

Portrait of Russia?

A VISIT to the Soviet exhibition at the New York Coliseum raises more questions than it answers. A visitor sees, for example, a Russian-made automobile. But what does this tell him about the comparative state of the Russian and American motor industries? What does the Russian car cost to produce? How does it run? Is it actually in mass production? How many are turned out? How many Russians could afford one?

American automobile engineers tell us that the Chaika, for example (a car made only for officials), is not mass produced, that there is no original engineering in it, that the Russian designers are imitating even our mistakes. But most of the questions above are questions that even an American engineer cannot answer. A better expert is someone who has lived in Russia. Max Frankel, who spent two years in the Soviet Union as correspondent for the *New York Times*, tells us that a visitor to the Russian show can see far more there in two hours than he was

able to see in his two years in Russia—"far more especially of the stuff of Soviet wishful dreams."

Image of Abundance

"The products and models at the exposition are . . . a distinct surprise to someone who works and travels in the Soviet Union. . . . The Soviet exhibition strives for an image of abundance with an apartment that few Russians enjoy, with clothes and furs that are rarely seen on Moscow streets, and with endless variations of television, radio, and recording equipment, cameras, and binoculars that are not easily obtained in such quality or range in Soviet stores. . . . The men and women employed as guides have been hastily dressed in American suits and dresses and shoes. . . .

"The restraint in showing toys and drugs and household goods reflects the low priorities assigned to such goods in the Soviet Union. . . . The large, sleek Packard-like limosine Zil is produced exclusively

for chauffeured government duty. The small Moskvich advertised as an 'economy' car would cost a Russian worker at least a year's wages and many years of patient waiting. . . .

"The majority of Russian city folk must still live in communal apartments, four and more to a room, sharing bathroom and kitchen with two and more families. . . . Few Russians enjoy built-in kitchen cabinets like those in the model apartment. A few similar sets caused a sensation in Moscow last year when imported from Finland. . . . Shower curtains are hard to find. . . .

"A visit to the Soviet Union exposes glaring paradoxes of ugly slums and palatial subways, muddy roads, and huge jet planes. These contrasts are glossed over at the Coliseum."

Real Facts on Output

To those who have followed factual studies of the Russian economy there should be nothing surprising in this report. In *Newsweek* of May 27, 1957, I discussed the careful study of Professor G. Warren Nutter covering 37 leading industries, from which he concluded that "Soviet industry still seems to be roughly three and a half decades behind us in levels of output and about five and a half decades in levels of per capita GDP.

put." More recent studies have shown that in Russia there is one agricultural worker for every 10 sown acres as against one for every 60 sown acres in the U.S. Yet Russia produces only a third as much meat and half as much grain per capita as the U.S. The Russian occupies less than a fifth as much dwelling space as an American. Most families have only a single room in which all members sleep.

These facts reveal how ludicrous are the Russian claims that they are about to equal or surpass us in "peaceful production" or living standards for their people. In this respect they are still enormously behind not only the U.S. but nearly every country in Western Europe. But we should carefully distinguish between production for peace and production for war. In the latter, Russia has made giant technological strides — precisely because she has put that goal first.

And in propaganda, she is enormously our superior. She can put on an exhibition that gives false impressions of merit, whereas our own exhibition at Brussels exhibited and apologized for our slums, and the new one at Moscow will have a painting lampooning our generals. . . .

WHY

A *Fortune* editor, reporting last year on a visit to Russia, made this comment about his discussions with "the Russian bosses": "The tough proposition to argue with them is our reasons for *not* socializing large areas of our life and economy..." Significantly, he noted that the Russians had all the answers in any discussions of capitalism versus socialism.

Although the United States presumes to speak for and defend the "free world" against communism, how many of us can give any good reasons for *not* socializing our way of life? Large areas of our lives and economy have already been socialized, mostly without our realizing it — perhaps *because* we didn't realize.

To oppose an idea effectively, one must first understand what it means. "To socialize" means to turn over to government officials the ownership or control of the means of production and distribu-

SOCIALIZE

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tion. Theoretically, both socialists and communists aim at eliminating all private property, and all income other than wages: no profit, rent, or interest allowed to individuals. Theoretically, too, the State is supposed to "wither away," but all history shows that, as a nation has become more socialized, the State has become more powerful.

Why not socialize our economy? Here are at least two vital reasons for choosing liberty:

1. *Socialization restricts freedom of choice, thus destroying opportunities for the material, moral, and spiritual development of the individual.*

2. *Socialization keeps the standard of living for all below what it would be under a system of private ownership with free exchange.*

There can be little doubt about the first reason. With government officials owning or controlling an economy, the individuals who make up that society find most — if not all — areas of their lives controlled and directed by their rulers. The

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