

# Bargain Basement Crowds But No Bargain Prices Found in Moscow's GUM Store

By ROY ESSOVAN  
**MOSCOW** — Take Grand Central Station, add a thousand sales booths and stir 250,000 Russians through it every day and you have G. U. M. (pronounced goom), the Soviet Union's biggest department store.

It covers one giant block on Red Square facing the Kremlin, and comprises three block-long, three-storyed halls topped by vaulted glass roofs stretching from one end of the square to the other.

Vladimir G. Kamenev, 49-year-old director of G. U. M. and the biggest merchandising executive in the Soviet Union, says:

"Our counters placed end to end would stretch one and one-half miles."

Kamenev, a big man with grey hair, friendly brown eyes, the small-boned features of an Englishman and the enthusiasm of a restrained American salesman, adds in the same breath:

"In 1935 we sold 14 1/2 million meters (9,000 miles) of silks, linens and woolsens. That'll take you from Moscow to Vladivostok and back."

**Heavier on Holidays**  
 G. U. M. is open from 8 a. m. to 8 p. m. every day except Monday. Squeezes in any time between those hours and you'll think you've stumbled on a fire sale. That's on week days. Kamenev estimated up to 400,000 people swarm over G. U. M.'s 17 acres of floor space on holidays.

"It takes 230 permanent employees just to keep the place swept out," he said in an interview. "and at the end of each working day we cart off three tons of dirt, slush and refuse."

About the same time each day, three trucks pull up to G. U. M.'s back door and haul the day's take, an average 10 million rubles, off to the bank.

The value of the ruble, officially pegged by the Soviet government at 25 American cents, is reflected in the prices at G. U. M.'s.

**Costly Items**  
 A fairly good pearl necklace will set you back \$2,612, a medium quality shirt \$14, a shirt made to order from Chinese silk \$30. A cheap pair of socks fetches \$2.50; woolen socks, when available, \$6.

Ladies' shoes run from \$50 for a pair of walking shoes to \$125 for evening slippers. Stadium boots at \$150.

Refrigerators range from \$150 for a tiny model to \$300 for a workmanlike, fullsize model. You can buy a television set with a seven-inch screen—large magnifying glass attachment at extra cost—for \$300, and a 17-inch set for \$520. A small wringer-type washing machine costs \$200, a model similar to an American automatic washer \$300.

Can the average Russian afford such prices? Kamenev waved his hands helplessly in the air.

**Expensive Models**  
 "The more expensive the item is," he said, "the faster it's bought up. You can buy a cheap television set any day in the week, but every time we stock up on the best models, they're gone in a day."

He was speaking figuratively. Long queues extend from many counters dispensing the most expensive items. And other counters dealing with daily necessities are jammed five-deep with customers. Kamenev admitted that supply has a hard time coping with demand at G. U. M.'s.

Another handicap in the obstacle race known as "shopping at G. U. M.'s" is the Soviet system of purchase. You line up or elbow your way to a counter, pick the item you want, catch the salesgirl's attention and emerge with a slip of paper in your hand.

Then you line up or elbow your way to the cashier, pay for your purchase and emerge with the validated receipt. Line up again, elbows out, and retrieve your purchase from the other end of the counter. Each process of lining up, or elbowing, consumes a goodly amount of time.

According to available statistics, the average Soviet wage is 800 to 900 rubles (\$300 to \$225) a month.

and that holds for G. U. M.'s 5,500 employees who range from 540 rubles (\$135) for an elevator operator to 4,300 rubles (\$1,125) for each of the top 12 executives under Kamenev. G. U. M.'s 3,500 salesgirls earn 900 to 1,000 rubles (\$225 to \$250) a month.

When business is good—and when isn't it? — a 15 per cent bonus is added to the pay check.

**Refrigerators, TV**  
 Kamenev unveiled a few more statistics: Averaging them out over the two years G. U. M. has been in business, the store has sold, every day, 49 refrigerators, 40 bicycles, 35 television sets, 200 radios, 750 watches, 2,000 suits and overcoats and 10,000 pairs of footwear, including rubbers and rubber and felt overshoes and goloshes.

To the average Russian, G. U. M. is more than just the biggest state-operated department store in the country. It is a symbol of the consumer goodies the government says are in store for him. And some of them, after all, are already in stock.

For out-of-towners who make up the bulk of its shoppers, G. U. M. is a storehouse of modern miracles. Kamenev estimated that of the thousands who elbow through G. U. M.'s 12 double-doored entrances, about 150,000 a day actually buy something.

**Unheard of Wonders**  
 The others come in out of the cold, stamp the snow from their boots and wander happily among unheated of 10 years ago—Soviet-manufactured vacuum cleaners, radiators, electric floor-polishers, flashy neckties, electric coffee pots and tea kettles, sporting guns, television sets, refrigerators and automatic washers.

G. U. M. also provides such Soviet eye-openers as a shopper's guide book, a coin-operated snapshot machine, check rooms and

delivery service. Coming soon, says Kamenev, are automatic soap and shoe-polish dispensers and a coin-operated perfume spray.

Services include a post office, telegraph office, savings bank, cafeteria, medical station and a nursery to check your baby, with diaper-changing services thrown in.

Ninety-two per cent of G. U. M.'s stock comes from 278 towns and hamlets scattered throughout the Soviet Union, some of it by sled to distant rail heads. The balance comes from France (silk, textiles and woolsens), Germany (optical goods and crockery), Yugoslavia (shoes), and Communist China, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

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## Dog's Life Not So Bad, Experts Agree

By WATSON SIMS  
**NEW YORK** — The next time you feel the need for sympathy, don't complain that you're living a dog's life. It might be better than your own.

A dog's life, canine specialists agree, is getting better and longer all the time. Man's best friend is getting a full share of the benefits modern civilization has brought to man himself.

His life expectancy is up about 50 per cent. Vaccines and antibiotics have all but eliminated any of his diseases, and eased the effects of many once fatal infections.

New techniques in surgery are being applied in his behalf. He is getting better food and, on the whole, receiving better care both in sickness and in health.

But not all of these blessings are unshared. Like man, the dog is running into certain penalties that come with longer life. More and more, he is suffering ailments normally associated with old age. And because he is living longer, his numbers are increasing far beyond the demand for dogs.

Dr. Hadley C. Stephenson, professor of veterinary medicine at Cornell University, said recently the average life expectancy for a dog is now about 12 years that.

"Many live longer than that," Dr. Stephenson told the Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Assn. "There are 500 dogs in the country that I know which are 17 years old or more. That's about 80 years in humans. The average dog used to live to be about 7 or 8."

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## Major A-Ore Boom Seen In Wyoming

**RIVERTON, Wyo.** — Uranium boom in Fremont County "will be big and of several years duration," the Atomic Energy Commission reported after February ore shipments reached 80 per cent of the record January output.

Vitro Minerals Corp. again was the largest single shipper, filling its 3,500-ton quota.

Most of the February ore came from the gas hills area of eastern Fremont County in shipments from Globe Mining Co., Vitro, Savannah Construction Co. and Lucky MC Uranium Corp.

The newly discovered area in the Pryor mountains along the Montana-Wyoming border was the second largest shipping region. Several loads of ore were shipped from Loren Bice and Coyle-Ferguson-Dean groups.

A trial shipment from the Yellowstone Mining Co. from a new discovery near Virginia City, Mont., arrived near the end of the month.

Bad weather closed all producers in the Crooks Gap and Copper Mountain areas and hampered production throughout the rest of Fremont County. No shipments of ore were made from the Pumpkin Buttes area of northeastern Wyoming during February.

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