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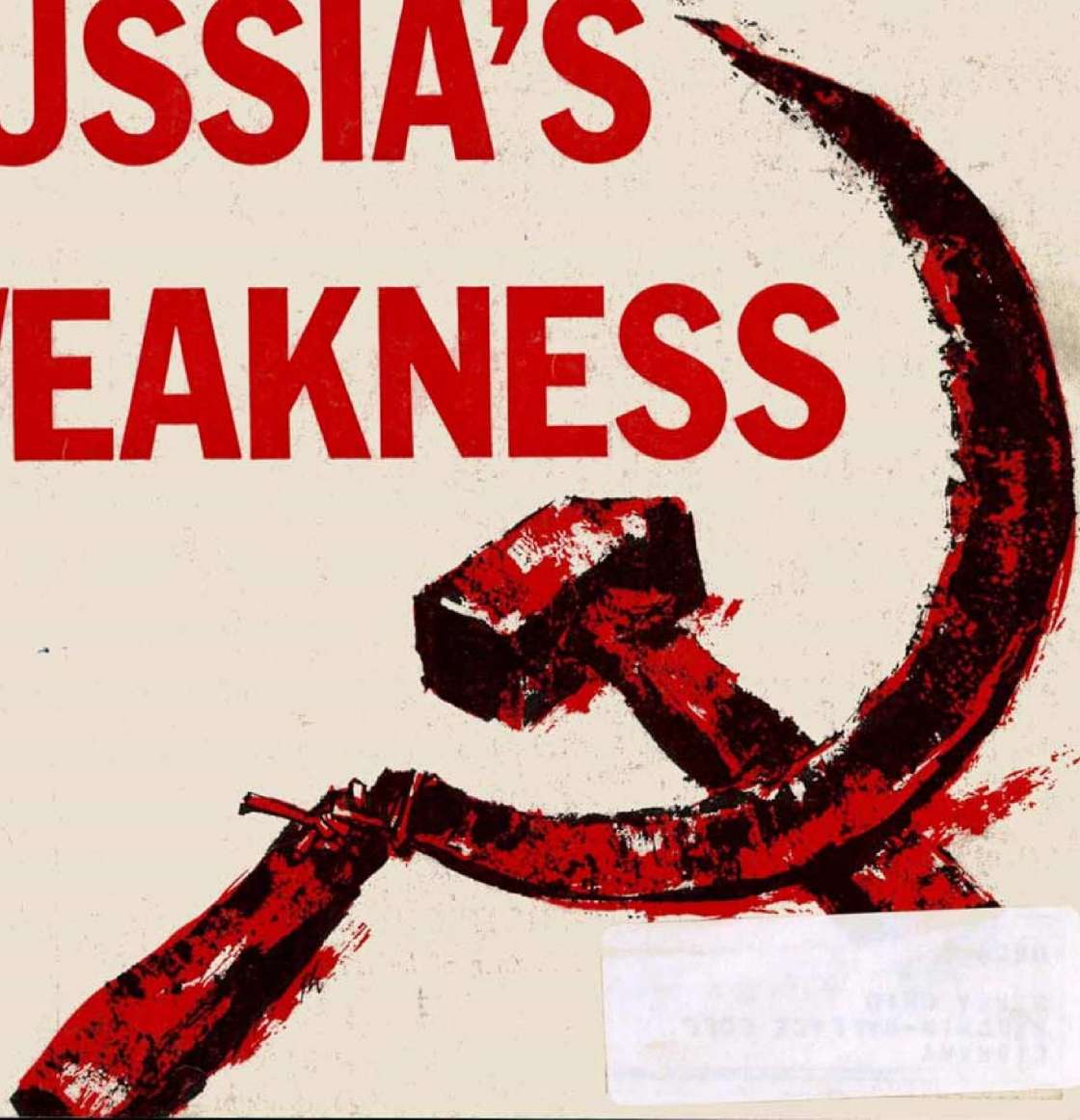
BEREA, OHIO

FEB 25 '57

**THE TRUE STORY OF**

**RUSSIA'S**

**WEAKNESS**



# THE TRUE STORY OF

Has the world been fooled by Russia, and its claims of remarkable progress under 40 years of Communist planning? What's behind the impressive façade of Soviet strength—a hollow shell?

Now, for the first time, the answers come from a trained economist who went to Russia to see for himself. The outgrowth of that trip is a detailed and penetrating firsthand report, made by G. Warren Nutter, associate professor of economics at the University of Virginia.

Professor Nutter visited Russia in connection with work for the National Bureau of Economic Research. He is director of the Bureau's study of Soviet economic growth, a project sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation.

On his fact-finding tour of Russia, made in 1956, Mr. Nutter traveled widely and saw much. He visited Russian cities and towns, went into factories, looked at collective farms, talked with officials and workers, and examined

the whole field of Russian life with a trained observer's eye.

Russia's economy, concludes Mr. Nutter, is half a century behind the West. As for Russian airplanes, cars, radios and modern weapons, he calls these "anachronisms" in a country that, by and large, is still backward.

Mr. Nutter describes production methods that are ancient by Western standards, and pictures a transportation system that is crude. He even finds "sweat shops."

It is the expert opinion of Mr. Nutter that there could have been "remarkable growth" of the economy of Soviet Russia over the last 40 years, "if there had been a significant area of private enterprise to release, encourage and channel the powerful energies of the work force and the inherent creative abilities."

Instead, Mr. Nutter finds Communist Russia stifled by bad planning, bureaucratic inefficiency and lack of any real incentive.



PROFESSOR NUTTER

# RUSSIA'S WEAKNESS



BY G. WARREN NUTTER

Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Virginia

## WHAT INDUSTRY IS LIKE UNDER RED BOSSES

IT WAS DIFFICULT to visit the kinds of plants I was interested in, apparently not so much because the authorities were trying to keep visitors out, but because plant officials had already been bothered excessively by tourists. In the written description of tours, Intourist [the official Soviet tourist agency] had promised visits to industrial plants and collective farms in various cities. Rather typically, the agency had apparently not arranged to set up regular tours in certain plants; instead, each time a tourist asked to see a plant, the Intourist chief in that city would call around to different plants until he found one willing to show the tourist through.

Since these tours were usually conducted by the plant manager, his assistant or the chief engineer, it is easy to see that the management of the plants most in demand—i.e., those in heavy industry—got tired of tourists and quickly found some excuse for refusing Intourist requests. Typical excuses: "The plant is under repair"; "We will call back"; "The manager is on vacation."

In any case, after the first wave of tourists had hit the major cities, it became increasingly difficult to arrange for visits. It may be said that Intourist's failure to make elementary preparations and its generally poor organizational work seemed to follow the customary pattern of Soviet bureaucracy.

A visitor to the Soviet Union must become accustomed to boundless red tape, interminable delays, continual frustration and total ignorance of what is going on. One particularly annoying thing is that the tourist is seldom told outright that a request has been denied; he is instead strung along with

vague statements until the time comes when he must leave town.

**The curtain factory in Leningrad [Samelov Gardinno-Tiulevaia Fabrika]**—This plant, one of two in the Soviet Union manufacturing lace curtains and related items (e.g., lace tablecloths), is about 120 years old. Before the Revolution it was owned by a British concern. The buildings, almost all the machinery and a great deal of the technology obviously date from the tsarist period.

Except for one floor of new spinning and winding equipment built in the Soviet Union and East Germany—equipment that seemed, on the whole, to be quite efficient—the machinery is of English, German and French design, as installed around 1886. Much of the power is transmitted through overhead belt lines, a relic of the days when steam engines were used as prime movers. The rooms are dark, dirty and crowded with machines. Not even primitive safety equipment is to be seen. Graphite is used as a lubricant, and it covers everything with its characteristic black and slippery coating: stairs, walls, railings and workers—generally black from head to toe.

I was curious as to how such ancient equipment could be kept in operating condition, and on raising this question was told that spare parts are manufactured in the Soviet Union. As an illustration of the backwardness of technology, the chief engineer—an employe in this plant for 27 years, having learned his trade on the job—asked if textile machinery were made in the United States. He knew, he said, that such machinery is made in Germany, France, England

... A textile plant "looked like something out of the nineteenth century, and it is hard to believe that similar plants exist in this country or in Western Europe"

and the Soviet Union, since it is used in the plant, but he had never heard of American machinery.

It may also be noted that the industrial sewing machines used were Singers of ancient—probably tsarist—origin.

The plant operates on three shifts: two 8-hour day shifts and one 7-hour night shift. Workers on the day shifts were said to have a 46-hour week: 8 hours weekdays and 6 hours on Saturday. There are about 2,000 workers, including 68 administrative and 70 technical. Between 70 and 80 per cent seemed to be women. There is supposed to be a rest period every two hours. Wages were said to run between 600 and 1,200 rubles a month [\$150 to \$300], with an average around 800 [\$200. At the official rate of exchange, four rubles are worth \$1. Actually, however, the ruble is worth considerably less.] Profits in excess of plan were said to be divided equally between management and workers, but this seems to be a standard line and, if one judges from vigorous complaints in the Soviet press, probably is not true.

The looms stopped frequently because of breakage of thread, and the plant engineer complained that the cotton

thread was decidedly inferior and would probably be sent back to the factory. Paraffin is used to strengthen the thread and to reduce breakage. It is likely that operating conditions are generally worse than I observed, since every plant insists on advance notice of visits so that everything can be put in the best order.

On the whole, this plant looked like something out of the nineteenth century, and it is hard to believe that similar plants exist in this country or, for that matter, in Western Europe.

The hosiery mill in Kharkov [name not known]—This plant, under the Ukrainian Ministry of Light Industry, was said to have been completely rebuilt since the war, when it was supposedly totally destroyed. The run-down state of the buildings made it difficult to believe that everything had been rebuilt, but one can never tell about Soviet buildings. In any case, all the machinery I saw was new and of Soviet origin, except the knitting machines for kapron [a synthetic] hosiery, which were built in Germany. The plant makes socks and stockings—mostly the former—out of wool, cotton

## RUSSIA: A LAND OF SHODDY GOODS—AND WISTFUL WINDOW-SHOPPERS



... "Most of the equipment seemed to be modern enough, but at the same time very few processes were 'automatic'—a great deal of handwork seemed to be required at all stages"

and kapron. Cotton is by all odds the most important raw material.

Most of the equipment seemed to be modern enough, but at the same time very few processes were "automatic"—a great deal of handwork seemed to be required at all stages, in feeding and guiding machines, and so on. I cannot safely generalize about this, however, since I am not familiar with techniques in American hosiery mills.

Working rooms were clean and well lighted with fluorescent bulbs; in this respect this plant is exceptional. The plant works on two 8-hour shifts: from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to midnight. Workers were said to have a 46-hour week. There are 3,500 workers, from whom 3 to 4 per cent were described as "administrative." Women were said to make up 70 to 80 per cent of the work force but, from my observations, I should say more likely 90 per cent. The chief engineer is a woman, risen from the ranks.

Wages are said to run from 450 to 2,000 rubles a month [\$112.50 to \$500], with an average of 600 [\$150]. Men presumably may retire at 60, women at 55, with a pension ranging

between 300 and 1,200 rubles a month [\$75 to \$300]; they may also work beyond retirement age with a deduction of 150 rubles [\$37.50] from their normal monthly salary. Profits were said to be 13 million rubles [3.25 million dollars] in 1954, of which 12 million [3 million dollars] went to the state and 1 million [\$250,000] to the director's fund. An undisclosed share of the latter was contributed to workers' clubs, sanatoriums, youth camps, etc., but not in direct bonuses to workers.

Production was said to be 200,000 pairs of socks and stockings a day, but my guess is that this was a considerable overstatement.

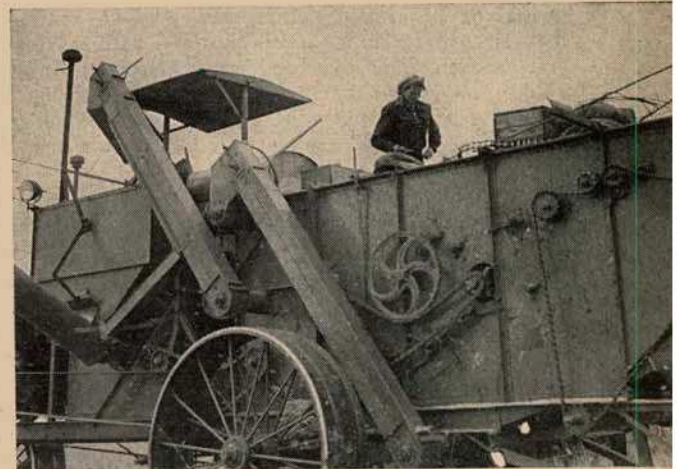
The factory had an evening "engineering" school with an enrollment of 300, and a similar trade school with an enrollment of 100. Both were conducted in a few small rooms with crude and primitive equipment, and by a staff that showed more signs of age than of educational talent. Such "schools" could never qualify for that name in this country.

