

USSR Has More—Tourists, Money, Goods, She Finds

Editor's Note: Mrs. Maxwell, former Birmingham resident and reporter for the Lebanon Daily Star, describes Russia as she saw it from Sept. 22 to Oct. 7.

By GENEVIEVE MAXWELL

BETRUT, Lebanon—For the past three years the USSR has encouraged tourism, and trained a gigantic staff of foreign-language personnel to handle tourists in many of the cities and towns throughout the present fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics.

Trips for the most part are taken in cash. Intourist is a specialized agency for first class accommodations, and works through the trade missions abroad. The USSR is obviously arranging (paid in advance) by looking for its share of the Some individual itineraries are allowed, as well as the most special speaking in the USSR is a huge country, extending 22 million square kilometers (three times greater than "INTOURIST" in the USSR and abroad helps make the plans and together) and having a population

of over 200 million (India, 400 million; Communist China, 600 million). Its natural resources are enormous and organized for the most part on a great scale, and although having a varied climate, there are obviously some things lacking such as natural rubber, coffee, jade, various tropical fruits, and others.

BUT SOME of the natural resources of the USSR are remote or still unexploited. It is found more economical to purchase certain commodities and raw materials—in some cases to accommodate other nations' resources for political reasons. Result: the Soviet Union is interested in developing its foreign trade and tourism is foreign trade.

USSR on the Move

Russians and the many Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Uzbeks, Tatars, Georgians, Armenians, Jews and other nationalities represented to any degree are also on the move in the USSR, as well as the peoples of the ground-satellites.

They are encouraged to travel and see the impressive sights of the USSR. When our American party was in Moscow, there were the additions of the Communist Chinese and East German communists in the capital to celebrate their respective 10th anniversaries. They had their own linguist-guides, we had ours and never-the-twin met, although we are in the same dining rooms, elbow to elbow.

THE SEVERAL large "tourist" hotels were filled to overflowing and we were slept three and four to a room (with bathroom). The specially-built "plush" hotels are as high as 30 floors with great lobbies of marble, chandeliers of crystal, and other interior decorations of a past era that belie their recent construction. Ceilings are still very high, but both heat and light are very adequate. So is the food, with generous supplies of milk, butter, yogurt, and ice cream. Everything is kept clean, too—hotels are spotless, and service good, public buildings, streets and parks are spruced up, transportation excellent on planes and jets, trains, buses and taxis, or in the undergrounds which are possibly more beautiful in Moscow and Leningrad than any others in the world. Even dust is kept at a minimum.

THE SUBWAYS run every minute, in rush hours every half-minute. You can cross town in 17 minutes, no smoking, no commercial advertisements, and plenty of Russian propaganda for a few kopeks.

Also Fifth Column

The Journalists Union is an organization of journalists working in periodicals, in organs of Soviet information, in publishing houses and radio and TV, whose aim is to take an active part in mobilizing all the efforts of the working people to bring about the full victory of communism in the USSR.

The Union is also supposed to widen ties with journalists of foreign countries, but I could not get near a journalist nor a newspaper during my two weeks visit. However, there was plenty of literature to buy and read in English, including the "Moscow Mirror," eight-page sheet (50 kopeks) which is published twice a week, it carried only communist news and especially N. S. Khrushchev's speeches which he was making in the USA and later in Peking, while we were in the USSR.

It did carry a very helpful "Entertainment Guide for Visitors," a cute cartoon of Oleg Popov and his adventures on the moon, and comprehensive lessons on the Russian language.

ALTHOUGH claiming to be the largest publishers of books in the world, according to USSR statistics, these books I saw in English by both English and American authors (Theodor Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and other gloom writers) were of doubtful value, as changes were obvious in the texts of books I happened to pick up at random. Art books of Russian museum treasures, on the other hand, are of great value and finely produced, especially the books of icons, both in color and black and white, as well as other priceless and more modern painting and sculpture collections.

The Hard Sell

Excellent audio-visual methods were being used everywhere in publicizing the current industrial and agricultural plans, as well as the Sputnik and rocket programs and people who did speak English, boasted of the progress of these plans with great pride. Russian communications media were especially noteworthy at the Economic Achievement exhibition, a permanent exhibition in Moscow, the capital and nerve-center of communism.

HERE ARE seen striking pavilions of the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics, various halls of general progress (400,000 industrial enterprises, 60,000 collective farms, 16,000 state farms, and charts showing 120 times increase in output since the communist years) and great charts explained in five languages on heavy industry of the USSR in comparison with the industrialized countries of the world.

One pavilion of modeling Sputniks, geophysical rockets, cosmic rockets, and others (including life models of the dogs used) was attracting large crowds of spectators, all very graphically presented by the Academy of Sciences. Shopping at the various outlets did not prove exciting as I could find no star sapphires, topazes, or

AT NUMBER 17, for instance, I saw only costume jewelry, clocks, much cloisonne from Communist China, stoneware, plastic and other trinkets similar to those found in US dime-to-dollar stores. Later, however, I discovered "Commission Shops" in both Moscow and Leningrad, where people are allowed to trade anything second-hand. Here can be found precious and semi-precious jewels, valuable objects d'art, paintings, furniture. (See TOURISTS, Page 6-C)

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