its population. Eastern Siberia (2,500,000 square kilometers in area) alone is about five times the size of France. Much of the region is gripped by bitter winter for seven months and in the North for ten months a year with a temperature of 40-50 and even 60 degrees

below zero, centigrade. Yet Eastern Siberia in 1970 was annually extracting 30 million tons of oil and by 1980, this will reach 230-240 million.

What is the key to tapping this treasure?

From Moscow and Academic City came the same reply: the alliance of science and worker at the point of production. Siberia and the Far East are not to be taken by a mass assault, by mass migration or sheer number of hands. Such an approach for the most severe parts of this vast area is considered neither practical nor necessary in this age of the scientific and technological revolution.

The assault of Siberia was soberly weighed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet government and scientists. It envisions the harnessing of rivers, the piping of gas, the extraction of oil and minerals, the construction of cities and great industrial plants. All with the utmost mass use of the latest in scientific know-how and equipment, with the mass mobilization of scientists and technicians both at the point of production and at the long-range research laboratory and planning board.

And life-living and working conditions—for those who have come to open up the treasure of Siberia and the Far East and to found and live in its new cities is to be made as comfortable and as beautiful as possible. Hence, Academic City, Ust-Ilim, Bratsk, Amursk, Komsomolsk-on-Amur.

Scientists are now engaged in experimentation in Krasnoyarsk and Norilsk to try to better adapt housing and working conditions to severe climate.

As Rudolf Yanovski, first secretary of the Sovetski Communist Party district committee, told me, the characteristic feature is both *quantitative and qualitative growth in active population of Siberia*. Academic City provides a good picture of this growth. In the city's research institutes there are 5,000 scientific research workers of whom 1,500 have scientific degrees. There are 53 academicians among them. Only 15 years ago there was only one academician beyond the Urals.

The nuclear and social analysis institutes are mainly manned by former Muscovites. An entire institute of electronics and automation came from Lvov. Similarly a mathematics school came from Ivanovo.

Yanovski stressed that the most socially active sections of the population were coming to Siberia. Everywhere I went—as in Ust-Ilim—I found this to be true. Above all, those coming are youth seeking new worlds to conquer.

Siberia was never short of gifted people. Academic City has a special school for talented youth that gives them as much as a three-year preparatory course for Novosibirsk University. From 60-80 per cent qualify for the University, all others are admitted to other higher schools.

How are these talented youth found?

Academic City University teachers scour the country's schools in a nationwide talent hunt. On the University grounds I came across a considerable number of youth of various nationalities. Here's the picture: of 726 students enrolled, 50 were Jews, 22 Ukrainians, 14 Yakuts, 12 Tatars, 12 Kazakhs, 10 Nenets, 6 Buryats, 4 Byelorussians, 4 Koreans, 3 Bashkirs, one Azerbaijanian, and one Chuvash. The rest were Russian. But much more than mere percentages are behind these figures. For instance, Jews who are little more than one per cent of the population make up almost seven per cent of the enrollment. To get some idea of the meaning of the enrollment of 14 Yakuts, one would have to imagine 14 Eskimos and Indians in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Cities of Labor Safety

Nature, which buried one of the world's richest deposits of black gold in the fertile Ukrainian earth, also made this treasure one of the most difficult and dangerous to extract. Gas, the miner's main enemy, is plentiful in the bowels of the Donbas and sudden explosions present a far greater menace than in US mines. The mines are among the deepest in the world, burrowing as far as 1,200 meters (a meter is 39 inches) underground. At that depth the temperature can reach 40 degrees, centigrade. Thus, intense heat had to be mastered. No wonder Anatoli Sukhorukov, director of the Bazharov mine in Makeevka, who is familiar with the problems confronted by US mines, told me:

"God was more considerate to your miners. They face far less difficulties and dangers than we do."

God may have been considerate to US coal miners but as the huge army of "black lung" victims, limbless men and numerous casualties of mine catastrophes testify, the greedy coal operators and an indifferent Washington more than make up for the Lord's mercy.

According to *The New York Times Encyclopedic Almanac, 1970*, a research study "conducted by the US Consumers Protection and Environmental Health Service has revealed that more than 100,000 American miners are affected by coal miner's pneumoconiosis or 'black lung'."

Or let us recall the notorious "Yablonski case." Iosif Yablonski was a rank and file miner and a trade union activist in the United States. It was his courageous struggle against such conditions that resulted in the murder of his wife and daughter on New Year's Day, 1970. The upsurge in the United Mine Workers' Union has since swept the corrupt union head

out of office and compelled the passage of some legislation to improve the situation but notwithstanding this, miners are forced to conduct a constant struggle for the enforcement of minimum health and safety standards. One can only imagine the ghastly casualty rates US coal miners would suffer if they had to work under conditions where, like in the Donbas, God was far less generous.

The story of Makeevka and Donetsk—cities of labor safety—is all the more moving because it is a dramatic demonstration that with all the Soviet government's all-out efforts to meet the goals of the massive 9th Five-Year Plan, the safety and well-being of Soviet working men and women, especially those engaged at the most hazardous fronts of production, remain the main consideration.

The Soviet government mobilized an unparalleled army of scientists, technicians, specialists and safety workers to make up for God's lack of consideration for the Donbas miners. No coal miner in the world is backed by the kind of formidable safety and health force that I observed in operation. And I observed them in operation 1,000 meters below the earth's surface in the Bazharov mine.

The Makeevka Scientific Institute is headed by Alexander Timoshenko. Its staff consists of 1,350 scientific and research workers (600 of them scientists) working in 25 of the most up-to-date laboratory buildings spread over 23 hectares of park-like surroundings. This huge scientific force has only one mission: to wage war against the natural enemies of the coal miner and to conquer them.

Every hazard confronted by miners is studied and dealt with by a specific scientific laboratory. And the army of scientists spend much of their time studying the problems and testing their solutions in the bowels of the earth.

Makeevka scientists have concentrated on the control of four main mining hazards: gas, sudden explosions, high temperature and dust particles (the cause of silicosis). And from what I saw in the mine as well as in the equipment produced by the Institute, a most remarkable job has already been done. Danger from methane gas and sudden explosions (caused by pockets of gas and dust particles) has been reduced to a minimum by a comprehensive system of scientific detection and safety mechanisms.

When we came up from a depth of 1,000 meters, Sukhorukov took me to the mine control room. A graph on the automatic control chart showed that the methane gas was 1.1 at the place where we had just been. At 1.3 (considered to be the maximum allowable) a mechanism automatically shuts off all the mine electricity, thus immediately suspending all work in the danger area. All miners immediately leave the area. They can't work even if they wanted to.

They return only when normal safe conditions are assured. The chart showed that September 28, 1971 at 12:30 p.m., the electricity was automatically shut off because a higher concentration of methane gas was detected. Work was resumed at 1 p.m. when normal conditions were restored.

In the mine I also saw another extremely valuable safety mechanism which automatically sounds off an alarm when it detects methane gas. But Makeevka scientists are not satisfied with it because the mechanism depends too much on "subjective" factors. It has to be placed in the area of work by the team leader. And so, the scientists have to come up with a miner's lamp which contains an element that is so sensitive only to methane gas it blinks, warning the miner of the danger.

The danger from sudden explosions has been vastly reduced by a most intensive scientific study of coal layers and seams. The "hunt" for deadly gas pockets never ceases. The hazardous areas are all carefully charted and special safety measures are taken there.

Dust particles are combatted with water.

"No dust particles means no silicosis or pneumoconiosis," Makeevka Institute director, Alexander Timoshenko, stressed.

And so the fight against dust particles begins with the first stage of extraction and continues up to and throughout the process of conveying the coal out of the mine. I saw holes drilled into seams every four meters—they were water holes to give the coal an internal bath. From 50 to 80 per cent of the dust particles are eliminated this way. The entire water process removes 95 to 97 per cent of the dust particles. The result is that to a very great extent the battle against silicosis and pneumoconiosis has already been won. Anatoli Sukhorukov told me that in 1970, there had only been one case of silicosis among the 3,000 (1,800 who work underground) in his mine, the man affected being a digger who had labored 20 years in the mines.

Cables are the life lines of miners and they are guarded accordingly. The elevators transporting miners to and from the bowels of the earth are doubly protected by emergency brakes that act like parachutes in case of faulty cables. The cables themselves are constantly checked and tested in search for "tired cables." A mobile cable meter carried into the mine provides on the spot check-ups.

Temperature is controlled by a vast ventilation system that pumps cool pure air into the mine. I found it hard to believe we were down 1,000 meters. A gentle breeze was blowing. Without "God's consideration" the Donbas mines have been made among the safest in the world.

All this could not help but impress a US delegation of coal experts who visited the Makeevka Institute, June 4, 1970 and wrote in its book: "The USA delegation of coal experts (the first to officially visit the USSR) had

the honor to visit the State Safety Mines Institute in Makeevka today. The work being done here must be an inspiration in coal mine safety advancement all over the world. We salute you in the excellency of your achievement." Among the signers were Tom Mullins, C. Lynch Charleston and Nelmut A. Rickey II.

The visit of Tom Druax, an Ohio miner, to Donetsk and Makeevka in 1973 on an exchange basis to see mine safety methods, had a profound impact on him and the United Mine Workers' Union. The UMWA Journal (November 1-15, 1973) carried a two-page interview with Tom Druax.

Asked if he considered his trip fruitful, Druax replied:

"Well, first I think anything the union can learn about how to make the mines safer is important. I don't care where the idea comes from—if it's going to save lives for our own men then we ought to try it. I'm not advocating socialism or communism but I was greatly impressed on the trip by Russian emphasis on safety."

And for good reason.

What the normalization of USSR-USA relations can mean for US miners is clear—it can save many lives. US workers generally stand much to gain from learning from Soviet cities of safety.

Tom Druax was greatly impressed not only by the elaborate set-up the Soviet government provides for miners' safety and health, but also by the huge force it has organized to *rescue* them when and if disaster strikes. I was impressed by the stark contrast this highly efficient, *permanent organization* (I want to stress, permanent) presented to the haphazard "volunteer" rescue operations that are mobilized to meet our mine catastrophes.

Incidentally, great stress is placed by the Donetsk Emergency Headquarters on *preventing accidents*. An army of inspectors regularly checks for the slightest violations, including the amount of dust particles in the air. If it is above the norm, work is immediately stopped until the correction is made. The Emergency Headquarters is a city in itself. It includes 2,000 workers, of whom 1,000 are technicians, 250 coal mining engineers and 40 Candidates of Science. All work in a beautiful building that has 22 huge laboratories. They have a special medical group consisting of 120 doctors and assistants. I saw a fleet of special emergency trucks (I counted 18) on the alert, ready to respond in 90 seconds.

"We have relatively few accidents," director Ivan Belik told us, "but we have to be ready when they happen."

The emergency force services the coal mines in Donetsk areas but will respond to call for assistance anywhere, including other countries.

The emergency headquarters makes its own safety and rescue equipment which it exports to 18 countries. Backed by these cities of safety, the coal miners of the Donetsk and Makeevka area (as well as all Soviet

miners) work at their hazardous occupation with a sense of security. And their wives and children share their assurance.

Everything possible is done to reward the miners for their heroic and hazardous labor. Their pay is *three times* the average Soviet wage. They can retire at 50, i.e., ten years earlier than ordinary Soviet working men, and if they choose to continue work their pension raises their pay to *four times* the average Soviet wage. They get up to 45 days of fully paid vacations a year. The miners' union has an unparalleled network of sanatoriums, rest homes and week-end sanatoria at all the best vacation spots in the Soviet Union. And the union picks up 70 per cent of the miners' vacation tab. They have nurseries and summer camps for their children at minimal cost.

The homes of the miners we saw are neat, solidly built private homes—each with a lovely garden. And miners have more cars on the average than most sections of the Soviet population.

But perhaps what impressed me most was the *tribute* paid to coal miners. Donetsk's chief monument is a coal miner who stands proudly in the center of the city—the real master of his realm.

Palatial Subway

The Soviet Metro ideally combines efficiency and beauty. Only a society that cares for its people could conceive of surrounding them with such an atmosphere of loveliness as they perform their "humdrum" functions of going about their daily business. The clean fresh air makes the Metro in Moscow as well as in Tbilisi and Leningrad one of the most pleasant and favorite meeting places. The Moscow Metro is airconditioned in summer and winter. The air is changed three times an hour. A special staff regularly checks the atmosphere to see if it conforms to the norm, 1.5 milligrams of dust particles per cubic meter of air. It is always less than that.

Some stations are veritable art galleries, depicting in statues and frescoes some chapter of the October Revolution or of the history of the Soviet people. *Ploshchad Revolutsii* in Moscow is the story in sculpture of the makers of the October Revolution. Moscow's *Kievskaya Station* is a history of Ukraine in frescoes. The Metro stations in Tbilisi and Baku are living histories of the cultures of the peoples of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Only those who can view culture and art as belonging to the people can conceive of making art galleries of their subway stations.

The Moscow Metro is also the epitome of efficiency. You literally ride with clock-like precision. A huge clock on each station wall clicks off the seconds between the trains.

Every New-York subway rider is familiar with the numerous breakdowns that cause uncomfortable delays and often lead to accidents. These mishaps reflect the steady deterioration of an aging subway that has been milked dry and badly neglected. I never came across a serious breakdown or even a non-working door in the Moscow subway. And it can be explained quite simply: constant meticulous care. Incidentally, all this makes for an understandable pride in their Metro on the part of the workers, that is reflected in their very high labor discipline. Here is what is behind the Moscow Metro's precision timing.

The 7,500 trains of the Moscow Metro go to a depot for a check-up and a quick clean-up after every 6-7 hour runs. Every two days they are taken to a sanitary station where they are washed inside and out and carefully inspected. First, the dust is sucked up by air compression tubes. Then, the roof, doors, floors and windows are scoured with mechanized brushes and dried with hot air. In addition all cars undergo a system of thorough repair every few days. It is here that defects which could lead to train breakdowns are discovered and taken care of. All this results not only in better service, but savings.

The Moscow Metro is not only clean, comfortable, efficient and beautiful—it is safe. No fear of being robbed and beaten. My wife and I experienced a strange sensation during our first rides in the Moscow Metro. Something seemed to be missing. Then it came to us: no police patrol the cars. This normal situation is anything but normal for New York straphangers, for whom fear and police, armed with bulging revolvers and walkie-talkies, are constant travelling companions.

Public transportation fares are nearly free in the Soviet Union: five kopecks in Metros, from four to five kopecks for autobuses (depending on the size of the town and the average route length), four kopecks for trolley buses and three kopecks for trams. (Americans pay 35 cents for a subway ride in New York and 60 cents in Chicago.) And the nearly-free fare has been a constant factor in transportation cost for Soviet citizens: Metro fare for almost 40 years (the Moscow Metro went into operation on May 15, 1935).

Fare for the mini-bus is ten kopecks. The Russians call it *marshrutny* taxi. You pick up the mini-bus at a designated point (they usually run along a fixed route) and you are taken right up to your destination, if it is along the route, of course.

One of my most pleasant surprises was my early discovery of the low cost of Soviet taxi fare. The taxi fare (uniform throughout the Soviet Union)

is stabilized at ten kopecks for a kilometer (two-thirds of a mile). You can literally ride from one end of Moscow to the other for about three roubles. Thus the average Muscovite uses taxis far more extensively than the average New Yorker for whom this is a very expensive means of transportation.

There are more than 14,000 cabs in operation in Moscow, carrying nearly 500,000 passengers daily. And at least twice the number could well be used, from what I observed. By comparison, if one takes New York cab fares as an example, the meter starts running at 60 cents (that is what it costs you just to enter the cab). And it ticks off 20 cents for every quarter of a mile (80 cents a mile). You can hardly get very far on three dollars in New York. Thus, unlike in the Soviet Union, taxis are only employed as a common means of transportation by the more affluent. They are used for special occasions, holidays or emergencies by average Americans.

Tipping, of course, is considered an additional part of fare by our cabbies. This is understood by the US passenger who mentally adds the average 20 per cent to his fare. And this additional cost helps to place this means of transportation out of the reach of average Americans.

Poor public transportation, and in some places even the total lack of it, as well as its high costs, make Americans buy automobiles even if they cannot afford them.

Automobile and highway construction concerns are mainly responsible for the complete deterioration of public transportation. Bradford C. Snell testified before the Senate Anti-Trust Subcommittee that General Motors played a dominant role in destroying more than 100 electric surface rail transit systems in 45 cities. General Motors bought up and scrapped electric rail systems in order to make the people completely dependent on private automobiles for transportation. The result was not only the destruction of public transportation but the conversion of Los Angeles into an ecological wasteland: the palm trees are dying of petrochemical smog; the orange groves have been paved over. The air is daily polluted by four million cars, half of them built by General Motors.

