

THE BRIDGE OVER THE OCEAN BECAME THE
SYMBOL OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE WITH GOOD WILL

Last Saturday and Sunday the second show of the telecosmic connection "Moscow-Cosmos - California" was held. Imagine a huge videotelephone through which, every one who desires can ask any question and momentarily receive an answer from the other side of the globe. And to see the eyes of the responding person. And to know, that he too sees your eyes.

This event has an history. In the summer of last year, the organizers of one of America's youth festivals turned to our State Television and Radio with an unusual request. During the festival they intended to organize a parade of newest achievements of electronic technology. Among those - this huge screen.

In front of it, a few hundred thousand people were to gather at a given time and through the satellite to receive a stable picture from the other end of the World. This miracle took place at the night of September 4, 1982. It seems that all that happened was a joint concert and exchange of greetings. Alla Pugacheva* sang for the participants of the American festival; a number of rock groups played interchangeably and the youth on both sides of "Television Bridge" danced and sang. People who gathered that early morning in one of Ostankino* studios had some sort of a sensation of universality and globality of the happening. They desired to have detailed talks, to look narrowly at strange faces, to answer questions.

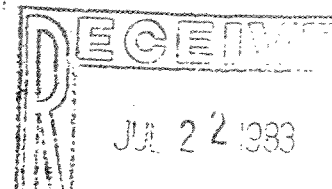
Apparently, the Americans had similar thoughts. At least, when after eight months, in May of this year, a discussion started to once again throw a television bridge over the ocean, both sides agreed that this time, along with music and dancing, there should also be a direct dialogue. Congressmen with deputies, cosmonauts with astronauts, scientists with scientists, mothers with mothers. No scenarios were written in advance. And how can you write them? Among those invited to the show was, of course, "Komsomolskaya Pravda" And I decided to make a present to Levon Agamanykian. This young artist from Erevan, of whom our paper had written on March 3, had just turned fourteen. For a number of days, this shy boy literary suffered for the benefit of all, answering questions to psychiatrists journalists, pedagogues, in the Blue Hall of "Komsomolskaya Pravda." How did he manage to oil paint three hundred and twenty four remarkable paintings, suitable for exhibition halls, in such an incredibly short period as less than two years? What is it - a mysterious puzzle or a natural occurring? So we invited Levon with his parents and sister to a show of telecosmic connection.

During the show, I was observing the kids. Both they and their American coevals were asking each other not complicated questions: How do you study a foreign language in school, what kind of movies do you like, do you have actors among kids, from which grade do you start studying programming...

But the essence was not in the questions. We will have time to learn all about each other, all we need is a desire, and most importantly, no war. It seems to me that it is precise children and parents who have to constitute the main group of audience in the following telemeetings. Since the talks about future are the talks about the fate of children. And it is this pedagogical field in which we can find points of mutual understanding with ordinary Americans.

* Alla Pugacheva is a very well-known pop music singer.

* Ostankino is the location and name of Moscow TV and radio studios.



... Mother's main problem today is what to do with her son. The house has already become tight of canvases, and already he had given two personal exhibitions, and what will happen to him in the future. He had already spoiled his vision and his health is so fragile... She wanted very much to ask this question to an American mother, perhaps she would know. She had asked this question of Soviet mothers, both in Moscow and Erevan. They only shrug their shoulders, because at no time was there in the world such a number of talented children. How wonderful can our XXI century be, when all these young artists, musicians, and sages will grow up. But the mother's heart is afraid of something else -- global catastrophe.

... Next to me there is yet another mother. For some reason she has asked me: Can I not ask a question but simply get up and say - I have three kids. The youngest is only a year and a half, she refers to every woman as a mother and to every man as a father. But I am not jealous. Let it be that way. Let her count all humanity as her family. But you too, grown-ups, take care of Katia, show concern for her future. For a second, a face of an American mother appeared on the screen. Her eyes were saying the same thing.

From the banks of Ostankino point towards the beaches of Pacific ocean, rushed the signals for peace. If all intentions of the organizers will come through, the tape of the dialogue will be available for viewers in tens of countries in the world.

After the last, September videobridge, a number of people were found abroad who poured tea spoons of tar in a big barrel of honey. The tweeks were of various kinds. In one American magazine I read that the participants of the experiment in Moscow were given pairs of jeans, so that they'll look more fashionable...

The dogs are howling, the caravan is moving. It is needed very much today, this television caravan, in this desert which was created in the relations of two great powers.

Perhaps at some point, this cosmic bridge will become a very ordinary thing, designed to enable conversations between cities, and peoples. Technically, it is a reality already today.

It should be mentioned that both teleexperiments - the one in September and today, were done in a very tight schedules. The central television has emerged with honors from the first two trials.

The commentator, Vladimir Pozner, academician E. Velikhov, the cosmonaut V. Sevastianov who had spoken with an astronaut Shveicart, and the director of NII of General Pedagogy had brilliantly handled the task. Actually, the whole room was at its best - kids, young artist Levon Agamanykian, students, young workers, and Andrey Voznesenskii*.

Evgenii Velikhov said in his speech that nuclear arms are not muscles but a tumour which requires operational surgical interference. He also spoke about the fact that forty years ago, on the fences of Moscow there hang the same two posters as now, two flags - an American and Soviet, and hand-shaking of companions for the common struggle.

The Ostankino hall audiences got up and were staring at the screen. What will they, over the ocean, say about this. Here the words reached them, here they were translated into English, and suddenly a sea of hands were waving. And if it was impossible to see the lumps at the throats, that was only the failure of technology which can do almost everything but not everything.

There exist events which are the beginnings of new epochs. Time will show whether or not these two videobridges will become the beginning of long-term program of cooperation. One wants to believe in this with all one's strength, with a great hope that peoples, who get acquainted will understand each other better, when they are face to face.

* A well-known Soviet poet.

Ararat*, from many sides and during various seasons of time, day and year. Portraits of father, friends, acquaintances, and simply strangers. I don't know what will Levon devote his three hundred and twenty fifth painting to, but for some reason, I am sure that it will carry the motive of the telecosmic bridge.

Because he paints the most beautiful things that he meets. And what could be more beautiful than an open human face, than eyes, which are asking: "You too are for peace? For life? For children?"

Paint Levon, grow-up Ekaterina* and let the bridges of understanding between yours and strange parents, between Moscow and California, Shanghai and Venezuela, between all who is nursed by mothers' breast and Earth, never be destroyed.

*An Armenian mountain located now within Turkish borders. It is clearly seen from the Armenian city of Erevan.

* Ekaterina is the full name for Katia.