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Leningrad, USSR
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Institute of Current World Affairs.
366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

In leaving Kiev for Moscow, I put in for the jet flight which takes 1 hour and 10 minutes (to go about 500 miles). This particular jet flight had been inaugurated only a week before and I had to motor out of town for about 45 minutes before reaching the field. It literally was a field, with not a building on it, just a few tents and a wooden privy. It seems that the strip is part of a Russian air force base and when Khrushchev was in the area sometime



MOSCOW AIRPORT: Jets by the eye'ful

ago and was told a new civilian airport was needed to accommodate the jets, he said, nonsense, take the air force one and let the air force move further away from town. The air force apparently did not like being put so far away from its recreation area and so far hasn't budged. This was quite apparent from the number of planes lined up along the runway. I counted at least 50 jet bombers, similar in model to the jet passenger plane, and a few jet fighters. And impressive as this array of these huge planes was, I suspect there were more elsewhere -- because the field was far bigger than any one eye'ful. I was tempted to snap a picture or two as I waited for the plane to get ready. But then a friendly Aeroflot passenger agent came by and laughingly said, "These? Old-fashioned and all cut up. We've got new ones flying now which will carry twice as many people. And ones to come which will be even bigger." The one I flew in carried 100 passengers in 20 rows of five abreast. A little short on leg room, perhaps, but not bad.

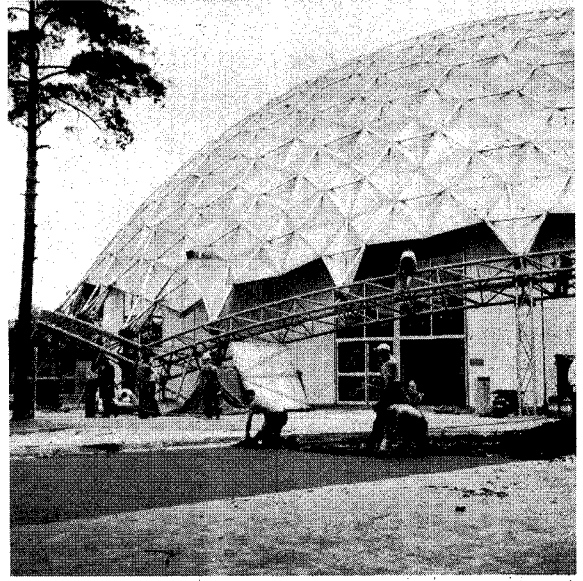
As I arrived at Moscow Airport, by the way, there was another huge array of jets. But these were strictly passenger planes. I had several immediate impressions of Moscow. First off, the city is not only immense, but it seems to be ideally laid out for those who play with war. The streets are so wide it's give and take whether you can walk across them within a signal change. And there is no end of these wide streets fanning out from the Kremlin center, no end of railroad stations fanning out from the city limits. I also was impressed (or rather terrified) by the way cars go zooming along these boulevards. I was tempted to run back to my jet plane for safety. There are a good many Intourist hotels in Moscow -- the Ukraine, the largest and newest which houses a good many of the Americans; the Metropole with its Czarist elegance, the National, and the Peking, where I was put, along with a number of Russia's Chinese and satellite visitors. I found that if you

want to dial somebody at another hotel, you first learn the hotel's three-digit code, and then add on your friend's room number, and you're in -- no switchboards at all to go through.

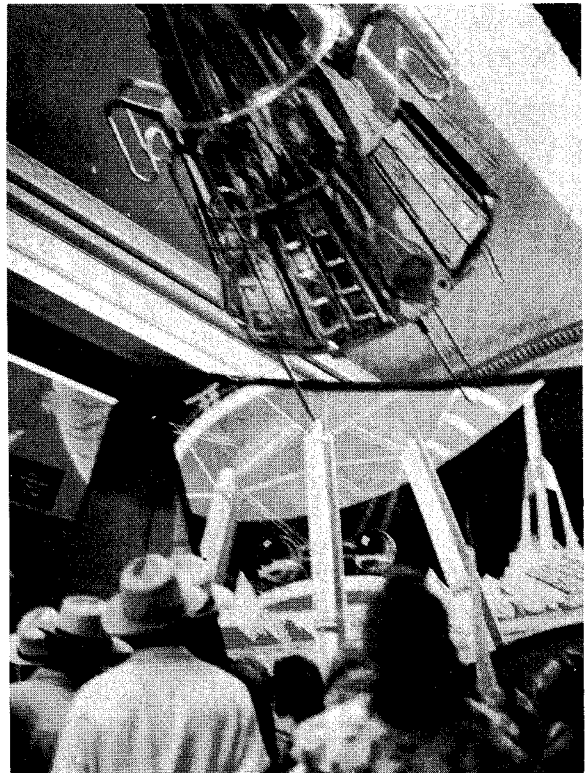
I discovered one of my friends in Moscow, Lee Brady, the head of USIS who is also a Counselor of Embassy, had an appendectomy the night I arrived. When I called on him at the hospital a few days later I found he had just about survived. He told me the Russians consider general anaesthesia unhealthy and so give local injections, combined with strapping the patient down to the operating table. Only in Lee's case, they didn't give enough local and when he started thrashing and screaming as he felt himself being cut through the nurse told him to hush up: He was distracting the surgeon. Once Lee was wheeled back to his room, another nurse came in with a tray bearing ten little glass covers with candles burning underneath. They were placed all over Lee's chest: To draw the bad blood away from the wound. What made my friend even madder was the thought that some nine U.S. Governors were just then concluding their Soviet goodwill visit, overwhelmed, among other things, with the Soviet progress in medicine.