Snell's study shows that the Big Three of the auto industry, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, reshaped US ground transportation by eliminating competition among themselves and getting control over rival bus and rail industries.

Anarchy of production has its corresponding reflection in the anarchy in American city streets—the result of the conscious sabotage of mass transit, the high cost and poor quality of what little public transportation is provided. Thus, tens of millions of American urban dwellers have been placed in a position of utter dependence on their own private means of transportation—the automobile. This has not only dumped the responsibility and the cost of transportation on the mass of the people (a massive and grow-

ing expense) but it has made our streets daily scenes of traffic chaos, where there is no longer any room for these mechanical monsters. There are many areas in the heart of our cities where your feet are the fastest means of transportation. Moreover, even if one does manage to reach one's destination quickly via the automobile, the time spent seeking and finding a parking spot more than makes up for it.

The automobile long ago ceased to be a luxury in the US (as it still is in most parts of the world). The auto monopolies and the finance companies saw to that. In many American large cities, not to speak of the suburbs and outlying areas, the automobile is the primary and almost sole means of getting to and from work or getting anywhere. The two-car family is not quite the symbol of US affluence it has been ballyhooed to be by Madison Ave. It is more of a symbol of the expensive burden of transportation placed on the American people.

But, perhaps, my greatest discovery in the more than four years of living in the Soviet Union, was how strange is our free enterprise life, how hypocritical, indeed, are its pretenses of concern for the "individual." And, at no time did this realization strike me more forcefully than during my daily rides in the Moscow Metro. I tried to imagine such a subway in our country (there is no question, we have the know-how and resources to construct one equally as beautiful, clean and efficient). Let us say, the construction of such a subway is agreed upon. It would either be owned outright by a monopoly utility (like Con Edison) on the basis of a city franchise or run by an "Authority." Finances would be secured by issuing bonds (which would be soon controlled by big banks) and by securing loans. Thus, our subway would soon be in hock to the banks and its fare service would be based on the need to guarantee the payment of the interest. If Chicagoans pay 60 cents fare for a ride and New Yorkers 35 cents a ride for their daily ordeal, one can well imagine what the charge would be for a Moscow-Metro type subway in New York.

Czarism bequeathed a real horse and buggy transportation system to the makers of the socialist revolution. By comparison, our cities at that time were in a flourishing state in respect to transportation, with elevated lines, trolleys, buses as well as the beginnings of mass production of automobiles.

The Nazi invasion took a terrible toll in destruction of railroads, roads, and all kinds of vehicles in the Soviet Union. The war also put a temporary halt to further construction though not on the Moscow Metro. Overcoming its backward heritage, the ravages of the Civil War and intervention, the incalculable devastation of the World War II, the Soviet Union has today the cheapest, most efficient, and certainly the most convenient transportation in the world.

City on Piles

More than 50 years of Soviet power transformed a once backward Azerbaijan of veiled women and 90 per cent illiteracy into a land in which women play a leading role in every sphere of life. Socialist Azerbaijan trains many students from 38 countries, mostly from Asia, Africa and Latin America. It sent its specialists to aid in construction of a port in Yemen, a power station for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and to aid in prospecting for oil in India and Pakistan, as well as in the study of the earth's interior in socialist Cuba.

The Republic today is not only a major exporter of oil. It also exports oil equipment. The United States, for instance, has purchased license rights for the use of Azerbaijanian turbo-drills. Azerbaijan now has 27 scientific research centers, 16,600 scientific workers, among whom are 54 Academicians, 582 Doctors of Science and 5,000 Candidates of Science.

In 1920, the life expectancy of Azerbaijan's oil workers was 28 years; today it is 72 years, and the mortality rate is considerably lower than in the United States, Britain, and France.

Baku is a city sitting on an oilwell. But it is hard to think of Baku as a dusty industrial giant. It is a giant dressed up in green, adorned with archways of shaded trees and cloaked with innumerable parks and squares. The odour of oil is barely perceptible and only on occasions near the shores of the bay.

Baku is an extraordinarily beautiful city. Its new buildings blend harmoniously with the charm of its ancient past (Baku is 1,300 years old). Wide boulevards lined with towering, sleek, streamlined structures are only a stone's throw away from narrow winding 12th century streets.

In 1971, an 18-story *Intourist* Hotel was finished. Baku has a beautiful art-gallery-like subway. The glories of its past are carefully preserved. The citizens of Baku and particularly its Komsomols take part in frequent *subbotniks* (days of voluntary unpaid social labor) to restore and maintain ancient buildings and monuments.

Off the coast of Baku, 66 miles out to sea, is the "oil city" Neftyanıye Kamni, built in 1949. It is a modern town of comfortable homes, shops, theaters, movies, restaurants, boulevards, hothouses, flower gardens, workshops, derricks and cranes, all supported by a vast network of trestle-bridges stretching out like a huge spider over an area of 170 sq km (114 sq miles).

Neftyanıye Kamni is the largest of several such "cities on the sea." They produce 13 million tons of oil, at one-third of the cost of land-extracted oil and with a labor productivity 17 times greater.

These sea cities are not only miracles of engineering, but are tributes

to the heroism of Baku's oil workers. Neftyanije Kamni is battered by a stormy Caspian Sea 330 days a year, with waves as high as 45 feet. It is lashed by frequent hurricanes. Production never ceases, no matter how rough the weather, and the firm structure built on stilts has successfully withstood all the Caspian's angry assaults for twenty years.

The workers and employees of Neftyanije Kamni receive 55 per cent above the pay scale for their classification paid on land, plus an additional one rouble 20 kopecks daily for food and transportation. Special comfortable rest homes provide the workers with after-work rest and relaxation.

A Fairy Tale Come to Life

Dushambe, capital of the Tajik Republic, is a fairy tale come to life. A tiny village before the revolution and now a city of 350,000, Dushambe combines Central Asian color and charm with the dynamism and vigor, typical of Soviet cities. It is at once, distinctly Tajik and uniformly Soviet.

The ancient and the modern not only coexist, they produce a delightful, original blend. You can see it in the men clad in bright, multi-hued bathrobe-like coats girded with colorful sashes, who parade to Dushambe's factories and offices side-by-side with those in European dress. You see it in its women, their lovely dark faces illuminated by radiant scarfs draped around their heads. You see it in the beautiful young girls in *tyubeteikas* (skull-caps lined with symmetrical designs) perched on their twenty-five strands of waist-long tresses, as they hurry off to the university.

You hear it in the haunting minor-key chants of ancient songs to the words of Omar Khayam and other famous Tajik poets over the radio and TV. You see it in monuments to those who like Avicenna, one of mankind's first physicians, contributed to the glories of its past. You see it in the fabulous exciting bazaars. You see it in modern Dushambe Hotel and sleek *Volgas* whizzing by. You see it in the majestic snow-covered mountains that follow you along tree-lined streets. You sense it, above all, in the Tajik tea houses, *tchaikhanas*, which are far more than our cafes.

Dushambe's *tchaikhana* is an oriental art gallery, Arabian Nights storyland and leisurely cafe all rolled into one.

The *tchaikhana* generously, no, luxuriously abounds in space for relaxation and beauty. Much of its area is occupied by a huge columned courtyard. The *tchaikhana* has a private as well as a street life. The private rooms are, indeed, like art galleries. Ceilings are masterpieces of ancient symmetrical designs. You sit on bedsteads covered with bright rugs, sip the fragrant, strong tea, as you sample *shashlik* and *plov*.

What makes the houses in Dushambe particularly attractive is the variety of styles of construction. Like all Soviet cities I visited, Dushambe is in a state of constant construction.

Tajiks are particularly proud of their two-million book central library in Dushambe, named after their great writer Abdul Kasim Firdousi, which services more than 2,700 libraries in towns, villages, state and collective farms and factories.

As I watched young girls and elderly women deeply engrossed in books, I thought that in pre-revolutionary Tajikistan it had been difficult to find somebody to read a letter. Dushambe's library was founded in 1933; it has eleven departments including a manuscript section that is famous throughout the Arab world. The library has ties with 26 countries, including the US Library of Congress. The library is headed by charming Nuriniso Babajanova, whose illiterate mother was the first woman to cast her veil into the river. The act of liberation was performed on March 8, International Women's Day, 1925.

Vilnius—the Old and the New

Ancient Vilnius founded in 1323 is flourishing. I thought of the demolition of New York's majestic Pennsylvania Railroad Station as I watched Vilnius workers painstakingly reconstructing centuries-old buildings. I saw entire sections of 14th, 15th and 16th century buildings in process of reconstruction. The meticulous concern for artistic and historic accuracy that goes into the restoration of ancient cathedrals is being displayed on a mass scale. I watched specially trained bricklayers and plasterers chipping away at an aged wall to determine the exact material and style the particular building required.

Vilnius' Old Town is to be reconstructed as a complex whole. While the ancient architecture is being faithfully preserved, each building is being fully modernized, its interior is being rebuilt to provide apartments with all conveniences.

I found the same reverence for the beauties of the past in every Soviet city I visited: in Riga, Tallinn, Baku, Moscow and other Soviet cities.

To restore the past is far more expensive and time-consuming than to build modern pre-fabricated houses. The city's architects gave considerable thought to all aspects of the question before making a final decision. In the final analysis it boiled down to what values a city and its society live by. New Vilnius, sleek and streamlined, has risen side by side with its Old Town. Building a new city that can rightfully take its place beside centuries

of architectural splendor presents quite a challenge. And New Vilnius is trying hard to meet it.

Vilnius, like all Soviet cities I visited, is dynamically harmonizing its past and present into what all signs point to will be an enchanting city of the future. It is a city of charm and culture as well as an important industrial center. Its parks are like forests entering the city. Its cathedrals are like museums of art and the Cathedral of St. Stephens is exactly that. Its citizens truly live, work and "walk in beauty."

In Memory of the Fallen Heroes

Our train approached Minsk. Byelorussia's tender birch and poplar trees swayed and bent with the stern autumn wind but they bounced back with supple grace.

New Minsk is a city of joyous pride and unforgettable sorrows where the living never forget their dead. Our hosts spoke of each new complex of beautiful homes, each new factory, school and sport palace—and they are legion—as a monument to their heroic dead. Minsk and Byelorussia died twice in 50 years. As border areas they felt the fury of two German invasions—1914 and 1941. The Soviet people who lost 20 million in the Nazi holocaust speak with special pain and pride of Minsk and Byelorussia. It is almost beyond human reason to grasp the "statistics" of their ordeal. No one can feel the special suffering of another like those who themselves are familiar with immeasurable grief.

I found the statistics of Byelorussia's ordeal, beyond the grasp of my imagination: 2,360,000 (one-fourth of Byelorussia's population) killed, 380,000 transported to Germany as slave laborers; 209 cities, 720 villages—80 per cent of Byelorussia—reduced to ashes. The living fought the Nazis to the last man, woman and child: 1,100,000 as soldiers, 375,000 as partisans, 70,000 in the underground aided by the rest of the population. One hundred and sixty-two underground newspapers were published in Nazi-occupied Byelorussia. But, I really sensed the significance of these statistics when I met some of them in the flesh.

Later we walked up the long winding steps of Byelorussia's "Hill of Glory." Soil was brought from every corner of Byelorussia and the Soviet Union, including the hero cities, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Moscow, Sevastopol, Odessa and Brest. It was brought in bags and wrapped up in pieces of newspaper by Soviet soldiers, partisans, men, women and children. The Hill grew from year to year and was finally completed in 1969. It stands as a monument to the indestructible unity of the 100 peoples of the Soviet Union.

From my meeting with Minsk's partisans I went to Khatyn. Khatyn's 26 bells were tolling as we approached this memorial to Byelorussia's 2,360,000 dead. Each is an angry tongue summoning the world "never to forget." Each bell stands on the spot where a home and a family once lived.

That was a peaceful village that lay in the bosom of Byelorussia's gently rolling hills. On March 22, 1943, the Nazis herded into a hut its 152 villagers (76 of them children, the rest women and old men) and turned them into a funeral pyre. All who tried to escape were gunned down. Three miraculously escaped—Yusef Kaminsky, then 56 (now he lives near Khatyn), and two boys, Viktor, then 8, and Anton, 12. The two today live in Minsk.

A huge statue of a gaunt man with haunting accusing eyes bearing a boy in his arms stands as a tribute to Byelorussia's unyielding spirit.

Byelorussia had 135 Khatyns, villages which were wiped off the map. Therefore there are 135 graves here, each containing soil in a flower pot from the destroyed village.

Nearby are three baby birch trees and an eternal flame. The three birch trees represent Byelorussia's living, the flame, its dead.

We came to the Wall of Remembrance, a somber tribute to the tens of thousands who had died and languished in the 260 Nazi concentration camps in Byelorussia. Each camp was marked by a prison-like niche, listing its location and number of victims. It was a roll-call of Byelorussian villages and towns, among which were: Mogilev, 40,000, Grodno, 25,000, Brest, 27,000, Minsk, 20,000, Polotsk, 50,000, Slutsk, 14,000, Orsha, 10,000, Gomel, 100,000 and Tratsyanetsy, 206,500.

We came to Khatyn's last appeal to humanity. It read:

"Good people—remember! We loved our motherland and you, dear people, and we were set afire, alive. Our request to you is: let grief be transformed into courage and strength so that life will not have died forever."

A Final Word to the Reader

Working on a series of books about the Soviet Union, I focussed on the contrast between Soviet cities without crises and our cities, because I believe it is here that the *difference* between the two social systems is most forcefully revealed today.

Never has this difference been more sharply demonstrated than today for two reasons. First, never (and this includes the period of the Great Depression) has the decay of our social system been not only sensed but smelled by so many Americans, especially our youth. For years the image of America, portrayed to our own people as well as to the world (and unfortu-

nately accepted by many), was America, the industrial giant, that could produce automobiles on a scale that other countries manufactured clothing, the America of luxuriously soft toilet tissue and plush bathrooms where one could read in comfort the voluminous Sunday issue of *The New York Times*, America, the land of opportunity where everyone could strike it rich and where every boy could grow up to become a millionaire, America of unlimited free speech...

That false image was exploded by reality. Like powerful catalytic agents, the war in Vietnam, the ghetto rebellions exposed the rot long hidden by the veneer of affluence and exaggerated democratic rights. They placed all *basic* contradictions ripping our free enterprise society apart in the sharpest focus: the Declaration of Independence and Song My, the Bill of Rights and Watergate, Kent, Attica, Wounded Knee. The flames of the ghetto rebellions put a searing spotlight on our much heralded American way of life.

One of the most significant aspects of the social crisis is the moral crisis. Never before have so many Americans felt the soullessness, the emptiness, the inhumanness of life in America. Never before have Americans, including many middle-class people, and especially our youth, rebelled in such numbers and with such militancy against the false values of a society that will spend \$ 135 thousand million to destroy the towns and villages of Vietnam, while our cities decay, that can afford \$ 84 thousand million a year for its military budget, but can't find enough money to pay its teachers or keep its schools open full term. The moral decay poisons life for all those with consciences as well as comforts.

The second reason why the contrast between Soviet and US life (especially as it is reflected in the cities of our two countries) is more clearly than ever evident today, is because of the vast improvements in living conditions of the people of the Soviet Union. It is so apparent to any objective reporter today, that it requires considerable wilful blindness to ignore and skilful pen (or typewriter) to distort. That the wilful blindness and skilful typewriters are available is demonstrated by the picture of Soviet life portrayed with rare exceptions by our correspondents of the "free" big business press.

The basic advantages of socialist living were always present, they came with the October Revolution itself. But, it is no secret that notwithstanding this, for many years and for very understandable reasons, Soviet every-day living lagged considerably behind that of the "richest country in the world." The "richest country in the world" never inherited the poverty, backwardness, illiteracy and a multitude of other social ills. The "richest country in the world" never suffered two devastating world wars on its soil, besides intervention and civil war (it escaped the horrors and cost of war on its own soil for more than 100 years).

But today the picture is quite different. This, notwithstanding many still existing difficulties and the fact that in respect to some types of services life in the US is still more comfortable (though even here the gap is steadily being narrowed). It is no secret that in the quantity, variety and quality of many consumer goods the US is clearly ahead. These difficulties are not only readily and publicly admitted (and seized on by our eager big business press in an effort to blot out the far more important achievements), the entire Soviet society is being mobilized to wage an unrelenting struggle to overcome them.

