**Culture of the youth**

- What is implied under culture?

- Culture is known to have many meanings. One of them refers to the spiritual and material achievements of humanity. On the whole it is possible to distinguish three kinds of culture. They are elite culture, folk culture and popular culture. These cultures are closely connected with one another and one culture is part of the others. Elite culture is a highly developed sphere, it is comprised of painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, music. Folk culture is the culture of everyday life and routine relations of social life. Folk culture consists of traditional knowledge and practice. It is like a habit of people, thus this culture does not change very quickly Popular culture is mass culture. It is a professionally organized sphere that works for a large mass of people. Popular culture gives people, especially young, standards to be what they like.

- What can you say about the culture of the youth?

- Today the life of many young people in Russia as well as in other countries of the world is influenced by popular culture. The youth follow certain stereotypes that are imposed on them through TV, movies, and music. In their lifestyles they try to imitate the images of their idols. Other young people are sports and music fans. They frequent stadiums and huge concert halls. They follow their idols in their tours throughout the country and support them. Unfortunately they are intolerant to those who do not share their view. It is a specific aspect of the youth sub-culture that cannot be ignored.

- Do many young people follow this pattern?

- No, they don't. Many young people have other interests. For some of them getting knowledge is of primary importance. They are fond of reading serious books, listening to serious music. They go to the conservatory and theatres. They are engaged in Hi-Tech through the Internet.

- What do you and your friends prefer?

- We prefer music. It plays a very important part in the life of young men. Tastes differ, and the music scene is changing. Young people like different kinds of music. Some like disco music they can dance to. Some like loud, heavy rock music. Some like the popular reggae sound. Some like South American rhythm. Many of them are fond of jazz. Madonna and Bruce Sprigsteen from the USA and George Michael from Britain also have huge numbers of fans. As for me, my friends and I enjoy Celtic folk music. My favourite groups that perform Celtic music are "Chieftains" and "River dance".

- Is Celtic folk music popular in Russia?

- Yes, it is. It is very popular. For example, St. Patrick's Day, the major Irish holiday, is celebrated throughout Moscow. You can hear Celtic music everywhere on this day. It should be said that festivals of Irish music are regularly held in Russia, hosting groups performing Celtic music from Ireland, Great Britain, the USA and Russia.

- Do you mean that there are groups in Russia that play Celtic music?

- Yes, there are. In such groups as "Slua Si", "Pucken' Piper", and "Reelroads" Russian young men perform Irish and Scottish music.

- What can you say about Russian rock music?

- I am not a fan of Russian rock. But there are a lot of rock musicians in our country. Such groups as "Alisa", "DDT" and "Mumiy Troll" are very popular among Russian young people. It is interesting to note that many young people still listen to the music of the groups that do not exist any more. I mean "Kino" and "Nautilus Pompilius".

- What books do Russian young people read?

- Many young people are fond of stories and novels written by Victor Pelevin and Boris Akunin. Their works are examples of such literary trends as post modernism and post Constructivism. Besides, many young people like to read science fiction literature. The novels by the Strougutskys's are best read even today. Among the young science fiction writers the novels by Serge Lukjanenko are very popular. A lot of young people are fond of are science fiction and fantasy.

- Why are science fiction and fantasy so popular in Russia?

- These literary trends are poplar not only in Russia but all over the world. The best read foreign fantasy writer is J.R.R. Tolkien. His books really ushered in a new era in literature. J.R.R. Tolkien won fame due to his original epic trilogy "The Lord of the Rings". This outstanding work by the mid-1960s became a sociocultural phenomenon. While working on his trilogy J.R.R. Tolkien created "The Hobbit" which was an introduction to it. Both "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" are set in a mythical past. "The Lord of the Rings" chronicles the struggle between various good and evil kingdoms for possession of a magical ring that can shift the balance of power in the world. The trilogy is remarkable for its fantasy types - elves, dwarves, hobbits - and its sustained imaginative storytelling. It is regarded as a rare, successful modern version of the heroic epic.

- Do you know anything about urban sub-cultures of the youth?

- It is generally held that sub-culture is the culture of those who are dissatisfied with their place in society. On the whole Teds, Mods, Rockers, Bikers, Skinheads and Punks are the sub-cultures of the politically or economically weak segments of the society.

- What do recent sub-cultures protest against?

- As is known, recent sub-cultures reflect a refusal to con form in post-1945 society. For example, the sub-culture of Rastafairians was based on nostalgia for a lost world. They idealized Africa.