The machine-tool plant in Moscow [Ordzhonikidze Factory]—This plant, which I finally managed to visit on my last afternoon in the Soviet Union, produces mainly "aggre-



HUGE CRANES are left on the site until a building is completed—which may take years. Much of this time they are idle.

SOVIET FACTORIES are dirty, cluttered and poorly lighted, by Western standards. There is virtually no safety equipment.



—Pix, Homer & Norton Dodge Photos

GIANT COMBINES are showpieces of the collective farms, strike Americans as being too large for real efficiency.

PASSENGER TRAINS are generally slow. This old-fashioned car was photographed recently in the Moscow station.



. . . **"Huge cranes are seen literally by the hundreds standing idle at construction sites, where cranes half the size and a quarter the number would work equally well, if not better"**

gate" tools. An "aggregate" tool is one designed to turn out by itself, either "automatically" or "semiautomatically," some component part of a product. For example, an "aggregate" machine tool may turn out, without the aid of other tools, a coupling for the exhaust manifold of an automobile.

This plant was designed and built by American engineers in 1934, and most of the equipment, as the chief engineer himself pointed out, is American, English and German. It was said that these foreign machines are to be replaced by Soviet machines, with 67 scheduled for replacement this year, however that is to be interpreted. Most of the testing equipment, including some lapped weights and measures, is Soviet-made and seems to be of good quality.

The plant operates on two shifts and has 3,500 workers, of whom about 30 per cent are engineers and salaried employees. Some 300 engineers were said to be employed in design of tools alone. Output was given as about 100 tools of different types a day.

It is very difficult to draw any conclusions about the efficiency of this plant. It is clear, on the one hand, that the tools turned out are of good quality, though they are in many respects cruder than comparable Western models. On the other hand, the technology of the plant still seemed geared to its original design, now over 20 years old. The floor space was jammed and cluttered with machines, parts and workers; the overhead cranes seemed obsolete and clumsy—one large machine tool was dropped on the floor while I was there, with considerable damage to it and other equipment; safety equipment was totally absent; and almost no automatic hand tools were in use.

**Some general observations**—The plants I saw are obviously a poor sample of Soviet industry: Two are in light industry—the stepchild—and the third is a relatively old machine-tool factory. They therefore probably represent, if not the worst, than the less-advanced industrial conditions.

The technology in this part of Soviet industry is far behind ours, by anywhere from 15 to 70 years. The productivity of workers is clearly much lower than in similar American plants, by reason of all three major factors: poorer training, management and equipment. Work space is crowded and generally dirty and poorly lighted; there is virtually no safety equipment or clothing; the work load is heavy and there is strong pressure to work hard.

Work stoppages and accidents seemed to be more tolerated—more taken for granted—than would be the case in American industry, and the Russian worker exhibited much of his customary clumsiness.

### How Engineers Are Trained

It became quickly apparent that heavy stress is placed from above on training workers in engineering and vocational skills, for each plant manager went out of his way to describe and display the plant's "educational" program. As mentioned above, I came away with the impression that these programs are crude and generally ineffectual, except possibly at the most elementary levels.

The plant engineers I saw did not seem to be well trained or informed by Western standards; all three chief engineers had risen from the ranks with very little in the way of formal education. In many ways the type of training seemed

comparable with that in America and England during the nineteenth century, though, of course, the technology mastered is more advanced.

My remaining comments are based on casual observations of everyday life and of special displays put on by the Soviet Government. Everything a visitor sees about him confirms the well-known conclusion that Soviet industry is geared primarily to serve the needs of the military and of heavy industry, and only residually the needs of the consumer. Most consumer goods are shoddy and unbelievably scarce by Western standards, about which more later.

### "Machinery Has Been Mastered"

On the other side, one sees evidence all about that the production and use of complicated and, especially, bulky machinery has been mastered. This is not to say that large quantities of modern machinery are to be seen; in fact, this is not so, with a few exceptions.

The important thing is that examples of all types of machines are on display and in use. An interesting sidelight is the fierce pride many Russians take in being able to say that such-and-such is made in the Soviet Union, too—and, conversely, their delicate sensitivity to the suggestion that such-and-such is not made.

One has the feeling that Soviet leaders are willing to go to almost any expense just to be able to say that the Soviet Union, too, produces fine cameras, watches, champagne, electronic microscopes, and so on. And if something is not actually being produced in the Soviet Union, there is always some glib excuse at hand, if only the statement that it is uncultural, unwanted and uncommunitic.

One characteristic of the Soviet industrial scene invariably commented upon by outsiders is immediately apparent: the fascination with complicated and gigantic equipment. Agricultural equipment, such as combines and tractors, is usually much larger than one would find in this country, and one suspects much larger than the optimum size. Huge cranes are seen literally by the hundreds standing idle at construction sites, where cranes half the size and a quarter the number would work equally well, if not better.

Industrial expositions are dominated by displays of machinery, mostly of the "heavy" variety.

All this in an economy that apparently has not yet discovered the wheelbarrow—sledges and two-man litters are used instead—where the scythe is still far more in evidence than the mower, where brooms are mainly bundles of twigs without handles, where the mop is a handleless rag, etc. In the drive for modernism, the Soviet system has apparently ignored that multitude of simple yet dramatic inventions so important in the economic development of other countries.

In areas where the layman is competent to judge, there is abundant evidence that innovation still amounts mainly to making exact copies of foreign equipment. As is well known, Soviet cars have been virtually identical copies of earlier American models: the Zis, of the 1939 Packard; the Zim, of the 1939 Buick; the trucks, of American wartime models even down to olive-drab paint; and so on.

When new automobile models were introduced this year, the same practice was continued: The new Zil (formerly Zis) is patterned after the Cadillac of the late '40s; the Volga,

. . . "In general, new buildings can be distinguished from old ones, in that they look older. Even when freshly built, they look drab and show signs everywhere of poor construction"

after the 1955 Plymouth; the Moskvitch, after a recent model of the Nash Rambler; and so on.

The Soviet version of an electric shaver is an identical copy of the Remington; one vacuum cleaner is a copy of the Lewyt; the two models of calculating machines I saw are copies of the American Marchant and the Swedish Facit, respectively.

The one product that struck me as showing true originality and ingenuity—the new Soviet bus—turns out, as I later saw, to be a copy of German and Austrian buses.

The poor showing of Soviet industry in the area of imaginative innovation would seem, from all visible evidence, to remain a major weakness.

One interesting small example of this concerned the new Zil, one of the first Soviet cars to have automatic transmission. Apparently, great difficulties have been encountered in trying to get this model into production. When I visited the industrial exhibition in Moscow, I made a special effort to see the Zil, supposedly on display with the other new car models. After several inquiries I finally learned that it had been removed from the display without publicity; as far as new visitors to the exhibition are concerned, such a car simply does not exist, nor is its existence contemplated.

From what the ordinary visitor sees of the Russian people, he must be struck by their backwardness, by their apparent dislike for persistent work—though not for long hours of work—by their lack of sense of order and organization, by their low level of skill to the point of sheer awkwardness, and by their inability to "get things done" in a businesslike manner. In part this results, of course, from the pervasive dead weight of bureaucracy, everywhere in evidence to a degree that is bound to startle the Westerner. But, in large part, it simply reflects a backward, distorted economy.

I must confess that I am more mystified than ever about how the Soviet economy can have achieved all that its leaders claim for it. It puts a heavy strain on my imagination to picture one large isolated sector of the economy—namely, heavy industry—where all these signs of backwardness vanish, and industrial progress rivaling or exceeding that of the West reigns.

This may nevertheless be the case, for I had no opportunity to get a comprehensive and direct view of heavy industry. But, if it is the case, then there is something truly remarkable about Soviet accomplishments. There has been created an economy incredibly out of balance, with the bulk of skill, incentive, working temperament and efficient organizational talent concentrated in an area very artfully concealed from the view of those who are not supposed to see it.

## BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Picture the slums in any major American city and magnify them to occupy nine tenths of the city: This is the nature of Soviet housing. Of all major sectors of the Soviet economy, housing is almost certainly the most depressed. Buildings are dilapidated, even crumbling; facilities and appointments are primitive, perhaps roughly comparable with, though undoubtedly cruder than, conditions in this country 60 or 70 years ago, and housing is incredibly crowded for a modern industrial community.

As a "de luxe" tourist, I was given the best quarters

available, aside from those reserved for the elite. These quarters invariably dated from the tsarist period, and generally would, except for their spaciousness, about match second-class hotels in Western Europe.

Brick and concrete are the materials used in all the construction I saw. It is said that steel reinforces the concrete, but I did not see any steel being used for reinforcing or for framing. The method of constructing brick buildings does not seem to have changed over the last 50 years. Walls are at least two feet thick, built of solid brick and covered on the exterior by stucco. Double windows, opening inward, are used everywhere in the north. The brick is generally soft and of poor quality, except in the region around Kiev.

### Lack of Skilled Workmen

The newer-type construction, with so-called "prefabricated" concrete, is of the simple pillar-and-post type. The "prefabricated" blocks seem to be of two kinds: one to be used as a pillar, the other as a slab overlaying two pillars. Where the concrete forms do not exactly fill in the required space, bricks are laid. The concrete seems to be of poor quality, with many imperfections and large cracks; it has a large slag content. Nowhere did I observe work done by craftsmen of Western variety—e.g., carpenters—or, for that matter, the craftsmen themselves.

Vast quantities of labor, both male and female, are used on a construction project up to a certain stage in the construction. Techniques are generally primitive: Much of the mortar and cement is mixed by hand; the mortar is seldom pointed; litters and sledges are used instead of wheelbarrows; building materials are moved about on the site by hand; levels do not seem to be used in laying brick—the courses are uneven and wavy; and much excavation and filling is done by hand. I saw a large work force back-filling a foundation with shovels all night long, a job that would have been done here in a couple of hours by one bulldozer.

The only modern note is the ever-present crane, used to lift materials to upper stories. These cranes are left on the site until a building is completed, often a matter of years, during most of which time they are idle.

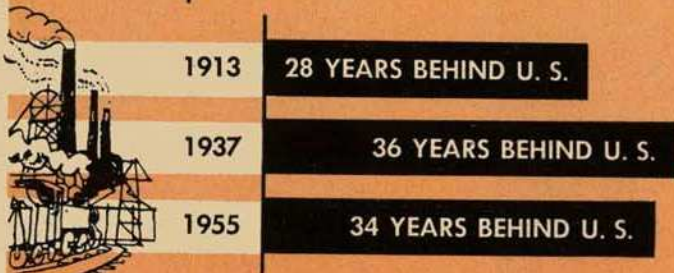
In general, new buildings can be distinguished from old ones, in that they look older. Even when freshly built, they look drab and show signs everywhere of poor construction. Within a year or two the exterior walls are crumbling, the stucco going first and then the brick and mortar. The window framing is roughly hewn and deteriorates rapidly. The interior finishing is also crude; most pipes and wires are exposed, etc. It seems as if at least half the buildings are under repair at any time: Some part of almost every building I visited, plants as well as dwellings, was under repair. "Under repair" is one of the most familiar phrases seen and heard in the Soviet Union.

After seeing the methods of construction and the finished products, one must marvel that buildings do not simply collapse, here and there, all the time. The exception to shoddy construction I observed was in Kiev, where the building materials seemed to be of very good quality, the buildings sturdily constructed, and the architecture interesting and attractive. Elsewhere conditions were bad on all three counts.

(Continued on page 52)

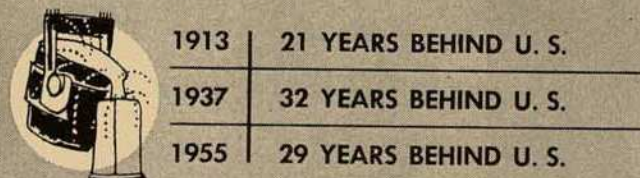
## HOW RUSSIA'S OUTPUT LAGS BEHIND THAT OF THE U.S.