I met a number of Soviet Jews who had gone to live in Israel and who had literally begged and fought their way back to their homeland. Let me put it frankly. From what I observed, it was hardly religious or nationalistic reasons alone that motivated many of those who emigrated to Israel. For a good number of these, Israel was just the first stop toward their real objective—the United States where they envisioned a life of prosperity. What was it that led them to return to the Soviet Union (and some to besiege the Soviet Embassy in Vienna demanding to be permitted to come back)?

To put it simply: *the bitter taste of capitalist life.*

These Soviet people suddenly discovered all the features of Soviet life that make it the most human existence (things they had not only taken for granted but discounted) were not to be found in the "other world." And for the first time they realized that life without this Soviet, socialist humanity was no life at all for them. I am convinced a similar realization and tormenting regret will haunt many who left their socialist homeland with similar illusions about life in the "free world."

Today—nearly 60 years and nine five-year plans after the October Revolution—Soviet life in those aspects that are most meaningful to ordinary people, especially working people, is already far superior to life in the United States. This is particularly true in respect to life in the great cities of our two countries. And, quite frankly, I believe "Soviet propaganda" (which is portrayed by our press as being ready to make capital out of the slightest advantage over capitalism) has hardly made the most of the stark contrast Soviet cities without crisis present to our crisis-ridden cities.

I have tried to tell the story in the most concrete and meaningful terms of every-day life as lived by the average person in the Soviet Union and in our own country. I stress average American because he and she are hardly the standard of comparison used by our big business press. Usually ignored in this respect are the 25 million Americans who live in poverty and an even greater number who live on poverty's edge—the "deprived" as they are called by social workers.

I also want to stress that it is high time the comparison between life in the two worlds was based on the elements of existence that are most

essential to most Americans. Among the most significant products of the "decade of turmoil and rebellion" were the new concepts, or *new values* as they were correctly and profoundly characterized, especially by our rebelling youth. These *new values* reject the superficial *standards* that were represented as the superior American way of life. In that standard it was the bourgeois material comforts, always denied or enjoyed in quite limited fashion by most Americans, that were stressed. In that system of values, the automobile, the quantity and style of clothing, the latest in gadgets (no matter how superfluous), were held up as the all-important measurements of the good life. Completely disregarded or minimized were such important elements of every-day life for average persons as the provision of decent homes at rents within their reach, care for their health and well-being, education and culture, guarantee of real security in a job, in advancement, for today and tomorrow, in a word all the *rights* accorded Soviet people as their inalienable rights. Who can deny that by this real standard based on the real values by which the mass of people live, Soviet life is already far superior to that in the USA?

The big business propagandists try to brand as unpatriotic Americans who recognize the superiority of the Soviet, the socialist way of life. But what is unpatriotic about seeking a more human life? What is unpatriotic about learning from those who, at an incalculable price of suffering, unprecedented feats of courage and labor, charted the path to such a life? I saw with my own eyes how joyfully the Soviet people greeted the historic First Summit in Moscow and the recognition of the principles of peaceful co-existence as governing the relations between the USA-USSR and countries of the two world social systems.

I attended the 24th Congress where the great Soviet peace offensive that paved the way to the widening detente was discussed and adopted. The entire world, and not only the Soviet and American people, can now breathe more easily, though as Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, stressed in his speech to the World Congress of Peace Forces, the struggle must now be to make the process of detente irreversible. The Soviet people welcome the expansion of relations and exchanges with the USA in every sphere: scientific, cultural, educational, transport, commercial, sports. I believe anyone who would dare to halt or obstruct Soviet-American cooperation (now developing so well) in the fight to conquer the two great enemies of mankind, cancer and heart disease, would meet with the united indignation of our two peoples as well as of the world. As for cultural relations, one had but to witness, as I did, the warm welcome extended by the people of Moscow and Leningrad to the Washington Arena Stage Theater during its visit to these two Soviet cities in October 1973. "Our Town," USA became "Our Town," USSR. And the get-together of Soviet and American theatrical workers or-

ganized by and held at the *Sovremennik* Theater was like a cultural "meeting on the Elbe."

From all I have seen, the Soviet people not only recognize but are making every effort to learn from us in those fields where our country has acquired considerable experience and know-how. Efforts are being made to learn from US experience, particularly in the service trades, in retail stores, repairs, office and hotel management, traffic regulation. In all these fields the USSR is quite anxious to utilize all experiences to provide the Soviet people with a higher quality of services, one of the main tasks set by the 24th Congress.

Soviet leaders and people are also quite prepared to exchange information. But, unfortunately, this has been seized upon by opponents of detente (who have managed to hoodwink many sincere people). The kind of exchange they want is one which would lead the Soviet people to exchange their socialist way of life for our free enterprise system. What would they have the Soviet people exchange? Their cities without crisis for our cities of crisis? Their cities without fear for our cities of coexistence with fear? Their life with no landlords and nominal rents for our rapacious landlords and monstrously high rents? Their life without ghettos, without racism and exploding tensions for our "hot summers"? Their life without doctor bills for our 100 dollar a day hospital beds? Their palatial Moscow Metro and its 5 kopeck fare for our hell-hole New York subway and its 35 cent ride? Their cities of people's culture from the box office to the stage for our commodity culture? Their cities without budget crises for our annual and ever deepening financial crises? Their free universities and stipends for our \$4,000 a year tuition fees and millstone bank loans?

Their life without inflation for our phase-four price rises? Their industries run for working people for ours run for General Motors? Their expanding people's owned oil and energy resources for our Rockefeller Standard Oil and energy crisis?

To start an honest exchange on a most vital aspect of Soviet life—Soviet cities—is the aim of this book.

Let me be frank. I am well aware of the problem faced by anyone who portrays Soviet life favorably, let alone anyone who presents it as superior to our own free enterprise system. Our half century of unremitting anti-Soviet, anti-communist propaganda has created an atmosphere in which there is one *cardinal, unforgivable sin*: to portray Soviet life and communism in a favorable light. Perhaps no single subject so occupies the pages of our newspapers and periodicals and blares at TV viewers and radio listeners, and is so discussed as communism. Moreover, the biggest share of that attention is centered on the first, most advanced and most powerful land of socialism.

And, for all our talk of dialogue, listening to "both" sides, it has for more than half a century been an overwhelmingly one-sided discussion.

All the massive outpourings of successive generations of Sovietologists stripped down to essentials, boil down to one central objective: to "prove" that workers cannot govern society, that such is the task of their "betters"! Here is the way it was put by *Novoe Vremya* (the New Times), a reactionary newspaper in czarist Russia, on the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution: "Let us assume for a moment that the Bolsheviks will win. Who will govern us then? Maybe the cooks, those beefsteak and cutlet proficient? Or firemen? Stableboys? Stokers? Or, maybe the nursery maids will hurry to State Council sessions after they have washed the diapers?"

"Which is it going to be? What are these statesmen? Perhaps the fitters will take charge of the theaters, plumbers of the diplomatic service, and joiners, of the post and telegraph? Is this the way it is going to be? The Bolsheviks will get an authoritative answer to this mad question from history."

Nine five-year plans have demonstrated to the world how the cooks, stokers and nursery maids, plumbers and joiners can govern. But, the Sovietologists, though hardly so crude, still play endless variations on the same theme. And, it is largely on this *theme* that the "discussion" has been based. The rule governing the discussion and even so-called "forums" and "debates" on the subject seemed to be—everyone can discuss communism—Sovietologists, outright anti-Communists, liberals and radicals of various lines, renegades from communism, "defectors" and "dissidents" (they are held up as the experts from the "inside")—everyone but Communists. Americans gagged at this daily one-dish diet. One of the outstanding characteristics of the stormy sixties, the "decade of turmoil," was a revolt against these "fixed" rules of discussion and debate.

As political reporter for the *Daily World*, I had a front-seat at many of the scenes of the rebellion which were linked and triggered off by the first waves of revolt against the dirty war in Vietnam abroad and against racism at home. It was particularly strong at the Universities. Hundreds of thousands evinced a genuine interest in communism but they rejected the old, fixed rules—they demanded to hear from the horse's mouth. The ideologists and propagandists of the "free enterprise" system could no longer "sell" the old wares of crude anti-communism. They had to adjust their line to fit in with the process of radicalization affecting large numbers of Americans, especially youth. Thus, they latched on to and promoted "Left" anti-communism, "Left" anti-Sovietism; they drew heavily on the Maoist venom of anti-Sovietism, anything, just so long as it proved that socialism where it exists, does not work, especially where it exists in its most advanced form—in the Soviet Union.

The main objective was to convince the large numbers of Americans, disillusioned with "free enterprise values" that nowhere (and that nowhere especially meant the Soviet Union) is life any better, that there is no alternative, that a search for a real solution cannot lead "anywhere." The "anywhere" has long ceased to be an abstract question, and the ideologists and propagandists of the free enterprise system are well aware of it.

Socialism long ceased to be merely a goal, a way of life to be theoretically explained. It is a more than half a century reality. It is the solution that has led "somewhere," not in the idealistic form some petty bourgeois radicals in the US imagine or demand it to be.

Life, and nearly 60 years of the most intense experience in building and defending socialism have provided the answers far better than these "theorists" who disdainfully brush aside the majestic edifice of the most human society in mankind's history.

No one, least of all the wise and experienced leaders of the Soviet Communist Party, offer their society as a blue print.

The issue is not and never has been that and the false cry of Soviet dictation is blood-brother to the moth-eaten bogey of "Soviet agent" and "communist conspirators," directed against those who seek the only viable alternative to dog-eat-dog system of capitalism.

The thought that increasingly obsessed me during my four years in the Soviet Union was: *what a terrible price we have paid and are still paying for anti-communism, anti-Sovietism.* For, I am convinced, this alone prevents Americans, who are a practical people, always on the lookout for the one who has "built a better mouse trap," from seeing that, indeed, "a better mouse trap" has been long in operation in the Soviet Union.

The immutable objective pursued by the enemies of socialism ever since the October Revolution struck terror in their monopolist souls has been to conceal this "better mouse trap." Here, let me say a word on the current anti-Soviet campaign focussed on that miniscule and dwindling group whom our capitalist press calls Soviet dissenters, since they figure highly in the present effort to conceal the "better mouse trap."

There is cunning purpose in focussing on "Soviet dissent." For make no mistake about it, the manipulators of this campaign are realistic enough to realize that their efforts will hardly shake the foundations of the firm socialist structure in the Soviet Union and the community of socialist nations: the campaign is mainly meant for "home" consumption.

The idea is to equate "dissent" in the Soviet Union with American discontent with the status quo in the United States. The US anti-Soviet propaganda machine is able to get away with this shell game by exploiting the political inexperience of many US dissenters, especially youth who have

not yet learned that all questions, including dissent, must be judged from a class point of view. Dissent has never been and is not now an end in itself. One has only to see for which dissenters the heart of the US capitalist press bleeds in order to see that the mouthpieces understand this. The US press has a long and ignoble history of supporting "Soviet dissenters." Its list of "dissenters" includes Kerensky, head of the bourgeois Provisional Government in Russia, swept off by the Great October Revolution, White Guard Admiral Kolchak and General Denikin whose hands were steeped in the blood of thousands upon thousands of workers and peasants during the years of the Civil War, 1918-21, and the pogromist Petlyura, the butcher of the Ukrainian people, who "ruled" the Ukraine on Kaiser bayonets. Its definition of dissent always used the same yardstick: anyone who opposes the socialist revolution and tries to subvert Soviet progress is dissenting.

That today US anti-Soviet propagandists have to be satisfied with more "modest" goals is no fault of theirs; even they have been compelled to accept certain world realities. But though times have changed and with them the methods of the more than 50-year-old anti-Soviet propaganda machine, its essence is still the same: hatred of a land where workers' power rules.

What is the real state of affairs in the Soviet Union? Is there "dissent" there? If bourgeois correspondents mean by "dissent" criticism and complaints, then, of course, there is plenty of that, because contrary to the image created by the capitalist press, Soviet citizens are very outspoken. No one knows this better than the US correspondents who eagerly scan *Pravda* and other Soviet papers for some choice gripes to buttress their negative reports. *Pravda* has a regular feature titled "After Criticism" which informs its ten million readers what was done by those criticized to correct the shortcomings. A visit to any factory, farm or school reveals the same approach on countless wall newspapers. American correspondents use the criticisms but carefully distort this freedom of speech of Soviet citizens.

Every Soviet Communist Party congress and every Five-Year Plan has charted not only industrial, agricultural and scientific advancement, but marked the steady progress toward the molding of the communist man and woman.

The 24th Congress of the CPSU could project a giant step further in that direction because tremendous changes have already taken place in the Soviet people. I have tried to describe this process which I personally witnessed everywhere in my travels through Soviet republics. A new human being is being molded. One who knows no exploitation and exploits no one; who lives in a land where brotherhood is not heralded one week a year, but practised every day; who measures his fellow man not by his wealth

but by his labor for the good of his fellow men. This is the real story that most bourgeois correspondents ignore.

For the overwhelming mass of Soviet people, the historical process is one which they are not only conscious of, but one in which they play an enormous role. You see it every day in the personal as well as collective struggle for higher moral and cultural standards. You see it in the personal and collective struggle against drunkenness and hooliganism. Still, there are those, relatively few, who stubbornly cling to the past, to the "morals" and "ethics" of the old society. You see it in the personal behavior of certain Soviet citizens, a behavior that reminds you of the ethics of our own "free enterprise society." Such people would very well fit in with the morals of our decaying society. And it is no wonder that such people are so attracted to the "glories" of the US "free enterprise" system at a time when as never before, masses of Americans are in revolt against its false values. These are the murky sources of today's Soviet dissenters and it's in such dirty waters that US correspondents fish. I have met a number of such "dissenters." In the US they would probably be among the most fervent supporters of our outstanding reactionaries, and some of them could very well qualify as George Wallace "crusaders."

Perhaps no one illustrates this point better than the acknowledged leader of the Soviet "dissenters," Andrei Sakharov. If Sakharov has not yet embraced George Wallace, he characterized Senator William Fulbright, one of the most vigorous opponents of the war in Vietnam and one of the sharpest critics of the military-industrial complex, as a direct heir of the slave-owners of pre-Civil War Days (*International Herald Tribune*, November 24-25, 1973).

These are the kind of voices of "dissent" one still hears in the Soviet Union. They are a mere peep drowned in the overwhelming chorus of Soviet construction. But these are the voices our capitalist correspondents seek out. By amplifying their squeak, the US press is trying to create an impression of discontent in the Soviet Union.

As for Solzhenitsyn, what more needs to be said of a man who makes heroes of Vlasovites, those traitors of the Soviet Union, who fought with the fiendish Nazi forces against their own country as well as ours? The diversions are endless, and "dissent" is only the latest of these. The runaway slaves during pre-Civil War days used to sing a refrain to guide them on their flight to freedom: "Keep your eye on the Star, hold on!"

The "star" shines in the land of socialism. And it is, indeed, time to "Hold On."

I'm frankly convinced that time is running out for the wily manipulators of this shell game though their sleight of hand tricks have become more dexterous through half a century of practice.

The detente in USA-USSR relations is giving Americans an opportunity to take a more objective look at their socialist partner in the relaxation of tensions. The great Soviet peace offensive, like a lusty fresh breeze, is blowing away the cobwebs of anti-Soviet obscurantism. But if the cold war warriors failed miserably for more than half a century to conceal Soviet reality, how can they hope to hide it today when the Soviet great force of example embodies the attractive power of almost 60 years of fantastic successes? No power on earth can today obscure for long the "better mouse trap" the Soviet people, and, above all, Soviet workers have created to make a better, a more human life.

Illustrations

***The Most
Human World***



Soviet people tackle their jobs with enthusiasm.







Friendliness and a genuine group spirit are typical of Soviet people.



