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Master

FEATURES

"A RUSSIAN LIFETIME," by Robert G. Kaiser, The Washington Post, 16-22 June 1974.

The attached series of seven articles might well be subtitled "Family Life in Soviet Russia." Kaiser describes the sociological aspects of life for most Russians in the first six articles; he saves his final piece to depict the wholly different world inhabited by the elite. For the overwhelming majority of Russians Kaiser concludes that, "Life in the Soviet Union is quieter, duller and harder than in the West. It is also more secure. No one need fear unemployment, inflation or a financially catastrophic illness. On the other hand, no one outside a very special elite can realistically hope to visit the Champs Elysees or the canals of Venice. The state provides, but it also withholds."

Although the series emphasizes the continuity in the Russian life style, Kaiser notes that, "The question remains whether the Soviet Union can remain the kind of country it has been when a new generation that does not remember the Revolution, the 1930s, the war or Joseph Stalin is running the country. People born after the war have lived lives that are difficult to compare with their parents." We are furnishing these articles as background and as a means to better understand our principal adversary.

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WASHINGTON POST
16 June 1974

The Baby in Russia: Tradition Reigns

With a Birth, Entire Orientation of Family Life Changes

First of Seven Articles

CPYRGHT

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW—A Moscow street scene: a young man with a worried look standing on the sidewalk gesticulates toward a nearby building. From a second story window, a young woman in a bathrobe, smiling reassuringly, waves at him. The Soviet Union's population has just grown by one.

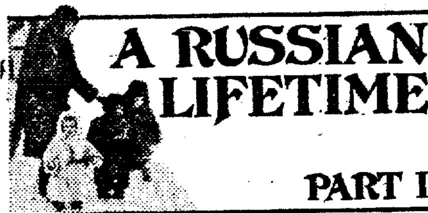
Husbands aren't allowed to visit the maternity hospitals where Soviet babies are born. In keeping with a national phobia about germs and babies, even the mother is separated from her new child for the first 24 hours of its life, and sometimes longer.

She will spend about 10 days in the hospital, and will see her husband only from a second-story window until she and the baby are sent home.

Motherhood is governed strictly by rules and regulations, both formal and inherited. At a lecture for expectant mothers, the doctor (like most, a woman) warned her audience: "Stay calm and take long walks every day. Don't eat too many sweets or your skin will itch. Wear only wool or cotton clothes, baby doesn't like it when you wear synthetics. Come to the polyclinic regularly for your ultraviolet rays (a source of Vitamin D)."

Many in this audience are girls of 18 and 19, the age of brides in more than half of Moscow weddings. It is still common for a newly married woman to use her first pregnancy as the occasion to become a mother.

That is not as absurd as it sounds. As a rule, birth control is not practiced



in the Soviet Union. Abortion is the most widely used means of preventing unwanted children. In big cities, 80 per cent of all pregnancies are aborted.

The young women at the lecture are shy and ask no substantive questions. They listen to an explanation of what is going on inside them, and to advice about how to cope with labor and delivery.

Breathe deeply, the doctor advises, oxygen is the best antidote to pain. She shows them how to rub their stomachs during labor.

There are no exercises, no elaborate breathing patterns like those taught to women in the West who want to have their babies without anesthetic. There is no choice about that here; anesthetic is used only in emergencies.

American women are told that the Lamaze method of natural childbirth is based on a Russian technique, but the Russians have never heard of it.

Toward the end of pregnancy a mother is given the telephone number of the maternity home where she is to go when labor begins.

The system doesn't always work smoothly. One mother called the number she'd been given, but there was no answer. That maternity home, she learned later, was closed for *"remont,"* a ubiquitous Russian term meaning repair and refurbishment.

Another woman had been treated at a special clinic for those whose babies, doctors feared, would be born prematurely. After eight months of pregnancy she was told not to come any more since her baby wasn't going to be premature.

She had not yet contacted another clinic when labor began. It was late at night, and she left home with her husband to find a place to have her baby.

One maternity home turned her away because there were no empty beds. But first the nurse on duty bawled her out for coming to have a baby without the proper change of clothes.

Then they went to the hospital for premature babies, and were turned away because her baby was not premature, and space couldn't be wasted on normal births.

A third extablishment agreed to allow this woman to come in and have her baby. (Under the Soviet medical system, a citizen is theoretically entitled to free treatment in every medical institution.)

It was a boy, healthy and noisy. Everything turned out fine. The British may have coined the phrase "muddling through." but the Russians have mastered the art.

The delivery was uneventful, though loud. Two or three women may give birth in the same delivery room at the same time, which results, according to many witnesses, in a lot of screaming.

Russian mothers expect birth to be difficult and painful. They don't seem to look forward to it. Some of the stories of those who have had babies must discourage pregnant women.

One Moscow woman recalls lying in her own blood on the delivery table for four hours after her baby was born. The nurses, cleaned up all around her, but ignored the new mother. When finally transferred to a proper bed, she was left with her dirty sheets until she screamed loudly enough to have them changed.

Once the new baby is home, little is left to chance. There are strict rules and traditions to be followed; they hardly change from generation to generation. The baby must be wrapped up like a sprained ankle, head to toe, often with a piece of wood as a brace, to make sure the baby's neck can't move. The baby must sleep on its back, wrapped in blankets.

Breast feeding is mandatory. If a mother does not have enough milk, she can buy human donor's milk at special stores. The Russians have never heard of baby formula. When told of it they tend to shudder, and to doubt its efficacy.

The baby can be bathed only in boiled water, and only when submerged up to its neck, to avoid chills. The recommended treatment for diaper rash is corn oil. Petroleum jelly isn't available. The lecturer at the maternity clinic recommends that diapers be made from old sheets. Rubber pants are not sold here.

After several months, a typical child shifts from mother's milk to special milk products, sold at special baby kitchens. A thin, mild yogart is the most popular. A mother must be registered on the baby kitchen's list to get this specially sterilized product, and she must pick up her supply every few days, or the kitchen will take her off the list.

Mothers are advised not to stop nursing an infant in the spring, when fruits and vegetables are beginning to reappear after the long and barren Russian winter. Beter to wait until midsummer, the theory goes, when baby has absorbed the stronger vitamins and minerals of these fresh foods from mother's milk, and will be better prepared for them when independent feedng begins.

Well, independent isn't quite the right word. Russian parents (even, it seems, those who read contrary advice in Dr. Spock, whose book has been translated into Russian) don't believe in letting a baby try to feed itself. The mess is offensive, and the inefficency wasteful. So it is not unusual to see a mother patiently spooning each mouth-

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ful into a child of four or five.

In sum, the arrival of a new baby in a Russian family changes the entire orientation of family life.

Energy and resources are withdrawn from most other pursuits and redirected enthusiastically at the newcomer. No amount of fussing over the baby could be considered excessive.

The family budget can be destroyed by expenditures on baby carriages, blankets and other paraphernalia. It is fashionable to buy one's equipment all in pink for a girl, or in blue for a boy.

"Russians are an irrational people," one Moscow artist observed recently. "We are afraid of the unknown. And what could be more unknown and unknowable than this little creature who suddenly appears among us? So we devote ourselves entirely to it, in hopes this will somehow satisfy it, or remove the mystery."

Continuity—the guarantee that old traditions are sustained—is provided by the famous Russian *"babushka,"* or grandmother. Not every young couple has *babushka* living nearby, of course, but a large percentage still do.

Her role is often greater than mama's own, especially when mama goes back to work when the baby is between three months and a year old. Virtually every woman of child-bearing age living in a town or city holds a full-time job. A young mother is not likely to challenge her own mother's views of how to raise the child, especially if the grandmother actually does most of the raising.

It is difficult to quarrel with many of *babushka's* notions. Her basic principle is love and affection, praise and appreciation to the highest possible degree. But this is coupled with a complete deprivation of independence from the earliest stages, which child psychologists in the West would find confining.

Babushkas are so sure of their basic standards that most of them unhesitatingly tell young parents on the street, even total strangers, when they are making a mistake. An American father took his 15-month-old daughter for a walk in Moscow recently. The daughter was dressed in rain gear from rubber boots and pants to sou'wester, and was running merrily through a puddle, back and forth.

An elderly lady walking by came up short.

"Papa," she said in a stern voice, "How dare you? How can you allow it? Her mama would never allow it . . ."

Babushkas routinely look into other peoples' baby carriages to check on the protection against Russia's unpredictable weather, and freely express an opinion if one seems called for.

Like virtually any aspect of life in the Soviet Union, child-bearing is a subject of interest to the state. And there is official displeasure about one aspect of giving birth: it happens too seldom.

Despite all the enthusiasm and affection that Russian parents and grandparents throw into the raising of their first child, it is increasingly likely that the first will also be the last.

In Moscow, families with one child are the most common size. Families with three children are virtually unheard of.

"Of all my friends and acquaintances, I can think of just one with three children," a Moscow engineer observed recently. "He's an Orthodox priest."

Rural families are slightly larger, but Russia proper is approaching, and may have reached, zero population growth. The major cities would now be shrinking, were it not for migration from the countryside.

The population of the Soviet Union will continue to grow, thanks to high birth rates in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. This is a source of anxiety to demographers here, though the anxiety is expressed in muted terms, for fear it might sound racist. Russians are now probably just less than half the total Soviet population, and their share of the total is shrinking.

The declining growth is the subject of much commentary in the press and professional journals, but no one has proposed a practical way to persuade Russian women to have more babies. On the contrary, the officially encouraged Soviet way of life—small-apartment living, working women, generally tight family budgets—seems to be establishing the one-child family as a norm, at least for city dwellers.

The state could abolish the right to abortion on demand which helps Soviet women keep their families small, but there is no guarantee that this would have the desired effect. Stalin made most abortions illegal in 1936, resulting in a short-term rise in the birth rate, but eventually a decline. When abortion was legalized again in 1955, the birthrate did not fall.