According to a new study,\* this is how Russia's industrial production over the years compares with U. S. output—

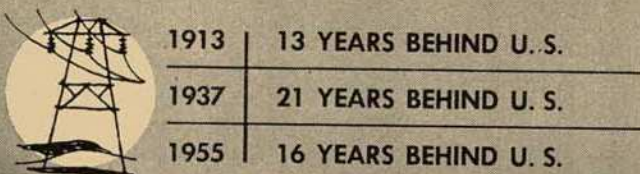


### RUSSIA'S PRODUCTION RECORD ON 17 IMPORTANT PRODUCTS—

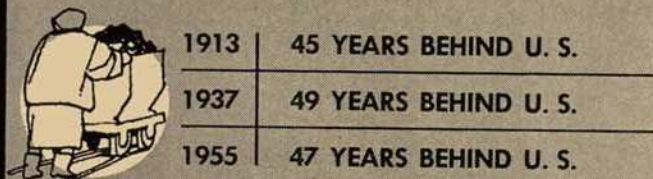
#### STEEL INGOTS



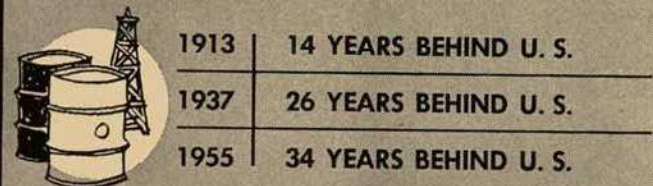
#### ELECTRIC POWER



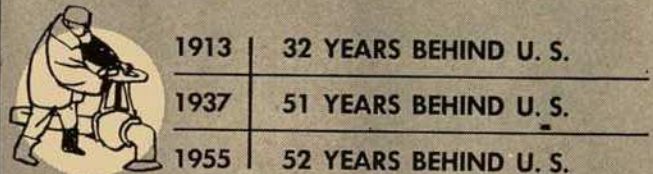
#### COAL



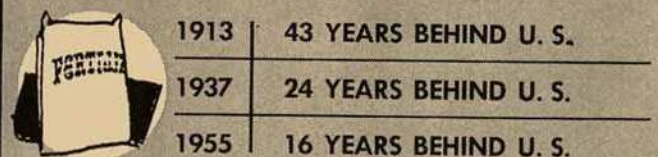
#### CRUDE PETROLEUM



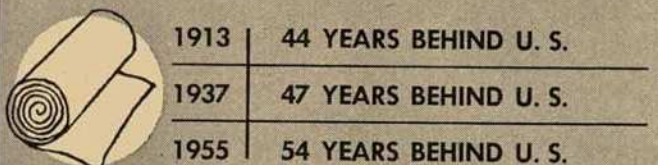
#### NATURAL GAS



#### MINERAL FERTILIZER



#### PAPER



\*Source: A research paper, based on official Soviet and U. S. figures, presented by Prof. G. Warren Nutter at the annual meeting of the American Economic Association, Dec. 29, 1956, Cleveland, Ohio

One of the most fascinating things is the way construction work is managed. It seems to be generally true that the first few floors of a building are completed fairly rapidly; then almost all the work force is withdrawn, and the building is finished by a handful of workers over a very long stretch of time. Thus one sees scores of buildings in various stages of completion; on each there will be three or four workers piddling around.

The offhand impression is one of enormous activity, whereas, in fact, very little is going on. One may surmise that this is the reason for such an apparently crazy way of doing things: to create the illusion, for Soviet citizens as well as outsiders, that much more is getting done than is actually

the case. It is hard to think of any technical or economic reasons.

It is hard to come away with an over-all estimate of the amount of building construction during the last few years, in part because much of the building has taken place around factories, and in part because the new buildings are generally difficult to identify in groups. However, judging from the projects pointed out to me—with great pride, I might add—in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Kharkov, I came to the conclusion that surprisingly little had been accomplished. I had the impression, for instance, that a major insurance company project in New York City would account for more housing space than had been finished in Moscow since the



### CEMENT



1913	19 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	33 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	32 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### CANNED FOOD



1913	43 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	45 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	45 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### RAILS



1913	42 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	57 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	54 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### BOOTS & SHOES



1913	23 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	44 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	44 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### RAILROAD PASSENGER CARS



1913	21 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	46 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	53 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### COTTON FABRICS



1913	28 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	44 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	48 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### RAILROAD FREIGHT CARS



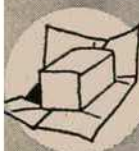
1913	33 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	51 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	69 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### SILK & SYNTHETIC FABRICS



1913	23 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	44 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	25 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### BUTTER



1913	21 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	38 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	35 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

### WOOLEN & WORSTED FABRICS



1913	43 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1937	67 YEARS BEHIND U. S.
1955	69 YEARS BEHIND U. S.

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war. But this is admittedly a guess based on casual observation.

In all the cities I visited, much was made of the terrible destruction of the war; the figure almost universally cited was 40 per cent destruction. I found this hard to believe except in the case of Leningrad: in the first place, because there were no signs of widespread destruction of trees in old, established parks and along streets; and, in the second place, because this level of destruction would have matched some of the worst in Germany, where cities were subjected to massive aerial bombardment which was not experienced in the Soviet Union.

On the whole, I suspect that the level of wartime destruction was lower than cited, with some exceptions. As in all

things one can check on, the Russian cannot seem here to restrain himself from exaggerating the truth.

In any event, there is an interesting and informative contrast in the way the Russians and Germans handled war damage. In Leningrad, a very costly expenditure of resources was made in restoring palaces and museums, by all appearances with a higher priority than accorded residential construction. In Munich, many of the damaged palaces and cultural buildings still stand in ruins, while commercial and residential construction has proceeded at an almost unbelievably rapid pace.

Similarly, there is almost no rubble still standing in Russian cities, whereas one often sees rubble in Germany, the

... "One quickly gets the feeling that the Russians have an obsession about making a good impression, about making things look better than they are"

reason being that it is used in construction work and hence is left on the site instead of being hauled away.

One quickly gets the feeling that the Russians have an obsession about making a good impression, about making things look better than they are. Hence, great attention has been paid to creating a pleasant façade covering and obscuring, in a literal sense, the unpleasant sights. Certain streets and structures in Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev, for instance, have been reconstructed and redecorated for no logical reason except this one, all at the expense of other construction more sorely needed.

## TRANSPORTATION

I have little to offer here that has not been said by many others before. I traveled by almost all means of transportation: automobile, railroad, airplane and boat. The horse, still important in rural areas, is the only means I missed. The biggest surprise to me was the efficiency of urban transportation. Most of the streetcars, buses and trolley buses are new and fast; some are very modern, stylish and comfortable.

Fares, as elsewhere in Europe, are low: 30 kopecks [7½ cents] on streetcars and buses, 60 kopecks [15 cents] on the subway [a kopeck is one hundredth of a ruble]. The subways in Moscow and Leningrad are, as is well known, as much showplaces as methods of transport. In addition to being monumental in architecture—"artistic" is not quite the right word—they are spotless; it is said every station is washed down three times a day.

The Leningrad subway is more handsome than utilitarian at the moment, running for only a few miles in a straight line between points that seem to be nowhere in particular. It is so deep—something the Russians are very proud of—that it takes a large portion of the travel time just to get down and up again. Trains run every two and a half minutes, like clockwork—each station has a sign in lights that continuously changes to show the time expired since the last train—yet, when I rode the subway during evening rush hour, the trains were not even a third filled. This may have been an unusual experience, for other tourists described the trains as crowded. My guide said that most people still go by streetcar and bus, because of convenience and lower cost.

Railroad passenger trains are generally slow, though some expresses compare favorably with other European trains. It took me 18 hours to travel fewer than 300 miles on the single-track line between Sochi and Tiflis, the train stopping literally every 15 or 20 minutes. The roadbeds are flimsy almost beyond belief: They are built up mostly out of sand, and the track is actually wavy over many stretches.

Conditions are much better in the north on the quadruple-track line between Moscow and Leningrad, a distance of about 400 miles, which the crack express—the "Red Arrow"—covers in about 12 hours. The typical sleeper has compartments for four persons, the berths not even being separated by curtains. Some de luxe cars have compartments for two.

In both cases, one takes potluck on sleeping partners, who more often than not are of opposite sexes.

The Russians have had trouble everywhere mastering plumbing in toilets, and some of the worst failures are to be found on trains and airplanes. For all this, the more modern trains are acceptably comfortable, including in their com-

forts a Soviet brand of air conditioning that at least stirs up the air.

Perhaps the most annoying thing to a Westerner is the ever-present loudspeaker, which cannot be escaped even on a train—in the cities there seems to be a loudspeaker on every corner, insuring that everybody gets his daily dose of propaganda and culture. I am told the speakers in trains can be turned off, but I never found the switch in one.

The domestic airplanes, except for the one famous jet, are all two-engine, nonpressurized models fashioned after our DC-3. Safety belts are considered a bourgeois annoyance, superfluous in the Soviet Union. There is also little



—Pix  
"MAJOR THOROUGHFARES into and between cities have good hard surfaces—mainly asphalt"

time wasted in preliminaries such as testing the engines; the pilot gets the propellers whirling and off he goes—often from a simple cow pasture, with cows peacefully grazing nearby.

The planes fly so low that the passenger has the feeling he could touch ground if the window were open. The planes also have a peculiar odor, not entirely caused by the toilets because it smells something like burnt rubber. The cabin is austere furnished, without frills. The stewardess seldom wears a uniform and usually settles back in a seat somewhere once the plane is off the ground. Scarcely a word is spoken by the crew from take-off to landing. No meals are served in the air.

Despite these crudities, travel seems reasonably safe. The pilots are good and inspire confidence after the first faint moments, and the planes seem to be in good operating condition. Moreover, they operate on schedule: Every plane I was on left at exactly the time it was supposed to.

... "The automobiles run better than I had expected. . . . They are kept in good mechanical condition, and the gasoline seems to measure up quite well to our own grades"

Boat travel on the Black Sea is a very interesting experience. The crews seem to be well trained, and schedules are met. The passengers are the interesting thing, especially those who travel third or fourth class. This means they buy the right to sit and lie somewhere on deck, anywhere they can find space. They come aboard with their packs of clothing and food, and bed down in the choicest place they can find. They are to be found in every corner and on every flat surface. These passengers pay only 10 or 12 rubles [\$2.50 to \$3] for the trip from Yalta to Sochi. For those who prefer more luxurious quarters, cabins are available at up to 500 rubles [\$125].

The boats are German-made, some built in East Germany during the postwar period, and one—the *Rossia*—built for Hitler as his private yacht. They are quite handsome and comfortable.

The automobiles run better than I had expected, at least those used by Intourist—which are, incidentally, often brand-new. They are kept in good mechanical condition, and the gasoline seems to measure up quite well to our own grades. The drivers still follow the practice of speeding up and then coasting out of gear, a practice apparently designed to conserve gasoline but certainly not the nerves of the passenger. When the driver finds a particularly choice downhill grade, he also shuts off the ignition.

Major thoroughfares into and between cities have good hard surfaces—mainly asphalt—but the roadbeds seem to be weakly constructed. Most roads have a roller-coaster contour. I saw handsome new buses running between Kharkov and Kiev, and suppose there must be similar service elsewhere. Traffic is not heavy by Western standards, but it is not light either.

One of the few areas of freedom for the Russians has to do with his role as a pedestrian, and he exercises this freedom to a deliberate extreme. It seems that the pedestrian is not required by law to obey traffic signals; he, therefore, seems almost to wait until the light turns red before crossing the street, when mobs stream out in front of traffic. The driver enters the game with equal vengeance by picking out some pedestrian—or group of pedestrians—aiming his car directly at him, speeding up, and laying his arms on his horn.

The awful racket of horns in Moscow was one of the hardest things to get used to. Soviet authorities have recently decided to attack their pedestrian and noise problem by removing the symptom: Horn blowing has been banned except for emergencies. But pedestrians are still allowed to disregard traffic lights.