*From infancy till old age
the state sees to the people's needs.*

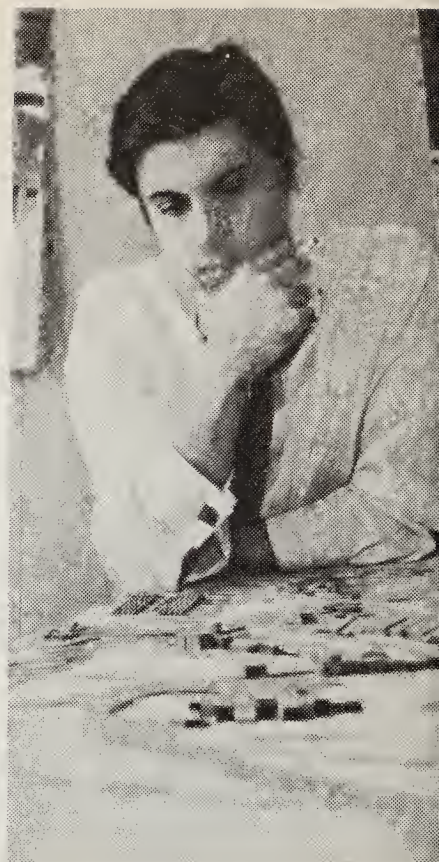


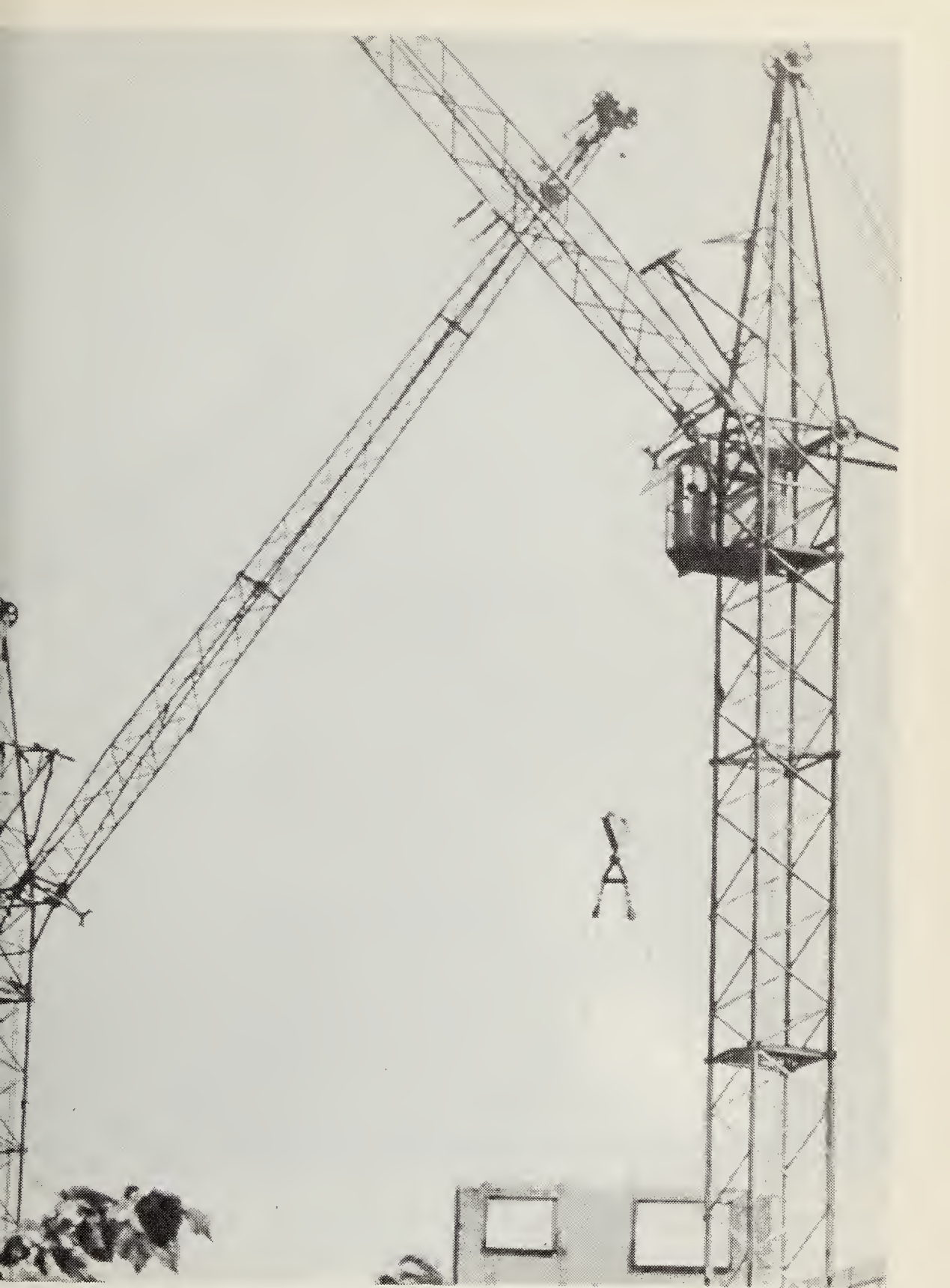


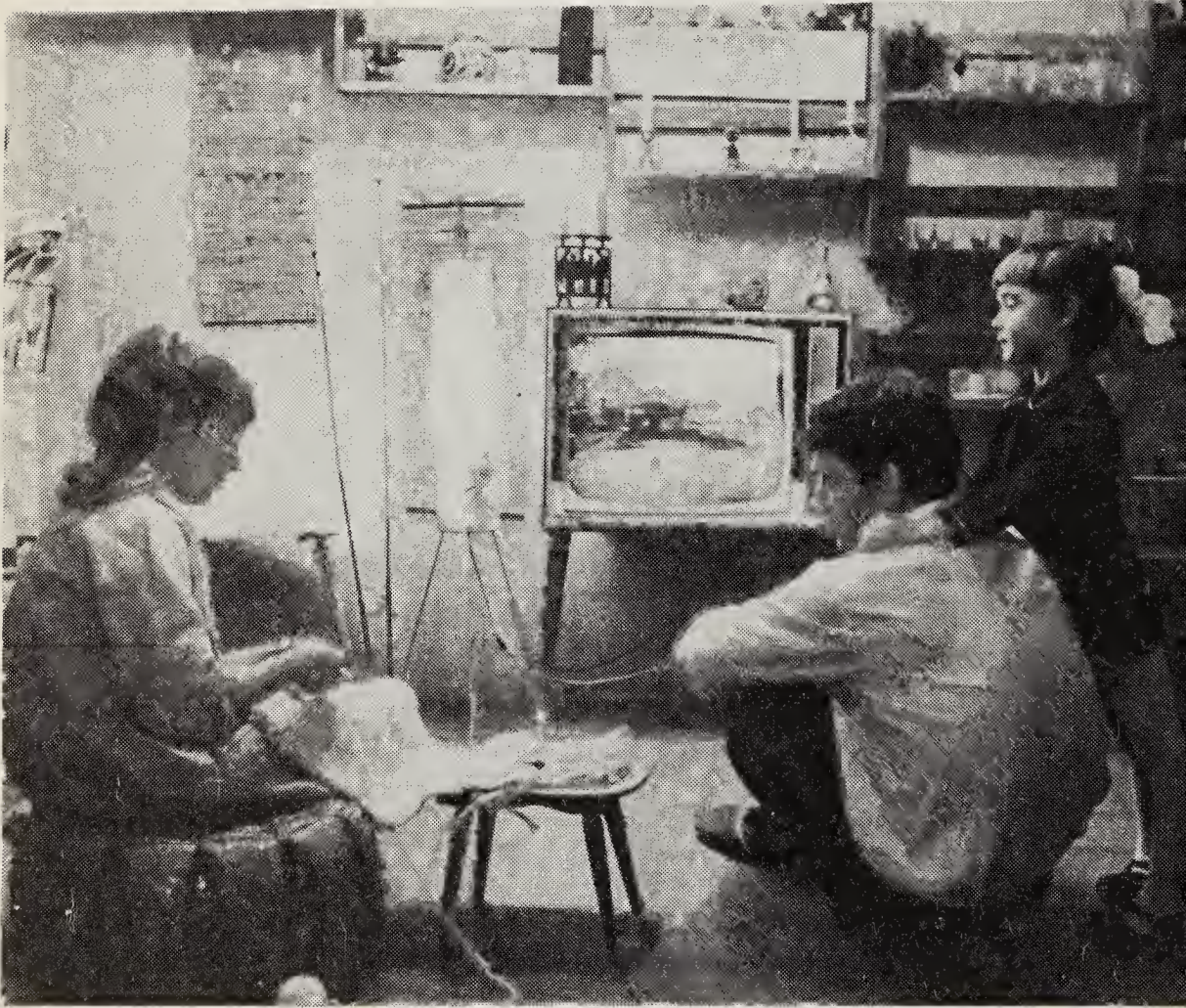
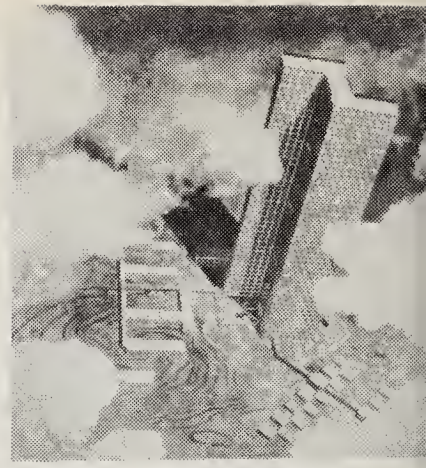
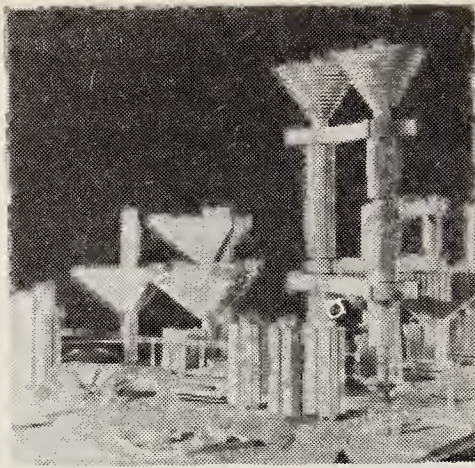
Good-natured smiles denote general well-being.

***Cities Without
Crises***

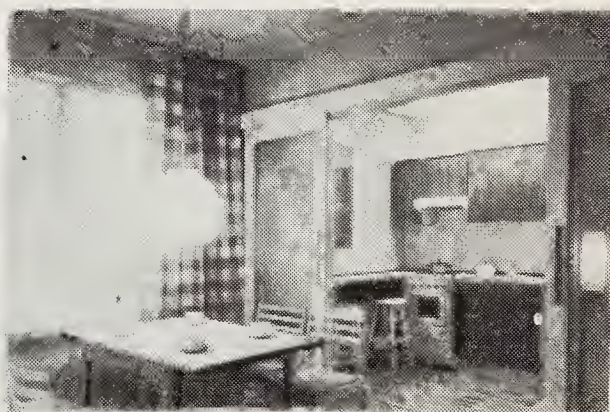
*The Soviet Union is one huge construction site.
Top priority is given to housing construction.*







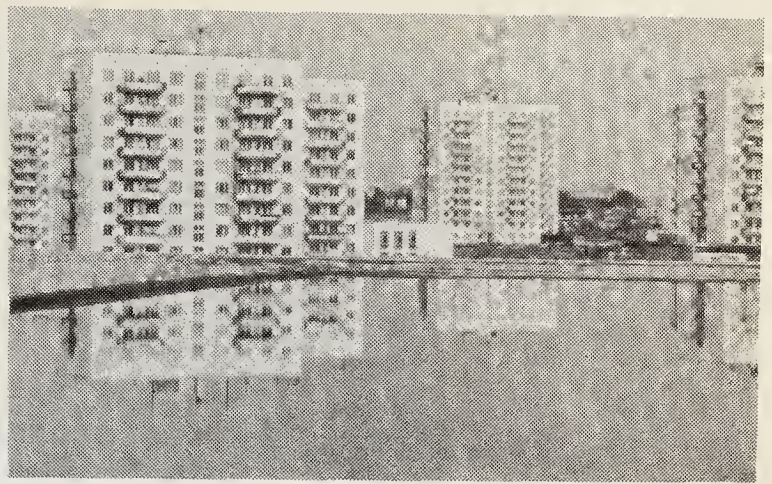
Most Soviet city dwellers live in modern flats. Rent does not exceed three-four per cent of a family's budget—a rate that has remained stable since 1928.



*Each year eleven million people
move to new flats in the Soviet Union.*



The Soviet Metro combines efficiency and high esthetic standards. The Metro station "Aurora" in Baku, capital of the Azerbaijan SSR.



New residential districts in Kiev (the Ukrainian SSR)

The building trade is one of the most respected and popular in the USSR.



Kalinin Avenue in Moscow.

***Cities
Without Fear***



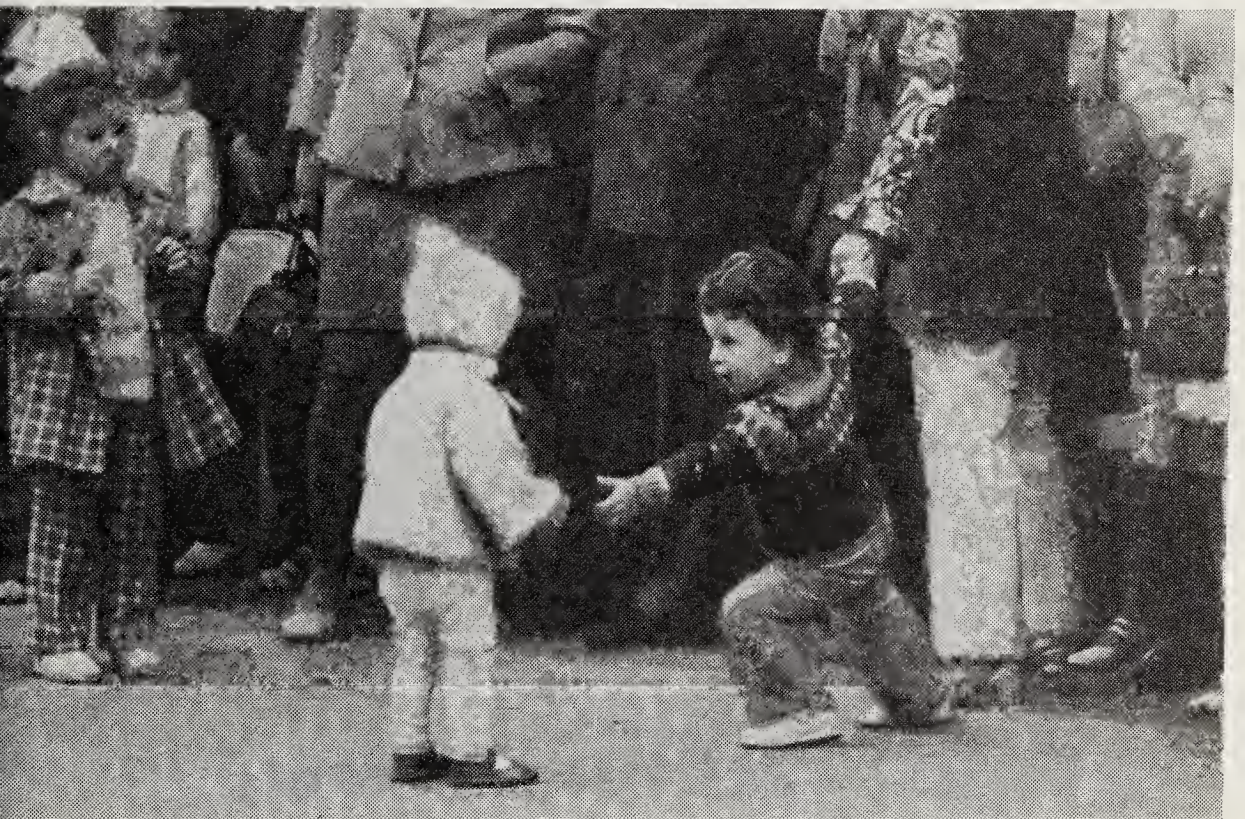
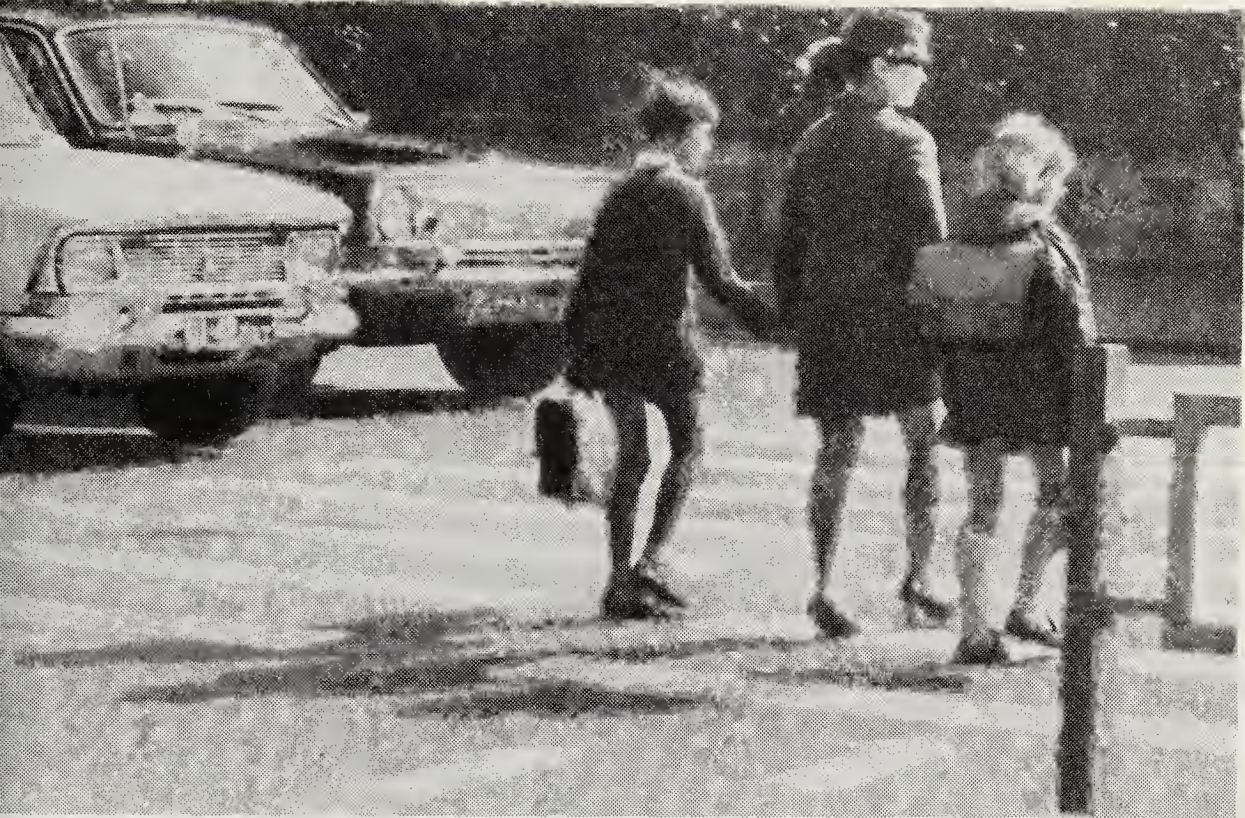