Illegal abortion thrived during those years, and women may have taken other measures to prevent pregnancy.

Unofficial abortion—"on the left," in the Russian phrase—is still common. Many women want to avoid the humiliation of an official abortion, accompanied by lectures on the need to bring more children into the world, and marred by the discomfort of Soviet hospitals. A privately arranged abortion at home costs 30 to 50 rubles, or nearly half the monthly salary of an average working woman.

Another proposal is to improve the economic benefits to working women to encourage them to have more children. Soviet benefits now are less generous than those in some East European countries. A working mother gets two months' leave with pay to have a baby, and her job is held open for her for one year. There is no family allowance on the West European model until a fourth child is born, and then it is only four rubles a month.

The state could also expand the network of state-run nurseries and kindergartens, which now have space for about one-quarter of the country's children up to age three, and more than two-thirds between four and seven.

The prevailing opinions among experts in Moscow is that, ideally, a child should be put into a nursery, where it will usually spend an 8- to 12-hour day, at the age of three months. This releases the mothers for a quick return to the work force, and brings the child into "the collective" at an age which makes its physical and psychological adjustment the easiest.

Not surprisingly, many mothers resist this idea.

There is also no guarantee that better economic benefits and child services would increase the birth rate. In fact, there is contrary evidence. From 1960 to 1966, the number of spaces in Moscow day care centers grew by 61.5 per cent, but the birth rate fell 52 per cent.

As for increasing cash benefits to mothers, social scientists report that the government simply cannot afford it, at least for now. A small increase in allowances in a nation of 250 million would cost the state an enormous sum. But, experts say, it might not convince one mother to have another baby.

Ada Baskina, a journalist who writes about family life, suggested in an interview that "the fairest solution to this problem may be for the state to take responsibility for housework—government agencies doing the work at home." That way, she reasoned, a mother could hold her job and raise two or three children without feeling that she was a victim of life instead of a beneficiary.

This, too, is far beyond the state's present capacities for the foreseeable future. The birth rate is likely to remain constant at best, and it could decline still more.

NEXT: Children and parents.

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WASHINGTON POST
17 June 1974

For Russian Babies: 'Only the Best'

CPYRGHT

Second of seven articles

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

CPYRGHT

MOSCOW—In winter, Russian parents take their small children outside on sleds. On a Sunday there are thousands of sleds in the parks and boulevards of Moscow, each carrying a carefully bundled-up minicreature who rides triumphantly behind papa or mama.

If there's a little hill in the park, the children yell to be pushed down it. The parents are nervous about that idea, so there is a compromise. Papa pulls the sled up the hill, turns it around, takes the rope in hand and runs down the hill ahead of the sled, never letting go.

That is the theme of Russian parenthood—don't let go.

Russian parents devote themselves to their children with a startling zeal.

"When a baby arrives, it's as though we were all marched to the wall and told to put up our hands," one Moscow

A RUSSIAN LIFETIME

PART II

father observed with a defeated grin. "Go ahead. we say, take it all, take everything . . ."

Children, being children, do just that. Many are the Moscow apartments in which a child of 8 or 9 is the center of attention for all who live there.

"For that child," one mother said recently, "we must keep up all the norms. We may have a cup of coffee and a piece of bread and butter for dinner, but for the baby—hors d'oeuvres, soup, meat, potato or vegetable, dessert, everything! And only the best!"

This attitude toward children has consequences which strike an American eye as both good and not so good. Not so good is the child's total dependence on his parents. Children under the age of six or seven are rarely allowed to go outside by themselves. An 8-year-old often won't dress himself to go outside.

An American visiting a family in Moscow may—out of habit—ask the eight-year-old son to bring him a box of matches from across the room. Before the bewildered boy has a chance to even shrug his shoulders, papa is on his feet, patting his son reassuringly and jumping for the matches.

"Here they are, here," he says. Little Miska hasn't moved an inch.

In public, at least, a Russian child's behavior is sternly regulated. The courtyards of many Moscow apartment houses have sandboxes, which are popular with the children. But mothers don't allow them to sit in the sand. They must learn to squat on their haunches, so as not to get sand in their clothes. Anyone who slips into his or her bottom is certain to be lifted out of the sandbox with a jolt.

On the other hand, relations between parents and children seem much closer in this country than in the West. One Soviet writer, a woman, discovered this on a trip to Paris several years ago:

"I was invited to a fancy apartment for dinner. The family had a teen-age son, and I sat next to him. We had a long talk. He told me that he wanted to go to Chile to see what was going on there. He told me all about his girlfriend. After dinner his mother asked what we'd been talking about so avidly, and I told her.

" 'Why,' she said, 'You've found out more about my son than I ever knew before.' You know, in Moscow a boy that age wouldn't go to the family dacha (house in the suburbs) without discussing it thoroughly with his parents, but that French boy was planning a trip to Chile that he's never even mentioned at home."

Generation gaps exist here too, but they seem narrower. Young people accept a parental role in details of their life that Western adolescents would regard as private. There is a strong family bond that is especially evident at times of crisis, such as the last year of secondary school.

"We have examinations this year," a Russian parent announces with a combination of pride and trepidation. In other words, their 18-year-old is hoping to win a place in a college or university, and the entire family is mobilized for the entrance exams.

Though the Russian parent's inclination is to smother a child with attention, the facts of Soviet life limit the opportunities for doing so. Arkadi Raikin, the Soviet Union's most popular comedian, has a famous monologue on this subject.

It concerns Slavik, whose mother, like most Soviet women, has a full-time job. Slavik's grandmother used to take care of him, but she died. Now Slavik's mother stops around the neighborhood on her way to work in the morning asking for favors.

She asks a pensioner in their apartment house to knock on the wall to be sure Slavik is up in time for school. She asks a nurse to feel his forehead if she sees him after school. She tells the policeman to blow his whistle if Slavik gets into a fight.

"But I think," Raikin says, " that none of these people can substitute for a mother who can sing a lullabye, answer any question, feed, pity and comfort. Mothers should probably work a little less and pay a little more attention to their children. Everybody would benefit—children, parents and the state."

Raikin's monologue is warmly applauded, but in fact, the state disagrees. The Soviet economy needs women's labor. They make up 51 per cent of the work force. Moreover, the Soviet experience seems to prove that many, perhaps most women who take up careers prefer to continue them rather than stay at home with a child.

So the typical Russian mother faces a series of dilemmas beginning immediately after her child is born. Does she return to work at the end of the two months paid maternity leave, or does she take off a year without pay, knowing she can resume her old job without loss of seniority? Or does she give up work altogether to raise her child?

A small minority of mothers, particularly among the intelligentsia, decide to commit three to six years to their children, regardless of their own careers. In many families this is economically impossible. The average Soviet worker's family budget depends on two sources of income.

For those who want to, or must, continue working, the most popular alternative is to leave the new baby with grandma (*babushka*). When a *babushka* isn't available, the state provides substitutes.

For infants there are nurseries which will take a child from the age of three months, but only 10 per cent of the country's infants are in these nurseries. From ages one to three, the figure rises to about 30 per cent. Some of these children stay in the nurseries from Monday morning to Friday evening, but most go home at the end of each day.

Predictably, these are controversial institutions. The professionals responsible for them in Moscow are convinced of their worth, and argue that most children would be well-served by moving into a nursery at the age of three months.

At that age the children adjust most easily to the group, and develop strong immunities to infectious diseases.

The testimony of mothers and Western specialists who have visited Soviet nurseries suggest another side of the issue.

They are, by all accounts, underman-

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ned. The children get less attention than they theoretically should, and are ruled by a strict, inflexible schedule.

"You sense that these kids lack spunk, they're a little dopey," one Western specialist commented after extensive visits to nurseries here last year.

"I wouldn't think of putting my child in a nursery,"—the comment is repeated by any women, particularly among the Moscow intelligentsia. There is a class distinction here. Working class women seem less reluctant to use the nurseries, partly because they have less choice.

There is less argument about the merits of Soviet kindergartens, which take care of millions of 4, 5- and 6-year-olds, more than two-thirds of the total population in this age group.

"Our kindergartens give children a better upbringing than any family could, even the most intelligent," according to Irina Ovchinikova, who writes about children for Izvestia, the government newspaper. "There's no argument about that."

She is exaggerating, but kindergartens are popular. Some families dispute the official view that a small child should be quickly immersed in a "collective," subordinating some of his own individuality to the group. But that is part of kindergarten life, accepted by the vast majority of parents and children.

The message was forcefully delivered by the director of a kindergarten in Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad). Boasting about her school to visiting Americans, she brought out a beautifully painted watercolor of a tree on a riverbank.

"One of our 6-year-olds did this," she said. "Look, here are some more."

The director then held up a dozen more watercolors of a tree on a riverbank—precisely the same picture, the same colors, the same strokes. How did they all turn out alike?

"That's how we do it. The teacher puts a picture up on the board and asks the children to copy it," she said.

This isn't the system everywhere. A music teacher in Moscow, observed by a foreign guest, taught her children the principles of high and low notes, harmony and rhythm, then encouraged them to invent their own dances to accompany tunes she played on the piano. This seems rarer than the reliable methods of rote and repetition.

Kindergartens sustain strict folk wisdoms about raising children—overdressing them for play outside, for instance, so they often come inside hot and sweating, or forbidding children to eat or draw with their left hands. Left-handedness is regarded as an inadmissable abnormality here.

The curricula for nurseries and kindergartens are determined by government authorities in Moscow, and are conveyed to teachers in a book. Each teacher is expected to stick to the offical plan.

Its goals, not surprisingly, are to produce ideal children—healthy, creative, clean, orderly and patriotic young Communists.

"A kindergarten," the book says, "must set the pattern for the Communist upbringing of children."