I suspect the Soviet citizen has come to view this way of displaying his independence as a precious liberty, which he will give up only with the greatest displeasure. It even extends to a skillful game of matching wits with the harried militiaman, who has the right only to insist that pedestrians stay inside marked crosswalks and to fine offenders on the spot. Many violations do occur, however, seemingly for no other reason than to flout the authority of the militiaman.

## AGRICULTURE

**The Collective Farm.** It was about as difficult to visit collective farms as industrial plants, and for the same reason. I managed to see one farm near Kiev by attaching myself

to a group of 30 French tourists. The chairman described the farm as average, not exceptional—about the only case of false modesty I ran into. It was organized in 1950 as a consolidation of three smaller farms, all set up in 1929. Vegetables, corn, wheat, rye and barley are grown; the soil was described as not suitable for sugar beets. Livestock is also raised.

In accord with what seemed to be the standard line, the chairman said that the farm had been almost completely destroyed during the war and since rebuilt. This was clearly a gross exaggeration, since most of the structures—the farm buildings as well as the members' homes—were obviously



—Unitel Press

COUNTRY ROADS are often a sea of mud, like this one (foreground) on a collective farm

older. It is probably closer to the truth to say that some of the farm buildings were partly destroyed by the war. This, too, was obvious since some were still without roofs, though repairs had been started.

The chairman said that contractual prices had risen so high relative to market prices—which, he hastened to add, had fallen—that the farm preferred to sell on contract rather than in the collective-farm market. The number of workers temporarily lost by sending them to the market is a factor taken into account.

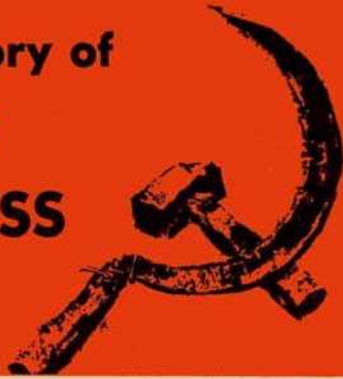
The members of the collective farm were said to receive about 35 per cent of the total output of the collective-farm area. The average size of private plots was not given; instead the manager said that, according to a recent directive, each family ought to have 0.5 to 0.6 of a hectare [1.2 to 1.5 acres].

Each girl tending calves has about 40 assigned to her;

(Continued on page 110)

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## The True Story of RUSSIA'S WEAKNESS



and each girl tending pigs, about 10 sows. Each sow has about 20 pigs a year. According to plan, there should be 22.

The plan seems to be taken quite lightly. The manager remarked that both the state and the farm draw up a plan each year. The difference, he went on to say, is that "the farm's plan depends on the weather."

The livestock looked healthy and clean, but, to this layman's eye, the breeds seemed primitive by Western standards. The hogs looked like a cross between wild hogs and razorbacks, with long snouts, big ears and a hairy spine.

The corn was very short—less than knee high on July 12—

and somewhat scrawny, with rather considerable weeds. The reason given for the poor showing was the late planting caused by the long winter.

One interesting thing about this farm was that almost the entire work force was taking a two-day holiday in celebration of a religious feast. It is, of course, impossible to know whether the feast was reason or excuse, but this was the only occasion during my visit to the Soviet Union where religion was indicated as being of importance to a broad group of the population.

Though I did not visit any other collective farms, I did get a chance to view crops in other sectors. In general, they looked quite good in the South—around Odessa, Sochi and Tiflis—though in many cases the corn seemed to be broadcast-sewn and poorly tended.

Weeds, especially wild mustard, were abundant almost everywhere. There was no signs of chemical spraying, except for some hand spraying of what seemed to be lime water in a few parks and botanical gardens. Around Tiflis much of the barley had been harvested, and the harvest looked abundant.

It was curious to see a number of fields that seemed to be newly plowed, with a very short growth of corn. My guide said that this was the second crop of the year, that corn had been planted on fields where the winter wheat had already been harvested and the stubble plowed under. If this is correct, there is apparently a sizable effort being made to get both a wheat and a corn-silage-crop off the same piece of land in the same year. This would not seem to be the most efficient use of soil.

### THE LOOK AND MOOD OF SOME RUSSIAN CITIES

**T**HE CITIES I VISITED in the Western Soviet Union are well-organized, well-articulated urban areas. The business of city life runs smoothly and people are moved about swiftly and in good order by an effective transportation system, to and from suburban areas as well as inside the city. The orderly movement of people is something of a paradox since simple aids such as city maps, street guides and telephone directories are not available to the general public. This suggests that most movement is along routine channels.

It is characteristic of Soviet cities to find a large street-cleaning force, mostly older women, constantly at work sweeping the streets and sidewalks. It seems, almost, that each block has its own scrubwoman. Equipment is crude: brooms are bundles of twigs, sometimes with, but often without, handles. During the night, streets and sidewalks are hosed down, either manually or by water trucks.

Although continuously cleaned, the cities do not have that neat appearance to be found, for instance, in Germany, Holland and the Scandinavian countries. This results largely from the run-down state of buildings, side streets and back alleys. For one thing, paint is used sparingly and that used is seldom colorful or clean looking.

A real effort is being made in Leningrad to restore the beautiful pastel colors of former times, but it is clear that pitifully few resources have been made available for this purpose, so that the work has progressed slowly and is concentrated in a few small areas. Buildings are everywhere scaffolded for refinishing, but little seems to get done after the scaffold is raised.

It should be noted that continuous removal of trash and litter from city streets is absolutely necessary for public health because of crowded living conditions.

The preventive public-health program is far-reaching—doctors even go into the homes to teach hygiene. From all appearances, the program has been successful in forestalling epidemics.

One of the surprising things to me was the teeming activity in the cities both night and day. Large masses of people are always moving about in the city centers, and the vehicular traffic is considerable even though far from heavy. At night, people are mainly strolling, but there is also a considerable amount of shopping. Food stores stay open until very late, apparently until midnight. All stores are open Sundays and closed Mondays and also at least one other day a month for inventory taking, which seems to be going on somewhere all the time. There is no private enterprise of any consequence.

There seems to be a few main streets in each city where buildings are kept in better-than-average shape, and these streets form a literal façade, obscuring and drawing attention from the uglier sights. One needs to wander only a short distance in any direction to find normal conditions. Often there is a great contrast between the front wall of a courtyard facing a busy street and the state of the buildings within. The casual visitor who does not stroll down side streets and glance into hidden courtyards can be greatly deceived into thinking that living conditions are better than they actually are.

Moscow is the hub of the country. One senses almost immediately that this is the point from which the country is governed, that the political and economic networks have their focus here. The atmosphere is created in part by the multitude of Government buildings, all massive and rather easily identified. It was also created during the campaign for international good will by the succession of foreign missions visit-

ing the city; it seemed that every day a new foreign "delegation" arrived. The city cannot be said to be beautiful, but it has distinction.

Few sights are more impressive than the heart of the city formed by the Kremlin walls with the adjacent broad expanse of the Red Square and the fantastic Cathedral of St. Basil, which seems to rise mysteriously from nowhere and whose candy-striped bulbs look like the twisting spires of a fairyland castle.

These structures form a powerful link between old and new Russia, psychologically as well as physically. The rest of the city is connected with its heart by a series of broad boulevards, radiating outward like the spokes of a giant wheel and interconnected by scores of narrow, winding streets and a few major thoroughfares.

On the rim of the city and along the Moscow River lie monumental structures like the Moscow University and the former estates of the rich, now lived in by important Government officials. The rest of the city seems to be a jumbled mass of drab and unattractive buildings, old and new.

Leningrad remains the "window to the West." The city still reflects some of the charm of its past, and the people in turn reflect the charm of their city. They seem to be more clean-cut, attractive and stylishly dressed than elsewhere in Western Russia—perhaps they are simply more Western.

The people of Leningrad are fiercely proud of their city, and a great effort, limited only by the meager resources at their disposal, has been made to repair the heavy damage of the dreadful 900-day siege of World War II.

### Museums Restored, Housing Neglected

Everybody I talked to spoke bitterly of the siege and its heavy toll on the city and inhabitants: A third of the adult population apparently died of starvation. Most of the palaces—including the fabulous Peterhof with its magnificent gilded fountains—and other famous tsarist buildings have been restored, at least on the exterior. This has been done even though badly needed residential construction has had to be curtailed as a result.

Despite these efforts, the city is only a shadow of its former self, and one is saddened to see such an inherently beautiful city in its present run-down state. It is a Venetian Paris. Except for its more orderly pattern of streets, the architecture, monuments and layout remind one of Paris; in addition, it has an intricate network of canals that complement the handsome Neva River.

Some of the old palaces have been turned into wonderful museums. The Hermitage contains one of the finest art galleries in the world. In contrast to the beautiful old parts of the city stand the drab and styleless newly constructed apartment buildings on the outskirts.

Moscow may be described as the most active city and Leningrad as the most beautiful, but Kiev is the most prosperous. At least that was my impression. Although housing is crowded, in sharp contrast to construction work in other large cities the new buildings in Kiev are sturdy, well built and stylishly finished. Exterior walls, for instance, are covered with glazed ceramics. Construction is better not only because building materials are superior, but also because workmanship is more skilled. The Ukraine has, of course, a heritage of handicraft skills, and some beautiful handwork is still done, though on such a small scale that the products are displayed as museum pieces.

Even more striking than the construction work is the relatively ample supply of food. Meat, dairy products and vegetables are more plentiful than in Moscow and Leningrad and the quality is better. Prices are significantly lower. The people

*(Continued on page 112)*

### AN AMERICAN LOOKS AT THREE CITIES . . .



MOSCOW IS THE HUB: "One senses almost immediately that this is the point from which the country is governed"



KIEV IS THE MOST PROSPEROUS: "The new buildings are sturdy . . . the people better dressed than in other cities"



—Pix, Homer & Norton Dodge, Wide World Photos  
TIFLIS IS DIFFERENT: In Stalin's home town, "Everything seems less well kept than in the Western Soviet Union"

. . . Russian people "are no longer afraid to be cordial to Americans and to talk with us, but they are very careful not to become too friendly"

of Kiev also seemed to be better dressed than in other cities, though I was told by one Russian that the reason for this was that large quantities of Austrian clothing had been brought to Kiev by the returning occupation army. Despite this apparent relative prosperity, the people of Kiev seem to be somewhat restive.

One senses a strong undercurrent of nationalism; there is certainly a deep reverence for Ukrainian culture, as shown by the nature of museums and the pride with which Ukrainian art, architecture and handicraft work are shown to the visitor. Modern Ukrainian buildings retain the characteristic architecture and decorations: the sheaves of wheat, ears of corn and so on. One wonders whether Kiev's relative prosperity is not the result of special treatment designed to offset Ukrainian nationalism.

This view is not supported, however, by conditions in Kharkov, another big city in the Ukraine. Kharkov is a busy industrial city and, except for a pleasant large park in its center, looks like one. Everything seems to be more run-down than in Kiev and the people seem to be less well fed and clothed. Most of the housing has apparently been put up by factories for their own employes. I saw several large projects that were essentially self-contained with their own "shopping centers"—miniature models of collective-farm markets—and other service stores. These projects are similar to those in Moscow and Leningrad and are equally drab, run-down and disorderly looking.

I went for a ride through the major industrial sector and was surprised to see plant after plant with very recent dates of completion—1952 and later—prominently displayed. A large natural-gas pipeline was being laid through this sector; I was amused to find that "Pravda" had reported this line as

having been completed early in July, a slight exaggeration. In the downtown area, streets are broad and at some points traffic is rather heavy. All in all, Kharkov looked more like Moscow than like Kiev.

The last city I want to comment on is Tiflis, the capital of Georgia and the home town of Stalin. Georgia seems like a foreign country. The people are physically distinct from Russians and Ukrainians. They are short, dark, hairy and—at least to me—rather sinister looking. They speak their own language, which is as unrelated to Russian in both alphabet and words as English is; all signs are printed in both Georgian and Russian. Everything seems less well kept than in the Western Soviet Union. At the same time, housing is much better; many families live in their own small homes made of brick with tile roofs.

Family life in Tiflis is much more important than in northern cities since most of the married women in the city stay home and do housework. One gets the impression that there is a good supply of food, including a large variety of vegetables and fruits. Wine drinking is the national pastime; huge quantities are consumed at every meal, including breakfast.

I got the feeling that Georgians are very displeased by the downgrading of Stalin and are reluctant to follow the new line. They revere Stalin, treat him as a god. His statues and pictures are to be seen everywhere; large numbers of people visit his birthplace.

