

His sculptures of plaster and wire were distortions of geometrical forms. He plied me with questions about modern and non-representational art in the West. When it came time to leave, Pavel's grave face, sprouting several days' growth of beard, yielded a melancholy smile as he reluctantly bid me good-bye.

Andrei's invitation was to a small party at his home. It was a spacious apartment by comparison with the others, consisting of two cosily furnished rooms with modern convertible beds and decorative armchairs. An elegant walnut bookcase bulged with the works of Pushkin, Gorky, and Mayakovsky. This apartment had a private kitchen with a good-sized refrigerator and roomy cupboards. Andrei's father was a minor government official and his mother an assistant director of a factory.

Free-pouring vodka and beer, cakes, cheese, and fruit, together with lively jazz played by a tape recorder produced a convivial atmosphere. Conversations also began to flow.

Irina, a stocky woman in her late thirties, who had been decorated for bravery during the war, plaintively lectured me on America's aggressive, capitalistic imperialism being the cause of all the troubles in the world.

Alexei, a jovial economist, proudly showed off the handsome suit he was wearing. He had bought the cloth, he said, and tailored the jacket and trousers himself.

Two raven-haired young ladies, whose chitchat was pungently spiced with piquant expletives, gave me the impression that they engaged in free enterprise as a sideline.

A young engineering student just out of his teens confided a few current anecdotes including the ones about more Vostoks going into outer space and less meat going into inner space—the Russian stomachs. This same student wanted to know if it were true that the John Birch Society was very powerful in the United States. He was relieved to hear that it was not.

Mikhail was a welcome latecomer to the party. He brought a couple of bottles purchased at the grocery a few minutes before the eleven p.m. closing time. Mikhail was a writer, keenly in-

terested in literary currents in the world "outside." A soiree such as this was no place for an intellectual discussion. The girls were clamoring for dancing partners. Mikhail asked me to lunch at his home the next day. When the party broke up in the early hours, I walked with Svetlana, a pretty, sensitive blonde, through a maze of crooked streets back to the tiny, dingy flat which she shared with her father. She apologized for the run-down appearance of the place, but she was full of hope. Her new flat in the suburbs, with its self-contained kitchen and bathroom, was to be ready in a few weeks. Svetlana and I talked for a long time about many things, with one exception—politics. I was never sure whether her abstention from this topic was tact or indifference.

The luncheon at Mikhail's home was called off the next day. He met me in the Kurskaya Metro station to apologize. His family of five, with whom he lived in a one room communal apartment shared with inquisitive neighbors, had decided it would be more prudent if a foreigner were not seen in their flat. The family sent their sincere regrets. I wondered if their caution and reluctance had to do with their being Jewish.

We had lunch at a *stolovaya* instead. In this unsophisticated worker's restaurant we were served soup from a huge cauldron, *kasha* and chunks of meat from another gigantic kettle, chewy black bread, beet salad, and a pudding, all of it doled out K.P. style in exchange for chits bought from the cashier. The decor and refinement of service far from pleased my taste, but the hearty food, robust atmosphere, and low-low prices had a homespun appeal.

Moscow's array of "rest and culture" parks provides much diverse recreation. In Gorki Park, sprawled along the Moskva River, a quiet, dignified atmosphere prevails while the people amuse themselves with chess, ice skating, roller coasters, concerts, libraries, cafes, merry-go-rounds, and boat rides. Sokolniki Park vibrates with group singing, dancing, and expositions, frequently sponsored by foreign governments. Baumann Park has its theatres,



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