

Soviet scholar from

Moscow to Halifax

by Alex Burton

1988 marks the first year of an academic exchange between Dalhousie University and the Institute of American and Canadian studies located in the Soviet Union.

Alexei Izyumov, an economics professor, is a visiting fellow at the Dalhousie's Political Science department this year. He is the first of what he hopes will be a series of academic exchanges between his institute and Dalhousie. "I know the next person will be a woman who specializes in labour relations (in North America)" says Izyumov. He adds that with the recent activities on campus (ie. the strike) it's a shame she could not have come earlier.

Izyumov, an expert in global economics, believes it's "useful to be here to gain first hand knowledge, communicate with Canadian and American colleagues, as well as to visit the U.S.A.!! Izyumov says that so far the academic exchange is unilateral but "it's a good opportunity for Soviet scholars to be at Dalhousie." On top of his regular duties as a research fellow Izyumov has taken it upon himself to conduct a series of lectures around campus in an effort to explain some of the new ideas and changes in the Soviet Union. "Since my interest is great of student's and faculty's attitude towards my country", he reasons, "I do these lectures that I'm not obligated to do."

Izyumov says "one couldn't imagine a better time for a political scientist to come to Canada, because of all the elections." Izyumov likes some aspects of our system particularly the open debates between the federal leaders. "The debates were useful because voters got to see their political leaders in open debate over ideas." Izyumov adds "we are going through our own political and economic reforms and I'm sure some lessons will be learned from Canada."

Change is occurring in the Soviet Union at such a rapid pace that sometimes Izyumov feels he is missing out by being in

Canada. "Sometimes I feel like a revolutionary in exile, the speed of developments is so incredible" says Izyumov. He says he "misses the Moscow political scene", but his wife does try to keep him up-to-date. She is a reporter for the *Moscow News*, a paper Izyumov calls "the Soviet Union's best." He adds "it is available in the Killam Library, in English, for those who are interested in developments in the Soviet Union."

Izyumov says the political reforms in his country have changed things a great deal including interaction between academics in his country and abroad. "Contacts with the outside world are made easier — for all parts of the Soviet population, not just for scholars. The number of Soviet people going abroad increased two fold this year over last year." Izyumov also mentions a new agreement between the Soviet and Canadian governments to facilitate exchanges between the two countries.

Commenting on the differences between Canadian and Soviet post-secondary education, Izyumov says he was surprised by the lack of formality on campus and in the class room. "Students are much less formal and the attitude of the professor to the student is much more close. This is positive. It allows professors to go deeper into students minds, to have feedback, and interactive training." He also says that there is a greater emphasis placed on individual expression. "No one will criticise you for this (individualism), until recently this was not the case in my country."

Another difference Izyumov thinks is important is the system of payment for education. He says that in the Soviet Union, where university is free, students don't work as hard as they do in Canada. "University is free so there is not as strong a incentive to push for a better education by the students." When Alexei Izyumov was in school it was mandatory for students to attend all classes. He fought against that system

and was almost expelled for it. However, as ideas are changing in the U.S.S.R. so are the universities. Although funding for universities in the Soviet Union has been dropping steadily over the past five years or so, in much the same way it has been in Canada, Izyumov says that "in the context of Perestroika there will be an increase and funding will be restored to it's (previous) levels."

When asked about the huge number of students that study English in the U.S.S.R. in comparison to the few who study Russian in North America Izyumov answered that "realistically English is the international language. Russian is one of the major international languages, but it is harder to learn. However, if Perestroika succeeds there will be a greater need to know Russian for joint ventures and other activities."

Izyumov is particularly grateful to have the opportunity to come to Dalhousie and he thinks Halifax is a great place with a "distinctive character", however he is a little concerned about someone who has a zealous desire to make him feel at home, or perhaps wants to coax him into learning more about our political system. It seems that Alexei Izyumov, Soviet citizen, was given an enumeration card for the federal election. Izyumov says "only my scientific objectivity prevented me from getting involved in the election by voting."

CUP Briefs

Meadow muffins

HALIFAX (CUP) — Bessie the cow will be roaming around a Mount Saint Vincent University field this week. And students will anxiously point cameras at her until the big event.

Three-inch square plots of land are being sold at \$3 each by the public relations students club as a fundraising event. Bessie the cow will drop a patty on the spot of her choice. If you own that spot, you win.

It's called Bessie Bingo.

The chair of the university's PR department has bought three of the 289 plots.

Prizes include \$100 in cash, two passes to a local club, and the choice of one of two paper mache cow-mascots.

An edited video of the event will be sent to the David Letterman Show, the latenight talk show. Said Gerald Hashey, co-ordinator of the fundraising committee, "We think it will be right up (Letterman's) alley."

Controversial condoms

BRANDON, Man. (CUP) — The November edition of Spin magazine wasn't circulated in Manitoba because the issue came with a condom attached.

Canadian News, the province's distributor of periodicals, mothballed the music magazine because of its "controversial subject matter."

"We thought it prudent to suspend distribution... you'd be surprised to learn how many people would be offended," said a company official who asked not to be identified.

The official said Canadian News was approached by several retailers who said they weren't interested in the November Spin.

Retailers were notified of the upcoming "controversial" nature of the magazine a month before. The letter said Spin would only be sent to those who specifically requested it.

The condom was a gimmick designed to publicize warnings that the AIDS virus is transmitted through semen and vaginal fluids. Researchers say condoms can protect sexual partners from the virus if properly used.

Canadian News said they supported "research for a cure... (but we're in a) damned if you do and damned if you don't kind of situation."

Spin magazine is published by Bob Guccione, Jr.

Care to spend part of your holidays at the lovely Oak Island Inn in Chester, Nova Scotia? If you can type, and would like to make some cash over the holidays, a stay in this luxurious establishment could be yours! We're looking for someone to transcribe the minutes of a Canadian University Press conference to be held Dec. 27-Jan. 2. A great opportunity for anyone with an interest in the media. Call Heather or Ellen at the Gazette (424-2507) or leave a message on the answering machine (424-6532).

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