The Georgians go out of their way to point out that their culture has ancient roots, that they were an independent country until relatively recent times. Perhaps it is this strong provincialism that accounts for the suspicion toward foreigners that I sensed. In any case, I felt less at ease in Tiflis than anywhere else in the Soviet Union.

## CHURCHES, "CULTURE" AND THE COMMUNIST WOMAN

**T**HERE HAS NO DOUBT been a substantial relaxation of the tension and a real change in atmosphere inside the Soviet Union within the last few years. One cannot help sensing that the people feel as if reins had been slackened, and they are obviously pleased about it. They are still not sure how much freedom they have—at what point the reins will be pulled in—and so they are moving cautiously.

They are no longer afraid to be cordial to Americans and to talk with us, but they are very careful not to become too friendly; they readily point out that there have been political changes, but they seldom go beyond the official line in describing them. Even here there are exceptions: Three of the people I met had the courage to express surprisingly strong criticisms and to volunteer opinions far removed from the official line.

As evidence that something has happened, Professor Calvin Hoover [of Duke University] and I managed to get an interview with Mr. Pautsin, the vice chairman of the State Planning Commission, which used to be one of the most secret organizations. We were treated most cordially, and the discussion was carried out entirely on a professional level with no hint of politics. We did not learn anything of any great consequence except that substantial efforts are being made to

decentralize planning, to reduce its scope and to separate detailed annual planning from broader long-range programming.

Our failure to learn much was due more to the nebulous subject matter than to evasive answers to our questions. On the contrary, most replies were direct and, from all appearances, frank. The interview lasted almost three hours and would have gone on longer if we had let it. As the interview closed, we asked if there were any way we could get a copy of the recently published, but already out-of-print, Soviet statistical abstract, "The National Economy of the U.S.S.R." Mr. Pautsin smiled and said he had only one copy himself. He gave his personal copy to Professor Hoover and sent out for a copy for me.

It may be that this is all a part of the recent campaign to impress Westerners with sweetness and light. However this may be—I must confess the attitudes seemed genuine to me—this kind of interview would have been inconceivable two years ago. It should be added that a line is still drawn: The Central Statistical Administration refused a similar interview.

The young people I talked with had had the famous Khrushchev letter on Stalin read to them in some sort of assembly or other. They were generally shocked by the revelations,

. . . "There is a long way to go before the Russian people become truly enlightened, but these are exciting times—times to watch. There is an unmistakable stirring of the people"

some very deeply. One exceptionally bright young man said he had not been surprised in the least. His father had been murdered in prison, he said, for being an intellectual. But even this young man seemed ready to accept the official line that these excesses were attributable to Stalin and, especially, Beria—not to the Communist system.

There is in fact no obvious weakening of faith in Communism, though one must add that the expressions of faith are trite, naïve and hollow. Indoctrination of youth has been extraordinarily efficient when measured in terms of slogans and party lines memorized. This does not mean that the intelligent young people are unusually gullible; on the contrary, they are sharp-minded and wary. It means rather that the exposure to Soviet propaganda has been so constant, so intensive and so much without competition as to leave an inevitable mark. No other conclusion is possible.

### What Reds Think of U. S. Broadcasts

Incidentally, I heard several strong criticisms of "Voice of America" broadcasts, claiming that many of the stories told about life in the Soviet Union are patently false—or, as the critics put it, deliberately slanderous. This of course destroys the effectiveness of "Voice of America"—except for its music programs, on which see more below.

By contrast, the British broadcasts receive high praise. They amount to straightforward, undramatic recitals of news; and, since the news stories on the Soviet Union do not contradict what the Russians see about themselves, confidence is created in the truth of news about the rest of the world.

Much of what is uttered in the name of Communism is actually nothing but old-fashioned Russian chauvinism. I was surprised to find such strong nationalistic sentiments. The people really argue that Russians do everything better and earlier than anybody else—in the fields of art, science, industry, technology, and so on endlessly. Almost without exception each guide would ask, after showing something or other: "What do you think of that? Have you ever seen anything like it before? Don't you think it's wonderful, magnificent, beautiful, impressive?"

In the subway this ritual was gone through at every station—each station is unique. I suppose the psychologist would describe this as compensation for an inferiority complex; and, if it is, Russians must feel very inferior indeed. To be fair, one must add that there is a group—how sizable is anybody's guess—quite aware that conditions are better in other countries.

This leads into one of the most important points to be made about the great change: Many of the intelligent and better-educated people recognize their ignorance of the outside world—which is appallingly comprehensive—and display, now that it seems permitted, an almost impatient eagerness to learn more about other countries, preferably by travel. They are encouraged by the recent excursions through Europe of the Soviet ship *Pobeda*, which carried three or four hundred Soviet tourists each trip. Even though the number of tourists has been small, their experiences have already been widely spread by word of mouth, and these experiences have made a deep impression on many of the people I talked to.

The desire to travel, already strong, has been strengthened.

Much interest is shown in visiting the United States; but, when the question is put as to why visits are not made, the universal answer is that no self-respecting Russian will come to the United States as long as fingerprinting is required, since this is a deliberate insult, branding all Russians as common criminals. Soviet leaders have clearly managed to elevate this convenient excuse for banning travel to the United States into a convincing reason.

At first I felt some sympathy for the arguments against fingerprinting, but after hearing the same line mechanically and indignantly repeated over and over again, I became quite annoyed by the whole thing. The protest is always made with a self-righteous air: "We in the Soviet Union welcome American tourists; it may be that we were a bit unsociable in the past, but things have really changed; we cannot understand why they do not change in America, too." This lack of elementary understanding of the problem is frustrating and irritating. One would think from listening to the Russians that Americans were guilty of original sin.

There is a long way to go before the Russian people become truly enlightened, but these are exciting times—times to watch. There is an unmistakable stirring of the people. If the drive to release their energies by relaxing centralized controls and granting small areas of freedom continues, it will almost certainly gather speed.

In the political sphere there would be only one logical end: the development of true elections and, ultimately, of opposition parties. In the economic sphere the trend would have to be toward a dilution of socialism and gradual intrusion of private enterprise.

It will be worth keeping close watch on how much further the leaders will let things go.

The younger generation takes a childish pride in proclaiming its atheism and in damning religion. This "antireligionism" is a paper tiger that will, I believe, never stand up against the soul searching that is bound to follow from the recent destruction of established idols. It is fashionable to be anti-religious, and many young people delight in ridiculing the church—to the point of reviling sarcasm—undoubtedly in blind imitation of their teachers and party leaders. But their image of religion is hazy and crude and, when they are questioned about what they really believe in, they reply more often than not with an awkward silence.

### The Official Picture of Religion

To them, religion has been pictured as a venal clergy employed by the state to prepare the minds of the masses for blind submission to capitalists. The ingredients of religion are represented as superstition and sheer physical torture, as in the days of the Inquisition. The message is brought home in actual physical exhibits—such as the collection of massive golden ikons in Kremlin churches and the Antireligious Museum in the Kazansky Cathedral in Leningrad—as well as in harangues of one sort or another.

The campaign has been successful in the sense that the younger people have a terribly distorted view of religion, unchallenged by information from other sources or by direct experience. Most of those I talked to had never attended a church service. One person simply would not believe me when I said that church and state were separated in the United

## The True Story of Russia's Weakness

States and that there were many different religious denominations.

The few churches open for services are attended mostly by old women. This is mainly because they have nothing to lose by being seen in church, whereas breadwinners and younger people do. I took a middle-aged woman interpreter to a church service, the first she had attended since she was a child; she was visibly moved by the ceremony and thanked me profusely for taking her.

A church I visited in Yalta was crowded with people of all age groups, from infants upward, though old women predominated. Many children and adolescents were brought in by their parents after the main service but in time to receive Communion. I was greatly puzzled by the attendance of so many men—most of them obviously from the middle classes—and younger people, until it finally occurred to me that these were people on vacation. They could afford to go to church because nobody would know about it.

In Kiev, the city of churches, one sensed a strong suppressed religious sentiment. When a delegation of American rabbis visited the city while I was there, the streets around the one tiny synagogue still used for services were jammed with thousands of Jews trying to get a glimpse of the rabbis even though they could not possibly attend services. As I was walking through the now "nationalized" museum in the old Russian Orthodox monastery, a middle-aged woman followed closely behind and tried to explain, with obviously deep reverence, the role each of the displayed items had in the Orthodox service as she recalled it from her childhood. Other visitors were also clearly more impressed than repelled—as they were supposed to be—by the exhibits.

### "The Churches Are Very Weak"

None of this should be taken to mean that the churches are now strong, for they are in fact very weak. And religion plays an insignificant role in the Soviet Union. It is my opinion, however, that people would flock to the churches if it really became safe to do so. As one young girl from Riga, the daughter of Jewish parents, said, "We are far from God. Stalin was my god, but, now that he has been denounced, I don't know what to believe in any more."

"Culture" is the second most popular word in the Soviet Union, following "work." It does not have a precise meaning but more or less covers everything not included in "work" or "rest," the third most popular word. I never heard the word "play," or saw any of it. Sports, for instance, are not really work and certainly not rest; therefore they are culture. Culture is of two types: Soviet and all other, which is generally inferior.

Russians talk more about the arts and seem to spend more time in theaters than Americans do. Tourists are shown an endless stream of museums, theaters, opera houses, monuments and the like. One guide explained, however, that this did not mean Russians are more obsessed with such things than other people, but rather that they do not know what else to show.

Russians have few opportunities to enjoy "noncultured" diversions, and there is some evidence that they are "cultural" less from choice than from necessity. The young people of the Soviet Union, as of the rest of Europe, are infatuated with American popular music, or "jazz" as they call it; some of them are amazingly well informed about American bands and singers, from the earliest to most recent times. But about the only way they can hear good popular music is by listening to radio broadcasts from Stockholm, Munich, Tangiers and "Voice of America" stations. If they wish to dance to well-

*(Continued on page 116)*



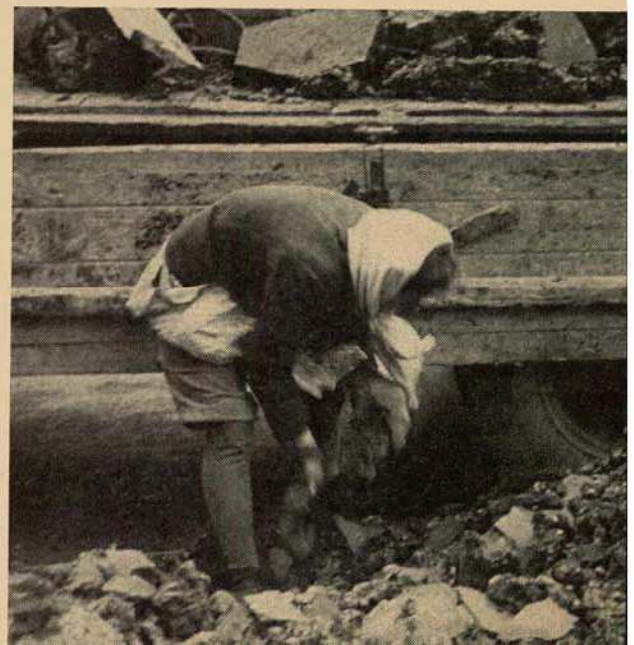
### WOMEN ARE "EQUAL" BUT UNFEMININE

A WOMAN'S PLACE, in Russia, is seldom in the home, Professor Nutter found. The women shown on these pages are typical of a system where the state rears children while the mothers toil.

One Russian offered this description of an "ideal" marriage: "They got more living space by being married, and they never got in each other's way since she worked days and he nights."



CONSTRUCTION: "No work is considered too strenuous or odious for women. . . . This leaves its mark."





