

*President's United States - Soviet
Exchange Initiative*



Office of the Coordinator

U.S.-SOVIET EXCHANGE INITIATIVE

FACT SHEET

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On November 21, 1985, the United States of America and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics signed a new General Exchanges Agreement in Geneva marking the resumption of official academic, cultural, and performing artist exchanges between the two countries for the first time since 1979. This Agreement, signed by Secretary of State Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, authorizes projects in education, the performing arts, exhibits, television and film, professional, and citizen exchange.

To complement traditional programs carried out under the Agreement, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev endorsed a new and broad-based People-to-People Initiative to expand contact between citizens of both countries.

Prior to his meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev, President Reagan stated in his November 14, 1985, Address to the Nation, "enduring peace requires openness, honest communications, and opportunities for our peoples to get to know one another directly."

In order to accomplish these objectives, the President called for a series of bold new initiatives to "find as yet undiscovered avenues where American and Soviet citizens can cooperate fruitfully for the benefit of mankind."

The U.S. Information Agency is responsible for implementing the General Exchanges Agreement and the Initiative. A Coordinator's Office was established at the U.S. Information Agency in January 1986 to encourage and facilitate the projects of the American private sector on behalf of the President.

The Coordinator's Office is responsible for providing guidance to Americans interested in establishing exchanges with the USSR in the areas of performing arts, exhibitions, education, health, sports, television, film, youth, citizen and professional exchanges.

The Coordinator's staff works with offices of USIA, the Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, and other U.S. government agencies sponsoring private sector exchange programs to facilitate projects. The Coordinator's Office also works closely with a wide range of Soviet ministries, state and public organizations.

The Exchanges Agreement and the Initiative signal a renewal in U.S.-Soviet cultural relations after a lapse of six years following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Since November 1985, the U.S. private sector has generated hundreds of innovative proposals to resume exchanges. The Coordinator's Office has received several thousand letters and inquiries from Americans interested in participating in U.S.-Soviet exchanges.

During the Moscow Summit, the Program of Cooperation (1986-1988) which implements the General Exchanges Agreement was renewed. Former USIA Director Charles Wick and Soviet Minister of Culture Vasily Zakharov signed the new Program of Cooperation (1989-1991). The new Program reflects the significant expansion in the number and scope of U.S.-Soviet exchanges in the fields of culture, education and youth.

Also at the Summit, President Reagan announced a bold new initiative to expand dramatically exchanges of high school students. By 1991, 100 American and 100 Soviet high schools will be paired for an annual exchange of over 1,000 high school students in each direction. American and Soviet students will study together in classrooms and live with families for a minimum of 4 weeks. The first reciprocal exchange of over 800 students occurred in January - April 1989.

Since the Geneva Summit in November 1985, exchanges have been broadened and strengthened. Some highlights include the following:

Performing Arts

Since January 1985, world class performances have taken place in both countries. The Kirov and Bolshoi Ballets, the Moiseyev Dance Company, the Georgian State Dance Company, the Leningrad State Symphony and the Moscow Virtuosi are among some of the notable Soviet groups to tour the United States. American attractions to the USSR have included Vladimir Horowitz, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, the New York Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, Dave Brubeck, the Paul Winter Consort, Billy Joel, the Manhattan String Quartet, and the Empire Brass Quintet.

Joint cultural productions have also taken place. Sarah Caldwell's Boston Festival, "Making Music Together," brought 285 Soviet performing artists to Boston in March 1988 for three weeks of performances with American artists. In November 1989, a similar group of American artists will travel to Leningrad for a Festival of American Music.

Plans are underway for the National Symphony Orchestra performances in Moscow and Leningrad. The tour is scheduled to open in July 1990.

People-to-People Exchanges

Many organizations engaged in Soviet-American exchanges have become increasingly active since November 1985. These include the Citizen Exchange Council, which has increased its programs with the Soviet Committee of Youth Organizations, the Friendship Force, and Sister Cities International which has increased its ongoing city-to-city partnerships from six to 35.

Since 1985, the Chautauqua Institution and the USSR Friendship Society have held annual conferences on U.S.-Soviet relations. These conferences have created a forum in which U.S. and Soviet officials have discussed and debated topics before American and Soviet citizens. In September 1988, 300 Americans travelled to Tbilisi, the capital of Soviet Georgia, for the Fourth Annual Conference on U.S.-Soviet Relations. The highlight of the program was the opportunity for 120 Americans to live for a week with Georgian families. The next conference is planned for October 1989 at the University of Pittsburgh.

