

LEV SKVORZOV

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Our Source

Lives at the International House, 500 Riverside Dr. Rm 527
New York, 25, N.Y. Exchange student from the USSR, came here
in Sept, 1963 to study philosophy at Columbia U.

Notes on March 24, 1964 meeting between Lev and K.

Lev is about 30, with blond hair, receding hairline,
6-foot tall, 160 lbs., athletic figure. He is married, soft-spoken
individual, wears Western clothes and speaks English well, but
with an accent. He is a member of the Communist Party, since 1954,
and before that time was a member of Komsomol. He was born in
Northern Russia, and this is his first trip abroad. On his way
to New York Lev stopped in Paris for a few hours. Here, he has
travelled to Vermont, where he stayed with some American families,
has been to Pennsylvania and is to attend a seminar soon in Boston.

K was introduced to Lev March 23 by another student, who
lives next door to Lev at the I. House. K returned the next
evening, and Lev invited him to his room, where they talked for
three hours, and then went downstairs for coffee.

There is a picture of Lev's wife in the room, as well as
recent issues of Pravda and Izvestia. Lev said he also reads
the New York Times regularly.

At first Lev seemed to be a bit ill at ease, but later
he loosed up, and the conversation went smoothly.

He said that he graduated from Moscow U. in 1954 and
at that time ~~applied~~ applied and was granted membership in the
party. He has the equivalent of a Ph. D. and is the author of
a book (his dissertation) on the philosophical aspects of

1 - cc - Roman Kuznetsov 201 file
1 - DO/SR on 4 May 64

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"Marxism-Leninism. After he completed his studies, he said, "they sent me to America." He will remain here until June, and then return to Moscow. He said he would like to teach when he returns, but that he is not certain whether he would be able to do that, "because at times the welfare of the state is more important than my personal wishes."

Lev has been to various parts of New York City. He mentioned Chinatown and Greenwich Village and was critical of the conditions in the Bowery and Harlem, but did not say specifically that he has seen these two sections of the city. He said he preferred Vermont to New York, because it was more peaceful there.

Recently he was out drinking with an American student, and the two ended up in night court. He treated this as an adventurous incident, and did not elaborate on it.

U.S. press is not objective in its treatment of the USSR, he said, and added that he reads the Times regularly. N.Y. Daily News was for the masses, he said, and he does not like that newspaper, but the Times is for more intelligent readers.

On USSR

Lev has travelled throughout the Soviet Union. He mentioned Kharkiv, Kiev and Dnipropetrovsk as the cities he has visited in the Ukrainian SSR.

K asked him how many members of the CPSU there are. Lev answered that there are 10 million of them.

K: "And what is the population of the USSR?"

L: "200 million."

/R:...

K: "Then there are very few party members."

L: "No, that's not too few."

Students in Moscow may have a private room with bath, or share a room with two others, he said. For this they pay one ruble (sic!) per year. But Lev did not complain about his quarters here.

Lev is interested in sports and enjoys swimming. He said the reason the Soviet Union won the last Olympic Games was that sports of all kinds ~~are~~ enjoy mass popularity there. In comparison, he said, American students are short, fat and non-athletic.

On Soviet Youth

There are three clubs for young people in Moscow, which are always crowded. He said there are not enough of them. He like to frequent them, especially the one on Gorki St. The young people sing and listen to poetry readings at the clubs. Occasionally they gather near a statue in Moscow (K forgot which one) for poetry readings.

Asked about the young poets, Lev named some, including Yevtushenko, and called them "our great new poets." He said there are new poets in the other republics as well and named Kostenko and Korotych as representative of those in Ukraine.

On religion

Religion still has influence in the Soviet Union, especially among the older people. Difficulties connected with the last World War caused a lot of the people to return to the church, he explained. There are still seminaries for priests in the USSR, said Lev.

/What he...

What he asked K

Lev asked K how the Ukrainian immigrants who came here, since WW II were getting along, and was told that they were getting along well -- some already owning houses and businesses here.

He asked about Stepan Bandera, but did not dwell on this subject too long. K said he read about Bandera's assassination in the American press.

He asked "how is sex life in college," to which K replied that it is fine, provided "you have the right connections."

General remarks

Lev said he would be glad to meet K again. He said he is homesick, and is waiting for the trip back.

While the two were talking, another student -- David -- who is studying international relations, and who was on the drinking spree with Lev, entered the room, and asked Lev if he wanted to go to Washington with him for a weekend. Lev asked the price of the fare there and when David told him it was \$20, Lev said he did not have that much money to spend.

David asked K how he met Lev. Before K could answer, Lev broke in with "We met by chance."

Lev likes to sing. He named a few Russian and Ukrainian songs, and sang a few bars from some of them to K.