

American Reports on Student 'Soviet' at University

(Editor's note: Each year, under the U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchange program, there is a trade of students between the two countries. This year there are 32 Americans studying at Moscow (Moskva) university. Here is the story of one of them, an account that at the same time provides a rare look at life on a Soviet university campus.)

By JAY AXELBANK
United Press International
Moscow — (UPI) — The young Russian student was in trouble, on trial before four fellow students at Moscow university for a breach of dormitory discipline. The question was whether he should be given another chance or ordered out of the dormitory which could be the prelude to expulsion from the university.

Judging the boy's fate—he had failed to take his proper turn attending the dormitory "Soviet", or student council. One of its four members was an American, 25-year-old Philip Stewart of 149 Arlington ave., Elmhurst, Ill. The vote against expulsion was three to one, with Stewart among those voting "no."

Soviet Accepted
"I thought he should have another chance," Stewart said. "The guy who wanted him out was tough, a sort of Stalinist you might say."

Stewart came to Moscow last September and will end his studies here next month. He is the only one of the 32 Americans currently at Moscow university, who belongs to a student "Soviet."

"They asked me, and I said okay," he said. "The students all accept me without question or surprise. On the

"Soviet" we never talk politics. We just keep the rules in our dormitory."
The slender, soft-spoken American holds a master's degree from Indiana university and is aiming for a doctorate in local government. He is on the "jurisprudential faculty" at the university here and has concentrated on studying Soviet government at the oblast or regional level. There are no tests and no grades and Stewart sets his own course under guidance or a faculty adviser.

"How much work you do is entirely a matter of conscience," Stewart explained.
Major subjects taught at the university include mathematics, physics, chemistry, zoology, psychology, history, philosophy and philology — language and literature. Most of the Americans here are studying philology, history or psychology.

Like all students Stewart lives in a dorm, but unlike most of them he has his wife, Nancy, with him. They share a small room on the skyscraper university's eighth floor, where the 23-year-old Nancy housekeeps. Only foreigners are allowed to have their wives with them in the dormitory.

Better Than Books
Stewart is grateful for his chance to have served on the student Soviet. "It's been better," he said, "than reading 50 books on the subject of local government." The system of "Soviets" runs all through Russian life. They are found in schools, factories and offices. They are semi-official and operate on disciplinary matters similar to the disciplining of the student who shirked his "phone duty." On higher, and political levels the Soviets govern districts, cities, republics, culminating in the supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. Lenin said, "All power to the Soviets."

A basic point of Russian life, Stewart said, is that the Soviets always come under control of, and are responsible to, the Communist party. "I've learned this first hand," Stewart said. He devotes an average of two or three hours a week to his duties on the dormitory Soviet.

Stewart summarizes his impression of Russian life, as seen at the university, in one word, "control."
"Don't get me wrong," he said, "control is part of Western life, too. Only in America, for instance, control assures that everybody can pursue his own aims. In the Soviet Union control assures that each person, each organization, serves the party and the state."

Sports no Fun
As an example of Soviet kind of control, Stewart referred to the "extra curricular activities" at Moscow university — what few of them there are.

"Most of this activity revolves around political evenings, and most of them are devoted to Cuba or Iraq. Sports are tied in with military and physical preparedness, not fun."

For Stewart and Nancy, life at the university is fairly hedged in. Other than their tiny room — 10 feet by 20 feet — there is no place to go except to the "day room" on their floor during the winter months or, in better weather, to the city parks. At the university itself there are no snack bars, no cafes, no students unions in the so-



OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY — American Exchange Student Philip Stewart of Elmhurst, Ill., and his wife, Nancy, check notebook outside Moscow's skyscraper university, shown in background. The 25-year-old American is one of 32 U.S. citizens studying in Russia under Cultural Exchange Program. (UPI)

cial sense. The university cafeterias are open only during meal times and are strictly utilitarian.

Students wind up visiting in each other's rooms or chatting in the halls or day rooms. "Buying a girl a Coke or a beer is impossible," Stewart said. "You see guys and coeds holding hands in the hallways, or going out for walks when the weather is good."

Passes Required
Compared to school life in the United States Stewart and Nancy agree that Moscow's students "have it tough." To enter the university compound students and others must present a pass that is checked by four persons. A guest must have a special pass and application for it must be made days in advance.

In addition to his role on his dormitory Soviet, Stewart "participates" in the university's communistic life in other ways. First of all, like all Soviets, Stewart's comes under the party thumb. It is initially responsible to the Soviet of the entire school, and must also bow to the local Komsomol (Young Communist League) organization. There is a Komsomol worker serving as "kommandant" of each floor.

"Our Community party worker," Stewart said, "gave us a lecture at the beginning of the semester. It was a girl and she said to us that control

There is one highly popular form of relaxation in the dorms — surprisingly — the "match game" known in America. "The idea, as I guess you know," said Stewart, "is to guess the total number of matches in your fist and those held by the others. Each player has three matches for the game. I don't play it myself because I haven't had time. Every minute I can spend in the library because I do want to get on with my doctoral thesis."

Plans To Teach
Stewart then outlined his own plan for the future. "This year has given me the chance to live among the Russians. Academically I am here to gather firsthand material — mainly from regional newspapers. When I get back home I hope to spend a year at the Library of Congress researching more material, and then get my doctorate in 1964. I hope to be teaching Russian political science by the fall of '64."

Over and beyond what he has learned by study Stewart has of course formed a number of impressions, ranging from what Russia is like under Premier Nikita Khrushchev and what the average Russian thinks of Americans. "I have a few Russian friends, not many," Stewart said. "Nancy and I really live a life mainly cut off from the majority of the 7,000 students here. They don't care to come into our room, much. There's no ban on this, but I guess they don't want to be associating too much with an American."

"But there's no police terror any more in this country, just the control. This can bring trouble in other ways. A bad record at university might interfere with getting a good job later on, or jeopardize the person's standing in the Komsomol and affect chances of getting into the party."

Couple Eats Well
The Stewarts eat better than most of the students. Under the exchange grant he received a stipend for support of his wife, a small sum for books, and transportation was paid. In addition Stewart receives 150 rubles (\$165) a month from the Soviet government as the other American students do. Other foreign students get about 100 rubles (\$110) a month, and Soviet students get a government allowance of 30 rubles (\$33).

"On that," said Stewart of the Russian student allowance, "they can just eat. Many of them get help from home."
The Stewarts' own food bill averages about \$100 a month and the rest of the money goes to miscellaneous upkeep. (Russian exchange students in the U.S. are paid from \$140 to \$190 a month by the American government, a higher sum because of higher living costs. Their other expenses including travel are paid by the Russian government. There are 50, the maximum under the program for both countries, in the U.S. (this year.)

Finally, how has the Yank at Moskva felt as an American among the Russians? "There's a reservoir of good will for us," Stewart said, "even though they do tend to be standoffish here at the university. Even during the Cuban crisis, I didn't hear a single bad word said against us as Americans."
In Puerto Rico, the sun shines 360 days a year.
The city of San Francisco is built on 43 hills.

DRINKERS CAN'T DANCE
Montpelier, Vt. — (UPI) — Tipplers in Vermont now can stand and walk around — but they can't dance while drinking. The state liquor control board Wednesday announced the change in barroom regulations which still prohibit dancers from carrying drinks. Gone is the old rule that required waitresses to transport drinks if a patron moved from one spot to another.

Dinah Shore Tells:



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