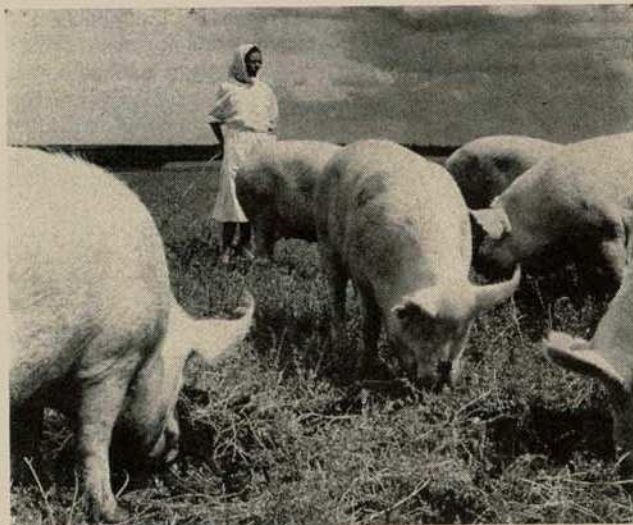


Pix, Robert F. Kennedy, Homer & Norton Dodge Photos

**UNLOADING FREIGHT:** "Westerners cannot help being struck by the maleness of Soviet women. . . . I saw them laying railroad rails, digging ditches, carrying heavy stones."



**WOMAN BARBER:** "A woman must, the argument runs, be free to develop her own personality and to make her maximum contribution to progress of the Communist community."



**ON THE FARM:** "Each girl tending calves has about 40 assigned to her; and each girl tending pigs, about 10."



**IN THE CITY:** "A large street-cleaning force, mostly older women, is constantly at work sweeping the streets and sidewalks."



**FEMINE JOBS** include those of gas-station attendant and street vendor. Professor Nutter found, "Few administrative positions are held by women."

**HEAVY DEBRIS** is moved by womanpower in photo at left. "Vast quantities of labor, both male and female, are used. . . . Techniques are generally primitive."

**. . . "The Soviet attitude toward American literature, and the resulting view of American life, is queerly distorted because of the peculiar sample of authors Russians are allowed to read"**

performed American popular music, they must get together in somebody's apartment, and it is not easy to find an apartment large enough for even a small group.

Moreover, American records are not sold in Soviet stores, and their prices on the black market are extremely high. One young man said he recorded the broadcast music on a Russian tape recorder. On the streets of Leningrad I ran into one forlorn young Ukrainian who was studying to be an engineer but wanted more than anything else to be a jazz musician or a "rhythm dancer." He had a fantastic knowledge of American popular music, musicians, singers and dancers. His favorites, in order: Gershwin, Glenn Miller, Jo Stafford and Fred Astaire. To what seems to be a fair number of younger people, the "new look" means as much as anything the hope that it will soon become possible to get their fill of jazz.

### **Ban on American Movies**

A taste for American movies has not yet developed for a simple reason: None has been shown. Italian, Austrian, French, Hungarian and German movies are shown with some regularity, and I often heard comments that these were preferred to Russian films. I have no doubt that American films will become very popular once they are introduced—and this will probably be soon. A deep and lasting impression was made by two English films—"Waterloo Bridge" and "The Lady Hamilton"—that were captured in Germany and were widely shown in the Soviet Union.

The Russians, as everybody reports, are avid readers, thoroughly acquainted with the works of great Russian literary figures such as Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Turgenev and Gorki. It seems that the writers of the tsarist period are more venerated than those of the Soviet era.

The Soviet attitude toward American literature, and the resulting view of American life, is queerly distorted because of the peculiar sample of authors Russians are allowed to read. These are Mark Twain, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, Jack London, Ernest Hemingway—some of Hemingway's works are banned—Howard Fast, Mitchell Wilson and a few minor writers. The translated works of these authors are sold by subscription, and the printings are virtually sold out before they reach the bookstores. English editions are even scarcer and harder to get.

In music and ballet the strongest attachment is also to the Russian past. Modern composers like Prokofiev and Shostakovich are apparently not widely esteemed—I heard many disparaging remarks on their works, and the performance of Prokofiev's opera, "War and Peace," that I attended in Moscow was very poorly received.

The ballet has continued strictly along the lines of the old Russian school, developing the classical techniques to flawless perfection. The standard ballets like Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" are still the most popular and best performed. Orchestral programs are strongly weighted with works of the old Russian masters.

American musicians and music are scarcely known outside the area of popular music. The only living artist universally admired is Paul Robeson, who occupies a position scarcely different from a Hero of the Soviet Union.

In a museum displaying Ukrainian handicraft work in Kiev there are hanging in one room three huge portraits in embroidery, very skillfully if not artistically done. On one side

stands Khrushchev, on the other the current party leader of the Ukraine, and in the middle Paul Robeson. The image of Robeson in the minds of Soviet citizens is rather interesting. He is pictured as a singer in his prime—in early middle age—with a voice still second only to Chaliapin's. As far as I could tell, no other American singers of the present or past are known even by reputation.

The only musician widely known is the violinist Isaac Stern, as a result of his extremely successful tour of the Soviet Union. Similarly, Gershwin is the only composer whose name I heard mentioned, again the result of performances of his opera, "Porgy and Bess," which was well received although few Russians had much notion of what it was all about. I met one young man who saw the opera three times in Moscow by virtue of getting himself appointed by his fellow students as the one to buy tickets for them.

In art proper I observed little enthusiasm for that horrid and deadly form known euphemistically as "Soviet realism." It is, of course, neither realistic nor artistic, but one of the most abstract, posed, melodramatic and uncolorful art forms ever developed. One gets the impression most Russians agree.

In the Tretyakovsky Gallery in Moscow—a gallery reserved for Russian and Soviet art—our guide spent a couple of hours in the rooms containing old Russian art—not too exciting in itself, but incomparably better than Soviet realism—going into the history of almost every picture; by contrast she spent a few minutes taking us hurriedly through the exhibits of Soviet realism, which occupied as much space. In Leningrad a magnificent exhibition of French impressionism—only recently come into favor—and an equally great Rembrandt exhibition drew the crowds. One should add that museums and art galleries are much more heavily visited by the masses than in the United States.

Let me conclude these random notes on Soviet attitudes with a few observations on the Soviet views toward women and the family.

Westerners cannot help being struck by the maleness of Soviet women. No work is considered too strenuous or odious for them. I saw them laying railroad rails, digging ditches, carrying heavy stones and cleaning sewers. This leaves its inevitable mark on the physical structure and appearance of Soviet womanhood.

### **Why Women Lack "Feminine Qualities"**

The long hours of work leave those not handicapped by heavy jobs little time for grooming their feminine qualities even if the incentive were there. The incentive is weakened by the generally drab existence and by the rather mediocre prizes at stake. And, once married, being too alluring increases the risk of having children, a major calamity in the eyes of younger people because it interferes with work and puts a final strain on crowded quarters. The Communist system has had remarkable success, in part quite unintentional, in abolishing sex and in keeping down the birth rate.

The women in professional and semiprofessional classes have an elaborate rationalization for this way of life, so standard that it is surely the product of indoctrination. A woman must, the argument runs, be free to develop her own personality and to make her maximum contribution to progress of the Communist community. She must, therefore, have coordinate status with men and above all be independent of

. . . **"There is an active and complex black market in foreign goods. . . .  
Some Swedish students financed their entire trip through the Soviet  
Union by selling pieces of clothing"**

the man who, for mutual convenience, happens to be her husband. To be dependent on her husband is to become his slave, forced to do his slightest bidding and tied down to a dreary and fruitless life of keeping house and raising children.

This is all very bad, not only because it throttles the woman and deprives the state of her usefulness, but also because it means that children are raised by their mothers in an individualistic environment instead of by skilled specialists in a collective environment.

It is hard to say how sincere those were who spoke along these lines, or how widespread the practices are that they recommended. One unusually attractive young professional woman with a bourgeois background and bourgeois tastes described her marriage to an actor as ideal: They got more living space by being married, and they never got in each other's way since she worked days and he nights.

### How Children Are Regimented

Almost no children were to be seen in Moscow or Leningrad; they were in summer camps of one sort or another. These camps are everywhere, run mainly by the Young Pioneers, the Communist Party organization for children. Similarly, there are many day nurseries for children of preschool age.

On the other hand, one does see small families on the streets with all the appearances of being well-knit. The husband must have a good salary, however, if the wife is to stay home and take care of the home and children. As noted earlier, the Georgians are exceptional. They seem to have managed to preserve family life in the customary sense.

It is also interesting that, if women have in fact gained equality with men, the men have—my apologies to Orwell—remained a good deal more equal. The most ardent feminist would not be caught smoking on the street: Ladies do not behave that way. Few administrative positions are held by women. For instance, last year was the first time a woman has got into the Presidium of the Communist Party, and in one of the sanatoriums I visited all the doctors were women but two: the head doctor and his assistant.

The general state of affairs described briefly above is unnatural, and it is difficult to believe that it can persist in the absence of despotic enforcement. There are many signs that conditions are reverting to their former state. Femininity is creeping into the oncoming generation of women: Teen-age girls are well scrubbed, neat and concerned with the style and color of their clothes. One suspects this is not without encouragement from the opposite sex.

The appeal of pervasive collectivism seems to be wearing off, too; the people on the streets and in restaurants are gathered in small groups of friends, not in large, organized groups.

The growing availability of private automobiles has undoubtedly strengthened this movement toward privacy and intimacy. If housing conditions are ever significantly improved, the family will almost surely resume a large measure of its former role as the center of life.

Almost all the Russians I came in contact with were friendly toward Americans. This is in part because Americans are rarely seen and Russians have an insatiable curiosity: Crowds spring up from nowhere when important officials are about, and one suspects that the long queues waiting patiently to

view the bodies of Lenin and Stalin in their mausoleum are there as much out of curiosity as reverence.

But this cannot be the whole explanation for the attitude toward Americans, for other peoples are rarely seen too, but not so cordially welcomed. Nor can the explanation lie entirely in orders from above directing people to be nice to Americans. Relations with East Germans belie this. Orders are out to treat them royally and they are given the best accommodations and food available. But personal relations with them are distinctly cool.

Many people voluntarily told me of their dislike and even hatred for Germans. Similarly, I observed little love lost for Orientals. The vice chairman of the State Planning Commission went out of his way to say that the people of the Soviet Union remembered the help given by the United States and Britain during the war and were still grateful for it.

There is an active and complex black market in foreign goods. While I was strolling down the street in Leningrad, a Russian came up beside me and asked, as we walked along, "Do you want to make business? I buy everything." I did not probe further to find out how much he paid for everything, but he seemed to be a legitimate black marketeer since he had a confederate, an equally shady character, who served as lookout across the street.

In Sochi, an American woman and her husband were followed to a restaurant by a couple of Russian girls. The girls waited outside more than an hour while the Americans ate and, as they left, the girls finally got up courage to approach and ask whether the American woman would sell her nylons.

### "Back Room" Deals for Goods

Some Swedish students financed their entire trip through the Soviet Union by selling pieces of clothing to managers of state stores. Transactions were carried out in back rooms, and the goods were quickly sold again to favored Russian customers, sometimes after being displayed in showcases. A young Russian student who made contact with me on the streets of Kiev was fully dressed in Western clothing—I recall that his sport jacket was from Sweden. He also had a small collection of American phonograph records, which he said could be found if one knew where to look.

Until very recently a legal form of black market existed in the so-called commission stores, state enterprises which deal in secondhand goods. Trade here was especially profitable for diplomatic personnel returning home on leave; they could sell their entire wardrobes for ten times the cost of replacing them with brand-new items. A recent directive has outlawed sales by foreigners to commission stores.

As suggested earlier, the Russians do not seem to know how to play. Everything seems to be done with determination and for a purpose. When they dance, they move stiffly with deep concentration on getting the steps right—often without success. When they engage in sports, it is to show their prowess, to develop their bodies, to make a new record and to promote Soviet interests; and so on.

The closest approach to abandoned and carefree play is found at the vacation resorts, where the people are far from home and everyday pressures. Elsewhere people are constantly reminded that it is "not cultured" to let themselves go; at the horse races, for instance, excited shouting and applause are forbidden. The only places where it seems all right to re-

. . . "The economy is active, but there are no signs of a boom such as one sees in Germany and the United States. . . Nor are there the obvious signs one expects for a rapidly expanding economy"

move restraints are theaters, operas, ballets and football matches.

My sampling of the fine arts amounted to attendance at an opera, an orchestral concert, a ballet, a puppet show and a movie. I found the ballet superb, incomparably better in its specialty than Western ballet. It displays beauty and grace in all their forms. The puppet show was also excellent. The performances of opera and symphonic music, on the other hand, were disappointing. And the movie was dreadful, with an unsubtly didactic plot and heavy-handed melodramatic acting. The most unusual thing was the way the audience sat enthralled through the show.

