

P.S. See Temporarily - Residences  
in N.H. and Connecticut.

Sept 7, 1991

"C" Span,  
400 No. Capital St.  
Washington, D.C.  
20001

also Everybody, (converted sub "C" Span)

I am a great fan of your  
series on TV - All of them! -

Find them exceptionally brilliant.  
Keep it up, for some of the  
TV is changing too drastically.

I'd like to see more of the  
real Russian people - I mean  
the class governing faction -

I admire Mr. Gorbuchov -  
and am grateful for the Russian  
conquering of Germany in WWII  
Germany surrendered to Russia  
only. We do need to help the  
Russian people - I do want to put  
all, like our beloved country has  
helped. We are Russia help -  
German satit - not right!

Mrs. [REDACTED]

# The Forum

## Impressions Of The Soviet Union

To the Editor:

In October I had the good fortune to travel in the Soviet Union as a member of a US/USSR Bridges for Peace tour. We were 31 U.S. citizens from 11 states and at least that many professions, spanning three generations.

While much of our time in Moscow, Riga, and Leningrad was spent in excellently planned and guided activities, we were free to move about at any time of day or night to pursue our own interests and to meet with Soviet citizens. Privately, and in public forums, we talked with students, teachers, architects, doctors, ministers and many others. Fortunately for us, English is now commonly taught, so most Soviets we met spoke our language well. They were also quite well-informed about our country's history, literature and politics.

We were dazzled with performances by the incomparable Moscow Circus and high-spirited Georgian dancers and awed by the meticulous, costly restoration of the Catherine Palace and other buildings of historical significance damaged by World War II. We were stunned by the gigantic rough-hewn wooden figures marking the four corners of what had been Latvia's largest death camp, Salaspils, where 100,000 perished, mostly the old, young and infirm, during the Nazi occupation. We were touched by the somber beauty of dark red roses, still blooming in late October chill, at the Piskarevskoye Cemetery, where half of the 1,000,000 Leningraders who died of starvation, cold, disease and war wounds during the Nazis' 900-day blockade of their city, lie buried. I spoke at length with a Soviet author who endured that siege as a youth and has kept the memory of that painful time alive through his writing.

It was that kind of personal contact that emerges as the most memorable part of my journey, from a fascinating, jolly, dinner with a young "entrepreneur" to a group of excited seventh graders who swarmed around a friend and myself outside the Pushkin Museum, eager to know where we were from . . . did we like their country . . . their city . . . ? Warmth, generosity and spontaneity were clearly evident. There was no evidence of anti-American sentiment. We felt no restrictions, nor did they, apparently, in discussing issues of abortion, Afghanistan, the status of women; but more often our conversations focused on our families, occupations, films and peace.

Although I had done a lot of pre-trip study, I was unprepared for the large number of parks, flowers, cars, well-dressed people crowding streets, buses and subways in clean cities, and American "easy-listening" music in hotel elevators jammed with people from all over the world. Especially, I was unprepared for the lack of homogeneity in building types and in people.

The most powerful impression of all is the reiteration of Soviets of their desire for peace. Still suffering from the hardships of war in this century, exhausted economically by the arms race and fully aware that a nuclear war would be the last war, they are eager to relax tensions, reduce arms and improve their lives. They welcome and support Gorbachev's moves in this direction. What a grand opportunity for us all to get on with the building of a peaceful, prosperous world.

Lyme

There are other impressions of beauty in the Soviet <sup>union</sup> not all the so did pictures we see of Russia on our TV. They are educated, too, and so, too, have ambitions not of the best in any respect. <sup>their</sup> health is concerned!



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