There is no way to poll preschool opinion, but informal observation and inquiry suggest that the overwhelming majority of Soviet children think kindergarten is great. The combination of play, dancing and singing, drawing, and pasting fills their days—which can last 12 hours—with fun. Sometimes the fun carries a message.

The instructions for teachers of 2- and 3-year-olds in nurseries stipulate: "The teacher will teach the children to recognize V. I. Lenin [founder of the Soviet state] in portraits and illustrations, and will arouse feelings of love and respect for him." Teachers of 4- and 5-year-olds are told that "on holidays, children decorate the portrait of V. I. Lenin in their playroom." Six-year-olds, the teachers manual instructs, "should be taken to the town monument to V. I. Lenin on his birthday, and should put flowers there."

Not surprisingly, Soviet children are certain that Lenin was the kindest, most intelligent and greatest man who ever lived.

The best kindergartens may fulfill the ideal curriculum that Moscow recommends, but, as always in Soviet society, there is a vast gulf between the ideal and the actual. Komsomolskaya Pravda, a popular daily newspaper, reported recently on the grimmer realities in Semipalatinsk, a predominantly Russian city in Kazakhstan.

Semipalatinsk has a serious shortage of nurseries and kindergartens, the paper reported. The nurseries that exist have places for 1030 infants, and they presently take care of 1631. The kindergartens are also overcrowded.

Big factories with money and resources to build their own daycare centers have adequate facilities, but everyone else in Semipalatinsk does not.

Mrs. T. Stepanova wrote the paper that she had to take her daughter to kindergarten on two trolleys to the other side of town, though they could see a kindergarten from the window of their apartment. It belonged to a factory, and was open only to the children of its workers.

A 10-year-old American who is now studying in a Moscow school remembers that in Washington "you could get up from your desk and walk around the room if you wanted to. Here, if you get up just to get a pencil, they bawl you out. And you've got to raise your hand a special way, and memorize the answers to all the math problems . . ."

Yet there are signs of an independent spirit among the young. Many Moscow parents report with awe on the political sophistication of their 10-year-olds.

"My boy's at a special English school," one father reported. "The school has a special relationship with some school in India. When [Leonid I.] Brezhnev went to India they put a lot of pictures of the trip up on a bulletin board. What did they use that board for? My boy says it was the place everybody gathered to tell the latest jokes about Brezhnev! Can you imagine my generation telling jokes about Stalin when we were 10?"

Next: Education and adolescence

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CPYRGHT

WASHINGTON POST
18 June 1974

Creeping Nonconformity

Soviet Youth 'Build Communism'—and Careers

Third of seven articles

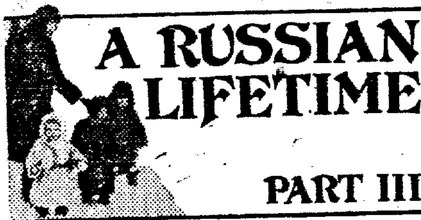
CPYRGHT

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW—"Do they give you a hard time about your long hair?" the 20-year-old taxi driver was asked. His brown locks fell over the collar of his jacket.

"Ah, they d like to, but I play on our garage's football team. I'm pretty good, so they don't dare say anything."

By such arrangements, long hair has finally come to this isolated land. For



years a few Russian eccentrics have followed the fashion established in the early 1960s by the Beatles, but suddenly this year, the adolescent males of Moscow and other towns have blossomed out with long hairdos.

The new hairstyles are a nice symbol of the temper of Soviet youth. Long tresses are hardly counterrevolutionary; they don't challenge the Communist Party or the status quo. But they do depart from the strict standards of this outwardly puritan society.

School principals don't like the change—they still insist that the younger boys (whom they can control more easily) keep their hair cut short. Parents giggle nervously about their wayward sons. But there it is—long hair on Russian boys, just like Americans or Britons or other Westerners.

Measured by the standards of the Western world's rebellious youth, Soviet adolescents are a somnolent lot. They don't stage demonstrations or occupy the dean's office. Nor do they accept their elders' world just as they find it. Most of all, they seem impatient with the isolation from the outside world that every previous generation since the time of Stalin has accepted.

Like all generalizations about Soviet society, any collective descriptions of the nation's youth are rash, and perhaps misleading. It would be impossible to exaggerate the gulf between a 17-year-old student in one of Moscow's special schools for bright children and a 17-year-old farm boy in Siberia or Soviet Central Asia.

Outside the more sophisticated major cities, conformity is still the rule, and even in Moscow or Leningrad the vast majority of young people are preoccupied with getting an education and beginning a career. From the age of 8 or 9 they have been lectured, cajoled and entreated to work hard to get a place in college and build a good career.

A Hungarian girl studying in a provincial Soviet college of engineering found her fellow students universally bored by world politics or Alexander Solzhenitsyn or any subject outside the approved mainstream, save perhaps Western clothes and pop music.

This is a conformist society, and the overwhelming majority of young people respect the tradition. But the draconian controls that once guaranteed Soviet conformism have largely been removed. As a result, there is more room for individualists to express themselves. Expressive nonconformists can have an infectious influence.

"By the 6th grade [age 12 here]," one Moscow mother reports, "the kids have stopped thinking that they have to do every single assignment in school and obey every single instruction they hear. Most of the boys and a lot of the girls have started to smoke.

"Teachers who used to maintain iron discipline now find they can't. It makes them nervous. Some try to rush through their lessons and escape from the classroom before they lose control. The teacher no longer enjoys full authority just because she's the teacher. . ."

The official Soviet press has confirmed the existence of a serious juvenile delinquency problem. Published sociological studies suggest that there is a deprived under-class that breeds juvenile crime. One study reported that of its sample of juvenile offenders, 48 per cent had begun smoking at age 9, and 43 per cent were drinking alcoholic beverages at 12.

A recent television program in a series on law enforcement was devoted to a teen-age gang that had killed two tellers in a savings-bank holdup in the Ukraine. The gang leader was sentenced to death.

The press has revealed the existence of bands of young dropouts from all walks of life who roam remote areas of the country, working when they need money (and getting the good salaries that are paid in remote regions), then quitting when they're bored, blowing their earnings on easy or wild living.

The strict regulations that govern the Soviet mass media prohibit reporting on isolated or atypical deviant behavior so it is reasonable to assume that these reports describe social problems that the authorities regard as serious.

More tolerable deviance is so common that it is visible, even to a foreign eye. There is no disguising the black market in phonograph records conducted daily, in front of the second-hand store on Moscow's Sadovoye Koltso, for example. There a copy of the original cast recording of "Jesus Christ, Superstar" might change hands for 100 rubles ($135 at the official exchange rate, and the monthly salary of a young physician).

The leading status symbols in the cafes for young people on Moscow's Kalinin Prospekt are articles of Western clothing — platform shoes for the girls, mod shirts or blue jeans for the boys. The black-market price for a pair of Levis is 80 rubles ($108). Three cafes along this avenue are much frequented by the young—the most stylish hangouts in Moscow. If you want a seat you'd best arrive about 6:30 p.m.—from then until closing at 11, they are all full.

An interest in Western styles and Western culture seems strongest among the Moscow elite—the children of government officials, professors, writers and journalists, etc. The wife of one prominent musician bragged to an American recently that her son was going to be a poet. The American observed that Russia was the perfect country for that ambition, since Russians were so in love with poetry.

"Oh," the mother said excitedly," I wish you'd tell my son that! He only talks about how good things are in the West—the freedom, the lack of censorship . . ."

A large percentage of these children attend special schools that give intensive instruction in a foreign language or a branch of science. Admission to these schools is by fiercely competitive examination. Their students—according to their own testimony—see themselves as a special slice of the country's youth.

These schools appear to produce a skeptical spirit that disturbs the authorities. Last year a special mathematics school in Moscow was disbanded because, according to one former student there, "the atmosphere was too free."

The official pretext for the unpublicized closing of the school was that some of its students had visited the main Moscow synagogue and signed the guestbook there as representatives of "Mathematics School No. 3." In fact, this student reported, the authorities realized that they couldn't control the school's intellectual environment. "We had a Russian literature teacher who told us Solzhenitsyn was the best living Russian writer," the student said.

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A boy of 17 in the 10th class (the last year in Soviet schools) at a special physics school in Moscow recently talked at length about life there. His story is worth recounting:

His fellow students can't see how their contemporaries in ordinary schools ("They're lousy") get any education at all. But they are working hard, mostly at physics, with an eye to Moscow state university or one of the best physics institutes.

There are 32 students in his class—four of them from the families of manual workers. The others are all children of officials and intellectuals.

All but three are members of the Young Communist League (the Komsomol), "but very few take it seriously. It's a credential you have to have to get into university . . ." (There's a full-time, paid Komsomol secretary on the school staff to organize Communist Party activities.)

Most of those who are active in the Komsomol are completely cynical about it—"or they are fools." They know that most fringe benefits go to the active young Communists. Last year, for example, half a dozen students in the school were chosen (by the Komsomol secretary) for a tourist trip to Poland. "Anybody who's been abroad has the highest status in school."

They have "military preparations" class twice a week, conducted by "a dumb retired colonel" who is also on the school's permanent staff. Girls and boys march together in military training.

"But the boys are anxious to avoid being drafted into the army—that's ghastly. Their parents try to help. Lots of mothers are always looking for physical defects that might keep their sons from being drafted." No one from his school would want to make a career in the military: "There's no prestige in it."

However, a boy who goes into the army after high school and then applies for admission to a university or institute has a big advantage over other applicants. Preference is given to veterans. But if you get into the institute directly from school, you'll only be a reserve officer after graduation, and probably won't have to serve on active duty.

Many 10th graders have private tutors to help them prepare for the university entrance exams. The school curriculum doesn't cover all the material that students will be held responsible for in the exams. Some students think that teachers in the universities and institutes maintain this gap on purpose, so they'll get more business as tutors. A teacher from Moscow University—whose salary might be 200 rubles a month—can earn up to 10 rubles an hour tutoring.

