

Matter of Fact

By Stewart Alsop

WHAT IS RUSSIA LIKE?

Moscow — What is Russia REALLY like? The best answer seems to be that Russia is like whatever you want it to be like. In the Soviet Union, you can find what you have come to find. Suppose, for purposes of argument, that you are a visiting "progressive," as pro-Communists are called in these parts. You can then report with enthusiasm and unchallengeable accuracy to the comrades back home.

You can report that Moscow has broad streets kept scrupulously clean and lined with handsome buildings. You can report that the people look reasonably well fed (the ladies a trifle too well fed, by Western standards) and fairly decently clothed. You can report that the standard of living has risen continuously since the war.

You can report that industrial production is increasing at a considerably greater rate, in percentages, than in the United States. You can further report that the Soviet Union has scored great technological achievements notably in such key fields as nuclear energy and jet propulsion.

IF YOU happened to be in the right place at the right time, you might even be able to offer eyewitness proof of such an achievement. This is unlikely, since Moscow is a very big city and the sky is often overcast.

But as all Moscow now knows, the Soviets have been flying their remarkable new aircraft over Moscow continuously, although at irregular intervals, ever since the famous overflights in early May.

As a "progressive" your list would by no means end with such technical triumphs. You could point also to such marvelous artistic achievements as the Moscow ballet. You could even report—accurately, in the view of all Western observers—that the Soviet people feel a greater sense of personal security than they have felt for years.

All these things, from the clean streets to the jet planes, are unquestionably true. But suppose that, instead of being a "progressive," you are a "decadent bourgeois." On the most decadently selfish level, you may complain of a lack of such small luxuries as well turned out women and good food in pleasant surroundings. But your doubts may go a bit deeper than this level.

For example, behind the handsome buildings on the clean streets, you may find strange shantytowns which remind you of the American South in the thirties. With their unpaved roads and hand pumps and sagging walls, these wooden villages inside a great metropolis are a curious phenomenon, oddly out of place in Utopia.

Again, as a decadent bourgeois you may be surprised by the close packed, shoving crowds in

Babson on Investments

Babson Park, Mass. (Special to The Mail Tribune) —Last week I showed that Uranium, Aviation, the Telephone, and Television are opening up the entire world to businessmen with vision. I will now offer some suggestions to INVESTORS with vision.

J. R. Govett
For the past 100 years English and American promoters have sought "concessions" to invest money and do business in foreign countries. These concessions consisted of railroad and trolley lines, electric power plants, manufacturing or merchandizing operations, and later

every store and market, and dismayed by the prices these crowds are willing and eager to pay. In Western eyes, these prices look strangely un-Utopian.

BUT WHAT you miss most, naturally enough, are precisely those "decadent, bourgeois" things that make up the Western and especially the American manner of living. Drive in to Leningrad from the air port, for example, as this reporter did on his arrival in Russia, and you suddenly realize how immensely wide is the gulf which separates you from the summer life of the lawn mower and the open air movie.

Instead of the mushroom growth of small houses you see in the suburbs of a Western city, you see great, imposing, clumps of apartment buildings for workers, hideous but functional. And instead of the bumper to bumper traffic, you see a surging, unceasing flow of people on broad streets, purposeful, industrious, anti-life.

What most dismays the "unprogressive" Westerner, in short, is that this is a system totally alien to anything he has ever known. There is, it must be said, no sense of fear here at all, at least for the visiting foreigner. But there is a kind of scruffy selfrighteous uniformity. Above all, there is a lack of that easy free spokenness to which decadent bourgeois types are eccentrially attached.

But this lack should not be permitted to obscure the fact that this alien system works. This Soviet way of life functions. It increases industrial production at an impressive rate, it produces nuclear weapons and remarkable aircraft, and at the same time it feeds and clothes the people adequately by their standards. To the "decadent bourgeois" way of life, the life of the lawnmower and the open air movie, the Fifth Amendment and the right of dissent, it represents a greater challenge than this reporter had realized before.

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mining and timber rights. Some were unprincipled exploitations, but most have been honestly operated. All, however, have given little attention to the local people of these foreign countries, almost none of whom have had a stock interest.

These "one-sided" agreements have caused many diplomatic misunderstandings and even revolutions "against the white man." Where the "white man" has insisted on his "pound of flesh" and has refused to voluntarily give up anything, he has ultimately lost; but in Burma this has not been the case. I have in mind Burma Mines Limited, Burmah Oil Co., and other foreign developments. Burma has a wonderful climate and faces on the Bay of Bengal midway between Indo-China and India. During World War II Burma was sacked by the Japanese, and Burmese companies were forced to reorganize. J. R. Govett, of 37 Dover Street, London, formulated a plan which will be used world-wide.

The Burma Plan
Mr. Govett's Plan divides stock ownership, and membership on the Board of Directors of the foreign-owned companies between the old stockholders and the foreign government AT THE START OF THE REORGANIZATION. One half of the stock goes to the old stockholders, and the other half is put in trust in a Rangoon bank to be delivered to the Burmese Government as it contributes labor and native supplies. The Govett Plan insures that the profits henceforth will be divided fifty-fifty. The foreign nation supplies the ore, or oil, or customers if it is a utility, while the English and American investors supply the "know-how" and management.