Russians are, as everybody knows by now, heavy drinkers. It is not that they drink a lot; it is the way they drink. No matter what is being drunk, the procedure is the same: A goblet is filled, a toast is made, and the goblet is drained. This is done with the most delicate wine as well as with the foulest gin, and, as likely as not, all kinds of liquor will be mixed indiscriminately together. There is no taste, no smell—just sheer consumption of alcohol as quickly as possible.

There is a mistaken notion that Russians have a prodigious capacity for alcohol, that they can drink enormous quantities without being affected. It is much closer to the truth to say

that they are less concerned than Westerners about getting drunk in public and behaving like drunks. The drunks one sees on city streets are perhaps not more numerous than in American cities, but they do seem, on the whole, to be drunker.

These drinking habits fit in with an almost indescribable characteristic of the Soviet masses, perhaps best called "clumsiness." It extends over almost all aspects of life: in emotional, intellectual and physical matters as well as in the region of social manners. It is so pervasive that one must wonder if it is wholly a cultural trait. I will add that there are many Russians who are as intelligent, skilled and well-mannered as any other people; they just do not seem to form such a large fraction of the population as in Western countries.

From outward appearances morale is good, though not high, in the areas I visited. The people are not exactly happy, but they are not unhappy, either. They seem to have confidence that things will get better in the future. At the same time, they are not in a mood to wait indefinitely, and they seem to be losing patience with the continual emphasis on heavy industry. Great hopes have been built up for the achievements of the current Five-Year Plan, and morale will depend heavily on how it goes. In brief, there are no signs of serious unrest, but some signs of restlessness.

## WHY RUSSIA'S ECONOMY LAGS BEHIND THE WEST

**T**HE SOVIET ECONOMY is an industrial economy that lacks most of the modern characteristics: Agriculture continues to absorb a huge share of resources; the civilian economy is 50 years behind the West except for a few anachronisms such as radio, automobiles, airplanes and so forth; the transportation system is generally crude and backward.

As to "heavy" industry, the ordinary tourist sees only the results reflected in the civilian economy. In part these results are impressive: The manufacture and use of complicated machinery has been mastered. But from what one sees, it is impossible to judge the size of heavy industry or its rate of progress. The economy is active, but there are no signs of boom such as one sees in Germany and the United States, or even in Italy and Austria. Nor are there the obvious signs one expects for a rapidly expanding economy.

It is, in fact, impossible to make a judgment of the strength of the Soviet economy on the basis of casual observation. There are great contradictions everywhere, bound to puzzle an observer from the West. How can an economy be split in two, so that one very large sector is incredibly backward while another contains skills and methods of production at least comparable to those in the West? One sees unmistakable signs of that other sector, but nothing to indicate its relative importance. In particular, the military economy is completely hidden from view.

The recent encouragement of Western tourists to travel in the Soviet Union could have two interpretations: first, that Soviet leaders believe Westerners will be greatly impressed by the progress and strength of their economy; or, second, that they believe Westerners will be misled by the general backwardness into underestimating the progress and strength.

I find it difficult to accept the second interpretation for several reasons. In the first place, tourists are given access to many things customarily denied to Western diplomats and newspapermen. The only reasonable explanation for this comparative "open door" policy is that tourists are expected to be more gullible and impressionable.

Secondly, the Soviet leaders, and many of the people, are very sensitive to criticism, particularly when it has to do with living conditions and economic progress. American newspapermen are openly referred to as liars and slander-mongers.

Third, deliberate efforts are made to shield the worst conditions from tourists, and to house and feed tourists in a grand style.

It is my impression that most Russians believe conditions of the masses are better in the Soviet Union than elsewhere. The American economy is still pictured as characterized by mass unemployment and extreme poverty for the proletariat. One of the college texts used for English courses contains nothing but stories of destitution, unemployment, bread lines, lynchings, etc.

As a people denied contact with the outside for years and fed a constant diet of distorted views, it is natural that Russians should view their economic developments in terms of internal improvements from the depths of war, and not in comparison with actual developments elsewhere. The propaganda has been so effective that it has undoubtedly led to dangerous self-deception of some Soviet leaders. I have this feeling about former Soviet Foreign Minister Shepilov, for instance.

Looking forward, one can see opportunities for great developments in the Soviet economy. The labor force is vastly underutilized; by improving skills, making organizational

. . . "The potentialities for economic development are enormous; about all that is lacking is the release of energies and the removal of the bureaucratic dead weight"

changes and introducing a few key but generally simple technological changes, the productivity of the existing labor force could be increased severalfold.

Paradoxical as it may sound to those impressed by the successes of the Soviet economy in military spheres, I feel that truly significant economic progress will depend on a substantial retreat from authoritarian Communism. The potentialities for economic development are enormous; about all that is lacking is the release of energies and the removal of the bureaucratic dead weight, which acts as an efficient brake.

Put another way, I have the feeling that there would have been remarkable growth of the Russian economy over the last 40 years—far beyond what has been accomplished—if there had been a significant area of private enterprise to release, encourage and channel the powerful energies of the work force and the inherent creative abilities of the intelligentsia.

Perhaps there would not have been the same direct emphasis on the military sphere, or the same success in creating a gigantic military force in being; but the economic potential for war would probably have been greater. I think it is important to recognize that the Soviet economy, with its heavy emphasis on the military sector, now operates with virtually no slack. Everything is mobilized; nothing is in reserve, as long as the system remains as it is.

There are strong pressures visibly working for a relaxation of militant, authoritarian Communism. The people are anxious

to get a larger share of the product. Their appetite has been whetted; the middle classes, a large and growing group, want more freedom; and the leaders are aware that their greatest economic problem, now that the growth in the labor force has sharply fallen off, is to stimulate initiative and creativeness.

Significant changes are occurring—in the social atmosphere, in political structures and in economic organization. It remains to be seen how far they proceed. The point I wish to make is that the ultimate effect of a "softening" of Communism is not likely to be an elimination of national rivalries, but rather an alteration in their form. If anything, the effect of internal changes in the Soviet Union should be emergence of a more powerful economy than now exists.

As we left our interview with the vice chairman of the State Planning Commission, his parting comment ran as follows:

"We have a great task ahead of us. We are short of everything: tools, industrial materials and, especially, consumer goods. Living conditions must be improved. To meet this great task, we must above all have peace and friendly relations with other countries."

I believe he meant everything he said. It remains to be seen whether the leaders have the same feelings.

## HOW THE MAN IN THE STREET FARES IN RUSSIA

**A**LL OF THE SOVIET UNION is divided into three parts: the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The class distinctions are sharply marked, in most respects much more sharply than in the United States. This is most apparent in the privileges that custom accords to different class positions; e.g., the aristocracy never waits in line, and the bourgeoisie seldom does. They simply break in at the head, no matter how long the line, with scarcely a murmur from the crowd. Class distinctions are also apparent in the extreme inequalities of income and, of course, standards of living.

The aristocracy is made up of top-level governmental, military and professional people. From all appearances their standard of living, at least in relative terms, approaches that of the wealthy in the West. To be sure, they show more restraint in ostentatious display, and some of the customary luxuries of great wealth are denied them. But, as one Soviet citizen remarked to me, "If you have money, you can buy *anything* in the Soviet Union." This upper class is certainly affluent by Western standards, if not opulent.

The bourgeoisie embraces a larger segment of the population than I had imagined, and seems to be growing steadily in size. Members range from the bulk of artists and professional people, through the lower-level officials, to minor administrators and skilled workers. Their standard of living compares, again at least in relative terms, with that of the middle classes in America.

There are, of course, pronounced differences. Housing is poor by any Western standards, and many ingredients of the

comfortable life, such as automatic household appliances and Western-type amusements, are not available. On the whole, however, this group enjoys a high standard of living relative to the masses, and its members seem to be contented, if not overjoyed, with the way things are going.

For the masses it is another story. The bulk of Russia's population lives in poverty. Housing is unbelievably crowded—perhaps less so in rural areas—and of very poor quality; clothing is drab and barely adequate; food is sufficient, but the diet is monotonous and heavily weighted with starches; and all other amenities are meager almost to the point of complete absence.

Although I saw few persons dressed in rags or suffering from hunger, it seemed clear most people were not long or far removed from that state.

The supply of food seems to be adequate to maintain a satisfactory diet in terms of calories. Bread is plentiful and its price is low. Meat and dairy products are generally scarce and low grade; Kiev was the only city I visited where both were available in stores and markets most of the time.

In Leningrad, for instance, no meat or milk is sold in the collective-farm markets on Mondays and Thursdays. Queues are still to be seen in front of stores selling dairy products and fresh vegetables, though they have generally disappeared elsewhere—in the main, apparently, because prices are high enough relative to incomes to perform the rationing. Vegetables and fruits are available in collective-farm markets, but prices are relatively high.

Shopping for food is done overwhelmingly in collective-

. . . "I feel that . . . the Soviet higher educational program fails by a good margin to come up to our own, both in quality of teachers and facilities and in number of bona fide students"

farm markets, primarily because the supply of food is more plentiful—at higher prices—and varied. State stores carry mainly prepared foods—canned products, sausages, salted fish and so on. Fresh vegetables and fruits are almost never seen there, and fresh meat and dairy products are available only sporadically—at prices lower than in collective markets.

One of the easiest ways to tell a Russian is by his clothing. It is drab, of poor quality and shapeless. Most clothing is cotton and rayon; wool is only rarely seen and is very costly—it costs more than 10 times as much as cotton for a meter of medium quality. One of the reasons the clothing looks so bad is that very cheap dyes are used, predominately ugly and dull purples, blues and pinks. Shoes are bulky and unattractive in appearance, and most of the leather—when leather is used—is of low grade. Next to housing, clothing seems to be the main source of complaints.

Housing is the big problem, everywhere. Walking down the streets of any big city, one sees room after room, below as well as above street level, filled with simple iron beds. Other furnishings are primitive—perhaps a lamp, a table and a straight chair or two. Sometimes a small room will be divided in two by a curtain to separate the generations.

The dreadful housing conditions—and the scarcity of recreational facilities—are reflected most strikingly in sidewalks crowded with people far into the night. A unique characteristic of Soviet cities is the people walking the streets at night, wandering aimlessly and jamming the sidewalks. Parks are also crowded.

To give a better idea of living conditions, it may be useful to make some broad comparisons with the United States. The average wage in the Soviet Union apparently runs between 600 and 800 rubles a month [\$150 to \$200]. Compare this with a monthly salary of 14,000 rubles [\$3,500] for the rector of a major university. If we allow for two working members in a family, an average family income—after rather minor direct taxes—would run around 1,100 or 1,200 rubles [\$275 or \$300] in urban areas, for it would be unusual for both workers to earn the average.

### Russia's High Cost of Living

In the United States, by comparison, the average family income after direct taxes would run, say, \$400 a month. If we deduct another \$50 from the American income to adjust for the large differential in rent that has to be paid—rental payments are absurdly low in the Soviet Union, running about 1.3 rubles [33 cents] a square meter a month—we find that the average Russian urban family has less than four times as many rubles to spend a month as the average American family has dollars.

At the same time, the things the Russian family buys cost considerably more than four times as many rubles—in fact, between six and 100 times as many. It will also be seen that clothing is much more expensive relative to American prices than food; and, rather curiously, consumer durables seem to be no more expensive than food.

This paradox is probably explained by the fact that so much of the worker's income is taken up by the purchase of food and clothing that very little is left over to buy durables, even though they are relative "bargains." I mentioned to one Russian that American visitors found they could not afford

most Soviet goods. He replied, "We can't either, but we buy them anyway."

Almost all types of consumer durables and semidurables can be seen in store windows, often in austere models but not always. For instance, many varieties of radios are made in styles that remind one of the 1930s in the United States. I cannot speak highly of the quality of most sets, however; almost every radio I listened to, of my own free will and otherwise, gave forth constant loud static. Television sets are available in assorted sizes up to about 17-inch screens. The reception on the one or two sets I watched was far superior to radio reception.

### Best Buys in Consumer Goods

There seem to be lots of aluminum pots and pans of quite sturdy construction. In many ways these are the most impressive consumer goods, which supports the view that the aluminum and aircraft industries are well developed.

I was rather surprised by the variety of specialized electrical and electronic equipment, such as tape recorders, available to consumers—at extremely high prices, of course. One also sees a sizable number of privately owned automobiles driving about. It is clear that an effort is being made to provide Western-type consumer durables in at least sufficient quantity to keep hopes up.