Film

Cooperation between the American and Soviet film communities is steadily increasing. Both industries are exploring possibilities for joint productions. In addition, experts from both countries are meeting to learn more about the different approaches of each film industry.

As an example, "The Entertainment Summit," organized by the American-Soviet Film Initiative, enabled director Elem Klimov, President of the USSR Union of Cinematographers, and other distinguished Soviet directors, writers, actors and journalists to meet with American counterparts for the first time in March 1987. In January 1988, Americans went to Moscow for a similar conference. In July 1988, The ASFI hosted a reciprocal showing of Soviet and American films to members of the Supreme Soviet in Moscow and Members of Congress at the Library of Congress.

The Walt Disney company held a three week festival of their animated films in the USSR October 1988. This was the first time citizens from Moscow, Leningrad and the Baltic Republic city of Tallin saw such classics as 1001 Dalmatians, Fantasia, Bambi, and Snow White.

The Citizens Exchange Council has arranged a reciprocal exchange of documentary film festivals entitled the "Glasnost Film Festival". Soviet film directors and producers have accompanied the Festival to lead discussions on the changes in Soviet society reflected in the new Soviet documentaries being shown during the Festival. After opening in Washington, DC on March 27, the festival embarked on a nationwide tour which

included New York City; Columbia; Boulder, Colorado; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Atlanta, Georgia; Berkeley, California; Tuscon, Arizona; Hollywood, California; Los Angeles; St. Louis, Missouri and Chicago. A reciprocal American documentary film festival will go to the Soviet Union in 1990.

Youth Exchanges

The first reciprocal high school exchanges took place in 1987 and the spring of 1988 when Phillips Academy and Choate Rosemary Hall organized exchanges of students with two Soviet high schools. Students lived in dormitories and enrolled in classes at the host schools.

These pilot exchanges were expanded upon when former President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev agreed to a large scale exchange of high school students and teachers. On January 13, 1989, former President Reagan greeted the first delegation of Soviet high school students arriving in the U.S. on the US-USSR High School Academic Partnership Program. By 1991, the program will pair 100 American and 100 Soviet high schools, providing for annual exchanges of 1500 students and accompanying teachers to study in each other's classrooms and live with host families.

The American Council of Teachers (ACTR), a co-sponsor of the High School Partnership Program, also administers a reciprocal exchange of 25 American high school students of Russian and 25 Soviet students of English during the summer months. The 1989 program placed Soviet students at the Summer Governor's Academy at James Madison University (VA) and at the Huron Shores Writing Institute in Michigan, while a counterpart group of Americans, winners of the Russian language national "Olympiada" contests, studied at a summer program at Volgograd.

The US-USSR Youth Exchange operates reciprocal mountain climbing exchanges for young people in the Rocky Mountains and the Caucasus Mountains in cooperation with Outward Bound.

In cooperation with the city of Philadelphia, The American Center for International Leadership hosted the first US-USSR Emerging Leaders Conference December 1-7, 1988. Over 180 Soviet leaders (ages 30-40) had an opportunity to discuss problems of common concern and possibilities for future exchanges with their American counterparts. The USSR Committee of Youth Organizations will host the second Emerging Leaders Summit in Leningrad in February 1990.

Plans are underway for direct exchanges between the Yale and Moscow State University yachting clubs. At the invitation of

Moscow State, Yale University sailors will travel to Moscow in mid-June 1989 to participate in joint competitions and sailing trips.

Fine Arts

The first American exhibitions to the Soviet Union following the Geneva Summit were "Impressionist and Post Impressionist Masterpieces from the National Gallery of Art, Washington" (February-May 1986) and "Five Centuries of Masterpieces" from the Armand Hammer collection (March-December 1986). In May 1986, the Soviet exhibition, "Impressionist to Early Modern Paintings from the USSR," toured the United States.

These exchanges were followed by "Russia: The Land, the People," a collection of 19th century Russian paintings which opened at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in November 1986. A collection of American 19th c. painting, "New Horizons: American Painting 1840-1910," organized by the Smithsonian Institution, completed a four-city tour of the Soviet Union in July 1988.