I had heard how Americans are confined to quarters in a ghetto-like setup in Moscow, but seeing was the reality. A number of Embassy families live right inside the high, grimlike Embassy building, taking the elevator to and from the office, which means the first floor or the ninth. The rest of the American colony, including non-Government people, such as newspaper men, is limited to a few apartment buildings. One of the exceptions, Henry Shapiro of the United Press, occupies a flat which UPI bought some 30 years back. Hank said he keeps getting such hints as the termites are about to destroy his foundations and doesn't he think he should move elsewhere? But Hank, whose wife is Russian, so far has declined to budge. I also saw the Moscow "press room": the telephone-telegraph office where foreign reporters bring their copy for approval. It is taken behind a curtained door. Then they may hear about it in a few hours, a few days, or perhaps, in the case of outright rejection, never. Like Lee Brady, the permanently accredited press corps is also disturbed that American visitors are going to become victimized by the Russian snow job. It seems that when the 100 or so reporters arrive for Vice President Nixon's visit censorship will be lifted, as if it never did exist. It has been lifted only once before: earlier this year for the Macmillan visit. And the permanent corps is in a quandry: Should they take advantage of the visit and file as they please? Or should they mind their manners in order to stay accredited once the Nixon entourage pulls out?

I went out to Sokolniki Park to look at the U.S. Exhibit. I suppose there is always a last-minute frenzy in putting on exhibitions, but this one looked as if preparation would still be going on long after the exhibit had opened and closed. The asphalt was still being put down for roadways. A model home and colored TV exhibit were set up, period. Some were blaming the Russians for sabotaging the work. Some the Finns, for sending along prefabricated parts with nuts but no bolts. And then some Americans were blaming themselves -- for failing to anticipate all the trouble they would run into. At any rate, the two main exhibition buildings -- a dome-shaped circular structure, and one built in a curve with modernistic eaves -- were large and impressive.



SOKOLNIKI PARK: AMERICA'S INCURSION INTO MOSCOW



USSR'S PERMANENT EXHIBITION IN MOSCOW: Grand entrance; One of the few remaining statues of a Comrade called Stalin; and proud admirers of their country's space satellite.

By the way, I also visited the enormous USSR Agricultural & Industrial Exhibition, a permanent world's fair with buildings for each republic, for major industries and for major agricultural crops. I saw duplicates of the various sputniks and satellites, and the original nose cone from which the two space dogs were recovered, complete with its ripped parachutes. I also saw an exhibit on the research entailed in taming the H-Bomb of thermonuclear power. It included a film with English dialogue which used the expression, "Similar to the Zeta device the British have perfected." I hadn't anticipated such a generous credit line.

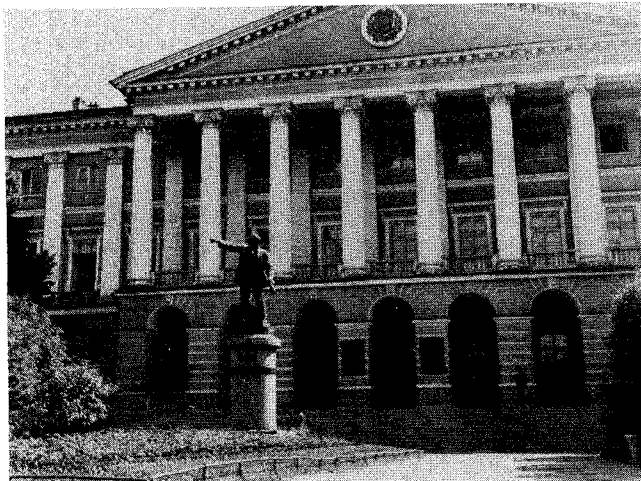
I was in the U.S. Embassy elevator one day and asked a gentleman who got in with me if he knew how much time I should allow to get to Spasso House. He answered quite readily and precisely. And then looking at him more closely and seeing how really haggard and weary he was, I came right out and asked if he wasn't by any chance Ambassador Thompson. Indeed he was, the man who had been kind enough to ask me for a drink at his home, Spasso House, for the next evening. When I got there I also found Hollywood: Twentieth Century Fox's Spyros K. Skouros himself. Later, when I thought I had carefully cornered the Ambassador for a few words Skouros barged right in to recite how well he had told off the various members of the Kremlin that day. And for confirmation, Skouros brought along a nephew who kept exclaiming: "You should have seen him! Nobody gets the last word with him! He sure told those Commissars!" It seems it all concerned Russia's desire to obtain American movies and Skouros' desire to hold back until he was sure the Russian movies he was getting in exchange would attract American audiences. Poor Ambassador Thompson -- in addition to all his other troubles.

