

MOSCOW STAYS AS A CITY OF STRANGE SIGHTS

Dirty Shops, Troops, Shabby Peasants and Odors Are Encountered

MOSCOW, U.S.S.R., June 1—Dull flight of several soviet aces to the faces, sombre eyes, nondescript clothes, khaki-clad officers, with revolvers at their belts, clattering trucks bristling with bayoneted rifles. Dirty shops, largely full of junk, with an occasional bookstore or commercial shop with a goodly display of food, wine, or decent clothing. Old women with bread and herring under their arms, trudging past decayed facades of once handsome buildings. The screech of an ambulance siren in the distance and a drunkard battling with a policeman while groups of comrades gaze on. Over to the west the mighty marble bulk of St. Isaac's cathedral and the slender golden fleche of the admiralty. An immaculate suite, friendly efficient servants and a brave attempt at good food in the Hotel Astoria, bustling with Jewish fur merchants from the four corners.

It is the same old scene, its strangeness brought home by a mere month in revolverless Scandinavia. Even Soviet Russia, with its soldiers and ambulances and motley masses, becomes a habit after a time.

The October station has been cleaned up and remodeled and there is a bright new dining room with clean linen and flowers on the tables, entered through a waiting room with the stale odor of unwashed bodies. As we sit drinking beer and waiting for the Red Arrow to leave for Moscow a demented girl wanders in, grimaces at the strange assembly of customers and finally is shooed out by a chunky waitress.

Weird Throng on Streets

Shabby peasants, bent halfway to the pavement by gunnysacks, shambling across Komсомолская Ploshad in Moscow, narrowly escaping death from honking trucks and clanging street cars. A weird throng, perhaps, a bit more hopeful looking than that of Leningrad, fills the sidewalks along Myasnitskaya leading down to Lubianka square—home of the political police—and the centre of the city. Hordes of workmen are still at it, trying to finish the two big hotels on Ohodny Ryad. The little park is a mass of mud, halfway between winter and spring.

Teatralny Ploshad, Mokhovaya, Arbat and other prominent spots have been enlivened by the unveiling of new subway stations, labelled "Metro" in red neon letters. A big sign across from the American embassy office announces that "The Metro Is," although the first section of the system is not yet open to public use. Meanwhile, the street cars are still packed with shoving, cursing comrades, presided over by exasperated conductresses. This information cost us an overcoat button.

Little Difficulties Continue

Little difficulties continue to make life in Moscow interesting, but difficult. The floor of the new dining room just completed for the American embassy looks like Lake Michigan in a storm, and the plaster has cracked, providing something more for the political police to look into. Our soviet-made water heater has again gone out of commission and the gas company can send nobody to repair it this week. The Moscow city council has taken advantage of our absence to deprive us of our garage space on forty-eight hours' notice.

Ten telephone calls net two replies of "busy," two reports that the other line is out of order, four replies that the official wanted is not in his office, and two conversations. But these are things to be thankful for. The pre-revolutionary elevator in our apartment building is working, when the elevator lady is on duty. We are lucky, for only 635 of the 1,018 elevators in this city of 3,500,000 souls are functioning.

The newspapers are beginning to concentrate on the spring sowing campaign, full of stories about tractor station managers who have not succeeded in putting their machines in order. Other current subjects of attention are Herr Rosenberg, the nefarious Nazi; a public loan of 100 million rubles which is being offered "at the insistence of the workers," and the

far outposts of the bolshevik arctic. Several persons of minor prominence who were looking distinctly worried six weeks ago have lost their positions due to "Trotskyist sympathies." The black bourse value of the ruble is still 2½ cents; the official value of 1 ruble 12 kopeks to the dollar. Overhead rumbles the Maxim Gorky, the world's greatest land plane.

"At least they've got to admit that Russia's different," says the young American Communist. This, no man can deny.