Because they're members of the faculty at universities and institutes, tutors can help you get admitted—"It's what we call 'Blat' in Russian—influence." (The Soviet press has reported many cases of parents bribing university officials to get their children admitted.)

"Steady romances aren't too common," but there is an active social life. On holidays the school has its own "evenings," which end with a dance. And the kids gather at one another's apartments for parties—if they can "persuade someone's parents to allow it." "There are always some liberal parents who are willing to let their places be used for parties, but most parents don't like to see vodka on the table."

The boys start experimenting with vodka at 13 or 14—by which age many of them already smoke. (There is no official propaganda against smoking in the Soviet Union.)

There's a school uniform, but that doesn't prevent sartorial competition among the girls. "Only the dress is required—they can wear different shoes, coats, stockings, pocketbooks. It's a big deal."

And what about ideals? What do 17-year-olds at the physics school care about? "Physics—they've got physics in their blood. They all have a pretty clear idea of what kind of work they'd like to do later on—research or practical work or whatever."

So, in the end, even these skeptical, cynical young people agree to play the game by the established rules. The young don't see how the rules could be changed.

A teacher of English in a Moscow institute recounts her own discomfort at the sight of career-oriented students compromising their way toward good jobs and other benefits.

"I asked one of them recently, 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself?' And he said 'What do you mean? I'm building a career. I want to live, to LIVE.'"

"Nado zhit," the Russians say—you have to live.

And cynicism is certainly not the universal attribute of this adolescent generation. Away from Moscow, outside the narrow world of the intellectual elite, simple, patriotic enthusiasm is at least as common. This is vividly evident at a giant industrial project like the Kama River truck plant, where a work force approaching 100,000, mostly young people just out of school, is building the world's largest truck factory.

These youngsters were lured to Kama, 600 miles east of Moscow, by Komsomol agitators who promised them good living conditions eventually and an exciting life immediately—building the country's top-priority industrial plant with thousands of their contemporaries.

They may covet a Rolling Stones record or a pair of blue jeans, but these young Soviet citizens are also willing to respond to the state's exhortations, transplant their lives to a remote new town, put up with overcrowded dormitory living for many years—all for the sake of what the propagandists call "building Communism."

The question remains whether the Soviet Union can remain the kind of country it has been when a new generation that does not remember the Revolution, the 1930s, the war or Joseph Stalin is running the country. People born after the war have lived lives that are difficult to compare with their parents'. Everything has been different—and, as parents complain, easier—for the young.

WASHINGTON POST
19 June 1974

Love, Marriage ... Divorce

Fourth of seven articles

CPYRGHT

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW—Volodya and Luba, both 19, are children of working-class families in Moscow. Volodya's family is a little more prosperous than most, so it took responsibility for their wedding.

The expenses were considerable and in the end there had to be some economies. The new suit they wanted to buy for the groom was skipped. (It would have cost about 100 rubles, or nearly two-thirds of his mother's monthly salary.) They thought about having a wedding party in a Moscow cafe, but at 10 rubles per guest this idea too had to be dropped.

They decided to hold the party in the two rooms of a communal apartment that Volodya, his parents and sister had shared for 15 years.

There was so much work on the day of the wedding, preparing food for the party and getting both families ready, that Volodya's mother skipped the wedding ceremony.

While she stayed in the kitchen, preparing salads and plates of cold hors d'oeuvres, the young people, their friends and a few representatives of the older generation set off for the Palace of Weddings on Griboyedova Street.

Volodya and Luba had gone there three months earlier to apply to marry. With other nervous, giggling young couples, they sat at one of the small wooden tables and filled out the form.

By law they had to wait a month before their marriage could be registered. But they wanted to come to the Palace of Weddings on a Saturday. Although nearly 50 couples can be married there every

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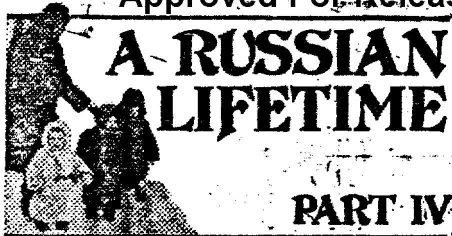

A RUSSIAN LIFETIME

PART IV

day, there was a three-month wait for a Saturday wedding. (There is no wait at most neighborhood registry offices, where marriages are accomplished by shuffling and signing papers, without ceremony.

Finally, their turn had come. They arrived in taxis which Volodya's father had reserved for the morning through a friend of his, a taxi driver. Two of the cars were decorated with streamers and balloons. The lead car had a baby doll attached to the front grill—a good luck symbol that would have cost more than 10 rubles, had Volodya's mother not found that a friend of hers still had a doll from her daughter's wedding. They borrowed it. A teddy-bear was similarly fastened on the second car.

The wedding palace was bustling. The young couple left their coats in the cloakroom and found a seat in the corner of a waiting room. Luba was nervous about her long white gown, custom-made by a state tailor shop for 90 rubles. They waited with four other young couples, each surrounded by a group of friends and relations.

Every 10 minutes or so another party was called by name. A woman lined them up behind the bride and groom in the hallway. Then she threw open big double doors and invited them into a brightly lit room with high ceilings, elaborate mouldings, a red carpet and a large statue of V. I. Lenin. (The palace was a wealthy merchant's house before the Bolshevik Revolution.)

Two women conducted the ceremony, which took only a few minutes. The young people signed a document and were told their marriage was now officially registered.

One of the officials handed them their internal passports, now amended to show their new marital status. Then they were declared man and wife.

Their friends and relatives gathered around; many gave Luba a flower. They went into an anteroom for a glass of champagne. Volodya and Luba had decided against spending 21 rubles to have a movie taken of their wedding, but a friend took snapshots. In keeping with the atmosphere of the Palace of Weddings, the party's mood was restrained. Everyone looked a little self-conscious. Strangers kept staring at them.

After several minutes, another woman official of the palace asked them to move along, their time was up.

From the wedding palace the group drove to Red Square, where Volodya and Luba laid a bouquet of flowers at Lenin's mausoleum. (This is an officially encouraged custom that is now popular, especially among working-class young people.) Then home for the beginning of two days of celebrations.

The crowd included school friends, relatives and their parents' closest friends. For many years Volodya's family had been living in their communal flat with four other families—sharing kitchen and bath with them, seeing them every day. But after some discussion, they decided that they really didn't want to invite any of the neighbors to the party.

Volodya's sister agreed to spend that night with their aunt, so the bride and groom had a room to themselves for their wedding night. Later they planned to move in with the same aunt. She had a two-room flat, but lived alone, so there was room for them.

Married life. Love, struggles, surprises, and often a sad ending. Almost one in three Soviet marriages now ends in divorce—nearly one in two in Moscow and Leningrad. The successes and failures of Soviet marriages are often attributable to the most universal of reasons, but this society also gives marriage a special quality.

Young people like Volodya and Luba (whose story is really a composite of several Moscow weddings) begin their married lives in difficult circumstances. They face immediate practical problems—finding a place to live is the most important—as well as a new way of life for which they are often ill-prepared.

A young married couple cannot expect to have an apartment of their own for years. They may get a room in a relative's flat, or if they can afford it, try to rent a room on the "free" market. The rent on a two-room apartment is about 15 rubles a month, but a room in Moscow—rented from someone with "extra" space — costs 30 to 50 rubles a month. Most likely, they will spend the first years of their marriage living with his parents or hers.

Even crowded together this way, the young couple will be entitled to privacy. Some young people acknowledge that this is a strong stimulus to marriage. It is difficult to find a place to make love in this country, and marriage at least solves that problem. (Not that it is otherwise insurmountable: an unpublished poll of 22-year-old Leningrad University students found that less than 5 per cent of them were virgins.)

Early marriages are now common, but Soviet social scientists don't approve of them. Alevtina Suvorova, an associate of the state's Institute of the General Problems of Upbringing, revealed in a recent article that in more than half the marriages in Moscow, the bride and groom are 18 to 20 years old.

"Accelerated sexual development," she wrote, "does not run parallel with social development. Young people do not have sufficient psychological maturity. As a result there are early marriages: ill-considered alliances doomed in many cases to a short existence."

Surveys of betrothed couples and newlyweds reveal that these young people are confident in advance of their ability to raise children, Suvorova wrote. But, "when a baby is born, optimism and faith in one's abilities to teach and raise it disappear. In the striking majority of cases, parents turn out to be absolutely helpless . . ."

In Soviet society, marriage is also challenged by the extraordinary strains of everyday existence. A new family that sets up housekeeping independently is thrown into "a whole new way of life," one Muscovite who survived it recently recalled. "Our young people are spoiled—they don't know self-reliance."

Ms. Suvorova wrote: "Our children . . . are not properly prepared for marriage." She was referring to the most practical matters. For instance, young couples on the eve of marriage "haven't yet encountered questions of the family budget, housekeeping or a husband's role in domestic duties."

Subsequent surveys of the same couples soon after their weddings show that: "Husbands who used to worry about their girl friend's cooking abilities soon understand that those abilities may perish in oblivion if they don't learn how to balance income and expenses. But alas, it turns out that only 17 per cent of newlyweds know how to plan a family budget."

In the Soviet Union, keeping a household afloat and organized is no easy matter. Budgets are tight, especially in young families. Official statistics reveal that in a typical family, the husband's wages represent just more than half the family income. Thus, economic necessity compels many wives to work.

Shopping is time-consuming and difficult. Few people have cars and 55 per cent of all families do not have refrigerators so it is normal to do some shopping every day. Shops do not always have what one needs in stock, so a woman must often try several stores. (It usually is the woman, sociologists confirm.) It may take several hours to track down a good piece of meat for a special occasion. Fresh fruits and vegetables are most easily found in the markets where farmers sell the produce of their legal private plots, but a trip to the market is an expedition for most people.

