

Soviet scholar hears cry for democracy

By KIMI EISELE
Collegian Staff Writer

The cry for democracy in the Soviet Union is a muffled sound for most busy faculty members and students in Happy Valley. But for one visiting Fulbright scholar, it rings loudly. Victor Israelian, a Soviet diplomatic official and professor of Soviet foreign policy, left his Moscow home in August before the Soviet coup attempt.

"It was hard to leave because my children were there and nobody knew what would happen," Israelian said. "I am very glad my kids are courageous and optimistic."

Israelian, who will be at the University for the academic year, is currently assisting Vernon Aspaturian, a professor of political science, in two political science classes this semester.

"(Israelian) is a former high-ranking Soviet official who knew all the Soviet leaders from Krushchev on," Aspaturian said. "He is someone who knows a great deal about the inside workings of Soviet foreign policy. He brings his knowledge and experience and shares it with students."

Israelian will speak of his experiences today at 3:30 p.m. in 222 Boucke as part of the International Lecture Series, which invites other visiting Fulbright scholars and returned University faculty Fulbright scholars to speak throughout the year, said Mary Gage, the Fulbright program adviser.

Earlier this week, Israelian sat comfortably in the furnished apartment, where he resides with his wife, not far from campus. He spoke of his experiences slowly and audibly with a thick Russian accent.

Though he is enjoying his time here, Israelian said he can't forget that cold winters are difficult without oil or food. He said he is thankful for the courage and optimism of the Soviet youth.

"Democracy is a level of civilization — you can't speak of democracy among a wild, uncivilized people."

— Victor Israelian
Soviet diplomatic official

Using dramatic hand gestures, Israelian said he could sense something was about to happen. He said that Gorbachev was succeeding in areas of democratization, but things were backfiring.

"We have the expression in Russia — you can't sit on two chairs at one time. It was hard to have a Communist leader and develop a free market at the same time."

Still, Israelian stressed that the time and form of what happened was unexpected.

Israelian explained that the feelings of the Soviet people are multiple.

"The people who were part of the bureaucracy or the party or the elite are unhappy, angry and furious with the situation, with the de-Stalinization," Israelian said. "Thank God they are in the minority — a generation which will disappear. The majority is happy for the new freedom and openness and changes, but unhappy with the deadlock in the economy."

Relating the changes that began in August to the October Revolution of 1917, Israelian recognizes that though the ruling elite has been crushed as a main political basis in the Soviet Union, it will still take time for the country to become a wealthy, democratic and civilized state.

"Democracy is a level of civilization — you can't speak of democracy among a wild, uncivilized people," Israelian said of the diverse

Soviet republics that often equate democracy with anarchy.

Israelian blames the decades of suppression for the misuse of democracy in Soviet republics.

Leaning back on his sofa, Israelian took a moment to reflect on his upbringing in both Soviet Georgia and Moscow.

During his lifetime, Israelian said, there was a great fear in disobeying the "big brother Russians," ruled from Moscow.

"On the surface it was quiet, with no conflicts, but it was a life which we are now ashamed of and sorry of," he said.

Israelian said when there is law and order and respect for human rights in his country, then technological advancements, wealth and more comfortable living habits will follow. But, he added, it will take time.

Likewise, he said, the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union will take time to improve.

"The past 45 years have been an era of confrontation. The next 45 years won't be an era of brotherhood, but it will be different — more business-like, creative business."

As a member of the generation that lived in the Cold War period, Israelian said the coup would have only pushed relations between United States and Soviet relations back. For this, he said he is happy the coup failed.

Pointing to a Soviet newspaper, Israelian said he manages to keep up with the situation in his country.

But from his contacts so far with University students and professors, Israelian said Americans do not understand the seriousness of events in other parts of the world and feel unthreatened by such events.

"This is not the United States of the 19th century and the Monroe Doctrine, it is a different world. If something happens in one region it bothers the rest."

Multiple sclerosis society seeks University chapter

By ORLANA M. DARKINS
Collegian Staff Writer

A national student organization dedicated to educating students and raising funds to find a cure for multiple sclerosis is looking to form a chapter at the University.

Students Against Multiple Sclerosis, consisting of student leaders from more than 150 campuses, sponsors contests to generate funds and increase awareness among college students, according to a SAMS news release.

MTV contributes by televising "Rock Alike" during spring break programming, which is SAMS largest fund-raiser. Students imitate and lip sync to their favorite artist's song. Other fund-raisers include, SKIP-A-MEAL FOR MS, haircut-athons, dance marathons and other events coordinated by the students.

Although SAMS is looking for a Penn State leader to organize the chapter, Sigma Pi fraternity, 303 Fraternity Row, sponsors the group. The fraternity supports SAMS by organizing a golf tournament.

"Our national philanthropy donations go to SAMS where the funds are generated from the Sigma Pi Open," said Tom Flowers, Sigma Pi president. "Depending on the participation we usually raise \$2,500 to \$5,000."

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling, neurological disease that cripples the nervous system. According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society a quarter of a

"The program helps many students to be conscious of multiple sclerosis."

— Karin Brownstein
program consultant

million Americans have the disease. There is no known cause or cure for the disease, but biomedical research efforts are supported by the society.

Many students participate because they are in the same age group as many people with multiple sclerosis, he said.

"MS primarily affects young adults in the same age range as college students. The program helps many students to be conscious of multiple sclerosis and also it helps build long-term support for the MS Society," said Karin Brownstein, program consultant for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Many students participate in SAMS to build leadership skills and provide insight into many careers.

"Many learn valuable skills in marketing, public relations, and coordinating special events," Brownstein said. "Many students already interested in those fields want to have hands on experience. Some have family members with multiple sclerosis or they themselves have MS."

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