**THE CINEMA IN RUSSIA TODAY**

Cinema is one of the most important means of entertainment and propaganda. It is an ideological instrument of the political party at power in a country. Cinema is a mirror reflection of the county rulers and their policy.

If you want to go to the cinema in Russia today you will have to face two problems. The first is to find a cinema in your locality which is still showing films and which has not been turned into a disco, bar, amusement arcade or a furniture salon-shop. The second is to find a film worth seeing.

The large industrial cities used to have five or six cinemas in the centre and about thirty in the suburbs. Even small towns had several cinemas. But since the advent (прибытие) of television, video and perestroika, cinemas have been closing down at an alarming rate. Now if you want to see a film there only few central cinema halls at your disposal.

There are several reasons why the film industry is losing audiences.

Many film makers put the blame on television and video, and this was certainly a major cause at the beginning. But since television and video audience figures have now passed their peak, while cinema audiences continue to decline, part of the answer must be sought in the quality of the films now being produced.

If some fifteen years ago under the socialism, our film industry aimed to make better films filled with love, friendship, struggle for the cause of peace and justice, nowadays many of the film tycoons (магнат; заправила; шишка; воротила; «акула»; тайкун) in our country have found the exactly opposite solution making stupid third-rate comedies and action films about prostitutes and killers. Cinema in Russia has been gradually becoming Americanised. Of course, Hollywood is a great film centre, but they on the one hand try to lure the public back into the cinema with all sorts of films with an accent on horror and the lowest kind of pornography and on the other hand propagandise violence, promiscuity and individualism. The most recent box-office successes combine all features in a blend of savagery, racialism, anti-socialism, sexual degradation and violation! It works for with a certain category of cinema-lovers typically teenagers and spiritually sick people.

Another solution to make cinema popular again is the introduction of all kinds of technical develop­ments like wide-screen and cinemascope, 3-D, Cinerama, Dolby surround sound, power-driven chairs, etc.; but despite the advantages of improved techniques, the audiences continue to decline. It only proves that cinema-goers very quickly get accustomed to these technological advances and they want more from the point of view of the film’s ideological content and message.

The present state of cinema leaves me no chance of going to see a corny film in a dilapidating building with bad sound and picture quality. I’d prefer to stay in and watch the good old Soviet “Twelve Chairs” or “The Caucasus Prisoner”. Though some oversea productions are worth seeing, too.

There is only hope that our country regains its status of the world’s highly spiritual and cultural film production centre.