Moscow shops are comparatively well-supplied, but the same isn't true in provincial towns and cities. In many places the stores are out of bread by late afternoon. In some towns, especially in winter, fresh milk rarely appears, and causes a small sensation when it does. In Novosibirsk, a city of over a million inhabitants in western

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Siberia, the s[illegible] fresh meat all winter. It was available only in the farmer's markets—for high prices.

All this may sound pretty awful to a Westerner, but Russians are used to it. Shopping is simply part of their day, every day. Many men and most women carry a string bag with them at all times, in case they see something good on their daily rounds.

There are some things that a young couple will simply do without. Rugs, for instance, are extremely difficult to find. This winter a crowd of at least 10,000 people stood in line, some for 12 to 18 hours, to sign up to buy a rug during the next year. This happened in southwest Moscow, and Moscow has priority for such consumer products. Bare wooden floors are common in Russian apartments.

Housework is difficult. Labor-saving devices are not yet common, and are often poorly made. Slightly more than half of all Soviet families have a small washing machine, but it is not very efficient. Thirteen households in 100 have a vacuum cleaner. There is no such thing as a dryer or a dishwasher in the Soviet Union. Nor is there a good dishwashing detergent. Many women do the family laundry by hand every day, in the kitchen sink or bathtub.

Westerners spoiled by the abundance of their wealth may find it hard to believe that Russians can live this way, but they do, millions of them happily.

Russians don't compare their lives to Americans' or West Germans', but to the Russian past. By that standard the vast majority seems to believe they're doing very well. Before the 1950s almost no one in Moscow outside the ruling elite could think of living in his own apartment; now two-thirds of the population do. Consumer goods and food products are almost all more abundant than 10 or 15 years ago. Life is improving—by fits and starts, but inexorably.

The burdens of daily life fall most heavily on women in Soviet society. They fulfill the historic woman's role as cook, cleaner and shopper, they hold full-time jobs, and they serve on the front line of the struggle with Soviet shortages and merchandising. Women initiate the majority of divorce proceedings in this country—two-thirds of those in the city of Leningrad, for example.

Marriages collapse in the Soviet Union almost as regularly as in the divorce-happy United States. Thirty per cent of all divorces involve "young" couples—presumably those under 30. Most of them already have children.

The principal cause of Soviet divorces is not one of the sociological factors mentioned earlier in this article, but drunkenness. A. M. Chechot, a sociologist, polled 1,000 men and women (500 couples) who were divorcing in Leningrad. Of the 500 women polled, 210 said they left their husbands because they were drunks. A third of the 500 women said their men had beaten them.

In the same sample, 104 of the women and 140 of the men said their spouses had been unfaithful.

Chechot also found that the strains of everyday life contributed substantially to divorce. Twenty-two per cent of the couple blamed arguments with parents, (presumably largely in-laws) for their divorces, a hint of the consequences when generations are forced to live together in close quarters.

The shortage of living space was cited as a ground for divorce by 11.5 per cent of those questioned.

Under Soviet law every citizen has a right to divorce. When a marriage turns sour, the partners can dissolve it almost as easily as they originally made it.

When there are no children, the couple can make a joint application for divorce to their neighborhood records office, wait three months, pay 50 rubles each and receive a piece of paper solemnizing the dissolution of their union. It is simply a matter of paperwork.

If there are children the procedure is slightly more complicated. The parents must appear before a counselor who makes an attempt, usually a pro forma attempt, to persuade them not to divorce. If they persist, the paperwork goes forward.

If one of the spouses is reluctant to divorce, or if there is a dispute over custody or the distribution of joint property, a court fight is possible. They are rare. A reluctant partner can only postpone, not prevent the divorce. Except in extraordinary circumstances mothers get custody of the children.

"I went into the record office on Tuesday, it was noon, I looked at the clock," one recent divorcee recounted.

"I had a letter from Yuri [her ex-husband] agreeing to everything. I gave the man the papers. He said, 'Do you have any questions for me?' I shrugged—no. He said, 'You can pick up your document in the clerk's office.' That's all there was to it. I walked out a free woman. It was four minutes past twelve, I looked at the clock."

NEXT: Women and family life

WASHINGTON POST
20 June 1974

Soviet Life Oriented Toward Family

CPYRGHT

Fifth of seven articles

CPYRGHT

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW—Imagine a Soviet apartment: Four women sit around a table, periodically tossing down slugs of vodka. They are playing cards—loudly—and telling war stories—more loudly still. A man, the husband of one of them, enters wearing an apron, carrying a tray full of hot cups of tea.

With nervous, jerky gestures he tries to clear empty vodka bottles off the table and serve the tea. The women start complaining to him about the food, the dirty table. He shrugs his shoulders. Finally the guests decide it is time to go home. The husband fetches their coats and boots.

When her pals are gone the man's wife throws her arms around him drunkenly. "Don't touch me!" he shouts. She responds indignantly. "Whatsa matter, doncha think I can drink? I drink on my own money, you know . ."

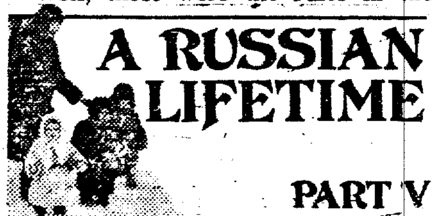
Speaking of money, the husband complains, she doesn't give him enough housekeeping money to do the shopping. She brushes him aside . . .

Difficult to imagine? For a Soviet audience watching a group of comedians acting it out, this scene is hysterically implausible. The theater rocks with laughter. The audience obviously loves the mirror image of Soviet family life that the comedians create.

Reality, as one of the comedians explains in an introduction to the skit, is different: Papa comes home from work and reads the paper. Mama comes home from work and goes shopping, makes supper, does the laundry and ironing, and helps the children with their homework. Sometimes, papa helps out after dinner by turning on the television set.

In Russia, "A good wife doesn't let her husband help her keep house. She keeps it clean herself, sews and weaves for her husband and children. A good wife is always merry—she always smiles and makes her husband's life easy and pleasant. A good wife doesn't interfere in her husband's business talks, and in general is mostly silent."

Well, those were the rules in the



16th century, when this prescription for a good wife was written in the "domostroi" or "rules of the household" that were then accepted by church and state. Though contemporary Russian society has little in common with the 15th century, the influence of the domostroi is still evident.

Yet mama's role has grown enor-

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mously, although she continues to act as a servant of the rest of the family. In the 16th century, papa was the lord of the manor, but today he is much less imposing, and much less influential. A woman who allows her husband to loaf around the apartment while she does all the housework is also—in many families—the pillar of family life and the chief decision-maker.

The Russian family is one of the institutions that Russians love most about their country. In its ideal form, the family is a fortress of love and mutual protection whose walls shield all within from an uncertain outside world. Though reality may seldom live up to these grand intentions, sentimental Russians (and that means virtually all of them) often overlook the family's failures and romanticize its accomplishments.

Modern Soviet society does not challenge traditional family relationships the way the fast-paced societies of the industraliized West do. There is no sign of the hedonistic lifestyle here: No amusement industry to fill leisure time, no cult of youth and beauty, no consumer industry for children or cemeteries for pets. The Soviet population is relatively stable and immobile.

Parents have time for children, and children for parents. Soviet sociologists claim that comparative surveys of Russian and Western families show that a mother or father here is likely to devote more of her or his week to the children than does a Western parent. There are fewer distractions, at least in the evening and on weekends, and perhaps—as many Russians would insist—a greater desire to share the child's life.

"Sometimes it's silly," one mother recently admitted. "We sit around in our apartment—me, my husband, my parents, maybe an aunt and uncle—and everybody is looking at Kolya [age 8]. 'What's new with you, Kolya?' 'How's life, Kolya?' 'What's happening in school, Kolya?'—That's all you hear for hours at a time."

At the opposite extreme is the story told in a woman's letter to the radio program "Man and Society," perhaps the nearest Soviet equivalent to a personal advice column.

"My life has been a nightmare," the woman wrote from Magadan, a remote corner of Eastern Siberia not far from Alaska. "I got married in 1946, and hoped to raise a happy family . . ." Her first son was born in 1947, and—"perhaps to celebrate this event"—her husband took a drink of vodka that was his downfall. A lifetime of drinking followed. "Our family survived extreme material difficulties, since more than half our income was spent on vodka."

Finally, after 21 years of marriage, she and her three children decided to throw him out of the house. To get away from him completely they went to Magadan. Papa stayed in the industrial city where they'd lived, still drinking. He remarried, then divorced, then moved in with another woman. Several years ago he had a stroke, which left him paralyzed. Learning of this, mother and children decided to invite him back.

"He getting better now," the woman wrote. "He's back at work, and most important, he isn't drinking any spirits. But life has already passed us by. We can't repeat our youth . . ."

Alcoholism is a perpetual epidemic in this society. There are no published statistics on the consumption of vodka or the prevalence of alcoholism, but evidence of it can be seen on the streets of any village or town. Perhaps 40 per cent of all divorces are caused by drunkenness, according to sociologists' research.

Vodka and wine play an important role in Soviet family life. What does an ordinary worker's family do to celebrate a birthday or a big event? "Buy a bottle of vodka," is the most common reply. An enormous Russian woman who works as a janitor confided that she would need 20 [half pint] bottles for the four-day May Day weekend.

Family celebrations are likely to happen at home. Millions of Soviets—very likely the vast majority — never go to a restaurant. (Restaurants are neither good nor common. In Moscow, the best-served city in the country, there are 127 of them—or one for every 55,000 inhabitants.) The Russian "table" for a big occasion is another of the things Russians love most about their country.

Besides vodka, it will be piled high wih a dozen different "zakuski" (hors d'oeuvres), from canned sprats in oil to elaborate Caucasian chicken in walnut sauce. The company can easily spend an hour or two over these, washing them down with the toasts that inevitably accompany the consumption of alcohol.