*Moscow, capital of the USSR. View
from the Lenin Hills.*



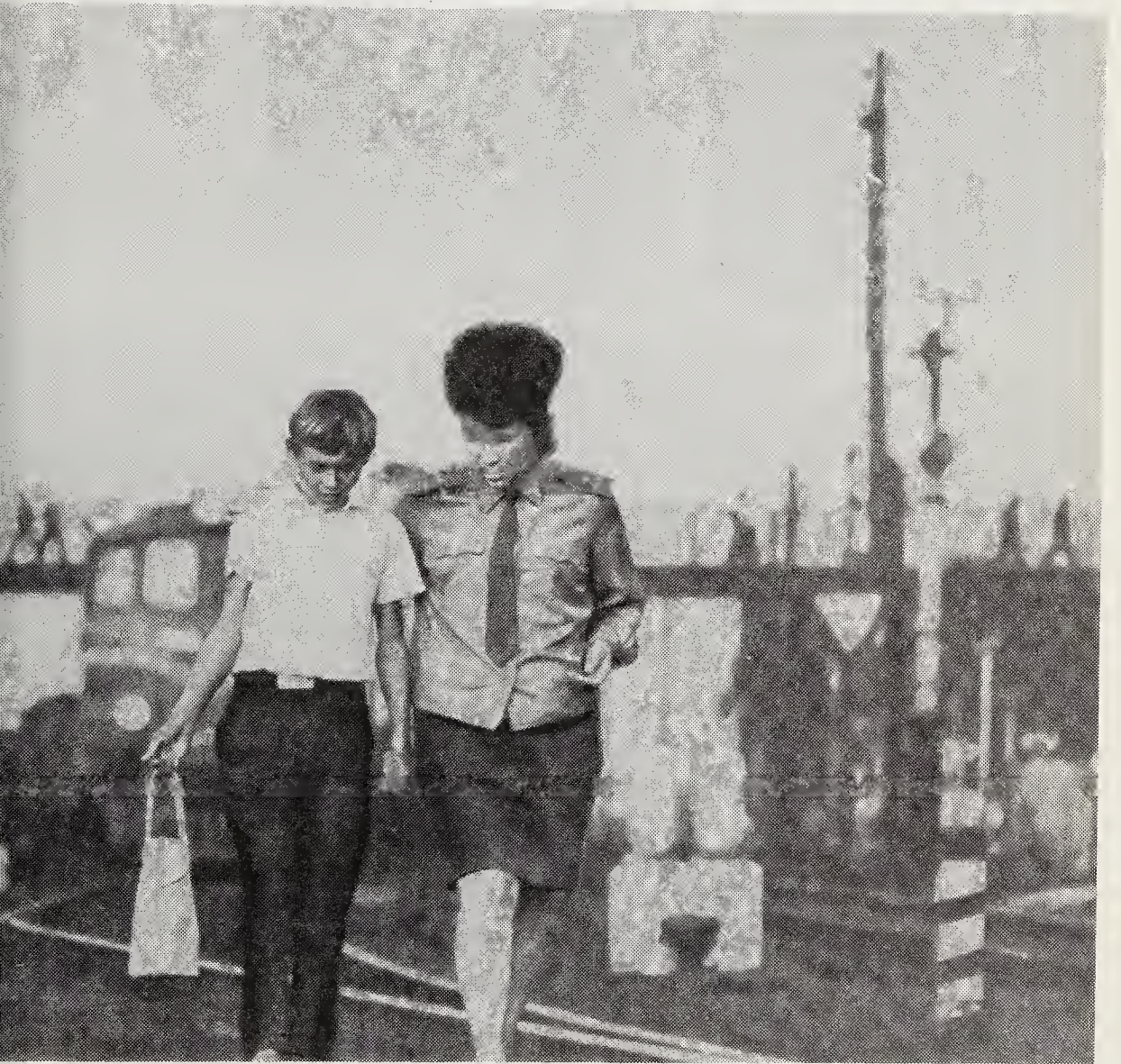


In the streets and parks of Moscow.

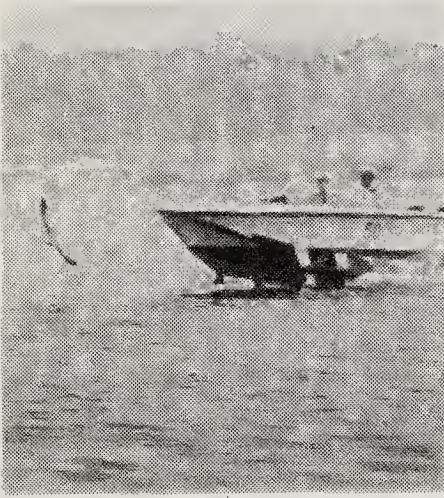


*Children and teen-agers
get lots of attention.*





The city has nothing to fear.

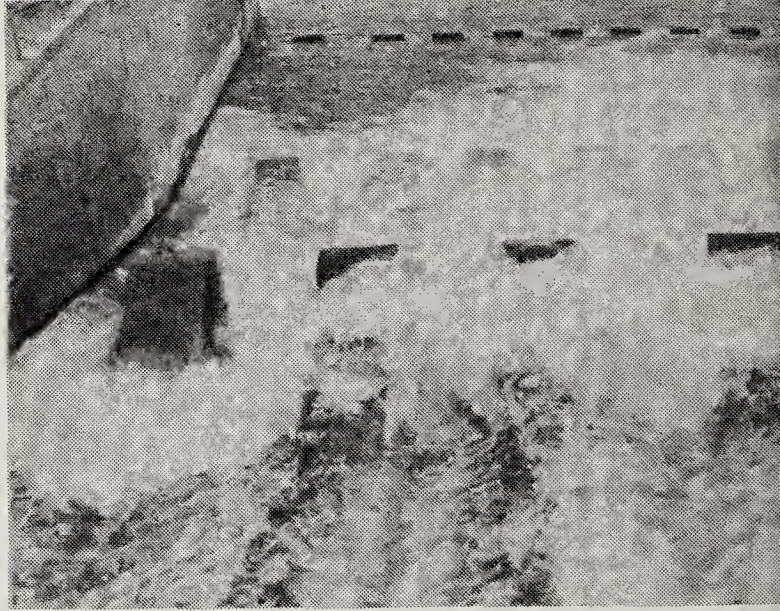
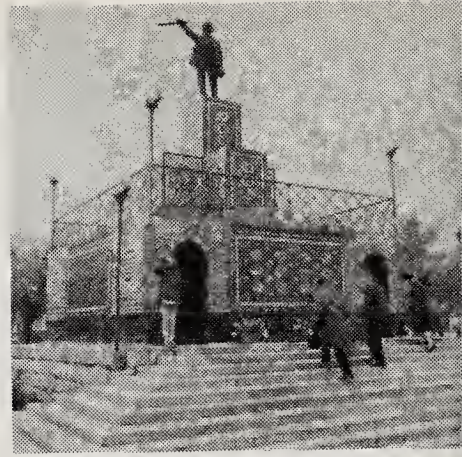


***Cities
of Brotherhood***

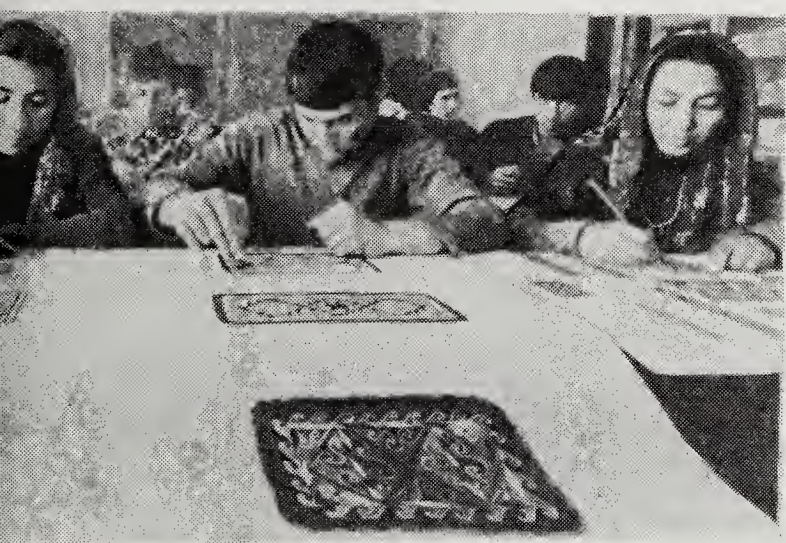
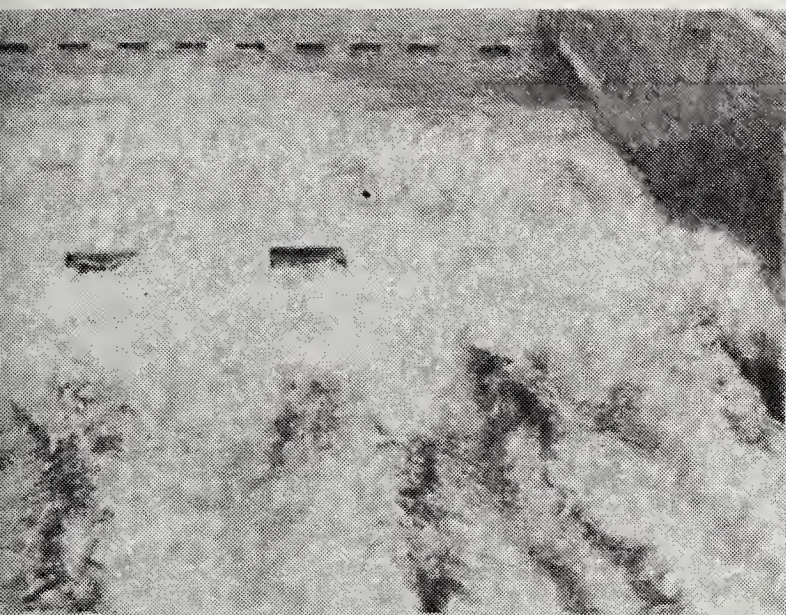


In 1966 Tashkent was destroyed by an earthquake. The entire country rallied round the Uzbek capital. A new Tashkent emerged from the ruins more beautiful than before.





A genuine cultural revolution has been carried out in Soviet times. The way to knowledge is open to all citizens of the USSR regardless of their age, nationality or sex.







Soviet cities are veritable centers of culture, science and education.

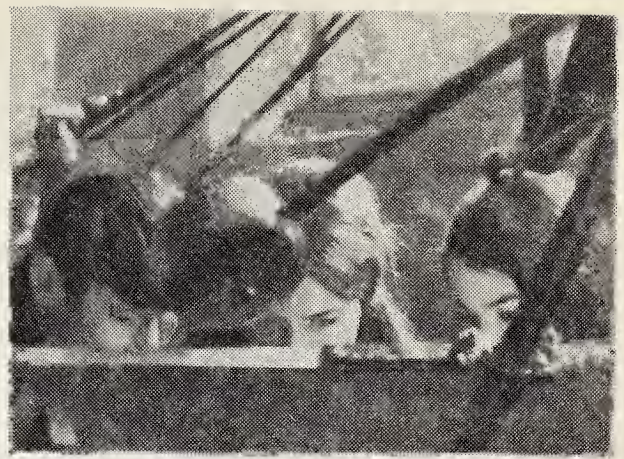
*Happy smiles, flourishing cities where
a real spirit of brotherhood
has grown up are all part
of Soviet life today.*



***Public
Education***

Education is free in the USSR. The country has switched to universal compulsory ten-year education.



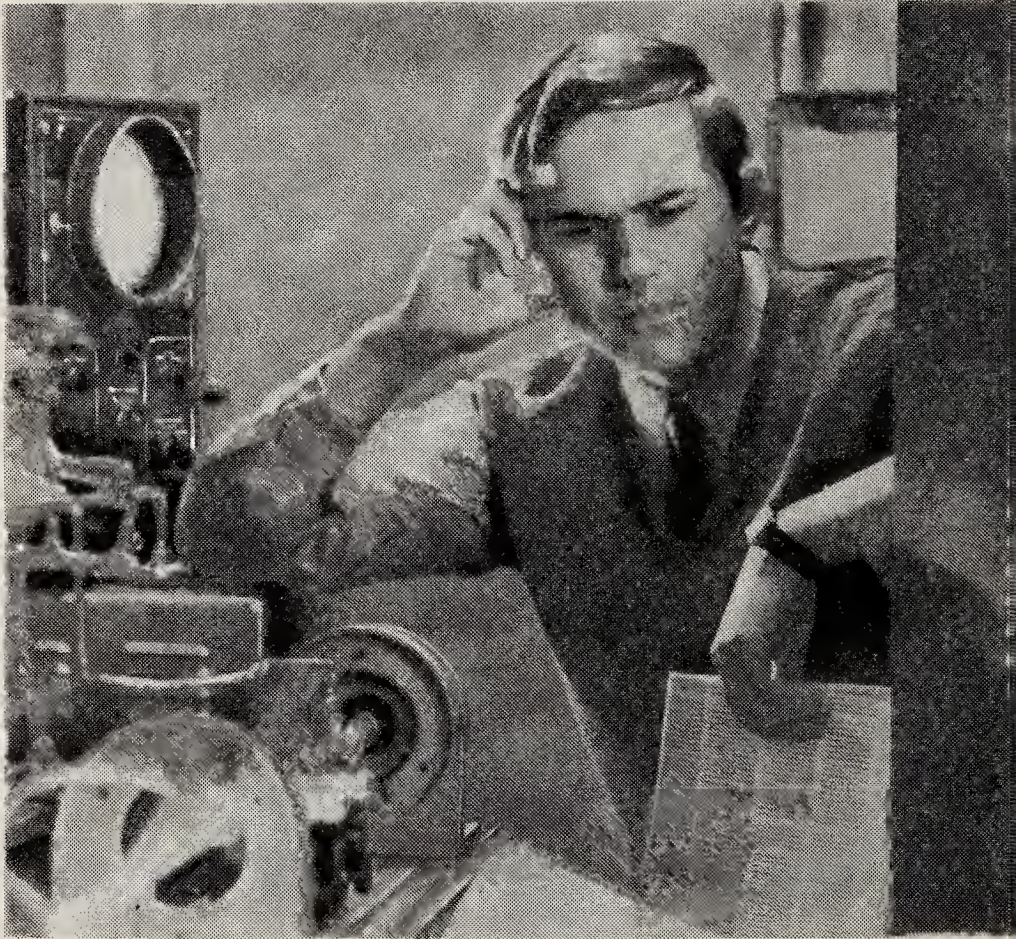


Young people in the Soviet Union are confident of their future, for they know that their great country needs their knowledge and boundless energy.