I not only believe in the future of these Burma "50-50" companies, but also I believe in other companies in Africa, Australia, and Argentina which are considering the Govett Plan. Powerful Standard Oil interests have just adopted a similar plan for Argentina, and the St. Joseph Lead Company may follow. A great opportunity for the Govett Plan lies with the American & Foreign Power Company which has holdings in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Chile, Cuba, Costa Rica, and China. Most of these properties I have personally visited, including the Shanghai Power Company.

Shanghai Power Company
This was a most valuable property in a city of 6,000,000 population. When it was expropriated by the Communists, it probably could have been saved by adopting the Govett-Burma Plan; but the American & Foreign Power Company, which owned it, hesitated to make such an offer fearing to set a precedent. As a re-

Is That So?

OVER HUDSON BAY, With SAS—Early this morning as our plane left Greenland, the air was clean-swept of clouds, clear as a crystal goblet, having traveled over a clean part of the world. As we approached Hudson Bay,



a cloud no bigger than a hand appeared on the horizon. Now as we are almost across this great bay, the world's largest cumulus clouds are below us.

How and why do these woolen, fleecy clouds come and go? First there must be water vapor—invisible water particles suspended in the atmosphere. But this is not enough. It is quite possible for the air to be full of water and yet to be without a cloud—as it usually is at night and early morning. Yet, under other conditions at mid-day, atmosphere with but one-tenth as much moisture in it can be as thick as pea-fog.

Which brings the second requirement: the vapor-holding air must be subjected to a temperature change. There must be a cooling and warming of air to bring the cloud and take it away.

Just as in the cup of hot coffee which the attentive SAS hostess brings me—the hot coffee can dissolve much more sugar than a cold cup. Stir as hard as I like, the cold coffee will always have sugar left in the bottom. So, too, warm air can blot up more water vapor than cold air. Actually, at 80 degrees can hold over five times as much vapor in the invisible state as air at 32 degrees, or freezing. The reason, incidentally, why my breath steamed when I left chilly Copenhagen last night but will not be seen when I step off the plane at warm Los Angeles this afternoon.

Now to transform invisible vapor to visible, the warm moist air must get to a colder place where the excess moisture condenses out—in exactly the same way as breath becomes visible when it is puffed from warm lungs into cold air.

This is done by an upward movement of air which anyone can see taking place at the top of a smoketack on a windless day.

Thus, on this day of June, the warm moisture-laden air rises upward and at first it held all its water vapor. But as the day became warmer over Hudson Bay, the air rose higher and sooner or later reached a point where it had a surplus of water vapor—the condensation level, and here the visible cumulus clouds formed.

When the sun's heat is shut off, then the cumulus cloud will start to fall but as descending air warms up under the influence of compression, the water particles will evaporate and so vanish into thin air long before they will have reached the earth's surface.

Thus, ordinary fine weather cumulus clouds in a day in June rarely survive nightfall, dissolving away completely. And so, as evening falls, the miracle of the day is repeated—clouds vanish, and nothing stands between man and the hard-polished stars.

FREE: By special arrangement with the editors of the Encyclopedia Americana, my panel of judges will award each week to the reader who sends me the best true-life nature adventure, or the best nature observation, or the best question on nature and wildlife a complete 30-volume set, the Shanghai Power Company bonds, sold to U.S. investors originally for \$1,000 each, can now be bought for \$5 each. The properties are still mentioned in the annual reports, but no capacity, output, or earnings figures are included.

Certainly the stork of the American & Foreign Power Company is one of the most interesting of foreign investments today. There are 7,224,238 shares of common stock outstanding, and a large debt. The stock paid \$0.75 in 1954 and sells it about 14.

If the Management has the vision and courage to gradually change the ownership of its foreign properties over to the Burma Plan, this American & Foreign Power stock could sell much higher.

This would especially be true if Congress should pass certain tax legislations favoring foreign investments. If, however, the Management and Congress are stubborn, this stock could become valueless. Several times I have personally talked this problem over with the Company's famous founder, the late Sidney Mitchell, but it was wasted breath on my part.

He was an honest and remarkable man, with technical training and great energy; but he was a hard dictator with very little social vision. Unfortunately, this applies to the heads of many big Corporations today that have large foreign investments.

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

Each week new submissions will be considered. Sorry, I simply can't answer your many friendly letters. Please address your letter to IS THAT SO? c/o Medford Mail Tribune, Box 575, Sausalito, Calif.

Perle Mesta Tells of Chats With Soldiers

Tokyo — (U.P.) — Perle Mesta paused briefly today in her round-the-world tour to tell of her chats with American servicemen.

"I'm very fond of our soldiers," said the famed Washington hostess. "When I get to a new place, I find out where the soldiers are to talk to them."

The former ambassador to Luxembourg said she makes wire recordings of Americans in uniform so she could send them home to their families.

Mrs. Mesta said of her three-day stay in Korea that she found President Syngman Rhee a "very wonderful gentleman with great charm."

She leaves tonight for Formosa and Hong Kong.

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