A few comments can be made about the so-called "social services," which some observers are inclined to treat as a substantial addition to workers' incomes. These may be roughly divided into educational, cultural and medical services. I leave aside the matter of pensions since it is now clear, by the admission of Soviet authorities themselves, that they fall far short—in relative as well as absolute terms—of similar aid in the West.

My observation of educational facilities was very limited but sufficiently broad, I believe, so that my general impression of the scope of educational services would not be changed much by more extensive study. From my limited view—including a trip through the University of Moscow, which is held up as the outstanding achievement in higher education, and quick views of universities in Leningrad, Kiev and Kharkov—I find it hard to believe that the Soviet educational program consumes a significantly larger percentage of national income in the Soviet Union than our own program consumes here.

Perhaps I am wrong, and am deceived into believing this by always comparing Soviet facilities implicitly with American ones, rather than with total resources available in the Soviet Union. However this may be, I feel that, in the large, the Soviet higher educational program fails by a good margin to come up to our own, both in quality of teachers and facilities and in number of bona fide students.

I cannot comment on the quality or nature of the curriculum itself, since I did not see classes in action. I did, however, hear bitter comments from students on being greatly overworked, and I had at least one guide who knew painfully little about mathematics.

As to the quality of students, I saw nothing to be excited about: There are good ones and bad ones, and, no doubt, exceptionally good and exceptionally bad.

In the area of cultural services, a great talent has been

. . . "I should say that doctors are poorly trained and lack enthusiasm for their work, that medical equipment is sparse and often primitive . . . and that some of the methods of treatment are very backward"

displayed in the creation of public circuses in the old Roman style. Spectacular monuments of varied types have been raised everywhere. Though seldom having delicate aesthetic appeal, they are always impressive: the Agricultural Exposition in Moscow, the restored palaces in Leningrad, the omnipresent museums, the subways in Moscow and Leningrad, the many opera houses and concert halls, the parks of "culture and rest" in every city, the gigantic athletic stadiums and the huge sanatoriums along the Black Sea.

Taken all together, these projects have consumed only a small fraction of resources in the country; but each, taken separately, gives the impression of gigantic achievement.



—Pix

MOSCOW BAKERY: "Bread is plentiful. . . . Meat and dairy products are generally scarce"

From a propaganda point of view this is one of the shrewdest programs that could have been devised. For example, if the work that went into constructing the Agricultural Exposition, and that now goes into giving its displays, had been directed into residential housing, a few thousand people would now be better off and know about the improvement. But the Exposition has its effect on literally millions, creating in them, by means of its fantastic displays, the illusion of unprecedented accomplishments throughout the economy. Not even a permanent World's Fair would quite match the spectacular effect of this permanent Exposition. As one American remarked about the Exposition, and the Soviet ballet, "At home this would be impossible—we couldn't afford it."

I leave it to the expert in aesthetics to decide how much psychic income the worker gets from these cultural projects. The operas, ballets and plays usually have full houses, but the tickets are not cheap even though receipts surely do not

cover costs. The rider of the subway may get a free exhibition of some kind of art or another, but he also pays double the price of a streetcar ride. The ordinary citizen has parks to enjoy, but, certainly, no more than people in Western countries.

All things considered, it is doubtful that the people of the Soviet Union enjoy more "free" cultural services than the people of Western Europe or the United States. There seems to be more "culture" largely because there is less "play."

I visited several sanatoriums in the Black Sea region, saw their medical treatments and questioned the doctors briefly. If generalizations are warranted from this limited experience, I should say that doctors are poorly trained and lack enthusiasm for their work, that medical equipment is sparse and often primitive—and what I saw was American and German—and that some of the methods of treatment are very backward.

### Pay for Doctors: "Extremely Low"

The poor training of doctors is reflected in, and probably explained by, the extremely low pay they receive: A village doctor starts at 500 rubles [\$125] a month—compared with an average industrial wage of 600 to 800 rubles [\$150 to \$200]—a doctor in a sanatorium starts at about 900 rubles [\$225], receiving a raise every five years. Women make up a large portion of the doctors—from all appearances, much more than half.

A sanatorium "treating" 300 to 400 patients a month will have an old X-ray machine—American or German—a set of dental equipment, also American or German, and assorted instruments for electrical and radio therapy. The primitive state of equipment is illustrated by the use of sandglasses instead of watches for the timing of such things as the taking of a pulse.

In fact, little equipment is needed since, no matter what the ailment, the principal treatment is "taking the waters," internally or externally. The doctors guiding me through every sanatorium ended up their tours by showing the "laboratory." This is inevitably a closet-sized room containing a simple wooden table with a few assorted bottles on it. One must wonder whether the doctors are really so naïve as to suppose that these "laboratories," and other equipment, are something to be proud of, or whether they have a sly sense of humor.

I was stunned at first to find such emphasis on "taking the waters" as a panacea, but I was later informed by visiting American doctors that this is usual throughout Europe. In the baths at Matsesta, I observed the following treatments in succession, all using water from sulphur springs: sprays to be inhaled for all types of respiratory troubles; foot-and-arm baths to rehabilitate tired extremities and to cure miscellaneous circulatory and skin diseases; showers for the head to treat scalp disorders and to stop falling hair; sitz baths; and full baths for rheumatism, arthritis, circulatory troubles, skin diseases, general exhaustion and other assorted ailments.

These waters are also believed to have a miraculous effect in combatting sterility, as witness the visit of the Queen of Iran. The craze for the curative powers of bathing in

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mineral water had an amusing sidelight in one of the new sanatoriums, where the doctor pointed out with apparent pride that every bathtub had two sets of faucets: one for fresh water, the other for sea water.

It may also be mentioned that no regard was shown for the privacy of patients; I was ushered into rooms, including those where baths were being taken, without preliminaries. In no case was the patient asked if he minded the intrusion.

All things considered, the sanatoriums—at least those run by the various ministries—are more in the nature of vacation spots than health centers. They are very elaborate, spacious and impressive structures with facilities similar to those in resort hotels in this country, though on a cruder scale. One new sanatorium was said to be for persons with heart trouble, but it is set on the top of a high hill several hundred yards from the beach, which is reached by a long set of intricate stairs, intriguing architecturally but enervating physically.

These sanatoriums must make a deep impression on those fortunate enough to attend them. According to the stock description, those attending are all "workers," even those quartered in the most elaborate suites. But their medical importance must be heavily discounted. I am leaving aside the sanatoriums designed for long-term treatments, such as those for tubercular patients.

In addition to the factors already mentioned, the attendance is strictly limited to 26 days: no matter whether the "patient" is suffering from heart trouble or an ingrown toenail, he gets the standard visit—no more and no less. The number treated is also so small—for instance, 300 a month in the sanatorium of the Ministry of Coal Mining—that it would take years to handle all employes entitled to some kind of a rest cure.

Moreover, although the employe is supposed to have some kind of illness to qualify for a vacation in a sanatorium, I was told by one of my guides that this requirement can easily be bypassed. The technique is as follows: One first buys his transportation tickets to the sanatorium and pays for the month's stay; after this, he gets examined by a doctor, who finds nothing wrong; the doctor is then told that a rest cure has already been purchased at great expense, and he manages by a second search to find something that he can certify requires immediate treatment.

The visit to a sanatorium is, incidentally, expensive; the normal price, excluding transportation, is 1,400 rubles [\$350] for the 26 days. If the worker earns less than average pay, his trade union presumably bears up to two thirds of the cost, but the remainder is not insignificant to the poorly paid worker. One has the feeling that here, as elsewhere, the main benefit is to those who can afford it.

### Boom in Summer Resorts

Even though the medical value of sanatoriums can be belittled, it should be pointed out that resort towns are crowded in the summer by vacationists. Sochi, for instance, was said to have a permanent population of 100,000, but a transient population of over 300,000 at any one time during the summer. I do not doubt that this is true. If one is willing to put up with discomforts, the trip can be made quite cheaply by third-class rail and boat travel. It also seems to be possible to get cheap lodging.

I hesitate to draw any broad conclusions about the im-

portance of free medical services. From visiting the sanatoriums and from talking to a well-qualified American doctor visiting medical installations, I formed the impression that the standards of medical treatment are generally low.

How much is free and how much must be paid for by the patient, I do not know. In the case of dental work, fillings are made free of charge if the patient is willing to put up with plastic or steel; if he wants gold, he must buy it himself and take it to the dentist. But, even here, the notion of free treatment is strained, for there is ample evidence of low standards of dental care in the poor teeth to be seen generally—and in the universal admiration of Russians for the condition of most Americans' teeth—and in the many people openly suffering from severe toothaches.

By Western standards, the Russian people as a whole are poor. The contrast becomes more and more pronounced as one moves westward through Europe. Even at the dividing line between Soviet and free Europe, the difference is so marked as to suggest two separate worlds.

In Vienna, Rome and especially Munich and Hamburg—the European cities I visited—shops are filled with attractive, high-quality and reasonably priced goods; the streets are crowded with shoppers; the people are smartly and well dressed; and morale is noticeably high.

### What Shopping Is Like

In the Soviet Union the shops have a number of different types of goods, but there are few shops and goods are generally unattractive, poor in quality and limited in quantity and variety. The shoppers seem to look about more than to buy—the goods are there to give them hope for the future.

Finally, though by no means sullen, the people show few signs of spontaneous gaiety.

It is a mistake, however, to emphasize Soviet poverty too strongly; Russia has always been poor. The important thing is whether living standards have been rising. There seems to be no doubt that they have been, not strikingly but, nonetheless, significantly. This is certainly true if one takes the end of World War II as the starting point.

Everybody I talked to went out of his way to describe the terrible conditions following the war and the great improvement since. People were literally starving, they were clothed in rags and they were housed like animals. It also seems undeniable that living conditions are better now than at the beginning of the Plan era some 27 years ago, though it is hard to assess the degree of improvement.

Professor Hoover, who lived in the Soviet Union during 1929 and 1930 and whose recent revisit overlapped my tour, said that living conditions were without question better now. For one thing, in those earlier days there were conspicuous numbers of people dressed in rags and begging on the streets for a scrap of bread. While a few beggars are still to be seen, they do not seem to be on the verge of starvation.

Conditions are also better in that relatively modern conveniences, though still scarce, have been introduced, and there are few areas—housing is probably one—where matters could be worse now than earlier. Finally, improvements have been accelerating, particularly since the death of Stalin.

More important than actual improvements is the feeling of the public about them, and here there can be no doubt



. . . "An old Russian tale . . . illustrates the current state of affairs." . . . In the Soviet Union "they have, after all, managed to get the pigs out of the house"

that people feel better off. It may be useful to relate an old Russian tale that one observer reportedly uses to illustrate the current state of affairs:

There was once an old Russian couple who, for reasons they could not comprehend, were unhappy. They had led a full life, they had raised several fine children who paid them all due respect, and they had adequate property to provide a comfortable livelihood in their old age. Yet they were unhappy.

To find out what might be wrong, they sought out a wise man known for his sound counsel on such problems. After their troubles had been recited, he thought for a moment and then asked whether they had any cows. "Oh, yes," they replied, "we have two very fine cows that have always given good milk."

"Take them into the house with you and come back to see me next week," was his brief advice.

The old couple could not understand the reason for this, but they did as they were told. The next week the old couple came back to the wise man and complained bitterly that he had created an awful state of affairs: The cows were all over the house, which was after all not too big, and made a terrible mess of things. How could this possibly make them happy?

In reply the wise man asked only if they had any horses, and when told they did, he advised that they take these, too, into the house with them.

And so it went, week after week, until the old couple's cows, horses, chickens, ducks, sheep and, finally, pigs had all been taken into their small house to live with them. At this point the old couple was at the end of endurance. They came to the wise man and told him conditions had become unbearable; they could not go on any longer with their house, which used to be so clean and comfortable, jammed full of animals. The wise man appeared unmoved and said only: "Take the cows out of the house and come back next week."

And each week that they came back the wise man told them to take another animal out of the house. Finally, all the animals had been removed, and the old couple went to see the wise man for the last time.

"Now, how do you feel?" he asked. "Are you still unhappy?"

"Thanks to you," the old couple said, "we are happier than ever before in our lives. Life is wonderful with the pigs out of the house."

And so it is in the Soviet Union: They have, after all, managed to get the pigs out of the house. [END]



THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA: "They are not exactly happy, but they are not unhappy either"