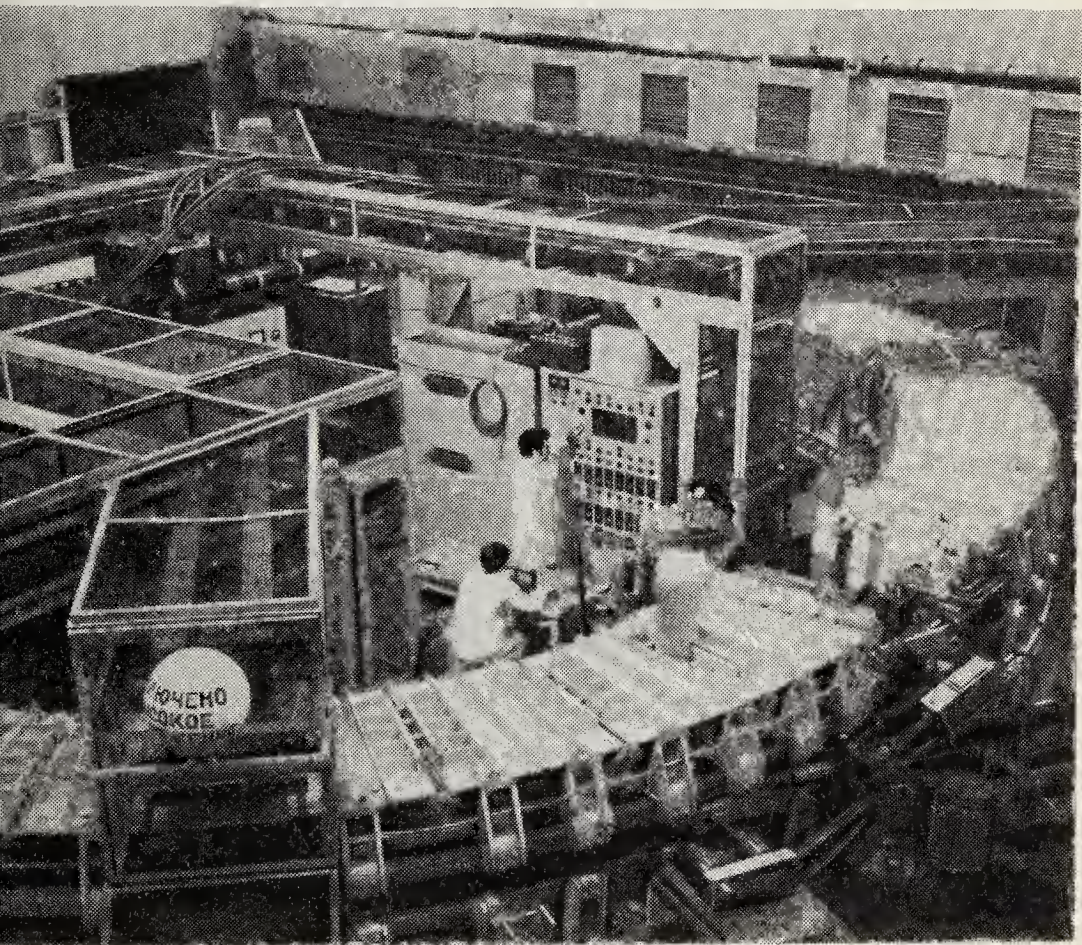
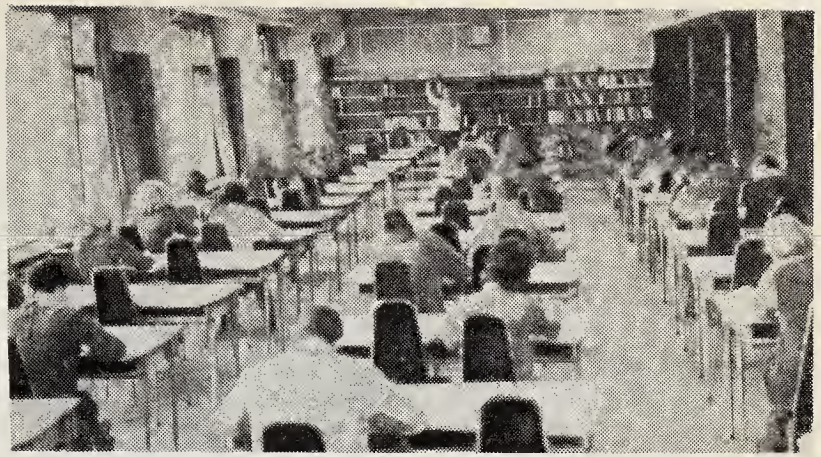




Moscow Lomonosov State University is one of the country's largest higher education establishments.



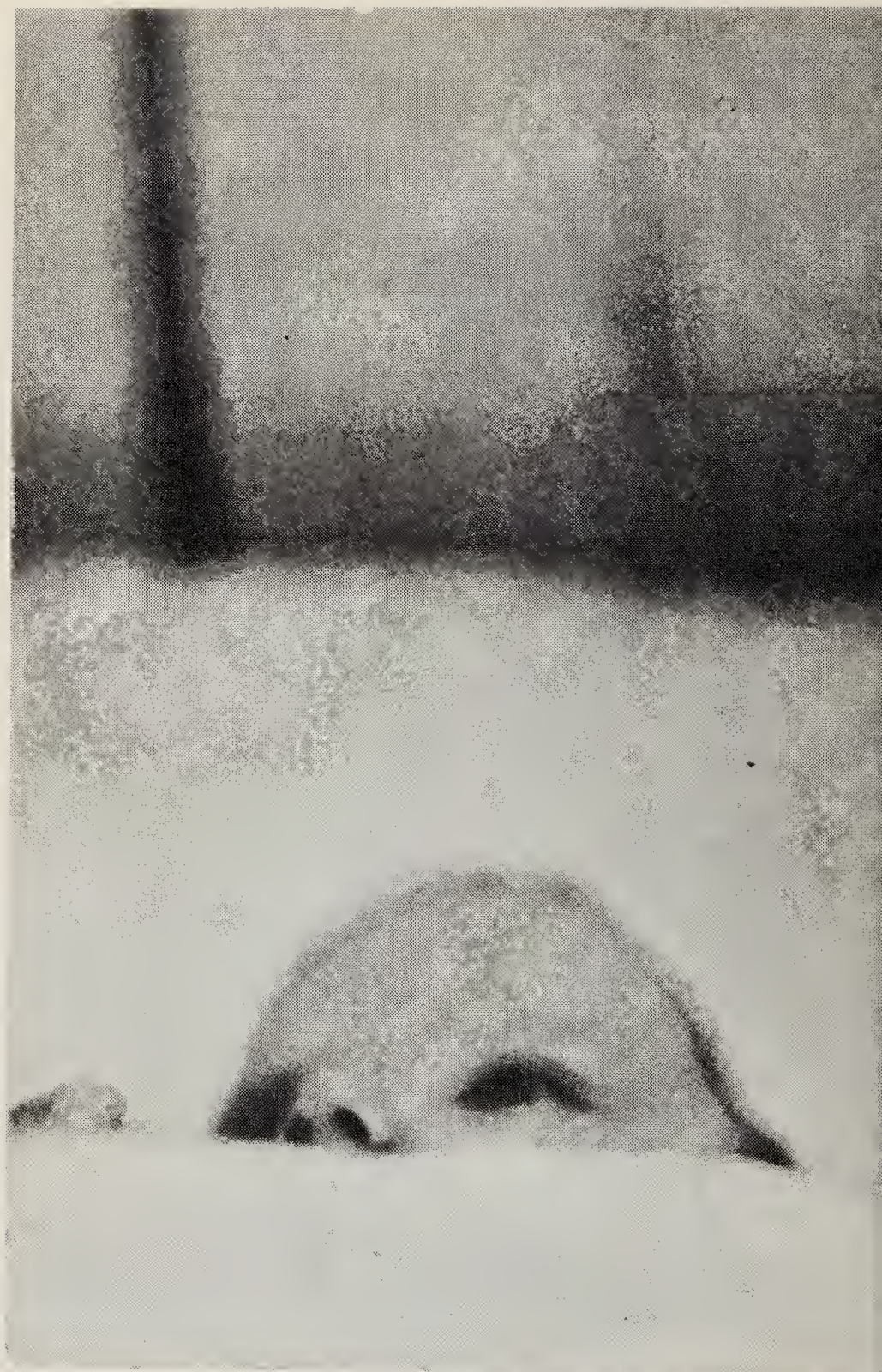
*Higher education is within everybody's reach
in the Soviet Union.*



*These happy children know
that they are loved and
cared for.*



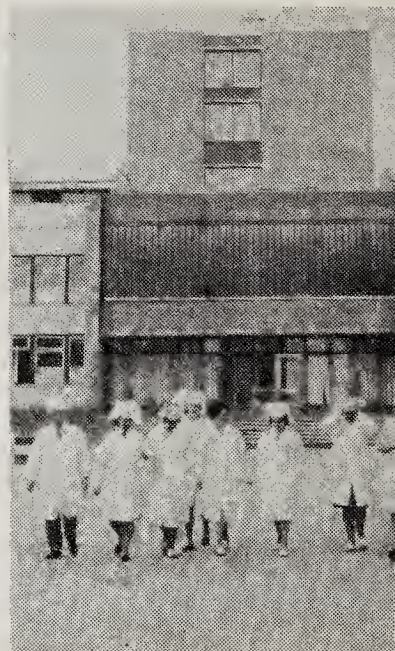
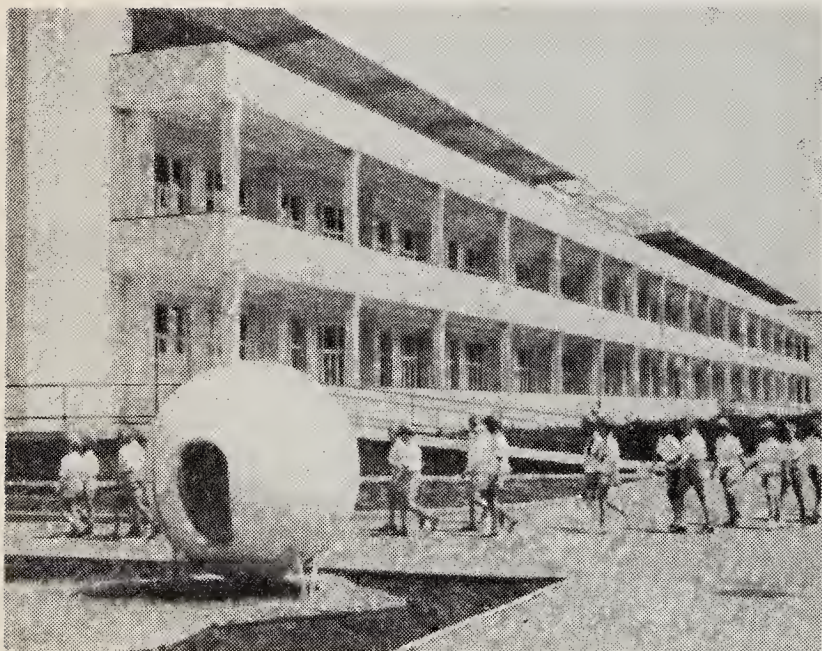
***Public
Health***





*From birth to old age
the health of Soviet
citizens is protected by
a wide network of
medical institutions. In
the USSR medical aid
is free of charge.*

Today they are learning the fundamentals of science, tomorrow they will devote their talents and knowledge to the extremely important job of protecting man's health. There are 800,000 doctors in the USSR—a fourth of the world's total.

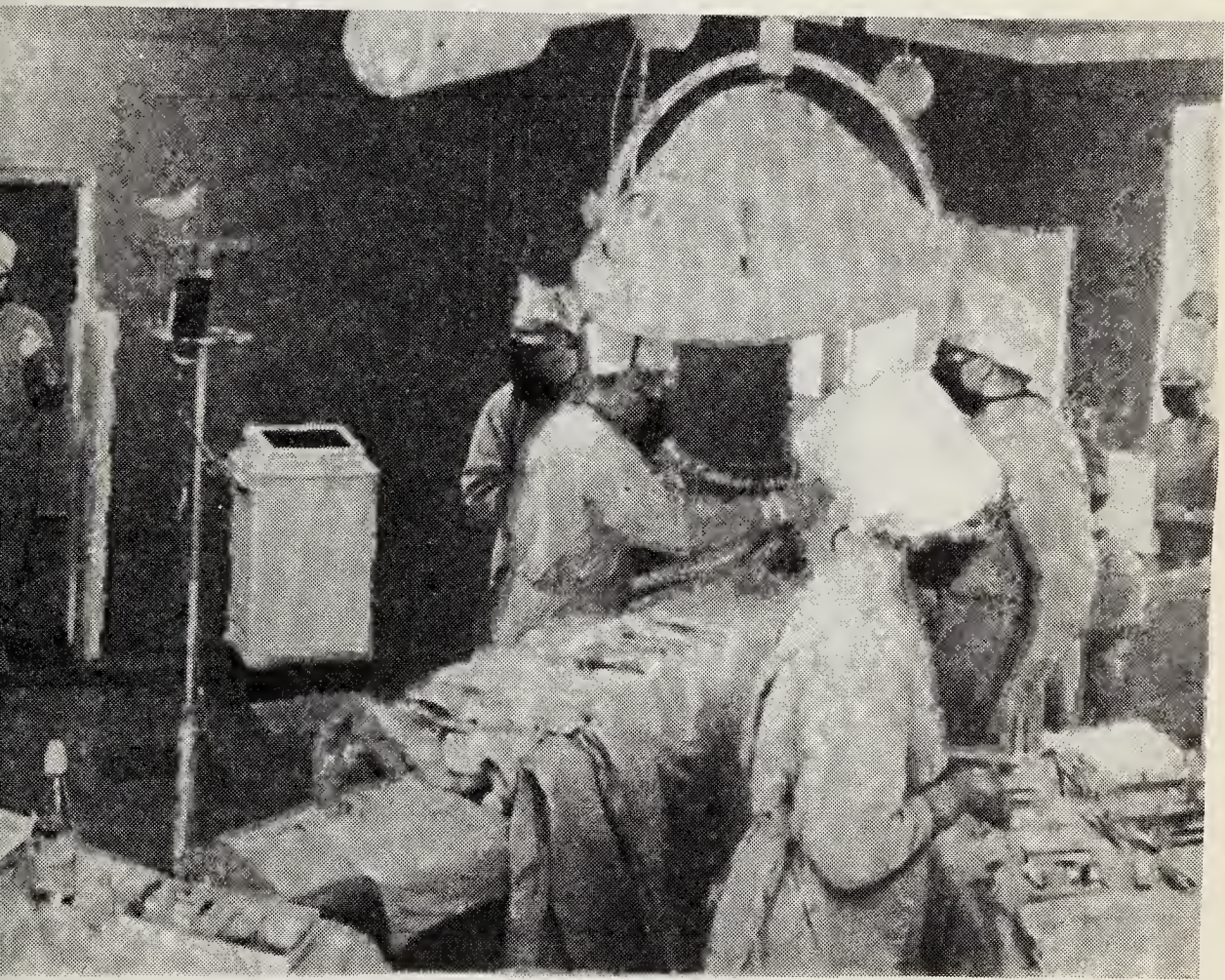




The life span increased from 33 in pre-revolutionary years to 70 today.



Hospitals, clinics and dispensaries are furnished with up-to-date equipment.