An exhibition entitled, "Russian and Soviet Paintings 1900-1930" was shown at the Hirshhorn Museum, July-September 1988. Plans are being made for a reciprocal exchange of American art from the same period.

The National Gallery of Art's exhibition of work by Paul Gauguin included a number of outstanding paintings from the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums in the USSR. This was one of the first times that Soviet authorities permitted the loan of paintings for an international exhibition. The Soviets also contributed works to the "Timur and the Princely Vision" exhibition of Persian art from the 15th century which showed at the Sackler Gallery in Washington, DC (April 16-July 6) and at the LA County Museum of Art (August 13-November 5).

The San Diego Arts festival in the fall of 1989 will be the site of two rare exhibitions: seventeen Fabrege Imperial eggs will be on display, the most extensive display ever, and 9th through 19th century icons from the State Museum of Arts in Tbilisi, Georgia will be on exhibit for the first time in the US.

Exhibits

USIA's "Information USA" concluded an extensive 18 month tour of nine Soviet cities in January 1989. The exhibit showed the impact of modern communications and technology on contemporary American life. Close to 2,250,000 Soviet citizens viewed

Information USA. A reciprocal traveling Soviet exhibition opened in New Orleans in September 1987 and traveled to six American cities -- Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Memphis, Cincinnati and Kansas City -- over a one year period.

The next USIA exhibit entitled, "Design USA," is scheduled to open in Moscow in September 1989. The exhibit will feature architecture, product design and graphic design.

A joint sports photography exhibit opened in Leningrad on April 17, 1988. Entitled "Sports Feelings-Mir Sporta," the exhibit is the result of cooperative efforts between Sports Illustrated and the USSR publication Olympic Panorama. It opened its American tour at the National Museum of American History, November 15, 1988. In the United States the exhibit will tour five American cities (Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles). It will conclude its U.S. tour at the 1990 Goodwill Games in Seattle.

Educational Exchanges

The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), one of the leading organizations arranging advanced scholarly programs with the Soviet Union, continues to expand its graduate, postgraduate and research exchanges. IREX administers scholarly programs on behalf of the American Council of Learned Societies and other organizations, including the U.S. Information Agency.

Other well-established programs include the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR) which placed over 500 American students, graduate students, and teachers in long-term study programs hosted by a dozen major Soviet institutes and universities in Moscow, Leningrad, and other cities for terms of two to ten months' duration. Under the terms of direct bilateral exchange agreements between ACTR (its bilateral programs division, ACCELS), Soviet partner institutions and the State Committee on Public Education, ACTR/ACCELS has placed over 200 inbound Soviet undergraduate, graduate students, and teachers at U.S. universities. One such bilateral program, the summer exchange of high school language teachers of English and Russian, is now in its fourth year. Since 1986, 25 American teachers of Russian annually have studied during the summer at the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad, while counterpart groups of Soviet teachers of English have trained in American English and American studies at U.S. universities.

The American Collegiate Consortium has concluded an agreement for a reciprocal exchange of American and Soviet undergraduate

students. In September 1988, 56 Soviet undergraduate students arrived for an academic year's study at 24 liberal arts colleges in New England. In September 1989, 63 American students will begin study for an academic year at Soviet universities and 55 Soviet students will enroll at 26 liberal arts colleges.

The Citizen Exchange Council has paired ten American universities with ten Soviet universities for direct exchanges of student government leaders, professors, undergraduate and graduate students.

Exchanges of university lecturers continue under the Fulbright program, administered by the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) for USIA.

Direct exchanges between universities were begun by the State University of New York (SUNY) and Moscow State University in the mid-1970's. Similar agreements exist between Moscow State University and the Midwestern University Consortium and the University of Missouri system. The University of California system has signed a protocol with Leningrad State University for a wide range of exchanges. The University of Wisconsin has recently signed a similar protocol with Moscow State University. Dartmouth College and Moscow State University annually exchange undergraduate students for environmental and language studies.

Exchanges of secondary school teachers are also expanding. AFS International and the Soviet State Committee for Public Education administer an annual exchange of high school teachers. Ten American teachers teach in Soviet schools and ten Soviet high school teachers live with American families and teach Russian language classes in U.S. high schools for ten weeks each fall.