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New member of the Real Great Society

The subjects of the story that begins on page 76 call themselves the Real Great Society—and they intend no irony. They are slum kids, with a poverty program of their own. Most of them are Puerto Rican, some are illiterate, many have been inmates of reform school and prison, and all of them at one time were leaders of street gangs. They came to the attention of Roger Vaughan when he heard that the group had received a grant of \$15,000 from the Vincent Astor Foundation. An assistant editor, Vaughan, who is 30, came to us from the *Saturday Evening Post* two years ago.

Roger pedals to work through New York traffic on a 10-speed metallic-green Italian bicycle which he parks in his office. He would sail to work if he could; he spends all his spare time on sailboats and is enthusiastic enough to have served as crewman in four Bermuda races. Professionally, at the moment, he is specializing in stories about young people, and he has grown knowledgeable enough about their tastes for his older colleagues to turn to him for advice when they buy records for their children. They know that what Roger picks will never brand them as squares.



ROGER VAUGHAN

Looking into the story, Roger and Photographer Steve Schapiro went down to the Lower East Side loft where the Real Great Society was holding a meeting. "At first it didn't look like much," says Roger. "Here were these kids holding a raucous meeting, yelling back and forth in broken English with no apparent leadership. The first few nights, Steve and I left those meetings shaking our heads. It seemed impossible that this disorganized bunch had really been given a substantial grant from a foundation. But we knew that they had, and that, combined with their real charm and hustle, made us stick it out. And hustle us they did. The story wasn't their only interest. As soon as they saw Schapiro's cameras and learned that we were from LIFE, they began pumping us about two projects they then had in the works: a photography lab and a magazine. One night they cornered me on one side of the loft, Steve on the other, and it was the Real Great Society that was doing the interviewing. That night they elected us to their board of directors—they wanted to make darn sure they didn't lose us.

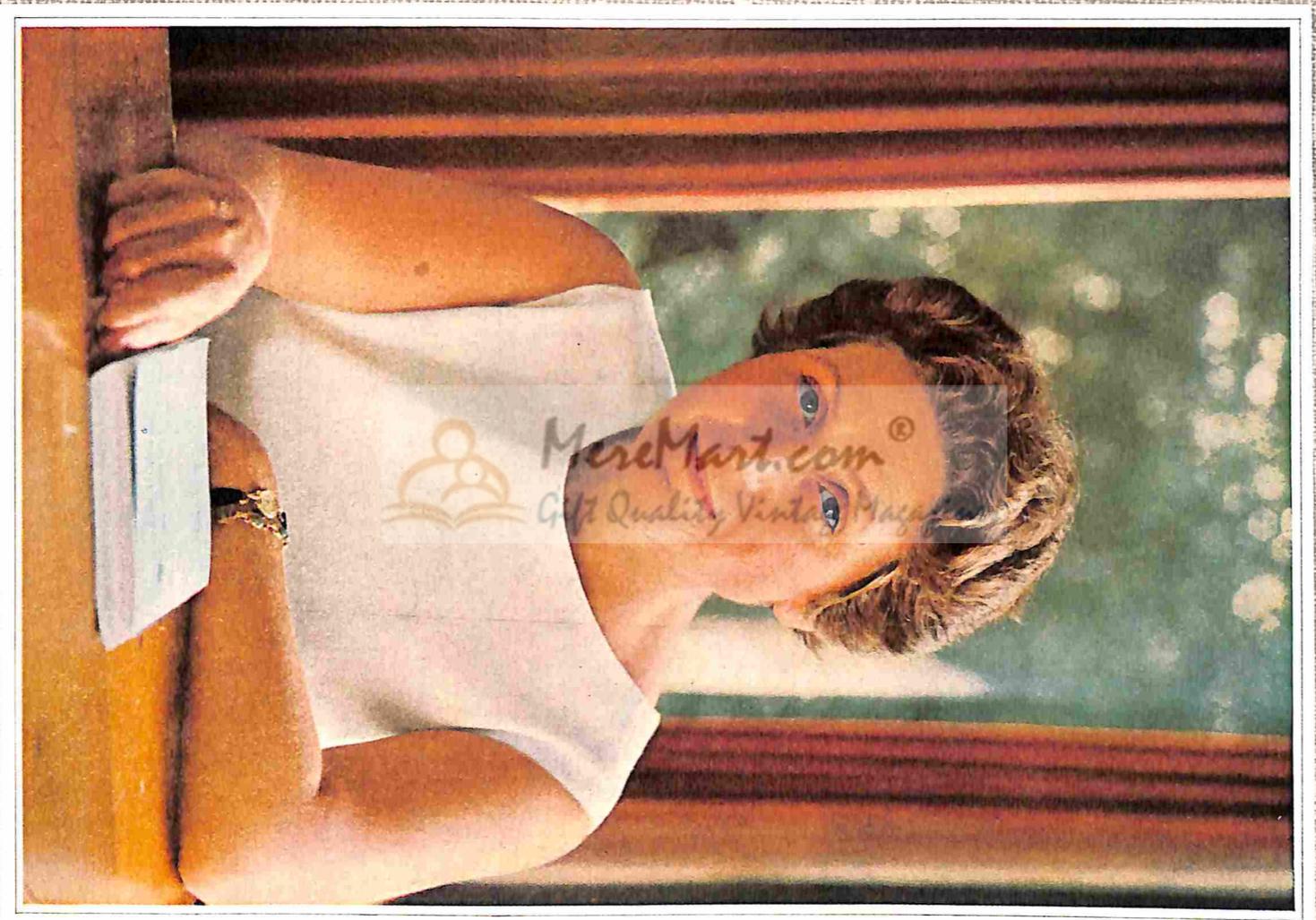
"One of the most refreshing things about being one of this Great Society is that its members always have fun. Even after a tough business meeting with a lot of loud disagreement, there would always be enough small change rounded up to buy a couple of quarts of beer. Then some good Latin sounds would be put on the record player and things would get lively. They have a great spirit and love of life that many generations of poverty haven't been able to squelch, and that's what's really behind the success of the Real Great Society. I'm glad I'm a member."

George P. Hunt
GEORGE P. HUNT,
Managing Editor

LIFE

The Intimate Recollections of

STALIN'S DAUGHTER



*Her extraordinary life within a doomed
family ruled by the dictator of a dark era*

by SVETLANA ALLILUYEVA

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