A soup may follow the zakuski, and a piece of meat, or perhaps a duck, will follow the soup. Mama and grandma serve and clear the dishes—none of which match each other—and yell at the young people to eat more of everything. Three generations crowd around the table, many sitting on stools, because there are never enough chairs, and all crowded, because the table is always too small. The men tell jokes and give toasts, the girls gossip and tease.

There is no cocktail hour, no coffee in the drawing room afterward (there's no drawing room), and somehow, it is usually more fun than any dinner party in Washington or London.

If Soviet society lacks the distractions from family life typical of Western countries, it has substitute distractions of its own. The most important of these is the requirement that able-bodied women, particularly in the city, hold a full-time job.

For some traditionalists, this is an outrage. Alexander I. Solzhenitsyn, the author, stated the conservative view of women at work in his recently-published open letter to the Soviet leaders:

"How can one fail to feel shame and compassion at the sight of our women carrying heavy barrows of stones for paving the street . . . ? When we contemplate such scenes, what more is there to say, what doubt can there possibly be? Who would hesitate to abandon the financing of South American revolutionaries to free our women from this bondage?"

Old women doing hard physical labor are an embarrassment to many Soviet officials, but the general notion that women should work is not. "The state's interest presupposes only one decision," Elena Ivanova, a senior editor of the government newspaper Izvestia said recently. "The country needs hands for work, including women's hands . . ."

To a large extent, women agree. In surveys, half or more of the working women questioned regularly say that they work for the satisfaction and enjoyment, not just for the money. Mrs. Ivanova points out that 60 per cent of the college graduates in the country are women. "Do they want to sit at home and waste their qualifications?" she asked. "Of course not." Polls show that the higher a woman's level of education, the more she wants to work, regardless of the number of children she has.

The compromises available to an American middle-class woman who wants to raise a family and pursue a career are not available here. The Soviet economy is rigid, and Soviet institutions live by a stern rule book. They do not believe in women taking 10 years off, or starting a career at 35, or working part-time. Either you work, or you don't.

The inflexibility of the system puts a psychological strain on women. As one sociologist observed recently, Soviet women may start life on an equal footing with males, study, begin work and marry on the basis of equality, but suddenly lose their equality with the arrival of a child, if not earlier.

In Russian families a child is the mother's business, whether or not her job, her housework and shopping already fill her time. A working woman with a child in this society has an enormous amount of work—30 hours a week, according to one survey, on top of a work week that averages 45 hours including transportation to and from the job.

If she finds a place for her baby in a nursery or kindergarten, a Soviet woman is still on call in case of illness. Day care centers won't keep a sick baby, for fear others will catch the illness, so the mother must take care of her child at home. (She is given some paid leave from work for this purpose).

Work discipline is lax in most Soviet factories and offices. Many women manage to do errands on office time.

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"A woman scientist in our institute is about one-third as productive as a man," a research chemist claimed.

Baby-sitters are virtually unheard of here. Either the baby goes out with the adults, or mama stays home—unless there's a grandmother who can be persuaded to look after the child. Soviet teenagers don't seem to have the entrepreneurial spirit or the confidence of their elders that would be necessary if they were to copy the American baby-sitting system.

Like most Soviet workers, a working woman is entitled to a month of paid holiday each year. In theory, this vacation could be devoted entirely to the family, and often it is. But it is common for Soviet parents to take separate holidays. This is officially—though coincidentally—encouraged.

Places in trade union sanitoria, rest homes and resorts — the most sought-after holiday spots in the Soviet Union —are allocated at work. Unless husband and wife work in the same place, they cannot expect to get spaces in the same resort at the same time. So they often go off alone at different times of the year. The effect of this on family life has been repeatedly criticized in the press and in sociological studies, but without apparent effect.

(There aren't spaces in these resorts for even half the population, so many Soviet citizens do take their vacations with their families—even if they'd rather not.)

The question remains, what is Russian family life really like? Hopefully some of the answers have been included in these articles, but a lot of them haven't. For an outsider who has had only a limited opportunity to see families at home, many of the answers remain out of reach.

For an American, it is instructive to reflect on typical aspects of middle-class American life which have no obvious equivalent here. The list is long.

There is no family car in the Soviet Union, save in about one in 14 families in Moscow, one in 70 for the country as a whole. There is no house, but rather a small apartment for the luckiest families (in urban areas, about half the total), and a room for the others. It is an officially stated goal of Soviet housing policy that every citizen should have his own room in his own apartment, but the goal is just a distant hope now.

The consumer goods that set the tone of American family life don't exist here. There are no cold Cokes in the refrigerator (which is tiny, if it exists), no cartons of milk brought home by the milkman, no garbage disposals or food freezers.

There is nothing here to compare with the organized activities that occupy American children and become the focal points of so many families' lives. Schools don't have organized athletic teams or — except in special cases — bands or orchestras. Dancing classes, pottery classes, church choirs—none exist. Nor do part-time jobs for young people.

Life in the Soviet Union is quieter, duller and harder than in the West. It is also more secure. No one need fear unemployment, inflation or a financially catastrophic illness. On the other hand, no one outside a very special elite can realistically hope to visit the Champs Elysees or the canals of Venice. The state provides, but it also withholds.

In the unique environment that Soviet society has created, family life goes on in recognizable patterns. Kids come home from school, have something to eat, go out to play. Mothers prepare supper, fathers read the evening paper, everybody watches television. "We're living well," Russians like to tell each other, "Life is good."

NEXT. Old age and death.

WASHINGTON POST
21 June 1974

Growing Old 'Is No Joy'

CPYRGHT

Sixth of Seven Articles

CPYRGHT

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW—Valentin Alexandrovich is 79. He's had a heart attack and liver trouble. Several weeks ago he had another heart attack, and his wife called an ambulance. It took two hours to get to their apartment, but the old man was still alive, and the ambulance took him to a hospital.

No one in the family was consulted about which hospital, and they had bad luck. It was an old one, overcrowded and shabby. There was no room in the wards, so Valentin Alexandrovich was given a bed in the hallway. The doctors were not solicitous. Soviet hospitals are reluctant to admit the very old, and especially reluctant to let people use their beds to die. That is seen as a waste of space—people should die at home.

But Valentin Alexandrovich isn't interested in dying. He survived 10 years in one of Stalin's prison camps and many other hardships; he wants to keep going. His wife, his 59-year-old son by an earlier marriage and the son's wife and daughter are taking turns at the hospital, looking after him. They keep watch around the clock.

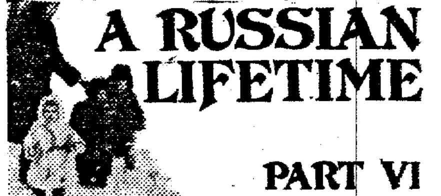
Soviet hospitals do not provide much nursing care. The nurses on duty perform functional tasks—cleaning up, keeping order, serving the one basic menu that is offered to all patients. They don't pay close attention to the patients. So relatives do. They also bring special foods and medicines—often the very things that the hospital doctors prescribe, but can't provide themselves. Soviet hospitals are irregularly supplied with medicine. Modern antibiotics and miracle drugs are generally not available, except in the special hospitals for high officials.

The Little Hall of the Moscow Conservatory looks like an American school auditorium. Several times a week it is used for commercial concerts, mostly for soloists and chamber music. On many afternoons and evenings it is the scene of free concerts given by students of the conservatory.

These free concerts are a gathering place for the elderly. The seats are comfortable, the music is often soothing, and it doesn't cost anything. A nice outing.

The other night a dozen violin students gave a free concert in the Little Hall. Several of the white-haired spectators looked like regulars. One fat woman carefully arranged herself in a corner seat, tucking her shopping bags under her, but holding tight to a scarf embroidered with a design. She didn't pay much attention to the aspiring violinists. She was busy with the scarf—folding it up in a square, unfolding it, looking at the design from the front, then the back, and then folding it into a square again.

Across the room sat three old women who seemed to be friends. One of the three dominated the group, holding forth on one subject after another. Her commentary wasn't interrupted by the music—she kept right on going.



About half the spectators that night were old people. Some wandered in late, others left early. They seemed to treat it as a hangout.

There aren't many proper gathering spots for the elderly in this country. As social scientists privately acknowledge, the Soviet Union until recent years hasn't treated old people as a special group of the population, apart from providing them with modest pensions. There are few old-age homes, almost no clubs for the elderly, and very few social services especially for them. "Old age is no joy," according to a Russian proverb.

A Soviet scientist who works on problems of aging listed the deficiencies he perceives in the system here.

- Geriatrics—the branch of medical

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science dealing with old age and its diseases—does not exist as a separate branch of Soviet medicine. There are virtually no special clinics or hospitals for the elderly. (A famous exception, sometimes shown to foreigners, is the home and hospital for Old Bolsheviks in Moscow.) There are no professional or popular journals dealing with old people and their problems.

- Old-age homes serve less than 10 per cent of those who need their services. Those that exist are often poor. In Kaluga, for example, old people live in dormitory conditions, several to a room, in an uncomfortable building.
- The state prevents the gathering of accurate statistics on causes of death from different diseases, in different parts of the country. It is forbidden to keep such statistics. In 1966 the Institute of Gerontology in Kiev opened a new statistical unit, but it was closed soon afterward for want of statistics to work with.
- Pensions are inadequate. Most old-age pensioners get 50 to 70 rubles a month, or about half the average worker's wage. The maximum pension is 120 rubles a month, even for a scientist, whose salary had been 500 rubles a month.

Soviet citizens collect about 20 billion rubles a year in old-age and disability pensions—an amount that sounds high, but isn't; when distributed among 43 million recipients that makes the average pension less than 40 rubles a month.

The situation isn't as grim as that scientist's list implies, because the extended family is still a healthy institution in the Soviet Union. Although figures aren't available—they seldom are for social features of Soviet society—it is certain that many more old people here live with their children than in the United States, for instance.