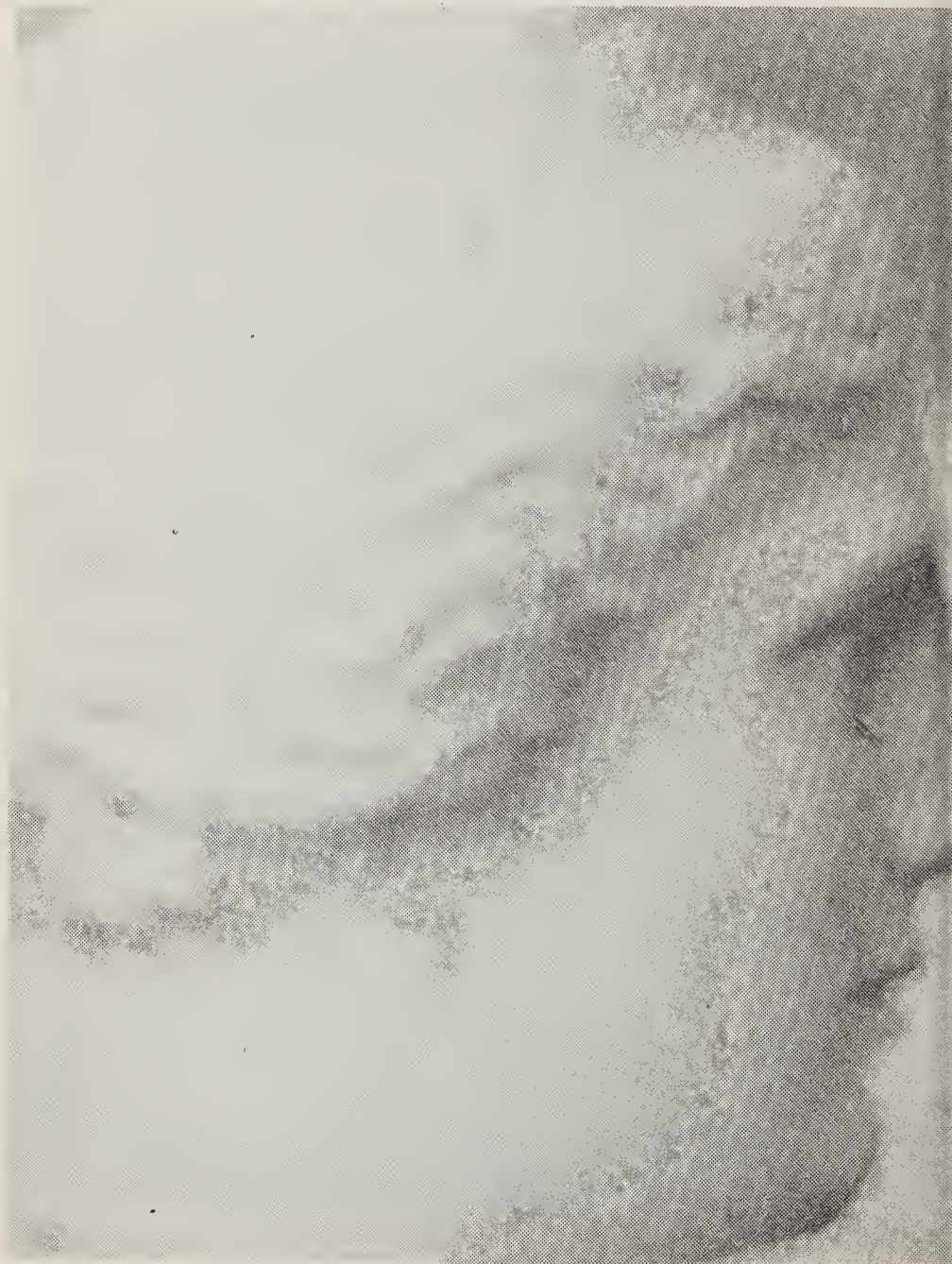


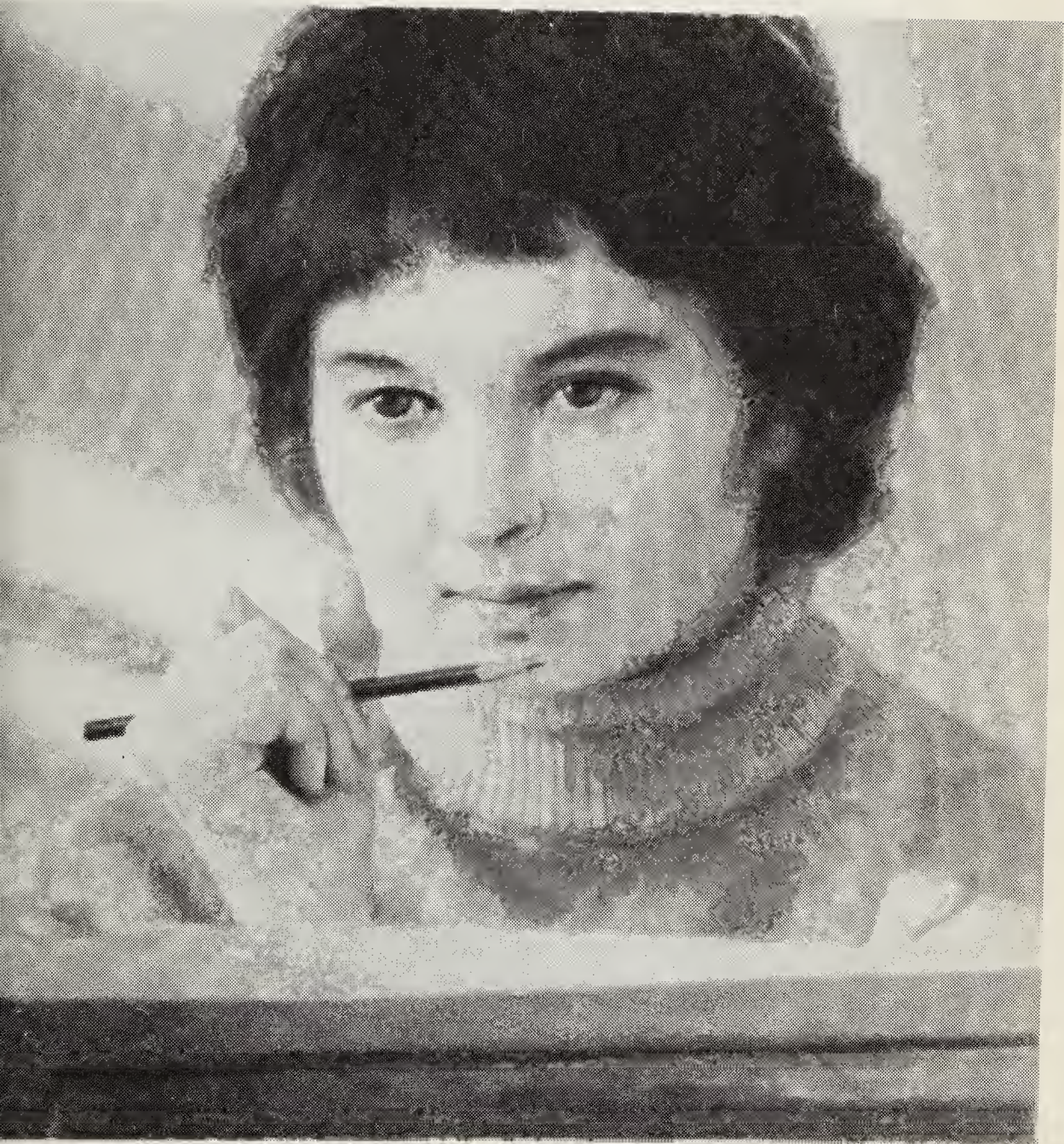
The Soviet public health service is based on the principle of preventive care. Regular medical checkups, a wide network of sanatoriums, rest homes, holiday centers and camps, all serve to protect the health of the people.

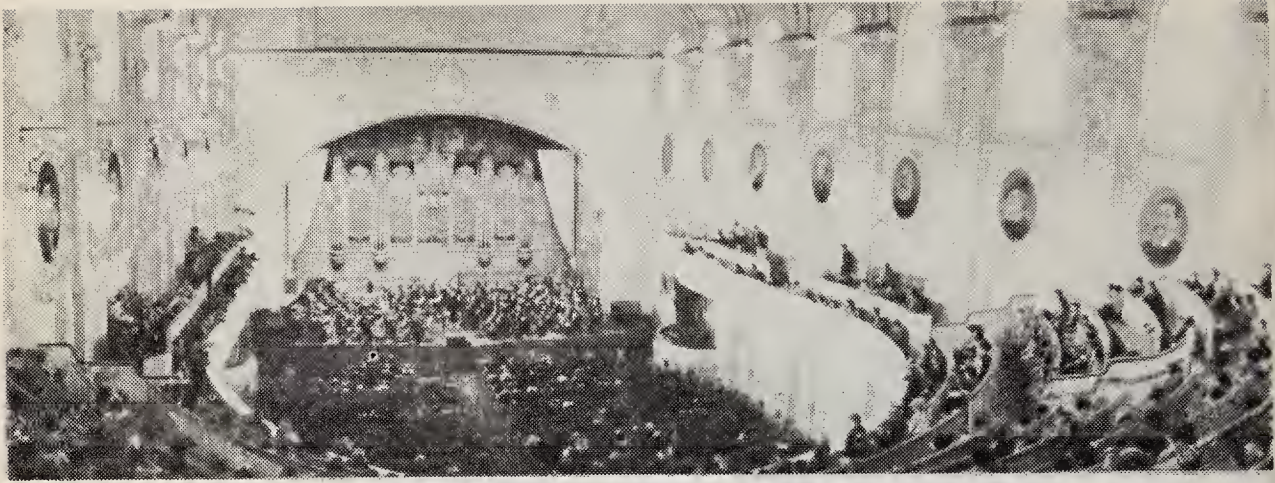


Culture

Every opportunity has been created for an all-round development of the individual, and the masterpieces of world culture are accessible to all.







The Tchaikovsky Conservatory is the center of musical activity. Among its graduates are many of the country's leading composers and performers. It is here that concerts are given by famous Soviet and foreign musicians.



There are music and arts schools, clubs and amateur talent groups for children all over the country. A tenth of the population—23 million—go in for amateur activities. Amateur talent festivals always attract huge audiences.





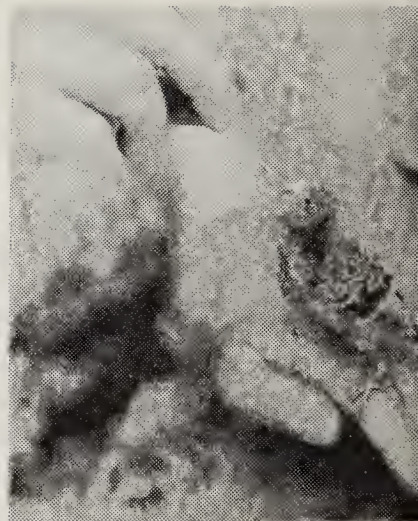
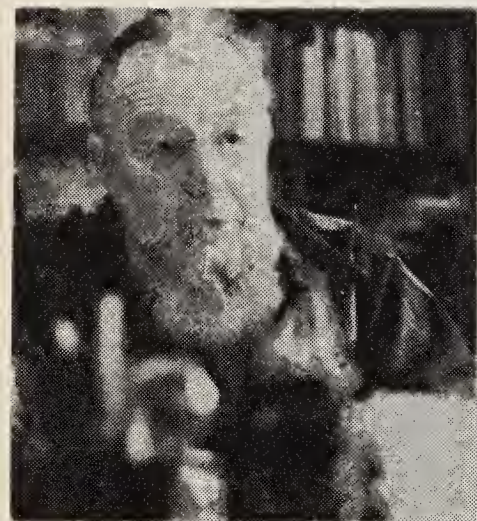
The benefits of culture are enjoyed by all. Nationality, profession, age and financial status are no barrier to cultural pursuits.



There are more than 134,000 clubs and Palaces of Culture functioning in all parts of the Soviet Union. Here concerts are often given by the country's best professional performing groups.



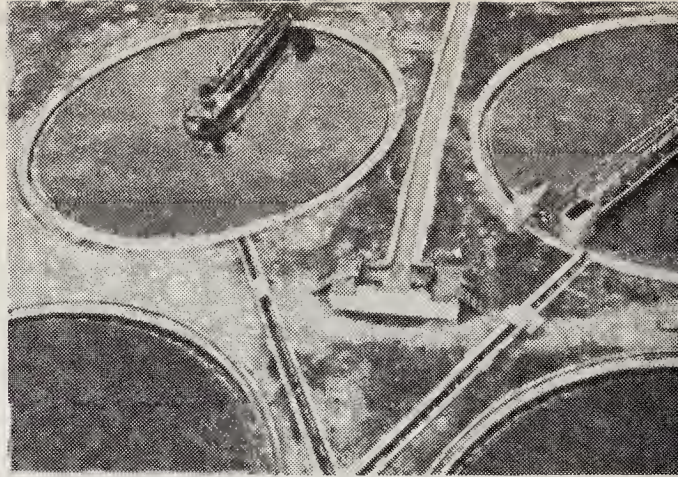
Fighting Pollution



The Soviet state carefully protects the country's wide variety of flora and fauna. Nature protection is organized on a scientific basis in the Soviet Union.

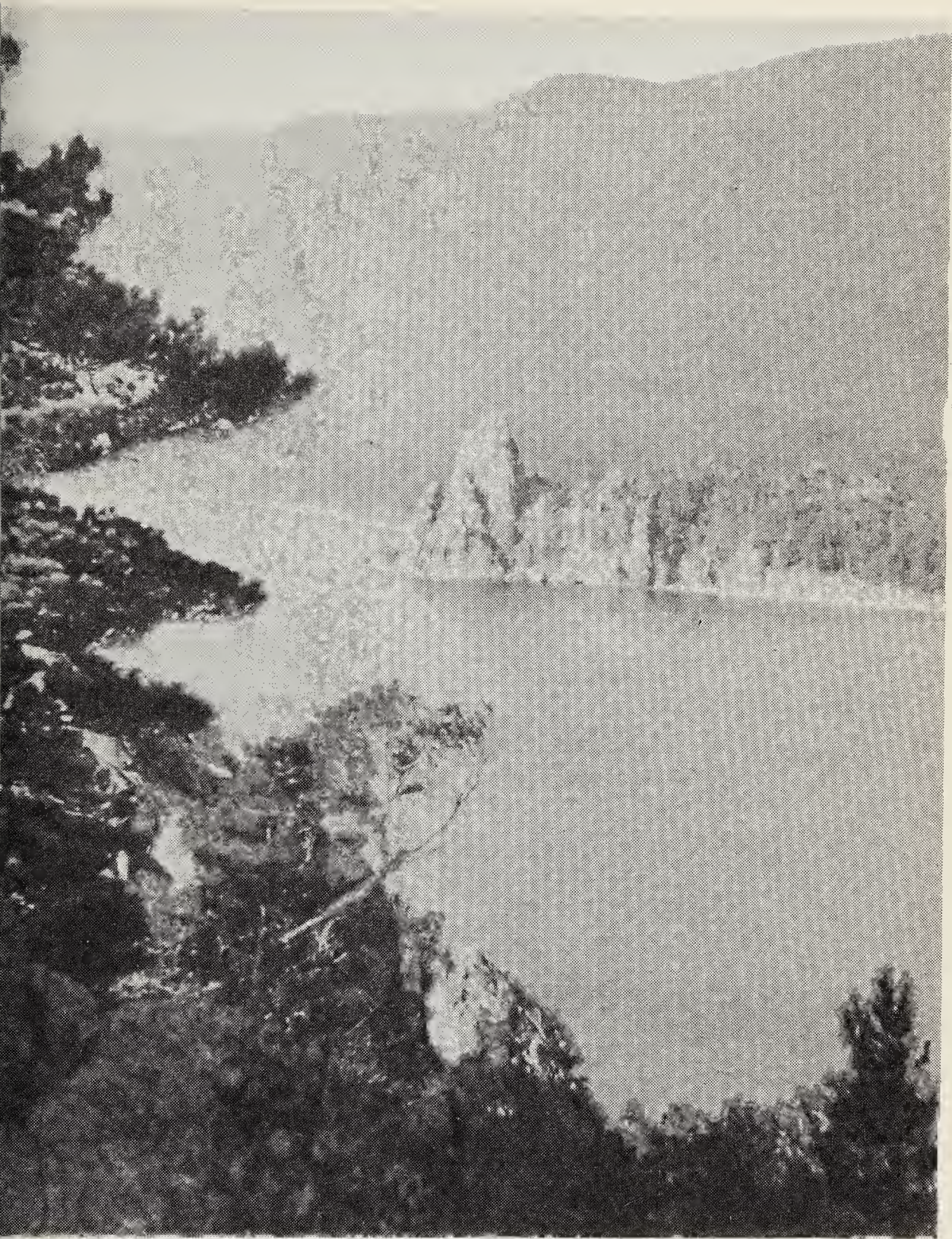
Hundreds of preserves and parks protect natural beauty sports and rare animals.





The purity of water in reservoirs is regularly checked.





Siberia's beautiful Lake Baikal.





Seagulls on one of the islets in the Black Sea preserve (the Ukrainian SSR).

Among the simple but fast disappearing blessings (for US city dwellers) that urban Soviet citizens can count on to a far greater extent than Americans is the smell of clean fresh air.



***Cities
of 100 Flavors***

The Soviet Union is a tourist's dream. It's a world of cities of 100 flavors.