- Who were Rastafairians?

- Rastafairians were Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Britain. They dreamed of golden age in Africa before the slave traders came. They viewed Britain as part of the Biblical 'Babylon', the land of slavery, and Africa especially Ethiopia as the 'Promised Land'. These Rastafairians began to wear distinctive clothes, camouflage jackets, large hats in the red, gold and green colours of Ethiopia and put their long, uncut hair in 'dreadlocks'. They took to speaking in a special 'patois' or dialect. Rastafairians were defiant until they became a recognized and legitimate minority group in Great Britain at the end of the 1980s.

- What made the greatest impact on the development of urban sub-cultures?

- Black music which came to Britain through the Rastafairians made its impact on urban sub-cultures. Such types as ska, reggae and 'Hip-hop' evolved in the Caribbean and the United States, developed in Britain during the 1970s, came to Russia in the 1990s In Britain reggae music is held as powerful expression of dissidents. In our country reggae is the music of the teenagers. Many sub-cultures developed as a result of music fusion of black and white cultures.

- Can you give an example of such fusion?

- Skinheads developed in the 1970s in England out of an older cult, the Mods. They imitated black mannerism and fashion and danced to reggae. At the same time the white teenagers who loved the music and copied the clothes of the Afro-Asian immigrants were violent to them. They wore heavy boots, jeans and braces, and shave their hair or cut it very short. They aggressively sought to recover a crude working-class identity which their parents' generation had largely abandoned. In the main, Skinheads dreamed about the revival of the traditional working-class culture. Now this movement is in decline in Britain but it flourishes in East European countries and Russia. The Skinheads in Great Britain were identified with extreme right wing views.

- What can you say about Hippies?

- Hippies belonged to the opposing young people of the late 1960s. Their forms of protest corresponded to the standards of their contemporaneous society. Coming against the war in Vietnam the young Americans, who associated themselves with Hippies, established their communes. The movement spread throughout Europe. Hippies led a primitive life in their own countries and then moved to the East. They rebelled against the values of their society. Their idol was J.R.R. Tolkien, who created the fairy tale of the twentieth century. His epic trilogy "The Lord of the Rings" became the guidelines for Hippies.

- What do you know about Punks?

- As far as I know, Punks appeared in Britain in the 1970s as a reaction to the glamour of the pop star world of the 1960s. Punks, like the Skinheads, are regressive, but inactive and politically indifferent. Their real attraction to the young has been their ability to insult middle-aged opinion, especially among the guardians of social values. They have done it by using vulgar language, wearying green and pink hair, dressing in torn clothes, mutilating their bodies with safety pins. Now Punks are in decline in Britain but are popular in our country. Punks, Skinheads and Rastafairians, each in their own way asserted that they resided in a world, as they understood it, alienated by class and race. Generally they were young people with low self-respect, who did poorly at school. Joining a gang was a means of finding a status. They opposed the traditional world in which they were settled as fiasco elements.

- Are there other cults within urban sub-culture?

- Yes, there are. "Heavy metal" is one of them. This music of failure is widely despised by those who enjoy pop, reggae or soul. Unlike other rebel cults the followers of heavy metal behave them selves as victims. They wear gothic script and grinning sculls, expression of disheartened interests. It is known that cults arise and disappear over periods of a decade or two. Ragga and Gothic arose in the 1980s. Raggas are American-inspired. They are clothed in baseball caps, tracksuits trousers and chunky trainers. Gothic is a blend of 1970s Punk and 1960s Hippies. "Goths" wear their hair very long and dyed black, and dress in cheap, loose clothes. They put on make-up, looking very pale with cosmetics around the eyes. They are not aggressive, and seem to feel nostalgia for the youth culture and music of the 1960s. At the end of the 1980s Acid House was a fashionable sub-culture. It fascinated thousands juveniles who had not earlier belonged to a cult. Acid House guaranteed fun and all-night dancing. It had its own music which was another variation on black music from America ("House Music"). By the 1990s this movement was also in decline. It is interesting to note that sub-cultures follow a cycle. At first they shock then provoke a strong response. As soon as the sub-culture gains momentum it magnetizes youth in search of rebel unity. Many adopt it for fun, and play at rebellion in their leisure time. The sub-culture rapidly ceases to express serious dissent. In the end it becomes another recognized and colourful part of urban culture.