Even if they live separately in the same town, relations between the older generation and its heirs seem close and protective. Grandparents often play an active role in raising their children's children. For many women, the birth of a grandchild becomes the official beginning of old age, and a pretext for giving up work and returning to the hearth.

Others are reluctant to do this because it may mean lower pension benefits. Pensions are paid in full only after 20 years of work, and only if one works for the three years immediately prior to going on pension. Women are eligible for pension at 55, men at 60.

"If you're old and don't have a family, it's terrible," a Moscow woman of 45 remarked recently. Another woman described an old lady she knew who lives alone in one room of a communal apartment on 40 rubles a month. She is so poor that she has to think twice before taking a 5 kopeck bus ride. She eats meat only two or three times a month.

Many old people supplement their pensions by continuing to work. The state encourages this as a means to reduce its labor shortage. In undermanned professions, someone who reaches retirement age can go right on working as before, collecting both salary and pension. Many doctors continue working after retirement age on this basis.

The classic pensioners' profession is that of cloakroom attendant. Every Soviet office, theater, restaurant, museum, school and factory has a cloakroom, manned by one or more old people.

"I don't think anyone in our country is just retired," a Moscow woman said recently. "Every old person has some job, even if it's just taking care of a grandchild or a sick husband."

The strains of ordinary life are most difficult for the old. Three sisters, all over 65, who live together in Moscow try to share the hardest jobs. The youngest and healthiest does the shopping. Instead of going out every day, as most people do, she tries to shop only every other day, buying as much as she can carry home in two big shopping bags. An old woman shuffling along with a heavy load is a common sight in Moscow.

Television is a big boon to the elderly. Conversation in the park of Tverskoi Boulevard, a favorite gathering place for the old, often concerns the previous night's concert or film on television.

Boredom, however, takes its toll: Editors of Izvestia, the government newspaper, report that half of the thousands of letters to the editor they receive each week are written by pensioners.

The universal scourge of old age is bad health, and it is no more fun to be sick in this country than in any other. A sufferer from high blood pressure, for example—a woman of 61—has trouble every fall and spring, when the seasons change. Each time she goes to her neighborhood clinic, which refers her to a hospital, which puts her through a series of tests that take two or three days. Each time, the tests show that she has high blood pressure. A brief rest is perscribed, and some pills. No Soviet doctor has ever suggested that her diet, which includes large quantities of eggs and fatty milk products, might contribute to her illness.

Soviet doctors don't like to make diagnoses before putting patients through thorough tests, and the tests can be so tedious that some people try to diagnose themselves to avoid them. Or they look for a doctor "on the left"—someone who will come to their home for a little money or a bottle of cognac and give them personal care. The practice is extremely common.

Most people die at home, since the hospitals don't want the dying in their beds. A man of 80 with cancer of the lungs lies in his own bed to the end, attended by a doctor who drops in every day to give him an injection. For the rest of the family it's a difficult experience, though the patient may be grateful for these last days at home.

When Ivan Mikhailovich finally died of cancer, his daughter called the hospital and asked what to do. She was told that a doctor must come to certify the death, and the hospital gave her the inspector's telephone number. She called, and in two hours the inspector came to record the details of Ivan Mikhailovich's passing. Then she telephoned the morgue, which promised to send someone for the body before the end of the working day. The children were afraid to stay home with the corpse, so they were sent to an uncle's.

The daughter then called a phone number she'd been given by a friend—the number of the state agency that helps to arrange funerals. What services could they provide, she asked.

"Come and see us, we don't do business on the telephone," a woman at the other end replied sharply. ("We are always so rude to each other; why is it?" a Soviet editor asked recently. "I don't know myself.")

Then she called the new crematorium, where she hoped her father could be laid to rest. The crematorium is in a small village just beyond the city limits, and its telephone is on the village switchboard. She couldn't get through all morning. Finally she asked the switchboard operator how to get to the crematorium. "How do I know? Is that my job, to give directions?" She hung up.

Toward evening the people from the morgue came to take Ivan Mikhailovich's body away. The next day his daughter was able to get things arranged, by traveling all over town. She had to get a certificate of death from the neighborhood registry office. For 10 rubles, the men at the morgue agreed to make the corpse presentable in an open coffin. (To save money, some people do this themselves at the morgue.)

Through a friend and with the help of several more tips, she arranged for a bus to take the coffin and the mourners to the crematorium the following Saturday afternoon. They would have 30 minutes in one of the three chapels for a farewell ceremony, which the family itself would have to prepare.

The new crematorium—the only one in Moscow—sits in a field on the outskirts of the city, a serene building of white marble. Outside in the parking lot, groups of mourners huddle around the buses that brought them and the bodies of their deceased friends or relatives. They are waiting for their turn in one of the chapels. The front of the crematorium is lined with wreaths from previous funerals, many of them withered and falling apart.

Finally a man in a work smock comes up to the bus and says, "It's your turn now." Those who have been designated pallbearers lift the coffin out of the bus, and carry it 20 yards up a sidewalk to a door in the marble facade. There it is set on a kind of

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pushcart and rolled into the chapel.

This is a room about 40 feet square with a high ceiling. The far wall is all glass, and looks out into an open field, now marred by some construction equipment. The coffin is rolled up to an altar-like platform, and is slid into it. Many families then remove the top of the coffin for a last look.

Several friends may stand up on a chair and make short orations. Mournful music is piped into the room. It seems traditional for the womenfolk to weep and wail loudly. The whole atmosphere is intimidating, and most people seem self-conscious.

After 30 minutes, an employee of the crematorium announces that the time is up. A young woman moves toward the coffin and makes a short speech, announcing that "Ivanov, Igor Valentinovich" has ended his life, and that "The fatherland is burying its son." Somewhere a button is pushed, and the true function of the altar on which the coffin sits is revealed. It is a trap door, which opens, and the coffin gently disappears from view. Several days later, the widow or children can return for an urn full of ashes.

A brightly painted sign outside the chapel says: "For burial of urns with ashes, the management suggests a niche or a plot in the cemetery."

A niche is a recess, about 18 inches square, in a specially built wall which accommodates row upon row of urns with ashes. The urn goes into the recess and is covered with a plaque that bears the name of the deceased and whatever other information is desired. These walls are going up one after another in the open fields around the crematorium. They look like small versions of the new housing developments in which more and more Soviet citizens live.

Fewer families choose burial, which is more expensive and more complicated. But religious families do, and they are more numerous than the state's militant atheism would suggest. At the Nikolo-Archangelskoe cemetery next to the crematorium, grave after grave is marked with the distinctive cross of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The cemetery is in dilapidated condition. The asphalt walkways are cracked and crumbling, and maintenance of the graves and shrubs that grow around them is left entirely to the families of the deceased. Many of the graves are marked only with hand-painted signs.

Walking through the cemetery the other day, a tourist was approached by a middle-aged man. "Do you have somebody here?" he asked. "Buried. I mean? I'd happily take care of the grave for you—only a few rubles a month. Look, there, that nice grave, that's one of mine . . ." He pointed to a little plot, about six feet square, surrounded by a metal fence as are most of the graves. It was neat and trim. Would you like me to do it for you? . . ."

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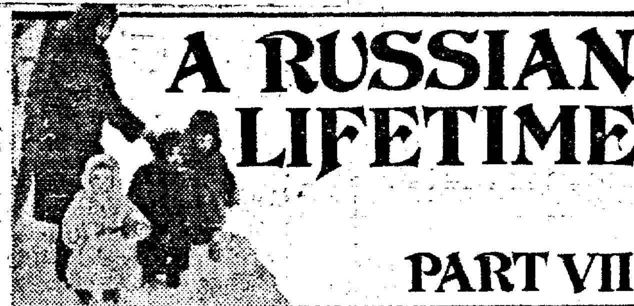

Privileged Soviets

A Different, Easier Way of Life

Last of Seven Articles

CPYRGHT

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

CPYRGHT

MOSCOW—There is one group of Soviet citizens whose way of life has little in common with the ordinary people described in previous articles. It comprises the tiny elite of senior officials, scientists and artists who enjoy the perquisites of power.

For those at the very top, there are no long lines, no bribes and tips, no harassment by petty officials, no overcrowded apartments or shortages of consumer goods. They live in a world apart.

In Russian they are the "nachalstvo," an untranslatable word often spoken ironically, whose literal meaning is "the authorities," but whose true sense is more "the big cheeses."

"The nachalstvo never see how the rest of us live," one working man observed ruefully watching a long black limousine speed down the middle of Moscow's Kutuzovsky Prospekt carrying one of the country's most important citizens to his sprawling dacha on Uspenskoe Road.

It is illegal to turn left from Kalinin Prospekt onto Granovskvo Street, just opposite the Lenin Library in central Moscow. But if a car approaches that intersection with a left turn signal blinking and its license plate begins with the letters MOC, the policeman on duty will wave it through. Illegal left turns are one of the privileges that accrue to members of the Communist Party's Central Committee whose license plates begin with the letters MOC.

Granovskovo Street is often lined with the black Chaikas and Volgas, all chauffeur-driven, which the nachalstvo use. They have come to do some shopping in the special store that is located there—behind a door marked "Office of Special Passes" in a building that bears a plaque which announces: "In this building Vladimir Ilyich Lenin gave a speech on April 4, 1919 to Red Guards on their way to the (civil war) front."

The store sells foodstuffs, which the customers bring out to their cars in nondescript paper packages.

Around the corner on Kalinin Prospekt is the special Kremlin Polyclinic, whose doctors serve only the nachalstvo. The long black Zils of Politburo members can often be seen on the street outside.

Other special facilities for special people are scattered around the capital. Just opposite the Moscow office of The Washington Post is the tailor shop for senior officials of the Council of Ministers, the Soviet government.