PICCARD TRIES POLISH BALLOON IN TEST FLIGHT

WARSAW, Poland, June 1—In order to sell Prof. Auguste Piccard, stratosphere explorer, his next balloon, the Poles took him up for a trial flight in the Swiss balloon Zurich-3, which was left here from the last James Gordon Bennett race.

Maj. Mazuriek, chief of the Polish balloon works, and Capt. Zbigniew Burzynski, winner of two Bennett races, piloted the balloon. The fourth passenger was Dr. E. Tilgenkamp, who flew the bag last September and who is Prof. Piccard's companion during his visit to Poland.

The flight was scheduled for only a few hours, long enough to give the scientist an opportunity to see the Polish terrain and weather conditions for himself. During the filling of the bag with gas and preparations for the takeoff, he was able to watch the efficiency of Polish balloon crews.

Prof. Piccard spent yesterday at the Polish balloon works in Jabloniec, testing balloon cloth and observing the process of making the balloons with which the Poles have achieved such success in the Bennett races.

The Swiss scientist already has decided that Polish balloon cloth would be the best for his next attempt to be a stratosphere, when he hopes to attain the height of 30,000 meters (97,000 feet). The Poles hope that he will not only order his balloon here, but that he will also make his flight from Warsaw.

Prof. Piccard is ready to fly tomorrow, so he said himself here, but he needs finances, at least \$50,000 for the cost of the bag alone. If his plans materialize the flight probably will be undertaken next year.

Has 35,000,000 Bees; Every One of Them Can Sting, But Won't

BURLEIGH, N. J., June 1—A bee with a disposition as sweet as its honey is making this village a Mecca for apiarists.

It can sting, but it won't! From all parts of New Jersey and neighboring states, bee-keepers are wearing a path to the door of Henry Brown, "inventor" of this latest improvement on nature.

Their interest sharpened by stings of the past they come to watch Brown pluck at random among his 35,000,000 honey-gatherers and place them in his mouth, his ears, and inside his clothes. "I started on this idea 12 years ago," said Brown, a former Russian seaman. "I got tired of being stung by my own bees so I crossed Cyprian bees—they are from Cyprus—with Italian bees and the mongrels stung worse than their parents. I kept crossing them down to the sixth generation and now I've got a bee that won't sting."

They could sting if they got riled, he explained, but they don't.

If you find it hard to concentrate on bridge even under ordinary circumstances, just try playing it on the air. The Four Aces tried it and succeeded admirably, but they claim it takes a lot of concentration and patience to make their bridge broadcasts understood by those who know little about the game and at the same time enjoyable to the many experts who listen in.

PRINCE AND CUBAN WIFE RECONCILED AT NEW YORK

Alfonso's Eldest Son Warmly Greeted by His Commoner Bride as Liner Docks—Says He's Still Prince

PRINCE AND CUBAN King Alfonso of Spain, had opposed the reconciliation with his bride. NEW YORK, June 1—The Prince of Asturias was reconciled with his wife today on the promenade deck of the liner Washington.

"Everything is O. K.," said the former (her) streaked aboard the liner as the Princess (that's what he called her) streaked aboard the liner as soon as it docked. She threw her arms about her royal husband and gave him a resounding kiss. The Prince, inclined to be a little stiff as the boat made its way up the bay, unbent in happiness.

The Prince and his wife sat on a ping-pong table, chatted in Spanish to each other, and kissed for the cameraman, kissed again for movies, and kissed again for good luck.

The Princess was inclined to be facetious. She told reporters: "Say we will be divorced tomorrow. Go ahead, say that."

Then she kissed her prince again. The couple had been separated since last November. The Prince's remark that everything is O. K. came when he was asked if his father, former his royal status.

SOVIET'S WEAKEST DEFENSE LINK LIES IN ITS RAILWAYS

MOSCOW, U. S. S. R., May 31—The growing war scare in Europe and the possibility that the Soviet may have to defend its borders against German aggression at some time in the future has again drawn attention to the weakest link in the soviet system of defense—her railways.