My girl Intourist guide in Moscow gave me a detailed tour of the Kremlin showplaces -- the Archangel, Assumption and Annunciation Cathedrals which have been restored to their original magnificence and the "Armory" where can be found not only the Tsar and Tsarina's crown jewels, carriages, court dresses and and fabulous bric-a-brac, but even the be-diamonded saddles, blankets and harnesses of the imperial horses. I was terribly impressed with Russia's royal tradition all right, but I asked what about the Lenin Museum. There is one in each major city and I noticed not one of my guides had ever suggested visiting them. "You wouldn't be interested," my Moscow guide told me. "Are you?" I asked. "Of course." "You personally like to go to the Lenin Museum?" "No, 'we'." 'Nough said.

I had another discussion with this girl -- a language student who now is studying to become an engineer. This involved the Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum in Red Square. After we had come out from viewing the floodlit, life-like corpses in their glass coffins, I asked my guide what reaction she had -- this time, during successive visits with tourists, and originally, when she first saw them. She said first she wanted to hear my reaction. We sparred around a bit and finally I did give her my reaction. Then I asked for hers. "No," she said firmly, "I don't want to discuss it." Tit for tat, under new rules.

There also has been no end of the royal tradition in my Intourist excursion through Leningrad. It was no accident that I started to call it St. Petersburg a while back. Peter's heritage is emphasized everywhere: the four-room cottage he built for himself on the banks of the Neva in the early 1700's while he was watching his new capital going up; in the Summer Palace he finally moved into (so small that the royal reception had to

be held in the more palatial home of Peter's bewigged, French-imitating Chamberlain, Menshikov). Peter's marble sarcophagus even gets daily floral wreaths. And there are also a good many mementoes of Catherine the Great: Her Winter Palace, of course, which includes the Hermitage Museum; and Petrodvorets, her magnificent palace on the Gulf of Finland whose grand fountains are far grander than Versailles.



LENIN AND SMOLNY INSTITUTE: In a school for nice young ladies, the Revolution was cradled

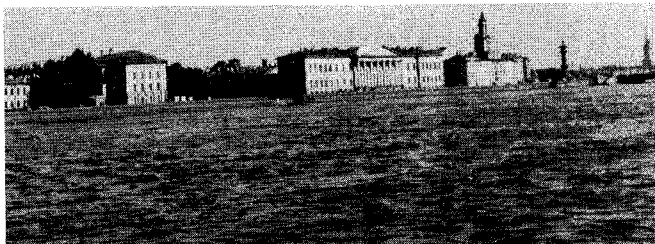
those days. It was explained that this was the flat of a skilled worker -- even in those days.

Catherine II's Winter Palace on the Neva Embankment, together with the three adjacent art museums which now are called collectively the "Hermitage" Museum, is a palace all right. And you get an idea of royal pre-

rogative when you see the magnificent crystal solarium room with tumbling fountains where the Tsarina used to have her dinner served from a table fully set on the floor below and then sent up, servantless, through a floor trap door. Catherine, you see, liked to dine with her lovers alone. But when it came to the art collection with its two de Vincis, two Raphaels, one Michelangelo

statue, 25 Rembrandts and an assortment of Picassos, Cezannes, Gauguins, and Matisses, etc., -- I couldn't help but think that in the classical art ranks, at least, old Andy Mellon had pulled a fast one. He gathered his nucleus for Washington's National Gallery of Art when the Soviets, in the early thirties, were desperate for cash. The Hermitage certainly has quantity -- and certainly some quality. But Andy came away with the cream. He couldn't quite pack off the town itself, however, and that too is a work of art. Leningrad is a tapestry of color, architecture, parks, canals and statuary. Perhaps this explains that even though it is the cradle of the Soviet Revolution, Leningradians are still pretty darn proud of the royal elegance all around them. And right now there are "white nights" when the sun doesn't set until 11 P.M. The shadows from this late sun make the city's architectural lines even more elegant.