There they can have a suit (or a coat for their wives) made to order by tailors who are presumed better than most, with materials that aren't available to the masses.

Privileges for the elite are not a recent innovation. John Reed, the American radical buried in the Kremlin wall whose book on the Bolshevik Revolution is a classic here, noted with discomfort how the earliest Soviet leaders began to assume privileges for themselves immediately after the rev-

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olution.

The practice grew more common and more elaborate under Stalin, who decided early on that material incentives were effective even in a state allegedly dedicated to total equality under communism. Today, the system of privileges is a fundamental fact of Soviet life.

The system is rigorously hierarchical. The most privileged of all are members of the Politburo of the Communist Party.

Their salaries aren't known but are probably irrelevant, since their lifestyle depends on privileges, not income. They lead cushioned lives, attended by servants and chauffeurs, housed in grand style, eating the finest foods — all on a level that must match the "ruling circles" of capitalist societies.

This lifestyle is shared by a tiny group — 16 full members of the Politburo, probably the seven candidate members, and perhaps three more secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. These are the only people who are truly immune from all the difficulties of ordinary daily life.

Below them a pecking order begins. The exact precedence isn't publicly known, but members of the Party's Central Committee and ministers of the government are at the top. So are officers of the Supreme Soviet, or parliament.

Privileges are by no means reserved for the uppermost crust. They are available to thousands of officials — members of the Party Central Committee's staff, important bureaucrats in Moscow's dozens of ministries, top scientists and entertainers, regional party officials and many more.

At each rank the privileges are slightly different, and incomplete. Every participant in the system of privileges knows that the higher he goes, the better off he will be. A deputy minister proudly told a foreign acquaintance recently about his new apartment — evidently a privilege. But he added in the next breath that his wife was furious because the telephone hadn't been installed, though they'd been living there three months.

In some organizations—the KGB, or security police, is probably the best example—privileges go to all employees, not just the highest-ranking.

The system is established in provincial capitals, as well as in Moscow. In Armenia, according to an Armenian scientist, the local "closed distributor" hands out special products before big holidays on the basis of written allocations. For instance, a top party official might get a piece of paper entitling him to buy as much caviar as he liked (at a modest price), while a lesser official's document would permit him to buy just 300 grams.

The first secretary of a regional committee of the Communist Party has a variety of privileges that he can dispense within his domain. For example, he controls the distribution of private automobiles, and can offer them as he pleases. A provincial journalist reports that after he published a piece which the local first secretary found flattering he was soon given the chance to buy a Russian-made Fiat.

Local officials receive copies from Moscow of new foreign films which aren't shown in public movie theaters. They decide whom to invite to showings of this forbidden fruit.

(The same movies are shown in the projection rooms of top officials' dachas, according to a Moscow cameraman.)

Privileges begin at an early age. During the recent national congress of the Young Communist League (the Komsomol), elected delegates and guests were invited to a special clothing shop where they could buy stylish Western clothes, one of the most coveted status symbols in Soviet society.

A foreign observer is struck by the fact that he can find out about the system of privileges in substantial detail.

Though it might seem embarrassing that a society which trumpets an egalitarian ideology encourages class privilege, in fact this isn't treated as a state secret. Everyone knows something about privileges, and members of the Moscow intelligentsia know a lot. The state does not make special efforts to hide the truth, or even to put the special stores in discreet places.

Perhaps the system wouldn't work properly if it were a secret. The nachalstvo may want people to know that there are benefits for those who work hardest to defend and promote Soviet power.

The most striking aspect of the system of privileges is its pervasiveness.

There are special "canals," as the Russians call them, by which the privileged can acquire virtually everything they need, from a summer dacha to a railroad ticket.

For food, the most privileged few pay a flat amount each month—50 to 70 rubles, according to educated guesses—to their special store. In return, they can take as much as they need of any food product, including caviar, good cuts of meat and many other products not sold in ordinary shops. This store is open only to the most senior officials. Others have access to more ordinary special shops which sell rare products on a more commercial basis. One of these is said to be in the basement of Food Store Number 1 on Gorky Street, in the heart of Moscow.

The privileged are allocated the best housing. Ordinary citizens are legally entitled to about 30 square feet per person, though many don't get so much. In practical terms that means a flat of two small rooms for a family of three. An important government official may have five or six big high-ceilinged rooms in a grand old building in central Moscow.

Or, like Premier Alexei Kosygin and at least half a dozen others, he may live in a big modern block apparently built just for the nachalstvo on Vorobyevskoe Way on the crest of the Lenin Hills, overlooking all Moscow.

For the privileged class, housing in the countryside seems to be more important than Moscow apartments. The villages of Zhukova, Borvikha and Uspensko east of Moscow are dotted with the huge dachas of the very important—two-story houses of stone or wood with large grounds, all surrounded by high fences. Driveways and side roads in these villages are invariably marked with the European "do not enter" sign, a white brick on a red disc.

Members of the Politburo have dachas in this area, and additional residences in more remote parts of the country. Many are said to have hunting lodges. Most, and probably all, have beach houses on the Black Sea. Lesser officials are also accorded this plum.

When they travel around the country, important officials are housed in special quarters apparently built just for them. The Norwegian premier was invited to one of these in Leningrad this year, a handsome villa built in Finnish style and equipped with Finnish furniture and appliances.

Clothes can be bought in special shops, or made by special tailors. Theater tickets are sold at special box offices as are train and plane tickets. Medical care is provided in special clinics and hospitals. The Kremlin Hospital on the Rublyovskoe Highway on the edge of Moscow is said to be the best in the country. It has drugs and equipment never seen in standard hospitals.

Hard-currency stores provide a vehicle for bestowing privileges. These shops, called "beriozka" (birch tree), accept coupons which represent hard currency. Anyone with a relative abroad who sends him money will get these coupons, not cash.

A diplomat serving in a Soviet embassy abroad will be encouraged to take some of his salary in coupons. So will a military adviser in Syria or a technical adviser in India.

Beriozka shops are clearly marked. There are seven of them in Moscow which accept coupons for food, clothing, furniture and appliances. Every day, numerous ordinary citizens stumble on to these stores and try to go into them. Each beriozka is protected by a man or woman whose job is to bar the way to people without the proper coupons.

Beriozkas are now jammed with Soviet patrons, and not all of them have received hard currency from abroad.

Some organizations pay their employees with coupons even when they work in Moscow. A young journalist in the Novosti press agency—which Western intelligence agencies think is

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connected with the KGB—boasted to a foreign friend that he gets a regular allocation of coupons.

An American diplomat doing his grocery shopping in the hard-currency supermarket once ran into a Soviet security man who had often been assigned to tail him.

Not all privileges depend on access to special shops or housing. Some of the advantages enjoyed by the privileged few in Soviet society are less tangible. They involve the reflexive acquiescence to those in command which seems to typify the contemporary Soviet Union as consistently as it did Czarist Russia.

When someone calls a Moscow restaurant and asks for a special menu for "the Central Committee," the maitre d' is unlikely to question the request. The manager of a theater or concert hall knows from experience that he must save a few excellent seats until the very last moment—a hedge against the possibility that he'll receive one of those phone calls.

Someone with an established name and reputation in a certain field can wield enormous influence simply because poeple have decided to defer to him.

Sergei Mikhalkov, a writer and official of the Union of Writers, is a good example. An editor at a publishing house who needs influential support to get a certain book published knows that if she can get Mikhalkov to sign a favorable review, the book will sail through all barriers. His credentials as an orthodox representative of the cultural hierarchy are impeccable and his support for a project all but assures its success.

Mikhalkov's own success is considerable. Describing someone who is extremely rich by Soviet standards, members of the Moscow intelligentsia will sometimes say: "He's as rich as Mikhalkov."

This instinct works most powerfully for members of the uppermost strata of the political elite. Politburo members, it is said, can routinely arrange careers for their children wherever they would like to work. Places in universities or institutes are similarly available to them on request.

Soviet history includes no examples of a senior leader passing on real political power to his children, but many have passed on the trappings and benefits of power.

Many Soviet citizens consider the greatest privilege of all to be the right to travel abroad. Citizens can be denied it automatically because of suspected "unreliability."

A scholar who spends his entire life studying Indian culture or American politics may never have a chance to see India or America.

Those deemed worthy to go abroad, particularly to the West, represent a special elite. Journalists, scientists, representatives of trading organizations, scholars and a few others — these are the lucky few who see the world. They come home with foreign clothes, romantic tales, and the latest rock records for their children — who are the envy of every kid on the block.

(A few ordinary citizens are beginning to travel abroad in organized tourist groups—a new kind of reward for the best workers. But only a tiny number go to the West—400 to the United States in 1978, for example.)

The consequences of the system of privileges are numerous, and not all easily identified.

On one level the system works well: It has helped persuade many talented people to devote their energies to their country and the Communist bureaucracy that rules it. Bright young people enter official careers every year, motivated in part no doubt by patriotic feelings, but in part too by the knowledge that special benefits await those who pass up through the layers of the establishment.

Ideologically, the system of privileges might seem to challenge the idea that the Soviet Union is building a classless society. But such contradictions must exist in the eye of the beholder, and those in power here seem to think nothing is amiss.

Most interesting, perhaps, is the gulf that the system of privileges creates between rulers and ruled.

As these articles have tried to show, life for ordinary citizens in the Soviet Union is defined largely by the physical hardships of everyday existence, the elaborate and frustrating bureaucracy, the economic and social conditions that induce some women to work and compel others, and the shortages of goods and services.

There is more than that, of course. The Soviet people are proud patriots. They love their families, their traditions and their Russian countryside—rulers and ruled share these in common.

But the mundane considerations that are so important in the life of ordinary citizens don't affect the lives of men at the top. Their majestic isolation depends only on the continued support of their fellow leaders.

"The nachalstvo never wait in line," a workingman observed this spring. "What kind of life is that?"

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