The salient fact, patent to anyone who makes even a superficial study of the situation, is that the Soviet railways are still in a dangerous mess, incapable of handling anything near their peacetime load and most certainly incapable of performing adequately in time of war. Lack of adequate transportation facilities, were war to come tomorrow, might well prove disastrous.

Soviet railways at the present time manage to load and unload approximately 60,000 cars a day, whereas the minimum requirement was fixed at 68,000 as early as one year ago and at least 70,000 cars would have to be loaded daily to care for the needs of soviet commerce and industry at the present moment.

Many Wrecks and Accidents

Wrecks and accidents, costing hundreds of lives and many millions of rubles yearly continue to be the rule rather than the exception despite the frequent shooting parties which have been staged after such incidents in the past. There were 62,000 mishaps and wrecks in 1934, about 7,000 in January and 5,000 in February, the toll for 1934 including 4,500 completely wrecked cars and 60,000 damaged cars while total soviet production of freight cars in that year was only 29,000 units. Bad assembly of trains broken axles and rails, and inattention to signals were the chief causes.

Lazar Kaganovitch, new commissar of transportation, blames the high accident rate on high officials of the various railways and has announced that they are to take responsibility for reducing it, "or else—" But the general problem of improving the work of the railways is far more complicated than that, and all of the threats in the world will not fill the bill.

The first immediate requirement is an increase in the number of freight cars. While the government has ordered industry to increase the production of cars two and six-tenths times in 1935, it is significant that the equivalent of only 29,600 two-axle cars were produced in 1934, against a plan of 42,000, and it completely inconceivable that 80,000, can be produced in 1935, orders or no orders. If the Soviet government is really determined to remedy the lack of cars it must purchase abroad, and probably in the United States, which produces gondola and hopper cars of the kind most

badly needed and most difficult to produce in this country.

Freight Needs Speeding Up

It is also vital that the movement of freight be speeded up and here the Soviet will run into the highly costly necessity of equipping its rolling stock with air-brakes and automatic couplings which are necessary for the operation of long trains and the speedy sorting of cars in the terminals. In 1934 the average freight car occupied 211 hours between loading, 91 hours of this time being spent in sorting yards and only 72 hours in actual movement. This year the Russians have high hopes of reducing the period of freight turnover to 187 hours and the time spent in sorting yards to seventy-four hours.

If the Soviet railway system is to be modernized in the manner made necessary by the growth of industrialization an imposing array of measures must be taken. The size of locomotives must be increased, forty or fifty ton cars of the American type must be substituted for the tiny seven-and-one-half-ton cars now in use, hundreds of bridges must be strengthened to support heavier trains, the ballast of the roads must be improved heavier rails of better quality must be substituted for the light rails now in use and the automatic clock system which is now in use on only 2,579 kilometers of track, must be extended. Locomotives and car repair shops must be reorganized; new lines must be laid to eliminate bottle necks which now exist.

Policy On Personnel

It is also agreed that the government must adopt some other policy toward the railway personnel than the one followed to date. It is a notorious fact that the commissariat of transportation is packed with incompetent bureaucrats and communist politicians who regularly sabotage constructive plans for the reform of the railway system.

Discipline among actual workers also demands a radical improvement, not through the iron-handed method used so unsuccessfully in the past, but improving their living conditions. More food and decent clothing and better housing conditions for those engaged in operating the railways and a thorough house-cleaning in the commissariat itself appear as important to the correction of the situation as technical considerations.

The bill was mounted steadily during long years of fumbling, and neglect. It must now be paid.

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Assisted by Ned Wever as her leading man and a distinguished supporting cast of CBS players, Ethel also will present a dramatic interpretation of another popular number, "Living

in a Great Big Way".

Ted Husing is cast as Miss Merman's "friendly enemy" in the singer's current series of broadcasts, and Al Goodman, noted New York musical comedy and revue conductor, sets the orchestral pace of the show. During the June 2nd "Rhythm at 8" program Goodman will present special arrangements of "Latin from Manhattan", "Reckless", "Fare Thee Well, Annabelle", and "Rhythm of the Rhum".

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