

WHAT IS GLASS MADE OF?



You, I am talking about the glass you see everyday. There are so few people that know exactly how glass and mirrors are made, but a few select students here at AUCA now know the process and that glass is made of...well, I'd better tell the whole story.

In October, the AUCA Career Center provided students with a unique opportunity to see the process of glass production with their own eyes. Several trips to the factory of "Interglass" company, which is a Kyrgyz-German joint venture, were arranged.

Everything started from the journey to Tokmak city. Those who didn't come to Career Center in time definitely lost their chance and we had to leave without them. When we got to Tokmak, the landscape around the factory reminded us of "Stalker", the movie masterpiece of Andrey Tarkovskiy. It was a soviet-style building, a large and looming gate, and

a smoke stack in the background. That's how the factory looks from outside. And finally, we entered the gate.

Inside the factory walls our guide showed us everything, starting from the materials needed for glass, and ending with the packing of finished glassware. It was very hard to stand next to the furnace, because the temperature in it reaches 1650 degrees Celsius! Then we went farther, to observe how glass stripe is formed, gradually cooled, cut, and packed. The technological part of this process was amazing – only 2-4 people were controlling each operation! The place where the glass is cut was strange, because of the sounds of breaking glass. These sounds constantly drew our attention from the words of our guide, Mrs. Zimmerman. And the poster on the wall with the words "No need in traumas!" suddenly became very meaningful.

In the department of laminated

glass, Mrs. Zimmerman showed us how multilayer glass is made. The conditions in that department are like in an operating room, because the film that sticks the pieces of glass together is very fragile.

The laminated glass laboratory wasn't the only place with sterile and unusual conditions. In the room where the silver mirrors are made, the glass is washed with distilled water. Visiting this room would be very interesting for people who are keen on chemistry, because even the air smelled there of chemicals, which are used in production of mirrors. As a result, the mirrors come out brilliant! It was a real pleasure to see my reflection in a huge (about 1.5 meters high and 3 meters wide), freshly made mirror. Where else can you have such a great chance?

The railway lines completed the grandiose picture of the factory. They are the starting point in glassware's journey all over the country, and even over the space of CIS countries. We felt a bit remorseful, because the major portion of glassware is made for export. But then we thought about it and understood that it is actually good for us and our country to have these exports to support our economy.

All good things must come to an end, and so did our excursion. Reluctantly we left the factory because we had learned all that was possible about glass-making. After this trip everyone who was there will be able to look in the mirror or in the window and recall how, and from what, these things are made. By the way, the ingredients used for glass production are the following: sand, soda ash, coal, limestone, dolomite, and feldspar.

And for those who want to know why in the glass-cutting section glass is not only cut, but also broken, I advise you to read the Career Center announcements – your chance is coming!

Malika ISMANOVA

P.S. Dear Students, Next semester AUCA Career Center will arrange Company Visit to gold mining industrial venue of the Kumtor Operating Company! For more information come to the Career Center.