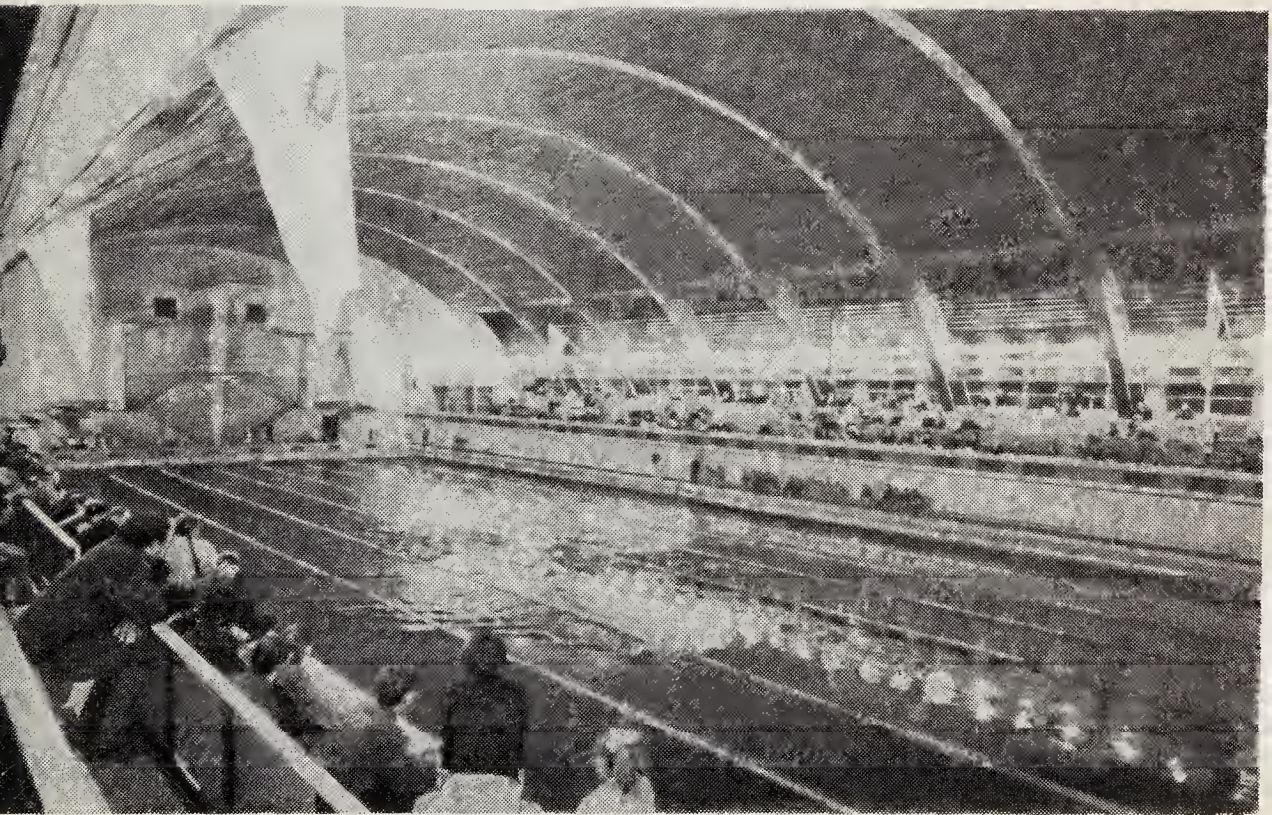
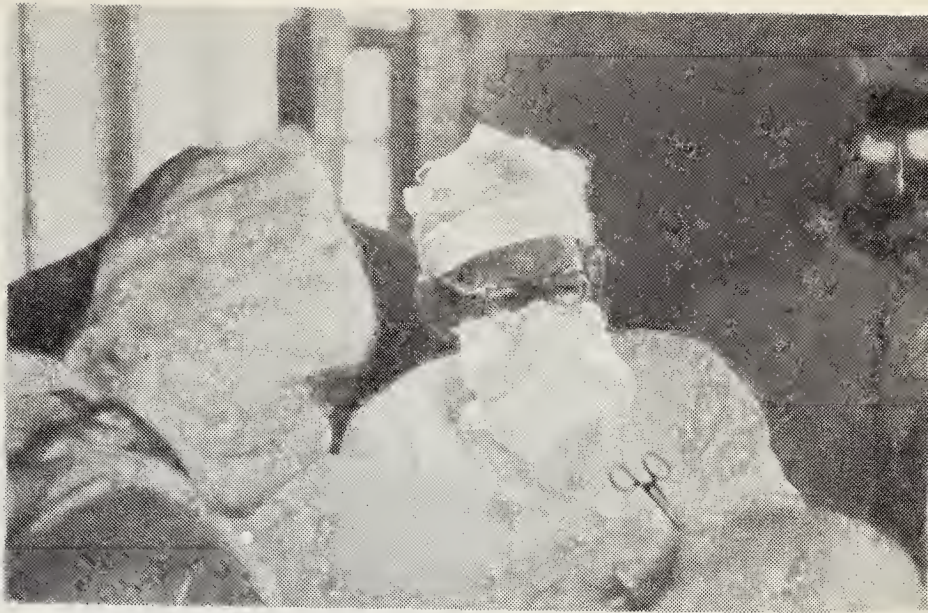
No country in the world offers such a variety of sights, such a feast of a multitude of cultures, such intimate contact with the glories of the ancient past, beautiful present, and such a sense of the even more glorious future.



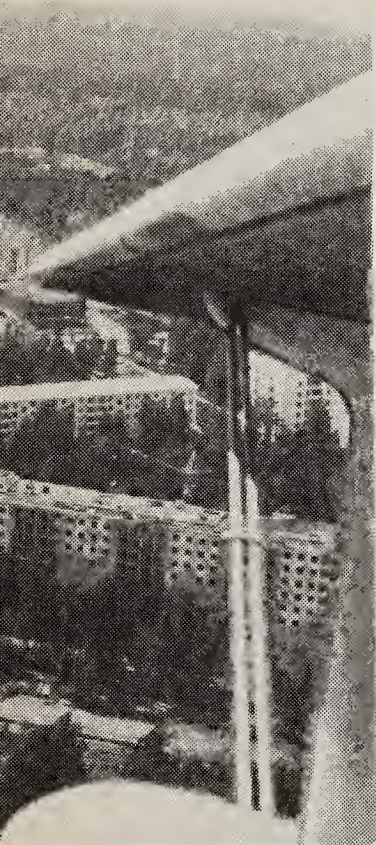




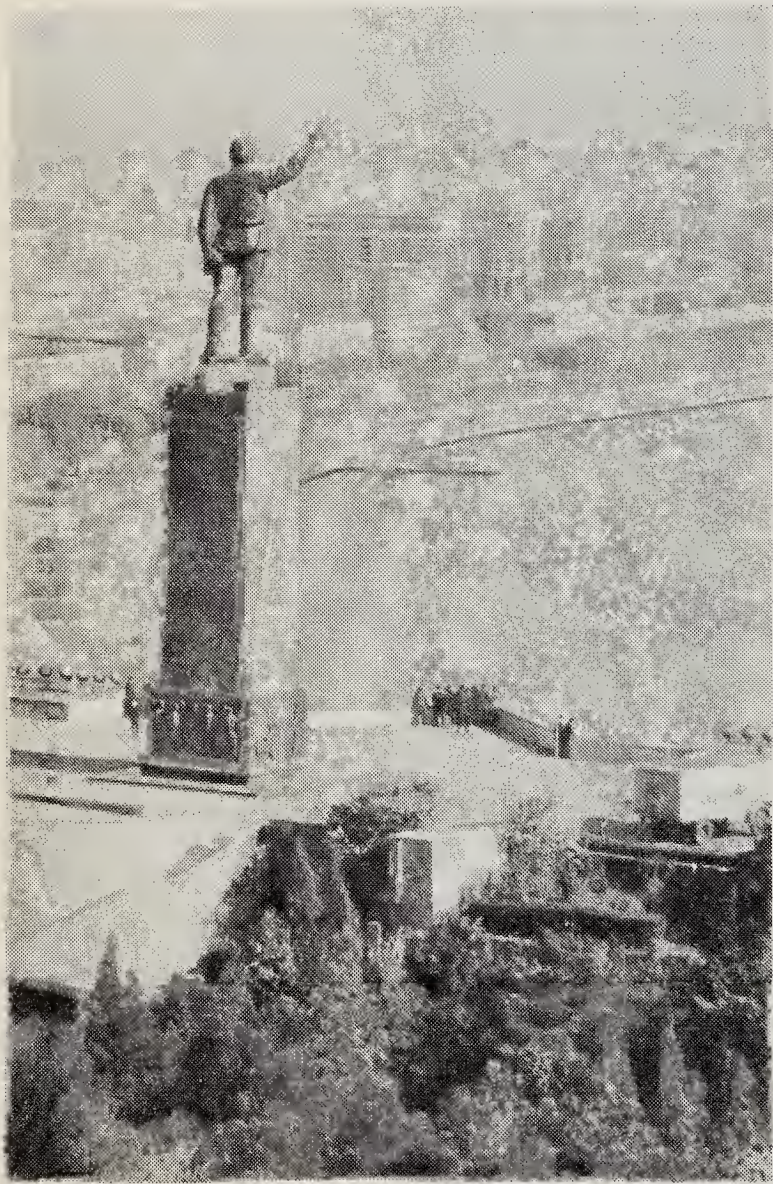
The great attraction of the Soviet Union's example is its almost 60 years of fantastic successes. Murmansk (top row) is one of the largest cities in the Soviet Polar regions.



The Siberian branch of the U'SSR Academy of Sciences in the taiga, near Novosibirsk, is a large scientific center in the east of the country. Scientists of the Nuclear Physics Institute confer at their "round table".



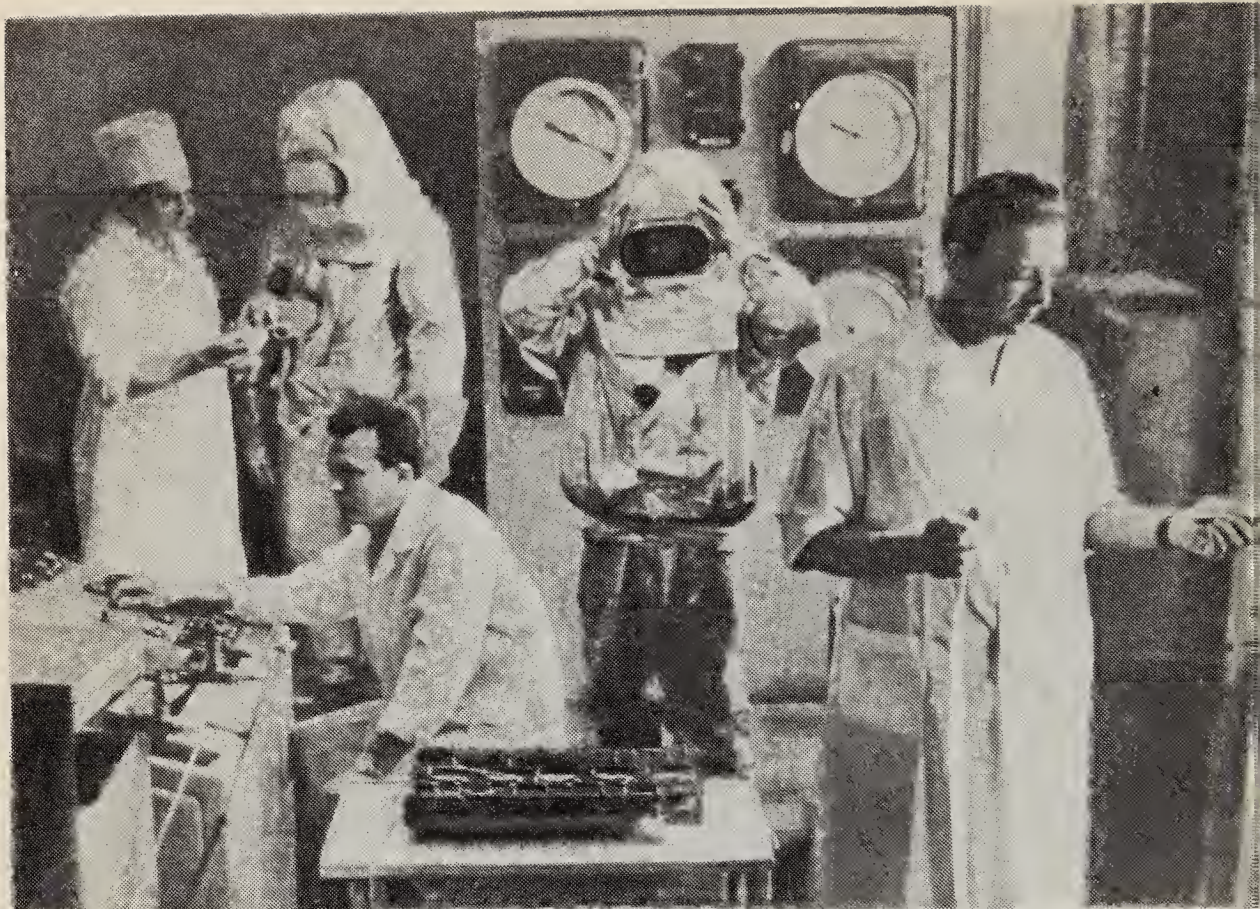




The architecture of Soviet cities harmoniously combines the best artistic traditions of the past with attractive modern elements. Baku (bottom), capital of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.



Soviet architecture is multinational in form and socialist in content. The Lenin Museum in Tashkent.



Every effort is made in the Soviet Union to prevent accidents in the coal mines. A laboratory of the Donetsk Research Safety Mines Institute.



The Soviet subway is the cleanest and the most efficient and convenient in the world.

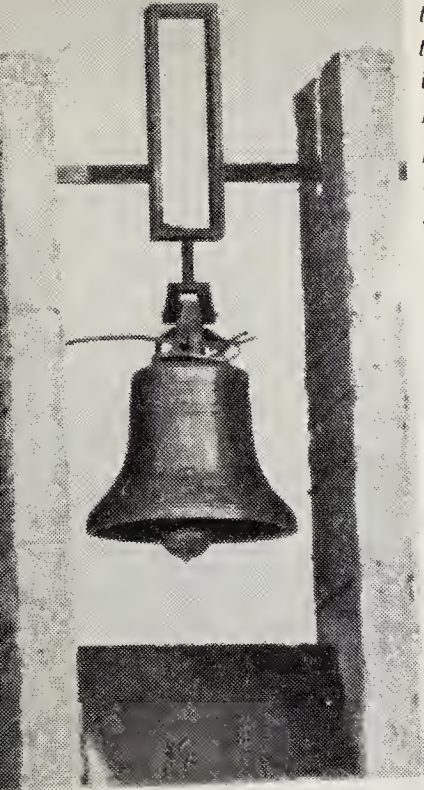


The old and the new blend well in Soviet cities. Vilnius, capital of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic



Nowadays many people have no idea of the costly price paid by the Soviet Union to save the world from fascism—twenty million dead. I can never forget my first visit to the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery in Leningrad where 600,000 Leningraders, those who defended the city on the Neva River, lie buried.

Nowhere have I come across a deeper sense of civic pride than in Soviet cities. The basic reason, of course, lies in the fact that like their factories, farms, theaters—everything in this vast land of socialism—truly belongs to the people. But, I believe, it can also be explained by the fact that no people in the world fought harder and suffered more for their cities. Only a people who paid such a price could so treasure every street, every building, every ancient monument...



The name of Lenin and the cause for which he fought will live on through the ages. There is no place dearer to Soviet people than Red Square where the Lenin Mausoleum stands.



Mike Davidow
The Soviet Union Through the Eyes of an American

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3055
3

The Soviet Union Through the Eyes of an American

Mike Davidow was born in 1913. His father was a photographer and his mother was a garment worker. While attending Brooklyn College he took an active part in the students' movement.

During World War II Mike Davidow served in the US Army and participated in military operations. After the war he worked for a number of newspapers as a correspondent.

He is the author of several plays. One of them, "The Long Life", won him first prize in a nation-wide one-act play competition in 1964.

From 1961 to 1968, he was a writer on political subjects for the "Daily World"; he also worked as a correspondent for this newspaper in Moscow for some years.



His book "The Soviet Union Through the Eyes of an American" is about his personal impressions of various aspects of life in the Soviet Union. It contains the following chapters:

The Most Human World

Cities Without Crises

Cities Without Fear

Cities of Brotherhood

Public Education

Public Health

Culture

Fighting Pollution

Cities of 100 Flavors

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