

DCT 103

D. C. Thompson
5/11/56MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN OF SOCIETY
Rev. D.C. Thompson.

The need for the development and extension of international cultural relations is greater today than it has ever been before. The world is sharply divided between people who favour the Soviet system and those against it. It is not the purpose of our Society to take sides in the controversies of world politics. We believe that in spite of political differences, countries should learn to get along together, to understand one another, to appreciate each other's cultural achievements and to conduct trade for mutual benefit and prosperity,

To work for such good relations between the Soviet Union and our country is the aim of the S.A. Society for Peace and Friendship with the Soviet Union.

To this end our Society organises public lectures and exhibitions and strives to counteract the misrepresentations and ill-will which clouds the international atmosphere.

We are particularly pleased to be able to present this exhibition at the University of the Witwatersrand. This University is well known for its spirit of tolerance and objectivity, and it is in this spirit that we hope this message will be received.

One cannot hope to convey any adequate idea of the culture and life of a nation through the medium of a few dozen photographs. We would like to aim at reciprocal visits to broaden our understanding. Why should not a delegation of South African farmers go to study Soviet agriculture? Or a group of our musicians and folk dancers visit their academies - and show what we can do? And why shouldn't we enjoy a visit from a group of Soviet ballet dancers or singers?

This can be done. In spite of international tension, there is a lively interest among Soviet people in the culture of other nations. For example, since the war, 86 million copies of translations of the works of foreign authors have been published in the Soviet Union. These include the works of 218 British and 211 American authors. French and Italian films have been shown in the Soviet Union for many years and the importation of British films has recently started. There is no doubt that great possibilities of mutual cultural exchanges exist and it is up to us to make the most of these possibilities.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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