On this last day in Russia, I begged my guide (Igor this time) to let me see something of Lenin's tradition and the cradle of the Soviet Revolution. It required permission and an appointment, but I got to see the Smolny Institute, the former school for daughters of the nobility which was seized by the Revolutionists for their headquarters. Here Lenin and his wife lived in two spartan rooms and here Lenin delivered his famous speech urging his followers to turn the rascals out. I also saw one of the workers flats where Lenin hid out for two days before fleeing to Finland. My surprise here was that this proletarian refugee had four very large rooms and, although ^{on} the sixth floor, was reached by an elevator, even in



CLASSIC ARCHITECTURE ALONG THE NEVA

There are still quite a few Catholic churches around, incidentally, and I looked inside one the other night while walking around looking for a good restaurant. I was just about able to squeeze inside. It was a standing-only audience -- as is true for Russian Orthodox -- but the standees were almost all women, and most of them middle aged or older. Leningrad also has a beautiful blue-tiled mosque, patterned after one in Samarkand, and a Jewish synogogue. I was told that the Soviets meticulously maintain at least one structure of every faith in order to say, "See: freedom of worship!"

I went to the lovely old Royal Ballet Theatre to see Gliere's *The Bronze Horseman*. Of course the dancing was magnificent. But so was the music. And the settings were so ingenious that they managed to stage a flood with the "waters" flowing across the stage at the height of a man's head, tossing boat loads of struggling people, housing *Uebri*s and what have you with the force of the current. Down front, this particular evening, I spotted one of Washington's leading hostess-dowagers. I could remember everything but her name and knew that this lapse would distract me from the rest of the performance if I didn't resolve it quickly. So I went down to her seat in fourth-row center, introduced myself and said I remembered being in her beautiful house (even the phone and TV are camouflaged behind 18th Century paneling). She beamed, introduced me to her Intourist guide and told me she was just beginning a long tour through Russia as part of President Eisenhower's "People to People" program. I looked at her baum marten cape, her sapphire lapel pin the size of a hydrangea, the amused, tolerant smile on the face of her Intourist companion, and thought Jesus Christ!

I ran into another American delegation here in Leningrad: Texans. They also were on a goodwill tour and busily have been fastening little yellow boot pins onto the chests of all Russians who respond to "Howdy!" The little old lady who runs the lift here has her boots dangling from the third row of a series of medallions. I don't know whether the others stand for Glorious Worker, Glorious Widow, or previous Texans.

Well, now I think I've worked out all attempts at objectivity and so will mention Intourist more directly. Intourist really works against the American grains: You have to pay cash on the line in advance without knowing what you'll really get: You have no choice of hotel or sights to see once you arrive ("The Chief" of each city's Intourist office supposedly can make adjustments but "The Chief" never does); You find things extremely expensive and have the feeling you are being gyped; You're in Russia, which is the last place where an American wants to play Santa Claus. I am told this agency -- which is practically the only medium through which foreign visitors can enter the Soviet Union -- works fairly well for groups. But I was told that if I was to adhere to my route from Odessa to Leningrad, I would have to go de luxe at \$30 per day as no organized tours existed. This supposedly was to cover all expenses. But it soon became only a starter. I



PETER: He gets wreaths.

was billed for intra-city flights and, more inconveniently, had to push through innumerable red tape at each successive city in order to be able even to buy the ticket for my next stop. And I found the Intourist meal tickets particularly irritating. These are really the tourist's substitute for currency. After a while he learns that the breakfast coupons are worth 12 roubles (a rouble equals 10 cents inside Russia; 25 cents outside); "dinner" (lunch), 30 roubles; afternoon tea, 3 roubles; and supper, 20 roubles. This adds up to 65 roubles which = \$6.50. I was told that if I wished to stay an extra night at this hotel it would cost me 40 roubles, i.e. \$4. Since my de luxe ticket costs \$30 a day, the Intourist guide and car -- the only other service provided -- presumably add up to \$19.50. Bunk. More often than not, there are not enough guides and not enough autos and drivers. Even if you are lucky enough to snag one, Intourist's idea of a sightseeing day runs from 10 or 10:30 until noon; and from 3 until 4:30. Russia Deluxe, Or You Gotta Want It Real Bad. Laundry is extra, of course, and about double Washington prices. To further aggravate this, you are always charged for anything extra you eat beyond your coupon figure. But if you aren't hungry for, say, a noontime "dinner" and eat only \$1.50 worth instead of the allotted \$3, that's liable to be the last you hear of it. If you complain, you are told it is impossible to make change. If you really bellow, you either get your change in lesser coupons (i.e., a breakfast and a tea) or, in really intimidating instances, in cash. Then, when it's all over, you are allowed to convert your leftover Intourist food coupons into commodities.

Me, I'm leaving for Finland wearing a raincoat loaded down with five jars of caviar. I bellowed.

Cordially,



Warren W. Unna.

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