

LOCALLY ENGAGED STAFF

The Canadian Embassy employs some 39 locally-engaged staff members in Moscow. As at other Canadian missions abroad, these employees provide a variety of important program and support services ranging from advice and assistance to Canadian business people and the travelling public to essential translation, transportation, accounting and maintenance services.

Aside from the occasional Canadian dependant, most of these locally-hired employees are Soviet nationals referred by the Office of Services to the Diplomatic Corps, UPDK. Their salaries and benefits are determined by the Embassy in light of local requirements, wages paid by other foreign missions in Moscow, and the various provisions of Soviet employment law. When a Soviet national is engaged by the Embassy, terms and conditions are detailed in a formal employment contract signed by the employee, UPDK, and the Embassy.

The importance of the role played by locally-engaged Soviet staff was graphically, if less than pleasantly, illustrated this past summer when the Soviet government abruptly withdrew 23 locally-engaged employees. While the experience demonstrated that the embassy could in fact maintain essential functions under adverse conditions, the agreement to restore staffing to normal levels following Mr. Clark's and Mr. Shevardnadze's meeting in New York last fall, was greeted with a collective sigh of relief by all concerned.

One bright spot in the whole episode, however, was the exceptional contribution of the thirteen Soviet staff permitted to remain at the Embassy through this difficult time. The cooperation and dedication of these employees was recognized by Ambassador Turner when he rewarded them with a bonus. In his words they "... worked valiantly to replace their absent colleagues."

PHOTO ESSAY BY CAROL WALKER

1. In Ashkhabad, in the southern republic of Turkmenistan, green snuff is offered in cones. The man's dark sheepskin hat contrasts with his beard typically trimmed to edge the chin.

2. Russian Orthodox priests carry the sacrament in a leather case. Zagorsk Monastery has "working cathedrals," in contrast to most churches which function as museums.

3. The distinctive Russian yoke is still used. This country woman wears "valenki" - felt boots with rubber soles which perhaps inspired snowmobile boots.

4. Priests at the Russian Orthodox Church are trained at Zagorsk monastery, 75 kilometers from Moscow. Once a medieval fortress, its 6 foot thick walls encompass 13 churches, cathedrals, and a museum.

5. A frail old man leaves Zagorsk Monastery. The elderly are more willing to risk official disapproval for attending church services than are younger Soviets.

6. Babushki huddle under umbrellas, taking orders from visiting Soviet citizens who have had their picture taken by professional photographers in Red Square. St. Basil's Cathedral surprises most visitors. Inside, it is broken up into many tiny chapels, connected by narrow, grooved stairways.

7. At a "stolovaya" cafeteria, patrons stand and snack on kefir, similar to yoghurt, and buns.